

INCLUSION THROUGH DIALOGUE

**PROMISING PRACTICES FOR THE INTEGRATION
OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN EUROPE**



network for
Dialogue



DISCLAIMER

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INCLUSION THROUGH DIALOGUE

**PROMISING PRACTICES FOR THE INTEGRATION
OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN EUROPE**



Introducing the Network for Dialogue

EMPOWERING INTERRELIGIOUS AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE FOR THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES



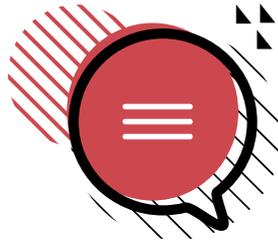
The Network for Dialogue was initiated in 2018 by the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) in order to bring faith and civil society actors from around Europe together to promote the use of dialogue and develop more effective recommendations for social inclusion policies for migrants and refugees in Europe. As a European-wide platform, the Network for Dialogue gathers faith-based and secular organizations, religious leaders and scholars working in the field of migration and religious studies. In 2019, the Network members come from Austria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, and the Network plans to expand its membership to other European countries.

The Network for Dialogue organizes regular twice-yearly meetings in workshop format and coordinates webinars, training sessions, conference panels and publications in order to exchange knowledge, tools and approaches. By identifying gaps in the field of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, the Network aims to reduce hate speech and prejudice towards migrants and refugees in Europe. And by sharing diverse and rich grassroots-level experiences, Network members aim to develop recommendations for policy makers working on migrants and refugees on the local, national and European level. In assisting and supporting social inclusion of people seeking refuge in their new host societies through various local initiatives, the Network for Dialogue is building bridges around Europe. Membership of the Network is open to persons working with refugees and migrants and who promote interreligious or intercultural dialogue, tolerance and respect the diversity of cultures and freedom of religious belief.



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Introduction



Since the start of the so-called European refugee crisis in 2015, involving the largest mass movement of people in Europe since World War II, migration has become a particularly contentious issue in the public sphere, with negative perceptions exacerbated by the media. People seeking refuge have mostly been arriving from war-torn countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. The main countries of destination for asylum applications were Germany, Italy and France, followed by Greece and Spain in 2017 and 2018.¹

Reaching Europe is not the major challenge for asylum seekers; it is rather being able to navigate the complex and different asylum procedures in each country. The situation that awaits refugees and asylum seekers varies: some countries, such as Germany and Sweden, initially had a policy of welcoming refugees but almost all countries in Europe have made it harder for asylum seekers to become integrated into society by, for instance, placing restrictions on the labour rights of refugees and asylum seekers.²

On 1 January 2018 of the 512.4 million people living in the European Union (EU) 22.3 million (4.4%) were non-EU citizens.³ Following the peak of refugee arrivals in Europe, with more than 2.4 million immigrants having entered the continent since 2015, populist leaders have stoked fear around the migration issue and their support in the polls has increased. Refugees are facing continued problems to access and stay in quality education.⁴ Other concerns of people seeking refuge involve the threat of violence and hate speech against them as well as new legislation on social welfare assistance.⁵

With the numbers of newcomers having declined since 2017,⁶ the focus is now being shifted to integrating newcomers into their new societies. People seeking refuge in general – but especially women, children and unaccompanied minors, and members of religious minorities – have experienced different levels of persecution in their homelands. Large reception camps that have been opened in the past few years in Southern and Southeast Europe have improved their conditions but often

1 European Commission (2019). Asylum statistics. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics#Main_countries_of_destination:_Germany,2C_France_and_Greece.

2 European Commission (2018). Peer review on 'Integration of refugees into the labour market'. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18855&langId=en>.

3 European Commission (2019). Migration and migrant population statistics. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics.

4 IOM/UNICEF/UNHCR (2019). Access to education for refugee and migrant children in Europe. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/access-education-refugee-and-migrant-children-europe-september-2019>.

5 FRA (2019). Beyond the peak: challenges remain, but migration numbers drop. Available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-beyond-the-peak-migration-annual-review-2018_en.pdf.

6 UNHCR (2019). Operational portal for refugee situations: Mediterranean situation. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>; European Parliament (2019). Briefing on the migration issue. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635542/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)635542_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635542/EPRS_BRI(2019)635542_EN.pdf).

still do not make safe shelters; and reports have emerged of gender-based violence, as well as of a high incidence and risk of human trafficking.⁷

In this booklet we use interchangeably the terms "refugees" or "people seeking refuge" – which includes for us recognized refugees, asylum seekers, subsidiary protection and people on the move. In addition we talk of "migrants", those people who have been living for a longer period in their host country already but still face difficulties integrating into their new context. We recognize that other terms are in use, such as "people on the move", but most importantly for us is an inclusive understanding when we talk of refugees and migrants.

Current framework in Europe

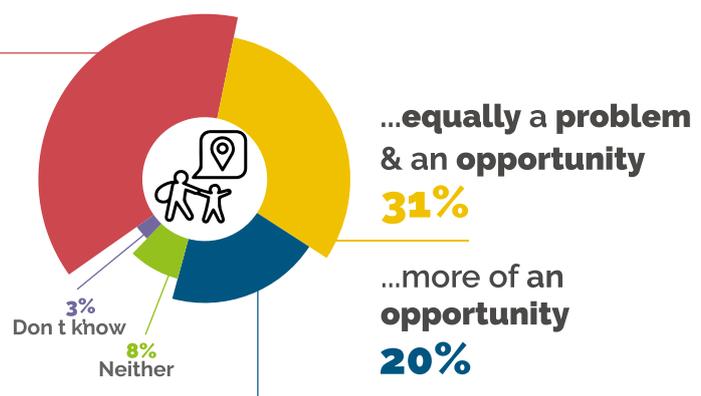
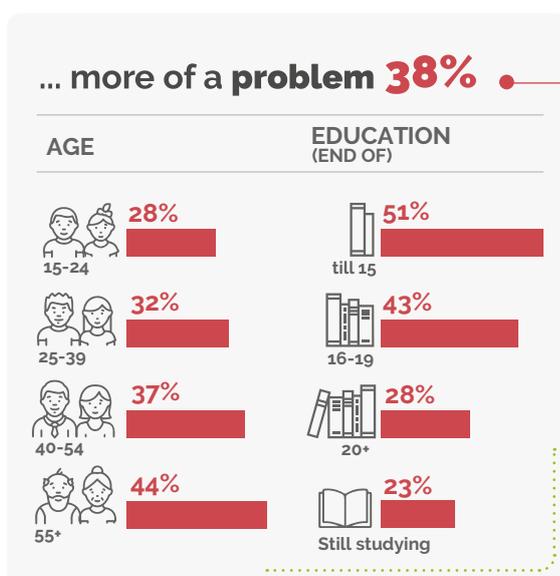
Throughout Europe, migration has become a sensitive topic. The effective integration of refugees and migrants is a critical issue for regional development, especially in times of rising xenophobia. Even though the member states of the EU are pri-

marily responsible for the integration process at the national level, several agreements have been concluded regarding the development of social integration at the EU level.

The legal mechanisms of the Lisbon Treaty (2007), together with the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy (2004) and the Common Agenda for Integration (2005), provided a framework for the member states to implement national integration policies. In order to strengthen social integration at a local level, the European Agenda for the Integration of non-European migrants was released in 2011. In 2016, the European Commission adopted the European Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals.

The Action Plan provides a comprehensive framework for putting integration policies into practice across all the policy areas and for developing further long-term strategies. It also underlines the significance of active participation and social inclusion through actions of mutual exchange with the receiving society, migrant participation in cultural life and awareness-raising about fighting discrimi-

For Europeans, immigration from outside the EU is perceived as...



Many Europeans are seeing challenges related to immigrants from outside the EU. / Source: EU Barometer, 2018

7 UNICEF (2019). UNICEF Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe: Humanitarian Situation Report #31 (January - March 2019). Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/greece/unicef-refugee-and-migrant-crisis-europe-humanitarian-situation-report-31-january>.

nation. This is also reflected in the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Migration, both of which provide a comprehensive approach to enhanced cooperation at the global level.⁸

The successful social inclusion of migrants and refugees is key to the future well-being, prosperity and cohesion of European societies.⁹ It is, however, a multilevel and multidimensional process, connected not only with the policies of the receiving country and the provision of supportive structures, but also with the ethnic background and gender of migrants and refugees, their cultural and religious heritage, their educational level and family status, and their own willingness to integrate.

Towards more inclusive societies

To achieve peaceful and sustainable integration of migrants, actors at various levels must be included in the process – from the grassroots level to national governmental level and even up to the level of the European Union. The process of social inclusion needs to be given strong support at all levels, particularly in relation to intercultural exchange and interreligious dialogue.

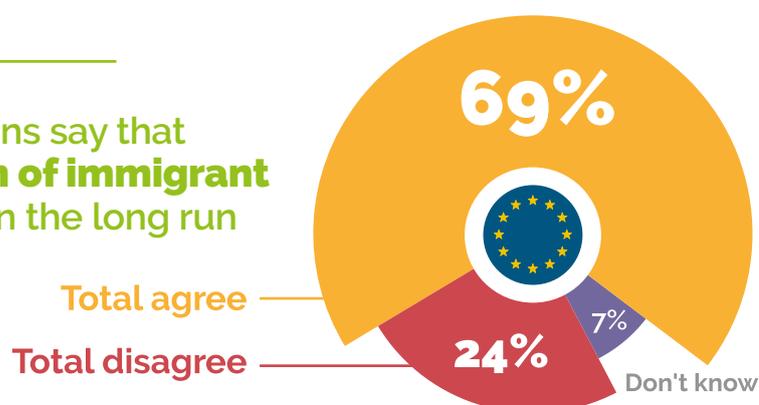
Only by creating safe spaces for intercultural and interreligious dialogue will it be possible to learn about cultural diversity and commonal-

ities. Realising that we have common values creates greater trust, bridges and bonds cultures and brings about social cohesion. Interreligious and intercultural dialogue can overcome the growing fear and apprehension of receiving communities and build up a lively process of intercultural exchange. Religious identity can thus be a peaceful integrative factor, provided that a safe space is created for bringing migrants together with host communities for exchange and social interaction to humanise each other.

It is the dialogical approach which offers personal learning by mutual interaction with each other. To achieve long-term social integration in pluralistic societies, for both migrant and host communities it is important to understand all aspects of each other's daily cultural and religious life in order to establish a basis of mutual trust and respect.

If we start by addressing common issues at the cultural level within communities, this can bring together people from very different religious backgrounds. Local authorities, faith-based organizations, local religious communities and secular civil society organizations can co-create what successful integration could be and communicate their vision to other citizens and members of other communities. As the process involves building trust, it naturally takes time.

A large majority of Europeans say that **fostering the integration of immigrant is a necessary investment in the long run**



Many Europeans want to see integration to happen. / Source: EU Barometer, 2018

⁸ UNHCR (2018). The Global Compact on Refugees. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>; IOM (2018). The Global Compact for Migration. Available at: <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>.

⁹ UNHCR (2013). A new beginning: Refugee integration in Europe. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/operations/52403d389/new-beginning-refugee-integration-europe.html>.

Using dialogue is not necessarily an easy process. In the first place, it needs the conviction to enter into deep conversation with persons we may not always agree with. Remaining open to being challenged and possibly altering our points of view goes counter to our tendency to filter information in a way that confirms our own belief system. We also remember things selectively and revise our memory accordingly so that it fits our preferences, which, in turn form our perceptions about the world and the people around us.

Dialogue involves challenging our firmly held beliefs. We may carry fears within us – often unconsciously – about the other; fears related to differences, usually religious or cultural. Whereas making sense of similarities is easy, it is harder for us to make sense of differences. Yet, learning to deal positively with differences also allows us to deal with our fears.

Intercultural and interreligious dialogue makes it possible to learn about and from each other, thereby overcoming stereotypes and building personal relations. Trust and personal relationships enable us to grow together as a society and embrace diversity as something enriching. Because most societies in Europe are already diverse, there can be no one-size-fits-all approach. Nevertheless, intercultural and interreligious dialogue in many communities has been successfully supporting the social inclusion of migrants and refugees across communities and borders.

Inspiration through promising practices

Offering perspectives from different European countries, the current booklet aims to share this approach with other actors working for the social inclusion of migrants and refugees using dialogue. It gives concrete examples of how using interreligious and intercultural dialogue skills in the social inclusion processes for migrants and refugees in Europe can connect local actors of faith-based and secular organizations, scholars and practitioners.

Through these examples of shared expertise and through the recommendations provided, the quality of the local programmes can be improved and the impact of social inclusion projects extended.

For example, in Serbia the Jesuit Refugee Service takes special care of unaccompanied minors, including their daily activities regarding education and intercultural exchange with local communities. The NGO Za'atar, based in Athens, supports refugees and migrants by focusing on empowerment, education and assistance towards achieving economic self-reliance through building bridges between their skills and the needs of the host country.

Various faith-based projects have also been implemented. God's House, as a unique project in Sweden, brings together Christians, Muslims and people of other faiths or no faith in diverse ways through interfaith encounters and intercultural activities in the local community. Abraham Forum in Madrid unites Christians, Muslims and Jews in different activities focusing on different target groups, always trying to build relations at grassroots and local level. The Islamic community in Croatia supports refugees in their acculturation process. In Austria, another example of collaboration between faith-based organizations and humanitarian organizations is the case study of the Austrian Red Cross and the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID).

The target group of this booklet are secular and faith-based organizations, as well as individuals working with refugees and migrants in Europe. The booklet aims to be an inspiration to actively use interreligious and intercultural dialogue on the local level. It is a contribution to expand the knowledge on dialogue in local work with refugees and migrants. The promising practices are ordered alphabetically by name of organization and can be read either one after the other or individually, as they stand for its own.

Case studies presented in the booklet should not be understood as best practices, but rather as promising practices, describing 11 different projects or initiatives in Europe. The examples shared by Network for Dialogue members are emerging practices that hold promise for other civil society organizations that wish to adapt or use approaches described in the case studies.

Who we are – introducing the Network for Dialogue

Supported by KAICIID, we bring together grassroots faith-based and secular organizations, religious leaders and scholars who use dialogical approaches in working on the social inclusion of migrants and refugees in Europe. On the basis of the recommendations of the 2017 Experts Workshop on Interreligious Education in Europe, co-hosted by KAICIID and the European Commission Representation in Austria, the first meeting of the Network for Dialogue was held in September 2018 in Hinterbrühl, Austria, and the official launch took place in March 2019 in Bologna, Italy.

Through regular meetings, webinars, training

courses, conferences and joint publications, we exchange knowledge, tools and approaches, and identify gaps in the field of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and social inclusion.

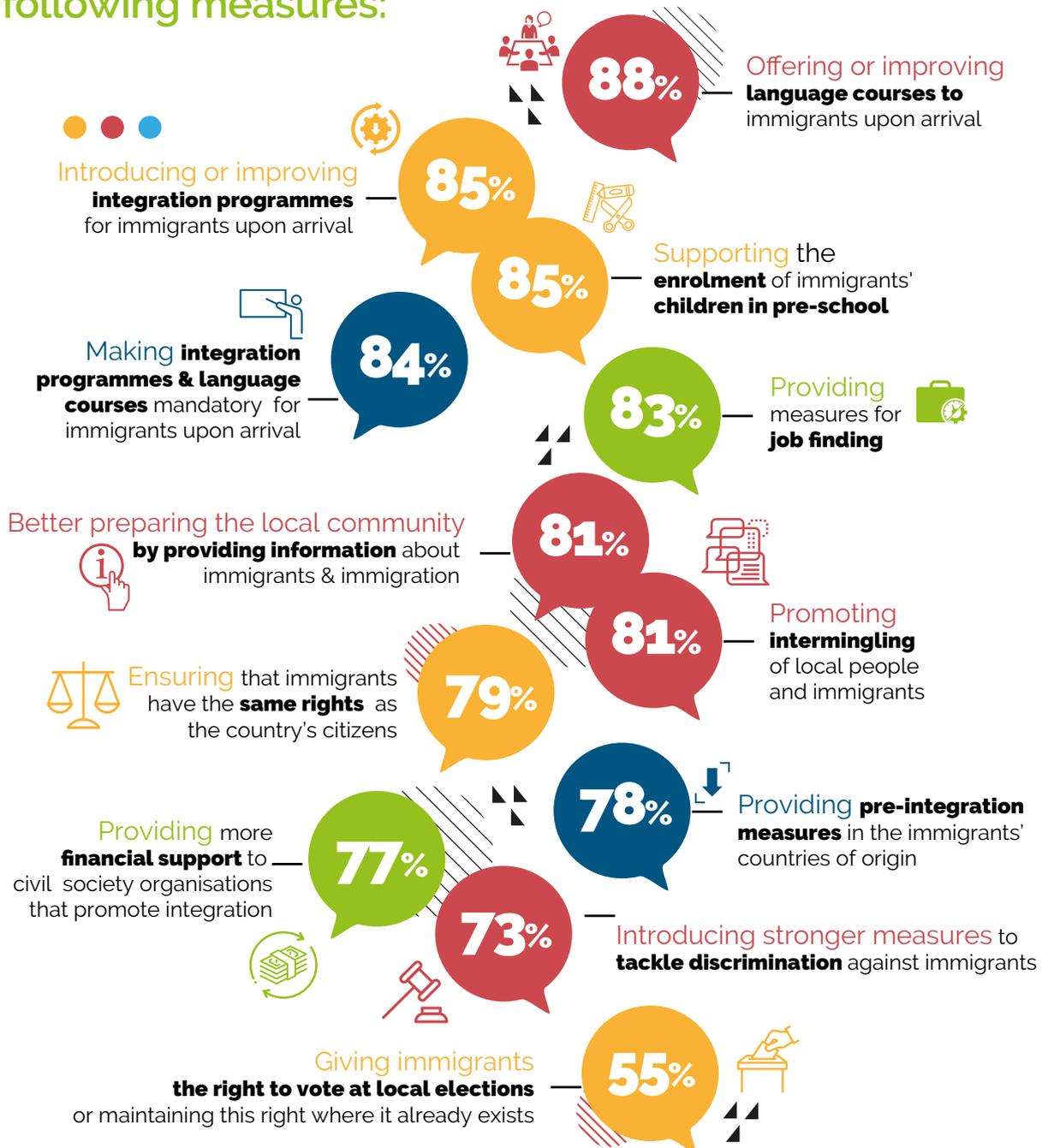
Our main focus is to engage with policy makers and initiate ideas of collaboration between policy makers, religious leaders, scholars and Network members. We also intend to work together to develop recommendations for policy makers based on our extensive grassroots experience in our own countries. We work together to inspire civil society actors to promote and enable interreligious and intercultural dialogue in their projects. Our main aim is to exchange knowledge and experience as well as to reduce hate speech and prejudice towards migrants and refugees.

By the summer of 2019, our Network comprised representatives from Austria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, from civil society organizations both secular and faith-based to bigger international organizations, as well as experts and researchers working in the field of migration. What Network members have in common is the use of dialogical approaches in our grassroots work with migrants and refugees to create better social inclusion programmes. Building this important bridge of collaboration between organizations and individuals with grassroots experience and policy makers, we hope to fill the gap in existing policies that are focusing on current migration dynamics in Europe.

Our mission is to be a unique platform that inspires civil society actors to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue as key components for the social inclusion of refugees and migrants in Europe.

Our vision is: “A society that embraces the inclusion of refugees and migrants to enrich communities”.

Europeans think that the integration of immigrants can be supported by the following measures:



Getting to know the community and exchange with the local people is already high on the agenda for many Europeans and many Network for Dialogue members are involved in this area. / Source: EU Barometer, 2018



What do we mean by interreligious and intercultural dialogue?

Dialogue is a method for fostering an attitude of openness and understanding diversity in today's world. Many definitions of "dialogue" exist, reflecting its various usage in different circumstances. We define it as follows:

"Dialogue is a secure means of communication between individuals or groups aimed at the exchange of views, knowledge, understandings, impressions and perceptions each person carries on any given topic, in order to reach a common understanding of the subject matter at the heart of a given dialogue".¹⁰

As the Network for Dialogue, we consider dialogue as the most important tool for building bridges between cultures, religions and communities. Dialogue is closely connected to learning, whether learning about others or about ourselves. The power of dialogue is to reduce misunderstandings, break stereotypes and prevent hate speech. It can strengthen tolerance, peace and respect for each individual or community. By using dialogue, we are not necessarily accepting or agreeing with someone else's point of view, but rather acknowledging,

learning and recognizing differences.

Dialogue can be of different forms – including "interreligious", "interfaith", "intercultural" and "intercivilizational". Yet whatever form it takes, it has many things in common. We also define dialogue as "a form of interaction between two or more persons of different identities that emphasizes self-expression and reciprocal listening without passing judgment, in an intellectual and compassionate spirit of openness to mutual learning with deep transformative potential".¹¹

"Interreligious" or "interfaith" dialogue can be defined as a means of bringing people of different religious identities together who seek to come to a mutual understanding that allows them to live and cooperate with each other despite their differences.¹² In this booklet, both terms are treated as synonymous and include all kinds of religions and beliefs, e.g. Hinduism and Judaism.¹³ The enhanced development and expansion of the practice of interreligious dialogue in many parts of the world in the past 50 years has led to deep transformations in theological perceptions, as well as interreligious collaboration on justice and peace.¹⁴ Although the Network for Dialogue has a focus on Christianity and Islam due to the nature of the refugee situation in Europe, it is explicitly open to all religions and faiths as well as secular individuals and organizations.

Another form of dialogue is "intercultural" dialogue: when participants come from different cul-

¹⁰ Abu-Nimer, M., Alabbadi, A. & Marquez, C. (2018). Building bridges: Guide for dialogue ambassadors, p.126. Available at: <https://www.kaiciid.org/publications-resources/dialogue-peace-manual-guide-dialogue-ambassadors>.

¹¹ KAICIID (2019). Project Integration through Dialogue Toolkit. Vienna, p. 24. Available at: <https://www.kaiciid.org/what-we-do/project-integration-through-dialogue-toolkit>.

¹² USIP (2004). What works? Evaluating interfaith dialogue programs. Available at: <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr123.pdf>.

¹³ BerkleyCenterforReligion,Peace&WorldAffairs(n.d.).Interreligiousdialogue.Availableat:<https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/resources/interreligious-dialogue>.

¹⁴ Garred, M. & Abu-Nimer, M. (2018). Introduction, in: Garred, M. & Abu-Nimer, M. (eds.), Making peace with faith: The challenges of religion and peacebuilding. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

In the EU, integration is seen as a two-way process where both the immigrants and the host society are **RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION**



'Integration is a two-way street and dialogue is a method that can contribute to this process.' / Source: EU Barometer, 2018

tural backgrounds and gather to talk from their explicitly stated cultural identity lenses to create a better understanding of certain challenges. If the dialogue occurs among people who have identified with the same culture for the purpose of the dialogue, we can call it "intracultural" dialogue. Its objective is to enable us to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging. Intercultural dialogue can also be a tool for the prevention and resolution of conflicts by enhancing respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Interreligious and intercultural dialogue are the means to deal with such diversity and to promote better coexistence and cooperation between people from different cultural or religious backgrounds. Such dialogue fosters the discovery of both what is shared and what is different in our respective cultural and religious world views.¹⁵ To achieve such a sustained conversation, an ongoing process is needed that requires the active participation of all the individuals involved. This dialogue can happen as a practice on an everyday basis or can be a methodology to bring opposing groups together.

Dialogue can be undertaken in both formal and informal settings. That is why we often use the term "dialogical approaches" when we speak

about the informal use of dialogue that is based on certain principles to be followed in the interaction with the other. As stated in the Democratic Dialogue handbook,¹⁶ the *dialogue process* is a distinct type of approach for themes or conflicts while the *dialogical approach* refers to a behaviour code and a quality of interaction that allows for a way of getting involved in different creative processes where the participants can feel included and empowered, "safe" to be transparent, "take risks", open to what others have to say and able to take a long-term view of the issues.

When we are speaking about the social inclusion of migrants and refugees in Europe, "dialogue is an effective approach to strengthen social cohesion within culturally and religiously diverse societies because it allows for people to maintain their various identities while still finding common ground".¹⁷ Using interreligious and intercultural dialogue for better social inclusion of migrants and refugees is essential for understanding cultural and religious identities, to perceive our differences not as obstacles in our societies but as an advantage of diversity. Applying dialogical approaches in everyday communication at the grassroots level with migrants and refugees is an important element for building more inclusive societies.

15 Abu-Nimer, M., Alabbadi, A. & Marquez, C. (2018). Building bridges: Guide for dialogue ambassadors. p. 17. Available at: <https://www.kaiciid.org/publications-resources/dialogue-peace-manual-guide-dialogue-ambassadors>.

16 Pruitt, B. & Thomas, P. (2007). Democratic Dialogue – A handbook for practitioners. Washington DC: OAS / IDEA / UNDP. Available at: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/democratic%20_dialogue.pdf.

17 KAICIID (2019). Project Integration through Dialogue Toolkit. Vienna, p. 22. Available at: <https://www.kaiciid.org/what-we-do/project-integration-through-dialogue-toolkit>.



B.



PROMISING PRACTICES: 11 case studies

In this chapter, Network members present their experiences and projects. Each case study was selected because it involves interreligious or intercultural dialogue as one of the potential approaches for better social inclusion of migrants and refugees in Europe. Situating each promising practice in a particular local context, our Network members shared their case studies, including the main challenges as well as recommendations. As the case studies reflect the work of Network members in their respective countries and local context, they do not represent all activities with refugees and migrants carried out in Europe.

Sweden

Stockholm

Austria

Vienna

Croatia

Zagreb

Serbia

Belgrade

Italy

Rome

Spain

Madrid

Barcelona

Greece

Athens





Interfaith cooking

 **Organisation:** Abraham Forum

 **Location:** Madrid, SPAIN

 **Contact person:** Victoria Martín de la Torre (vmartin73@hotmail.com)
and Amanda Figueras (figueras.amanda@gmail.com)

 **Website:** www.foroabraham.org



Target groups

Young refugees and asylum seekers living in Madrid

place and the beneficiaries, because they run social-housing apartments where these young men and women live while they wait for their legal situation to be resolved.



Local context

In the Abraham Forum for interreligious and intercultural dialogue we work to promote understanding among people with different beliefs. In our various activities we focus on different population groups, always trying to build relations at grassroots and local level. We carry out this activity in cooperation with the Spanish Catholic Foundation La Merced Migraciones. They have long experience in working with refugees and asylum seekers, and they provide both the venue where the activity takes

In Spain, according to the Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid (CEAR) during 2018 only one in four asylum applications were accepted, a figure below the European average (38%) while denouncing the long periods waiting to formalize these procedures that, in some provinces, last more than a year. During this time, refugees and asylum seekers have few opportunities to interact with the host population, due to both cultural and linguistic barriers. Very often, people living next door don't ever have the opportunity to meet, then refugees and asylum seekers experience exclusion and xenophobia.

Promising practice



In Abraham Forum we are committed to creating safe spaces to enable intercultural and interfaith dialogue. In cooperation with a Christian foundation that works with refugees and asylum seekers in Spain, we organized an activity that we call "interfaith cooking". We drew inspiration from a Biblical story that is common to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Once the prophet Abraham received some strangers in his house, after giving them shelter and entertaining them, he and his wife realised that they were angels. This story epitomises the duty of hospitality and inspired us to bring together Spaniards and foreigners to share some special dish of their own cultural and religious tradition as an opportunity to talk and learn

from each other.

We believe that this was an opportunity for the young newcomers to experience the hospitality of Spanish people, and to hear about the commonalities of religious traditions in the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith. It was also an opportunity for the volunteers and Forum Abraham's friends to interact and hear about the life experiences of the young migrants, most of whom came from West Africa, with some also coming from Palestine and the Middle East.

Through the creation of these safe meeting places, we try to encourage dialogue. We are also aware that for dialogue to be sincere, it is important that there is trust. We think that the work of the facilitators, members of Abraham Forum, is of great help to achieve this goal. Among the members of Abraham Forum there are Muslims, Christians and Jews, and each one is very active and recognized within their own community. For us this is part of the key to our success, since we can better identify the needs of the communities and have the support of volunteers.

With the interreligious cooking activity, we achieve the goal of bringing together very diverse people. The dishes in some way have some cultural meaning related to religion – for example, the Jews make the bread they eat on the Sabbath

We invited around 15 people from the Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities to come and **cook a special dish** in the Foundation's house, and to teach the recipe and cook and dine together with its residents.



and the Christians make a special Easter dessert. While the cooks explain the dishes they are preparing, conversation flows and, in the end, everyone learns from each other. Last year, for example, a couple of Spanish Jews and several Palestinian refugees spent the whole afternoon chatting. For us, these little things make all the difference!

Some of our main challenges were how to ensure the continuity of the project with a series of events throughout year, and how to reach out to more young Spaniards who might be willing to volunteer. This exchange could be expanded to other activities such as Spanish classes to further help with inclusion and integration.



Recommendations

1. **Get the support of experts** who work with migrants and refugees on a daily basis, who know the personal story and background of the participants in the activity. In our case, we collaborate with *La Merced Migraciones* Foundation, which hosts refugees and asylum seekers.
2. **Have facilitators who can ensure the safety of the activity** and, above all, encourage dialogue.
3. **Try to ensure that all participants** (both the refugees and asylum seekers and the volunteers) **are around the same age.**
4. **Use part of the time to explain the purpose of the session** and convey the expectations.
5. **Try to have some continuity in time**, so that it is not just one event but a series, in which some more personal relationships can be born.



Summer school for migrant and refugee children



Organisation: ADRA Community Centre



Location: Belgrade, SERBIA



Contact person: Igor Mitrović, director@adra.org.rs



Website: adra.org.rs/community-center/?lang=en



Target group

Children (age 7–14) on the move from the refugee and migrant community in Serbia, accommodated in the Krnjaca Asylum Centre in Belgrade

Europe. Since March 2016, the flow has slowed down due to closed borders, but has continued mostly in irregular ways (through smuggling channels).

The needs shifted in two phases. The first phase required a response to provide first aid – informational, medical, legal, psychosocial, fast tracking and referral. The second phase introduced new needs for people who would on average stay for one to two years: inclusion of children in schools, involvement in normalizing activities such as informal education, recreation, occupational activities, sports and vocational, with the potential for entering the national labour market.



Local context

Between mid-2015 and March 2016, the migrant/refugee emergency was characterized by a large number of people from the Middle East entering Serbia, staying for several days (in different kinds of government-run centres) and then moving on towards Western and Northern

Promising practice

In late 2016, the government started to include migrant and refugee children in formal schools. The global humanitarian organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (ADRA) focused at that point on the Belgrade region, which has the largest number of migrant and refugee children, by providing interpreters and cultural mediators as assistance to children and school staff, and also transporting up to 110 children daily.

The second need became obvious at the end of the school year 2016/2017. ADRA decided to organize a summer school for up to 70 children, aged 7–14, whereby 50 were migrants and 20 came from local vulnerable groups with similar disadvantages, e.g. local Roma returnees on the basis of readmission from Germany.

In the following project, we focus only on the 50 migrant and refugee children. The objective was twofold: first, to reduce knowledge loss in the summer period which is typical and especially true for migrant and refugee children due to the new language, sometimes with poor educational backgrounds and the lack of family support; and second, to prepare newly arrived children for the new school year.

The critical asset and resource in this respect was the ADRA Community Centre, which is situated relatively close to the Krnjača Asylum Centre, located just outside Belgrade. It had all the necessary learning and auxiliary facilities, classrooms, children content, sport and recreational facilities in a child-friendly, safe and spacious environment. The activities were of three main types:



During each summer school holiday since 2017, the children have been organized in four groups, based on their age and on an assessment of their knowledge. The groups corresponded to the age of children attending school from the first to the fourth grade. Each group had a uniform of different colour and a team name. Also, each group was allocated a "class teacher".

The syllabus included classes in Serbian, English, maths, art, music, sports, recreational activities, as well as an IT workshop. Professional teachers were engaged for each of these areas. Our intention was to prepare them as best as we could for the school rules. Information on the children's progress in this programme was collected meticulously, and the children were given an overall evaluation of their behaviour. The parents, who also visited our Centre, were informed on a weekly basis about the activities their children had taken part in and about their progress. Performance profiles were compiled and later delivered to formal schools in which the children were enrolled.



THERE WERE THREE MAIN BENEFITS OF OUR SUMMER SCHOOL:

- Attendance rate was higher than in formal school. Later feedback from school staff was that the performance of children who attended the summer school was better than in the previous period or that the children were, in general, better prepared for school, with some skills clearly more developed.
- Serbian language skills improved, which is critical for attending formal schools. This is due to our using a curriculum in the summer school that is adapted to their baseline condition. Gaps were considered and the programme was designed so they these could be bridged.
- During the summer school we involved teachers from formal education institutions so that the same teachers got to know the children and vice versa before they met in the school



setting, which helped both groups to get used to each other and work better together during the school year.

THE THREE MAIN CHALLENGES WERE AS FOLLOWS:

- Children in each class/group had considerably different knowledge levels; therefore, some children might have been bored. Ad hoc adjustments were made as much as possible, and flexibility was critical.
- Transport of children. Their accommodation (in the Krnjača Asylum Centre) is 6 km away from the Community Centre. We had to provide transport for all children, which required material and financial resources.
- The group we worked with were children or unaccompanied minors who planned to move on and leave Serbia. Even when they would eventually spend two years in Serbia (or two full school year periods), their motivation for attendance was not optimal. We tackled this by adding simulative measures, mixing educational activities with fun and sport, to ensure a child-tailored approach. This was effective but only to some degree.

Recommendations

- 1. Invest in innovation in education** for children on the move. For children in emergencies, or protracted emergencies, education is of paramount importance. As formal systems are rarely adapted or sensitised to their specific needs, innovative approaches should be developed and tried out until a successful model is found.
- 2. Collaborate with the official system.** It is still equally important to keep trying to connect with the official system, not creating parallel systems but trying to both meet the needs and enrich the system (work towards some slight reforms and improvements).



#BeTheKey campaign against Islamophobia



Organisation: Blanquerna Observatory



Location: Barcelona, Catalonia, SPAIN



Contact person: Prof. Miriam Díez Bosch (miriamdb@blanquerna.url.edu) and Alba Sabaté Gauxachs (albasg@blanquerna.url.edu)



Website: www.obsblanquerna.com



Target group

The community of Raval, which has its own 'glocal' spirit. Global because 47,274 people from 122 different nationalities live there, and local, because Catalan traditions are present but happily mixed to involve all "Ravalers". Within this community, #BeTheKey focuses specifically on youth (18–30)



Local context

#BeTheKey was created within the framework of Blanquerna Observatory, a research centre that focuses on intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The centre has done research on youth, religion and technology (2016–2018) that shows that 97% of the Catalan youth are technology users

and 65% of them regard themselves as believers. Some 16% of believers use apps such as Holy Bible, Instapray, iQuran, Islamhouse or iGranth for managing religious practices like praying, celebrations or messages of faith. Typically, they use digital resources about their own religion, so inter-religious digital dialogue among youth is still weak.

Blanquerna Observatory also carried out research about the situation of Islamophobia in the district of Raval. The survey showed that 97.5% of the respondents think that there is Islamophobia in the district and 42.4% have been a victim or witness of an Islamophobic event since the terrorist attack that took place in the district on 17 August 2017. Moreover, 92.4% believe that a campaign raising awareness about the situation, like #BeTheKey, is both necessary and ade-

quate. Suggested solutions to stop Islamophobia include education, awareness-raising – among youth but also among the elderly – dialogue, em-

pathy, media literacy and data to counter prejudices. #BeTheKey, through its several actions, aims to address them.

Promising practice

#BeTheKey has been created to raise awareness among the population about Islamophobia, as well as to empower citizens to fight against it. It highlights that everyone, especially youth, could be the key for change, from preventing prejudice to improving understanding and knowledge of several cultures. The main spaces to achieve these goals are social networks, media, local entities and institutions, as through all these stakeholders #BeTheKey action grows, is known and has multipliers that help in the main objective of raising awareness.

WITH THIS APPROACH, #BETHEKEY HAS CARRIED OUT THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

- **Instagram #BeTheKey exhibition:** showing the main pictures that followers of the campaign send showing keys through an artistic way.
- **#BeTheKey stories:** event in which some Muslim migrants spoke about their experience with the students of the School of Communication and International Relations at Ramon Llull University in Barcelona.
- **Influencers #BeTheKey:** Q&A session with Muslim migrant youth influencers in social media. They talked about how they manage to counter extremism online.
- **#BeTheKey workshop to counter gender Islamophobia** (which consist in discrimination, prejudice and hate action against Muslim women): session with students and participants from social organizations in which attendants analysed media pieces, detected how gender Islamophobia could appear to them and suggested improvements to media.
- **#BeTheKey Wikipedia training:** session with an expert in Wikipedia editing, in which attendants edited some Wikipedia articles about Islam that were not rigorous enough. This activity aimed to promote a rigorous knowledge of Islam in an open source of knowledge, such as Wikipedia.

The campaign reached the attention of local and national media. This impact has involved neighbours in the campaign, who have contributed to make it grow and to raise awareness about the problems that islamophobia creates.



THE CAMPAIGN HAS THE FOLLOWING STRENGTHS:

High reach: Catalunya Ràdio, TV3, El Punt Avui TV, La Vanguardia, Informe Raxen, Catalunya Religió are some of the Catalan media that have been interested in the campaign. This has allowed the team to have influential people taking part in the campaign like Miriam Hatibi (@miriamhatibi), Ashraf Kachach (@ashrafkachach) or Josep Lluís Micó (@jlmico). This media impact has created a rocket effect in the campaign, making it recognizable, popular and helping a lot to have participation and followers. Actually, the team did a great effort in sending press releases and in making media stay tuned about the activity.

A team made of “Ravalers”: This is a uniqueness the team feels proud of. The team has and lives the spirit of this district, unique in the world by concentrating on diversity, knowledge, history and arts in

the heart of an open-minded and cosmopolitan city such as Barcelona. #BeTheKey promoters share the spirit of improvement and the desire for peace that the Raval entities have. Since this is a team made of Ravalers, they know the reality of the place and have thus been in an advantageous position with regard to putting a strategy in place.

Glocal character: The team strongly feels part of this Raval feeling – which is local but global at the same time. The campaign has been developed in different languages: Catalan, Spanish, English, French, Greek, Italian and some Arabic. #BeTheKey has this approach, from the local Raval to the global world.

Empowering effect: #BeTheKey is not a campaign that asked people to undertake some specific action to improve society but to rather to think about the aspect in which each individual can contribute, be it on social media or in the streets of Raval.

The main challenge that the team has faced for the campaign is scepticism. #BeTheKey was able to access the most important associations and organizations of Raval's neighbourhood. Some of those neighbours were not as proactive as expected. They liked the idea of the campaign as they wanted a change from Islamophobia but did not think they could do something to bring about this change by themselves.

Recommendations

1. **Use social media** as an effective space of communication.
2. **Involve local communities** in your main activity and make them feel part of the action.
3. **Deal effectively with the media.** By having a continuous, fluid and effective relationship with journalists interested in the subject of a campaign like this.
4. **Promote the glocal aspect of an initiative,** as it's local in character but global in its approach.



Interculturalisation of persons granted international protection into Croatian society

 **Organisation:** Centre for Cultural Dialogue (CKD, Centar za kulturu dijaloga) and Islamic Community in Croatia

 **Location:** Zagreb, CROATIA

 **Contact person:** Nejra Kadić Meškić, nejra.kadic.sa@gmail.com, center@ccd.hr

 **Website:** www.islamska-zajednica.hr



Target groups

Persons granted international protection by the Croatian Law on International and Temporary Protection. These groups of people include women and men, children, youth and others (diverse age group), families and single persons (diverse family status)

asylum applications and one for subsidiary protection in 2016 and 183 approved asylum applications and 28 for subsidiary protection in 2017. By law, persons granted international protection have the right to stay in Croatia, have accommodation funded by the state during the first two years, participate in the labour market and access the educational system.



Local context

Croatia became part of the migration route in September 2015, and the attempts to resolve this issue resulted in rising tensions with neighbouring countries. Croatia only provided limited international protection: 36 approved asylum applications and seven for subsidiary protection in 2015, 83 approved

Different faith-based organizations provide programmes of support for migrants and refugees. The Islamic Community in Croatia is a natural partner to the government in the integration and interculturalisation process, as migrants are mostly Muslims. Islam has been an institutionally recognized religion in the Republic of Croatia for over 100 years, which makes the integration processes more productive and successful.

Promising practice

Together with every person granted international protection, our organization develops individual plans for their personal development, professional growth and hobbies. All these elements help us in the process of intercultural dialogue and overall with integrating migrants into Croatian society. The individual development plans and programmes are the joint result of work by the person granted international protection and coaches provided with the help of experts from different fields. For example, coaches cooperate with schools, educational centres, government bodies, the Croatian Employment Service and companies.

The professional and personal background of the persons is also analysed as a starting point in creating individual growth and development plans. Our experts help persons granted international protection to draw up every step in their individual development plans. The plans are flexible and customizable according to the results achieved by the person.

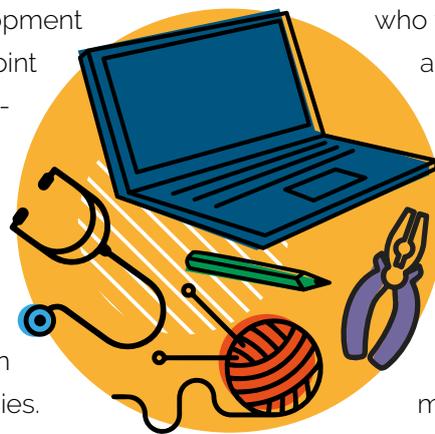
The main success of this approach is that persons granted international protection are interculturalised and integrated in Croatian society. They are capable of working in areas where they see themselves professionally, they are competitive on the labour market, and they don't become socially vulnerable after the end of the period in which they were provided with financial help from the state. Coaches are social workers and persons with social professional backgrounds who have sophisticated social skills and access that is specified to work with persons granted international protection. These persons are provided not only with help regarding their professions and careers but also with

advisory support, motivation, encouragement and psychological empowerment. With the professional help of a coach, they learn to become independent, empowered for life in a new society and able to live the life they want for themselves.

For example, there was one person, a lawyer, who was granted international protection and wanted to carry out his profession in Croatia. Together with coaches, he developed his individual development plan, which was focused on his law career. He improved his Croatian, and was informed in cooperation with the employment services about the necessary permissions for being a lawyer in Croatia.

He later obtained these permissions and now works in a law office in Zagreb. Based on the same model, his wife chose to be a cook; she finished the retraining programme and works now in a restaurant in Zagreb.

Many other people who were granted international protection passed through different retraining programmes with the support of coaches so they could get jobs and start working just after finishing these programmes. In most cases, migrants didn't



plan to stay in Croatia for life but rather saw Croatia as a transit country. They changed their perception about Croatia as a place for living while being part of programmes such as the programme of individual development plans.

IN OUR WORK, THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES WERE:

- Getting the migrants and refugees independent on the way and not expecting to get everything done by the coaches. The point of developing and implementing individual plans for persons granted international protection is to empower them to integrate and take control over their growth as well as their personal and professional development.
- Getting the confidence of persons granted international protection to create realistic and qualitative individual plans that can be successfully implemented.
- Getting more women involved because they are usually more quiet, self-conscious and withdrawn.
- Motivating persons granted international protection to stay in Croatia and build their future here.
- Creating an open and welcoming environment in Croatian society for persons granted international protection. The process of creating intercultural societies is important to simultaneously implement integration programmes for migrants and programmes of sensitization for Croatian citizens.

Recommendations

- 1. Coaches should be more connected** and work in cooperation with the international and local organizations and public institutions engaged in integrating persons granted international protection.
- 2. Provide more advisory support to coaches** in creating and implementing individual development plans.
- 3.** The government through its policies should **encourage the private sector** to be more open towards migrants.
- 4. Public institutions should be more welcoming** and more sensitive to migrants' needs and to their interculturalisation and integration processes.
- 5. Unite different activist,** educational and life-long programmes into individual development plans.
- 6. Involve the media more** in supporting the interculturalisation and integration processes, countering hate speech and fake news. This would have a positive influence on the ambition and motivation of persons granted international protection in the process of creating and implementing their individual development plans.



God's House – where people meet



Organisation: God's House



Location: Fisksätra, near Stockholm, SWEDEN



Contact person: Carl Dahlbäck, carl.dahlback@svenskakyrkan.se



Website: www.gudshus.se



Target group

People living in Fisksätra and from the greater Stockholm region; migrants, newcomers and people from various socioeconomic circumstances who want to contribute to and participate in our cooperation activities; religious people from various traditions in Fisksätra; secular organizations and non-believers



Local context

Before 2015, the social work in God's House at Nacka parish close to Stockholm involved a smaller number of newcomers and people seeking refuge in Sweden. After 2015 the entire parish was altered because of the great impact the work for the newcomers had on us. In the first acute period the Nac-

ka municipality asked the Nacka parish to organize all the voluntary work in the temporary residence building for the newcomers. Employees from the parish, inhabitants in Nacka, religious leaders, Red Cross, Save the Children and many more were engaged in the work to give the newcomers shelter, clothes and food, joined by the voluntary work of 400–500 people. Today, many of the newcomers have found friends and homes in Nacka and are now a part of our community. They are participating in camps, services and the voluntary work for newcomers to the parish. They have hugely vitalised our congregation and no one in the congregation wants to go back to less ethnic diversity and the less inspiring parish we were before 2015. And we are also satisfied that there are not many converts from Islam to Christianity throughout this time.



God's House is a collaboration that started in 2003 between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Nacka, the Muslim Association in Nacka and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm. Stockholm City Mission is a collaboration partner in the social work. God's House is both a peace model for interfaith dialogue and interfaith practice. It is also a fundraising project for a common building for Christians, Muslims and others who want to participate in the peace work. God's House activities can be divided in various areas. However, we will provide one example: "Källan" - The Source Advice and Support Centre.

"Källan" started after a couple of years of collaboration between Muslims and Christians in Fisksätra. When Stockholm City Mission was looking for an interreligious infrastructure in one of the suburbs of Stockholm, they found the perfect match in Fisksätra, Nacka. Together we started to do social work for vulnerable groups living locally. In Fisksätra there are more than 8,000 inhabitants from about 100 countries, and about 80 languages spoken. The successful result of "Källan" is the collaboration itself with the strong relations between the involved partners. Without this successful work together between the secular and interfaith-based organizations, there would not have been this high impact in society and in the benefits for people. The work has won prizes and received contributions from numerous organizations. Most important is of

course the impact it has for people seeking refuge and migrants who need help. Newcomers have found friends and hope for the future.

Various kinds of joint interfaith meetings have been developed through the years. Today God's House has four types of regular activities. First, and maybe the most important meeting, is the regular interfaith dialogue sessions in the mosque or in the church. Every semester has its own theme and the topics and lecturers are arranged by God's House Friends Association. About 20 to 30 people gather at each meeting to discuss topics such as "Peace in the name of religion", "Hope" and "Respect of each other's particularities". Participants are people from the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh religions, and also non-believers. These interfaith dialogue sessions with a smaller number of participants make it possible to talk about difficult issues that matter but are dividing us in our faith or ethical values. It's important to meet not only in what is common, but also in a respectful understanding about the particularities that separate us. For that

People of different socio-economic, cultural and religious backgrounds **have found that we are very much alike.** And that will give people in Fisksätra a trustful peace-building experience.

we have written a Declaration of Core Values that expresses how to approach the difficulties when diversities meet and still hold on to our vision.

Another activity is the cultural festival at the beginning of October every year. We often address St. Francis of Assisi, who has an annual Remembrance Day on 4 October. The aim of the festival, besides coming together in joy and companionship, is to learn and inspire each other through many vari-

ous cultural expressions from religious traditions. The cultural festival is a playground for taking existential questions seriously, but with the absence of the kind of religious heaviness that often restricts the exploring of new existential fields. Every year we hold a short peace prayer outside on the Peace Square, where we light candles and pray for peace. We gather about 400-500 people for every festival.

The third activity is the annual peace prayer at Pentecost. We celebrated our first interfaith prayer on the football field in Fisksätra at Pentecost 2003. Since then, we have come together every year and listen to scriptural readings and sermons from three religious traditions, and the Jewish community of Stockholm is also participating with us. We listen to music, sing hymns and the most important part is the prayer for peace in some of the many languages that are spoken in Fisksätra. It is not only a way to mark the interfaith respect for each religion, but also to remind us that it is in Fisksätra we have our most important and common mission to work for peace.

The fourth activity includes events in God's House around our values and principles that express our commitment to collaboration in programmes or



in connection with religious holidays, or common supporting manifestations when something terrible has happened in our society or in the world.

The successes of our joint activities are the carefully chosen range of meetings from small dialogue sessions, cultural feasts, peace prayers and the aim to make statements and participate in demonstrations to champion human rights and believers' rights.

Recommendations

1. **Look around.** Find out which secular and religious organizations are represented in your local context.
2. **Get to know each other.** Build trust and friendship over borders.
3. **Find a common mission.** Gather in collaboration to give support to people in need.
4. **Establish your vision.** Seek the support of higher levels of secular and religious organizations.
5. **Do what you believe in.** Build the way where you are walking.



6.



Legal assistance to refugees and migrants, focusing on unaccompanied minors and women



Organisation: Integration Centre for Migrant Workers-Ecumenical Refugee Programme (KSPM-ERP) of the Church of Greece



Location: Athens, GREECE



Contact person: Evangelia Dourida, kesypame@gmail.com



Website: www.kspm-erp.com/?lang=en



Target groups

Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, with special focus on vulnerable groups including single parent families, unaccompanied minors, victims of torture, elderly, victims of trafficking or SGB violence, sick and disabled.



Local context

In mid-2015, Europe faced an unprecedented influx of migrants and refugees. Since that time, more than one million people seeking international protection – coming mostly from Syria, Afghanistan,

dPakistan and Iraq – have entered Greece through Turkey. The reaction of European authorities was mainly to protect Europe's external borders and stem and manage refugee flows through the closure of the Balkan route, the EU-Turkey agreement, the hotspot approach. These policies resulted in a sharp decline in the number of newcomers but have also led to the long-term containment of thousands of international protection seekers in the hotspots of the Aegean islands under shameful conditions.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 76,000 of the people who have arrived since 2015 are left stranded in Greece (March 2019), facing huge difficulties relating to their living condi-

tions, administrative restrictions and no secure protection net. As this population changes from a population in transit to a more permanent one, the aim now is not only to respond to short-term basic needs

but also to address long-term needs in terms of their social inclusion, taking in consideration the alarming increase in incidents of criminality and the upsurge of racism and xenophobia in the local population.

Promising practice



The Integration Centre for Migrant Workers – Ecumenical Refugee Programme (KSPM-ERP) as an organization of the Church of Greece understands man as created after the image of God and the human society as a communion of persons, as an agapetic relationship of acceptance of and respect for otherness. In this agapetic communion of persons there is no room for any kind of discrimination. Rooted in this faith as well as in the long-standing Greek and Orthodox tradition of magnificent “ethos” and hospitality, KSPM-ERP has been providing its supportive services to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers regardless of origin or religion.

Ever since the onset of the “refugee crisis” in Greece in mid-2015 and in order to address the urgent reception needs, KSPM-ERP, drawing on its long-standing experience, has focused mainly on providing legal support to newcomers, especially as regards family reunification requests. During this period, it has helped more than 4,500 people reunite with their families in other European countries and continued to support international protection seekers with their national asylum claims.

We have adopted a holistic and individualized approach and through our experienced legal collaborators, social workers and cultural mediators/interpreters assisted people in a wide spectrum of needs. This approach has created a trusting relationship with the beneficiaries and empowered them so they can gain access to their social and legal rights and participate more

actively in society.

The main challenges faced by our collaborators concerned first of all the lingering deficiencies of the state mechanism and the grinding bureaucratic procedures in connection with the austerity measures the government had been obliged to implement. The scarcity of funding resources has also been challenging, as it made any long-term planning of holistic interventions impossible. Last but not least, there were challenges as regards the communication with the beneficiaries themselves, since, apart from the cultural and linguistic barriers, most of them were highly traumatized persons whose urgent and intertwined problems caused them to become frustrated and unmotivated. The following two cases studies are characteristic of our work.



1.

Case study 1: Minor male from Afghanistan, victim of torture.

Background: Born in Afghanistan. His family were murdered by the Taliban. As an 11-year-old, the Taliban captured him too, beating and torturing him. He managed to flee to Turkey and eventually entered Greece and stayed at Moria hotspot on Lesbos island for almost one year under perilous conditions. He was referred to our organization in order to be provided with legal assistance for his asylum claim.

Approach and assistance: During his first visit to our offices, our trained reception mediators identified obvious physical problems as well as psycho-

logical suffering and great insecurity. Our cultural mediators reassured him in his mother tongue and prepared him so as to feel as comfortable as possible for the interview with the lawyers. The lawyers also detected a wide spectrum of needs to be taken care of and referred him to the social service, who saw him on the spot. He was initially reluctant to speak but through the intervention of the mediators and regular meetings with the social workers, he was given assistance that addressed the full range of his needs, including support for his asylum claim and psychosocial support.



2.

Case study 2: Single parent family (woman and three minor children) from Afghanistan

Background: Born in Afghanistan, the woman is illiterate because being a girl she wasn't allowed to attend school. She got married at the age of 18, and after the couple had three children her husband left Afghanistan as a result of Taliban persecution and reached the United Kingdom. In 2016, after a 5-month journey, the woman and her children reached Greece on their way to reunite with her husband. The woman was initially referred to our office in order to receive assistance for her family reunion claim.

Approach and assistance: Her first request, besides legal assistance, was for accommodation, as they were living in dubious conditions. She was so depressed that she couldn't even

take care of everyday errands; she was unable to remember information or find her way in Athens. The KSPM-ERP legal team immediately undertook the family reunion claim. However, due to the lengthy procedures, the family had to stay in Greece for more than a year. The social service with persistent interventions managed to gain the woman's trust by finding her accommodation, assisting them in material needs and administrative communications. Although initially very reluctant, she finally received treatment by a psychiatrist which helped her to start dealing with her traumas. Finally, the family reunited, and they currently live in the UK.

They still communicate with our social workers about how they are getting along in their adaptation process.



Recommendations

1. **Empower and motivate individuals** so that they will want to participate in a dialogue.
2. **Involve cultural mediators** to function as a "bridge" between local and migrant communities, facilitating more fruitful communication between them.
3. **Institutionalise intercultural and interreligious dialogue** through advocacy with the state in collaboration with other organizations.



7.



Integration through Dialogue and Crosstalk



Organisation: International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) and Red Cross Austria



Location: Vienna, AUSTRIA



Contact person: Badi Niyazi, badi.niyazi@kaiciid.org

Elisabeth Palugyay, elisabeth.palugyay@da-vienna.at



Website: www.kaiciid.org and www.rotekreuz.at



Target group

People seeking refuge in Vienna, with a focus on women



Local context

In the years 2015 and 2016, Vienna's demography and cultural diversity expanded very suddenly and in a challenging way as a result of the large numbers of people seeking refuge and applying for asylum in Austria. Government and civil society actors, including faith-based organizations, developed additional integration support services and mechanisms during that period. Despite excellent initiatives across all sectors, there's an ongoing need for more

support for long-term social integration.

On the one hand, people seeking refuge do not have equal access to information about available initiatives or services; or they may lack the resources and the linguistic or educational capacities to access such services. On the other hand, local institutions may not be sufficiently well informed about the various cultural or religious traditions of the countries of origin. Critically, some people seeking refuge may greatly fear the concept of integration as a result of their experiences or cultural backgrounds or because they believe they will have to give up a fundamental aspect of themselves. Additionally, the rise of xenophobic developments and scepticism towards intercultural diversity in the host country is a challenge.

Promising practice



Two integration projects were developed and implemented independently of each other by KAICIID and Red Cross Austria: Project Integration through Dialogue, and Crosstalk. Starting in March 2017, KAICIID's Project Integration through Dialogue has provided a dialogue series for groups of people seeking refuge in Vienna. The sessions are aimed at helping participants better understand social and cultural aspects of integration in European host communities, and improve their individual dialogue skills. The female dialogue facilitators are Austrian facilitators with migrant backgrounds, originating from Syria and Afghanistan.

All four facilitators have found ways to combine their Austrian identity with their heritage and want to encourage newcomers to find a path to integration that works for them. In the pilot phase, dialogue facilitators brought the project to accommodation centres in Vienna, and also combined the dialogue sessions with certified German classes. Each session was dedicated to practising dialogue skills, while at the same time presenting an opportunity to learn more about a specific aspect of life in Austria. The content of these sessions evolved over the pilot period from March 2017 to March 2018 based on participants' priorities, interests and questions.

The project Crosstalk is an integration project that focuses on social inclusion through intercultural and interreligious dialogue and activities. It has been carried out by the Austrian Red Cross in Vienna and started in January 2017. It offers a broad spectrum of joint activities, including sport, cookery, lectures and talks. Project ambassadors with different cultural backgrounds act as role models and moderators of these activities.

What has made the Vienna project special is the collaboration of the two organizations, implementing similar integration projects with a common aim

of enhancing social inclusion of people seeking refuge through intercultural exchange and dialogue. Learning about each other's work, KAICIID and Red Cross Vienna began to set up a series of joint activities, talks and events. The core of the series of talks was the development and use of the Toolkit "Integration through Dialogue", which started in refugee shelters and continued in the Crosstalk format about various cultural topics with a continuous group of participants, especially women.

By merging the expertise in humanitarian work with the know-how in interreligious and intercultural dialogue, the impact of integration projects is broadened and social cohesion on the local level is strengthened. The added value lies in the role of becoming both a multiplier and a pilot for a promising practice when it comes to collaboration between local faith-based organizations and humanitarian organizations.

Based on the results of feedback surveys, **over 80% of participants** reported an increased understanding of Austrian institutions and cultures.



Participants most valued the time that was invested in them, and the relationships they developed. They felt that in other integration classes, the transfer of information had primarily been one-way. Through the Project Integration through Dialogue and Crosstalk, participants had the opportunity to dialogue, ask sensitive questions, and process their experiences in their new host country. This also provided time for them to build a sense of community with one another and create an atmosphere of trust. Consequently, much effort was put into direct and personalized communication. Participants reported that they felt they had been heard and taken seriously and had learned the principles of open-



ness and active listening.

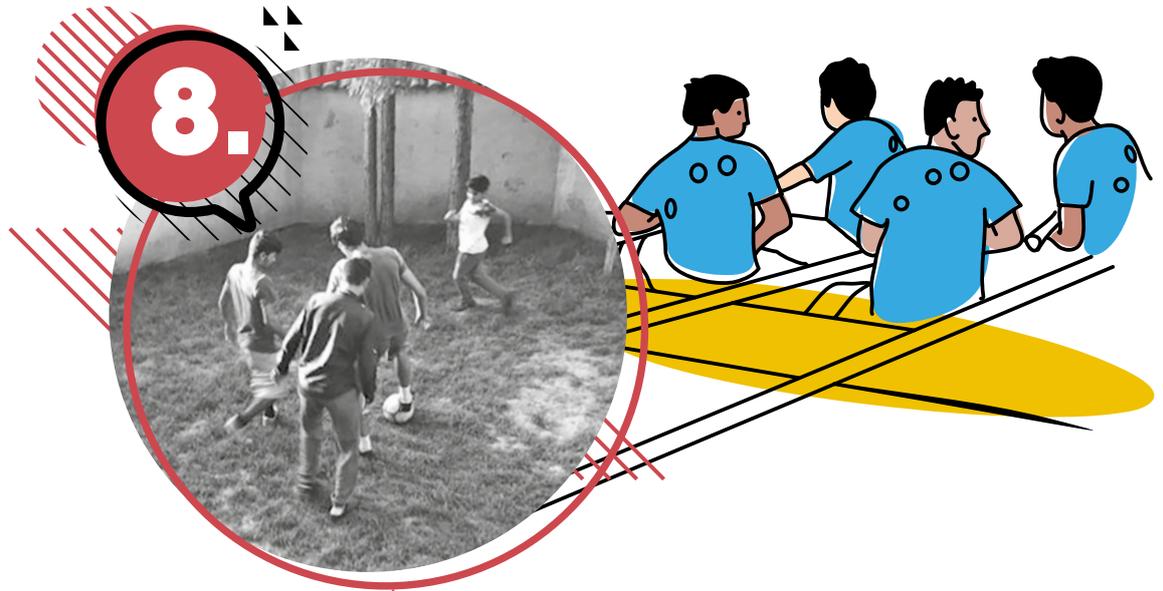
Another focus of the projects has been the inclusion of youth and young adults, with a special emphasis on joint projects, where young people from Austria meet peers with various other cultural backgrounds.

The participants have developed a feeling of social belonging because of the joint activity.

Through the cultural exchange, they have learned about the culture and religion of the other participants and created more tolerance and acceptance for cultural diversity. Having gained this awareness of religious and cultural diversity, they act as multipliers within their youth communities. One example for such a mixed group is a joint activity in collaboration with the Youth Red Cross and the Scouts in Vienna. Workshops and activities will be designed and implemented that meet the interests of the young people and can be playfully combined with interreligious and intercultural exchange.

Recommendations

1. **Combine dialogues with language courses** (or other courses) so as to reach a larger number of participants in the long term.
2. **Offer childcare whenever possible.** Or plan the dialogues so that they take place during school/kindergarten hours. It is sometimes difficult for female participants to join the activities because of obligations regarding childcare and household responsibilities.
3. **The relationship between the dialogue facilitators and the participants** is very important. We noticed that many participants came simply because of the good atmosphere in the sessions.
4. **Be aware that all participants have different backgrounds**, e.g. social level, education, wealth or political views. It is particularly important to always pay attention to the dynamics within the group.



Integration House for vulnerable unaccompanied children

-  **Organisation:** Jesuit Refugee Service
-  **Location:** Belgrade, SERBIA
-  **Contact person:** Violeta Marković, violeta.markovic@jrs.net
-  **Website:** jrsserbia.rs/en



Target group

Unaccompanied minors refugees/asylum seekers/migrants

that were not suitable for them due to the risks these children are exposed to.

The government recognized the necessity to protect these vulnerable groups and adopted instructions for the protecting minors and providing safe accommodations for them. During 2015 and the beginning of 2016, refugees and migrants were staying for a couple of days or up to one week, but after the EU-Turkey deal in March 2016, and the subsequent closure of borders, migrants and refugees were staying longer, as were unaccompanied minors. The government responded by allocating funds for raising the accommodation capacities in the institutions for social protection, but until today these accommodation facilities are not enough to provide safe accommodation for all the minors who need it.



Local context

Serbia was part of the "Balkan route" in 2015, facing a record influx of migrants and refugees. Since the beginning of this massive influx, Serbia was considered as a transit country. Among the people who were entering the country after 2015, a large number were unaccompanied minors. As Serbia did not have enough facilities to accommodate them, unaccompanied children were mostly accommodated in asylum and reception centres

Promising practice



Since May 2017, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Serbia has been providing safe accommodation for unaccompanied minors in Belgrade. By helping unaccompanied refugees and separated children to have a safe shelter, education and health support, we are contributing to building a better future.

Our goal is to empower children and to create a world of mutual respect, kindness and support.

Thus, JRS Serbia started with the project "Integration House for vulnerable groups of refugees" with the aim of not only providing safe accommodation but also integrating our beneficiaries.

The house can accommodate up to 20 minors for a set amount of time, providing accommodation, food, clothing, medical necessities and general health support, and psychosocial and educational support. Until now, more than 50 minors have passed through the house. On a daily basis, the children can participate in different activities that are organized by our professional staff, as well as by our partner organizations. Many of the minors gained or improved their skills. They are strongly encouraged to build a daily working routine, develop their focus and atten-

tion, and turn their thoughts away from the hardships. Thus, we intend to help them grow up into responsible adults.

JRS's promising practice example is working on educational inclusion of our beneficiaries through engaging them in the official educational system of the Republic of Serbia, but also through many activities in the local community. An educator carries out all the educational activities and determines the educational background of children, makes an individual plan for each child, supports them in learning and doing homework and keeps the children's pedagogical records. Since refugee children are included in the official school system in Serbia, educators are in charge of cooperation and communication with schools, as well as of following the process of the children's integration into the school environment and the local community. The educator also organises group educational activities and workshops, outdoor activities or visits to cultural institutions.

This also helps the children feel more welcome in Serbian society and also helps the local community – mostly teachers and parents, but also the wider community members – to overcome any





prejudice and welcome refugee children into the community.

We had examples of our beneficiaries going to birthday parties of local children, parents calling our staff to inform them about some activity in school, just in case our beneficiaries forgot to tell us, or did not understand the teachers.

All of this led to a step forward in the successful integration of our beneficiaries through the educational system. While the children are going to a regular school, our staff and volunteers are active in complementing this regular system with non-formal education. We are mostly focusing on English and Serbian lessons, helping children to speak in Serbian in order to make them feel them more integrated into society. Two of the children

are going to high school and are very successful, and more than 40 have attended elementary school.

JRS is also working on raising awareness about refugees in the community, starting from our neighbourhood. Supporting our beneficiaries' integration, JRS Serbia staff took the initiative to help organizing different celebrations, e.g. the Islamic New Year celebration, which we celebrate every year, and everything is organized with the help of our beneficiaries to make it as similar as possible to that of their countries of origin. We also celebrate the western New Year or birthdays, organizing outdoor activities and visits to cultural institutions or cinemas.

In our work we cooperate equally successfully

These activities have had a great impact on our beneficiaries. **All the children who were accommodated in the house for longer than a month were included in schools,** which helps them not only to learn new things but also to make friends with children in the local communities.

with grassroots organizations and faith-based organizations. The most important collaboration we have is with ADRA and Philanthropy (NGO of the Serbian Orthodox Church).

Among the challenges we encountered during our work, the biggest was a lack of shelters to provide safe accommodation for unaccompanied minors – which has been resulting in a large number of children being exposed to risks of violence in the collective camps. And for us, it is creating long waiting lists for accommodation as our shelter can only host a limited number of minors. Another challenge is the sustainability of the service, since it is being funded solely through project activities, which implies a constant risk that we may have to close the shelter due to lack of funds.



Recommendations

1. **Improve accommodation capacities** for unaccompanied minors outside of collective asylum and reception centres where they can have the same level of care and protection as in the specific protection centres for minors.
2. **Raise awareness** in your community through intercultural and inter-religious dialogue that would improve interaction and communication between local communities and migrants/refugees.
3. **Advocate** for better inclusion of refugees in different levels of the educational system, and provide both formal and non-formal educational support in different age groups for continuous education.



Being a bridge between teachers and parents at school



Location: Vienna/Lower Austria, AUSTRIA



Contact person: Mabrouka Rayachi, Mabrouka.Rayachi@derislam.at



Target group

Parents of Muslim school children and teenagers (refugees, migrants); school teachers and principals



Local context

As a teacher for over 20 years in Viennese public schools and since 2012 having been the supervisor for Islamic religious education in Lower Austria, I have observed that the integration of many refugee and immigrant children and teenagers is not always successful at school. However, I am convinced that school is the best place where integration can take

place. Many Muslim children and teenagers face difficulties in Austria's mainstream society. They are torn between two poles (parents and school) and each pole demands absolute conformity. Both parents and school representatives forget that the identity of immigrant Muslim children and teenagers in Austria is composed of, at least, two parts and that the children cannot sacrifice one of these parts. Since the so-called refugee crisis of 2015, when 88,000 asylum applications were submitted in Austria, the challenges at schools multiplied. As the newcomers are unfamiliar with the Austrian school system, they behave as they would in their own countries, and schools don't know how to cope with the new situation and the new challenges.

Promising practice

My promising practice is to be a facilitator providing lectures in the school context to teachers and parents in Austria. As they often have many stereotypes about “the other”, by actively addressing their fears in dialogical ways it has been possible for me to bring about a change of attitude. Let me provide two examples:

1.

With parents of Muslim school children and teenagers (refugees, migrants)

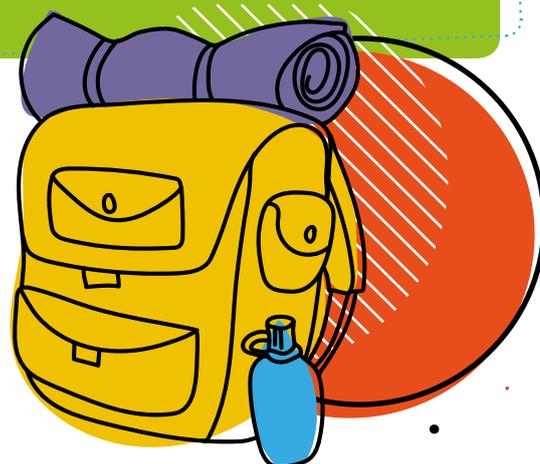
Before the school year starts, in different Muslim communities and with refugees in the refugee shelters I hold a lecture entitled **“How to help my children to be successful at school?”**. I deliberately chose this title because I am convinced that every parent has this wish for their children.

As a teacher, for me it's very important that the parents understand the fact that their children are moving in a context that may be very different from theirs. And one has to deal with this context properly so that the child finds her or his place in it. After giving them some structural recommendations, I focus more on the integration issues such as the headscarf for young girls, Ramadan, swimming courses and school trips.

My main aim is to explain why it's important for their child to take part in the language trip or activity week with her or his class outside school and town. For this trip or activity week, teachers and students begin two weeks before planning and organising it (e.g. who is going to sleep with whom, what kind of activities they are going to make, what they are going to see) as they spend one week together outside their town. When parents do not allow their child to take part in that experience, they exclude them indirectly from their school community, which can have negative consequences on the child and more serious ones on teenagers.

At the same time, **I address the fears of the parents.**

Some parents have false ideas about this week and think that the children are allowed to do whatever they want. I assure them that there are enough teachers with the group, that children have fun but that there are also limits. I also try to bring the parents to think about their decision: I tell them if they are very afraid to “lose” their child in one week, then they have to question their system of bringing up their children. It sounds hard but it works!



A swimming course is a compulsory subject in Austrian schools, but some Muslim parents don't allow their children, especially girls, to take part in it. I try to convince them to let their children learn swimming. First, I argue about it theologically. I mention the Hadith of Prophet Muhammed who said, "teach your children swimming, archery and riding" and the word children in this Hadith means boys and girls. I also mention the fact that Aisha, the Prophet's wife, rode sometimes in the presence of the Prophet and he never told her to dismount from horse.

Then I try to make them clear that learning swimming is saving lives. In 2016, six refugees from Syria and Afghanistan drowned in the Danube river because they didn't know how to swim. And I mention the possibility for girls wearing a hijab (headscarf) to swim with a burkini. Many parents don't know about this possibility and are afraid that their daughters have to swim with a normal swimming suit. The main purpose of these lectures is to build bridges between parents and the school. Through these bridges the integration of children is supported.

2.

With teachers and principals

I organise a seminar entitled "Islam in the classroom" to make teachers and principals aware of the diversity of Muslim children in their classes and how important it is to deal with them individually. It is a way to diminish current prejudices.

For example, the fact that some fathers do not shake hands with female teachers does not necessarily mean that they are disrespectful towards women but on the contrary in their culture this behaviour is a sign of respect.

Simply stressing how important it is to let parents, especially mothers of migrant children, to feel welcome at school, even with a smile, often has a big impact. If the opposite is the case, they will not dare to come to school again and may also warn other parents not to come. The more parents are engaged at school, the better they can help their children. My last advice to the teachers and principals is to lay monoculturality at school to rest and celebrate the diversity in our classrooms as a source of enrichment.

Recommendations

1. **Engage people with migrant backgrounds** as facilitators in your school. They themselves must be well integrated in society.
2. **Facilitators should be acquainted with the school system of the host country**, as well as with the language, religion and narratives of their community.
3. **For many Muslim parents, the appearance of the facilitators** is very important. In my case, wearing a headscarf gives them trust.
4. **Both parents should attend** the lecture of the facilitator.
5. **If possible, the facilitator should be a professional educator.**



Refugee empowerment through relationships

Organisation: Sacred Heart Basilica

Location: Rome, ITALY

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Website: www.basilicadelsacrocuore.it



Target groups

Young Italians and refugees



Local context

As shown by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 2016 was the year with the highest number of arrivals on Italian shores (181,436) and with the highest number of dead and missing people (more than 4,500 for the whole of the Mediterranean). In 2017, numbers decreased (119,369) due to the heavily criticized Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Italian and Libyan governments. In 2018, the number of sea

arrivals dropped even further (23,370) and at the beginning of May 2019, the recorded arrivals by sea were 842. This is due to internal laws, especially the Decree-Law on International Protection, Immigration and Public Security of 2018. The Law introduced the abolition of residence permits for humanitarian protection.

Currently those having such permit have to convert it into a work permit if they want to stay or obtain a new kind of residence permit, called "special protection", lasting one year and not convertible into another title. In terms of larger reactions by local populations, we are witnessing a heavily politicized and often polarized discussion in the conventional media but also on social media, where migrants are often presented as a threat.

Promising practice



The Sacred Heart Basilica is located immediately in front of Termini Station, the main train station in Rome, junction and meeting point of thousands of people every day. The church is the home of a religious congregation, the Salesians. In 2009, together with a religious women community the Salesian priests started working on a project targeting young and poor people. The parish priest at that time commented: "who is younger and poorer than those people who had to flee from violence, torture and war and find themselves in a foreign land?" This was the starting point of a project that welcomes yearly about 400 young refugees and 80 young volunteers. Activities are not just for refugees only, they allow everyone coming into this space to feel at home and join in without feeling that one person is a volunteer offering services while the other is a person receiving help.

Contact starts from the first orientation service – which is meant to **welcome new young refugees** and to understand what their background, aspirations and needs are so that the centre can help them.

There are many other activities that aim at reaching young Italians and young refugees together: theatre and art workshops, sport matches, movie nights and day trips in Rome or even further. The Sacred Heart Basilica is a Catholic church and refugees coming here usually learn something about the

Catholic faith, sometimes just because there are religious celebrations and they are invited to join for parties or dinners and this is the occasion for those who are Muslims, which is the great majority, to ask questions about a different faith tradition.

After a few years, some of the Muslim refugees asked if it was possible to organize some activities more directly linked

to spirituality. Then, a series of interfaith gatherings started. These meetings take place once per month and gather around 20 participants. A topic is chosen and generally discussed starting from a passage from the Bible and the Qur'an. Half an hour then is dedicated to small group discussions (4 to 5 people) so that people may get to know each other better from a faith point of view. This is a great opportunity to build bridges between Christians and Muslims on mutual knowledge. It also provides a space where Muslim refugees can feel welcome and appreciated in their own religious attitude and not only when they accept local traditions and try to behave like Italians. They feel that they can give rather than just receive.

It is impressive to see how, when talking with both young Italians and refugees at the Sacred Heart Basilica, words like "family" and "home" recur.



At a recent end-of-year party, a refugee took the microphone simply to say: "Thank you everyone for how you welcomed us. This is home and when I come here, I am happy".

In our experience, refugees' empowerment starts from relationships – the opportunity to establish a relationship with Italian peers at the same level, enjoying the everyday life of friendship. This is what makes a young refugee feel more able to enter a new society and contribute to it.

But the empowerment we observed is not only related to refugees. Young Italian volunteers, too, are empowered by this way of approaching and living the relationships. Year after year we realized how much individual lives were changed by this experience. Among the most recent projects we started the One-to-One mentoring programme to allow closer relationships and better coordination, and the establishment of a social cooperative supporting young Italians and refugees to use their tal-



ents in the job market.

In our collaboration with other organizations, some people get back to us telling us that they see us as a unique association and the reason they give is the fact that we are almost all volunteers and that the motivation is so high and obvious. This is definitely something that makes a difference and strengthens the feeling of this place as a home, as we all choose day after day to come here because we like it and love it.

Recommendations



1. **Invest time in creating a well-connected group of people** working on the project that can identify (for migrants and refugees) those training or working opportunities that need to be seized immediately and help the persons to benefit the most.
2. **Become actors together** in our project we are all protagonists, and this empowers all the people joining the project, young Italians and young refugees.
3. **Create places and times for people to meet and exchange** what usually might not spontaneously come in a conversation, like one's own faith. By focusing on providing basic services, we sometimes forget that for some people faith is a very important part of their identity and this should be considered when we want to welcome them.
4. **Fill the gaps** through our collaboration with other organizations (both secular and faith-based organizations), we realized how important it is not to replicate services but to be there supporting each other and filling the gaps for the good of the people we want to reach.



Making use of time while awaiting the asylum decision



Organisation: Za'atar Ngo



Location: Athens, GREECE



Contact person: Marina Liakis, marina@zaatarngo.org



Website: projectlayali.org



Target groups

Asylum seekers, migrants and under refugee status. Mostly adults, men in majority but also women (age 20–30)



Local context

As Greece has been a transit country for the vast majority of refugees, an emergency policy was put in place in 2015 when the big influx of refugees arrived and when food and shelter were the main needs. A number of refugees will end up spending months, maybe several years, in Greece.



Promising practice

The team of Za'atar, an Athens-based NGO, focuses mostly on empowerment and education not only for our students: men (mostly) and women from different nationalities, but also for our residents, single women. Indeed, it is not only about providing lessons of Greek or English but also about giving responsibility and autonomy to make the refugees understand that the fish will not be given to them if they do not learn how to get it, have patience and make an actual effort.

Most of our volunteers are refugees. This is very important so that we provide refugees with culturally sensitive support that allows them to integrate into European societies. For the majority, it is not only their first experience working in a multicultural environment, it is also an opportunity for them to gain various skills and to get a reference letter to apply for jobs.

With our shelter, we managed to have

many women who left the shelter after learning Greek or English get a job. In Greece, the lack of diversity is a difficulty when working with migrants and refugees and is a specific aspect of the country.

Indeed, the majority of Greek citizens are of Greek origin. Until very recently it was impossible for foreigners to obtain Greek citizenship even if they were born in Greece. And as the majority of migrants coming to Greece are economic migrants, now also refugees, who do not wish to stay and

settle in Greece, they do not invest energy in trying to get involved in the community and political life in Greece.

In order to support refugees and migrants in gaining autonomy, we researched what the areas which had the biggest needs for manpower in Greece were so as to match them with refugees and migrants' skills and help these

We believe in **“teaching people to fish”** instead of just providing fish. We provide a long-term solution, involving the refugees as actors in their own integration.



people get a job. We decided to focus mostly on empowerment and education. By supporting refugees with language classes and vocational training, we are maximizing their chances to stop depending on humanitarian support.

For instance, one of the Za'atar projects is to create small jobs that employ refugees and provide them financial safety and independence. Since the winter of 2018, we have been running two projects in parallel: a shop called Layali and a hair salon. The shop employs some ten refugees and asylum seekers who are making clothes, bags, jewellery and artwork. The hair salon employs one person and we hope to be able to hire a second person soon, and, in the future, to provide training for more refugees to find jobs in the beauty industry.

Our main success was to focus on supporting

refugees in being able to sustain themselves and their families. Many organizations provide food and shelter without preparing an "exit" strategy for this support. Recently, refugees that had been officially recognized before the summer of 2017 in Greece have been informed that they have to leave their accommodation. While for two or more years, they had free accommodation, social support and cash assistance, they will be now on their own without any plan for what will happen to them.

There are many different challenges in our work. At first, our approach was for us to be too involved and detail-orientated instead of encouraging the refugees and migrants to be autonomous and to get back on their feet. We forgot to insist more on the importance of refugees being proactive and take initiative.

Recommendations



1. **Believe in refugees and migrants' possibilities and skills.** We often see others doing everything for them instead of involving the refugees themselves. We believe that the discourse around the word "refugee" could be shifted so as to see them as survivors, actors of their own integration instead of the reductionist view of just being receivers of support and victims of persecution.
2. **Make sure that our support has an exit strategy** as people need to gain autonomy at some point and depend less, or not at all, on the support of humanitarian workers.
3. **Stay positive.** While it sounds very easy to say that, working in this context there is a lot of frustration from my colleagues when they do not get the results or the welcome that they were expecting from others. Spreading our message and being open to new ideas, possibilities and being creative on how to reach a wider audience has helped our work. Getting out of closed circles we should brainstorm to find ideas to reach out to those people who do not know yet about our cause and our work.
4. **Train refugees in interfaith dialogue** to give them tools for how to better address the comments that they could receive from the host society. This will prepare them and increase their chances of integration, and they can learn about the fears of the host society and how to better address them.



C



CONCLUSION:

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People seeking refuge in Europe face various challenges, especially in terms of social inclusion in their new societies. Working to address these challenges bring unique sets of context-specific obstacles. In the face of strict local policy regulations, numerous civil society organizations, academic research centres and individuals are striving to build bridges for better social inclusion, addressing the challenges faced according to their own context. Knowing the gaps and needs in their own local or national contexts, these entities are working on grassroots-level initiatives and programmes in order to overcome social prejudice, inequalities, xenophobia and hate speech.

This booklet offers readers diverse examples from these grassroots projects with migrants and refugees, which can bring better understanding of culturally and religiously sensitive questions. These should serve as examples for those wanting to have a dialogical approach to engage with people

seeking refuge in Europe and beyond.

In presenting eleven case studies from Austria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Serbia, Spain and Sweden, we have shared promising practices about the importance of dialogue, the importance of grassroots-level projects and initiatives as well as different forms of support for migrants and refugees in various European countries. In many ways, these examples of promising practices show the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue in particular in this process. For building more inclusive societies, both interreligious and intercultural dialogue are among the essential tools that can help newcomers feel less excluded in their new host societies.

Therefore, the aim of this publication is to share experiences, challenges and recommendations, for various organizations and individuals working with migrants and refugees in Europe and beyond to have a dialogical approach.

Some of the main challenges our Network members described in the promising practices depend on the target group their project or initiative is covering, as well as the specific national, regional or local context. However, the most common challenges can be divided into three categories:



1. Face stereotypes in the host society. The social inclusion of newcomers to host societies is one of the most sensitive and difficult tasks for the organizations working with migrants and refugees. Dealing with prejudices, hate speech and misunderstanding of "the other" on a daily basis is a major struggle in the process of creating more open societies.



2. Rely too much on the support of the organizations. While there are many well-meaning efforts to support people seeking refuge, it is easy to create new dependencies. It is important to foster independence so that they themselves can take the initiative for their own personal and professional development.



3. Limited space to learn more about the other. In formal education, programmes for migrant and refugee children are adjusted but often do not sufficiently reflect the needs of the newcomers. Lack of funding affects the possibilities for the continuity of the programmes.

While working on the grassroots projects and initiatives, Network members develop new strategies and directions to overcome challenges in their daily work. Our diverse experiences bring new insights, potential solutions and ways forward by developing different recommendations that could help us to better understand possible steps for the better social inclusion of migrants and refugees in Europe and are summarized in the following five recommendations:



1. Use dialogue. In order to be a "bridge" between local and migrant communities, dialogue is one of the essential tools that can significantly improve the social inclusion of migrants and refugees into their new societies.



2. Share knowledge and learn from each other. Learning is the key word, both for refugees and the host community. It is an essential tool for understanding differences between our identities, cultures, languages and religions. The more we learn from each other on a deeper level and share that knowledge, the less distance exists between us.



3. Reach out to the government. By being in contact with the government, often starting at the local level, grassroots actors' voices can be better heard and thus potentially impact policies and decision-making.



4. Be present in the media. Misinterpretation of migrants and refugees in the media is one of the main sources of fear and prejudice. Countering hate speech, fake news and developing professional collaboration with the media could significantly improve how migrants and refugees are perceived by their host societies.



5. Collaborate with other organizations. Through joint collaboration, exchange of experiences and sharing the same vision for a better society, organizations can multiply their impact and increase opportunities to do advocacy.

Comparing our experiences and discussing our challenges, we wish to open new directions in collaboration between secular and faith-based organizations, academics and practitioners working on the social inclusion of migrants and refugees in Europe. The Network for Dialogue's promising practices could be seen as examples for possible future strategies and policies related to migrant and refugee inclusion,

which would embrace a more active role of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Considering dialogue as one of the key tools for building bridges between cultures, religions and communities, we want to inspire similar networks, grassroots organizations or projects in their initial stages on how to strengthen interreligious and intercultural dialogue working with migrants and refugees in Europe.



D.

**CONTRIBUTORS
OF PROMISING
PRACTICES**



- **Carl Dahlbäck** was ordained as a Priest of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden in 1990. He has been the Vicar of Nacka Parish in the Stockholm Diocese since 2004. In the same year he started to work with interfaith topics and God's House in Fisksätra outside of Stockholm. He is currently enrolled in the master's programme of Theology at Uppsala University, wrote a biography about his wife called "Ett Långsamt Farväl" (2014) and composed music to be found on CD or Spotify with "Gudomlig Poesi" (2000) and "I Stillhetens Rymd" (2013).



- **Prof. Míriam Díez Bosch** is the Vicedean of Research and International Relations at Blanquerna School of Communication and International Relations (Ramon Llull University) and Director of the Blanquerna Observatory on Media, Religion and Culture in Barcelona, Spain. She is the Director of Global Engagement at the web portal Aleteia.org and a journalist covering the Holy See for more than ten years. She is a Member of the Board of the Institute of Migration Studies at the Pontifical University of Comillas in Madrid.



- **Elena Dini** works in the field of communications for a Catholic institution in Rome. She is also responsible for the interreligious meetings at the Sacred Heart Basilica in Rome. After having earned a Graduate Certificate in Interfaith Dialogue as a Peacemaking Fellow at Hartford Seminary (United States) and a Certificate in Interreligious Studies as a Russell Berrie Fellow at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Italy), she is now completing a degree in Theology of Religions at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. She is a member of the steering committee of the International Council of Christians and Jews International Abrahamic Forum.



- **Nejra Kadić Meškić** is a Programme Manager at the Centre for Cultural Dialogue and an associate at the Islamic Community in Croatia. She finished the School for Economics and Business of the University of Sarajevo and has seven years of experience as a programme and campaign leader in the field of human rights, culture of dialogue and youth and gender equality at the political and implementation level. In 2013, she received an award for her contribution to the achievement of gender equality by the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



- **Marina Liakis** is a French-Greek citizen and serves as Director of Za'atar NGO. After studying Law and Communications in Paris and New York City, she began a career in humanitarian work. During her professional career, she has worked at a variety of international organizations including the United Nations and for the French Embassy. In 2016, after volunteering at the Port of Piraeus with refugees arriving in Athens, she decided to establish Za'atar NGO. She speaks Arabic, English, French, Greek and Spanish.



- **Violeta Marković** is the Country Manager of the international CSO Jesuit Refugee Service in Belgrade, Serbia. She holds a master's degree from the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Sciences and is currently working on her PhD in social work at the same faculty. Violeta's professional work included social care for children without parents in migrant populations and coordinating the work of the Integration House for vulnerable refugees in Belgrade. She has also been working as a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Belgrade since 2018.



- **Victoria Martín de la Torre** is a Spanish journalist working as a press officer for the Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament since 2008. Victoria is also founder and president of the Abraham Forum for Inter-Religious and Intercultural Dialogue in Madrid, which was launched in 2009, and a fellow of the Alliance of Civilizations since 2011. She is a PhD candidate at the Pontifical University Istituto Universitario Sophia (Italy) on the topic of intercultural dialogue in the European Union.



- **Igor Mitrović** earned his BA in Theology degree at the Belgrade Theological Seminary, and his MA in Biblical Studies at Newbold College, UK. He served as a pastor with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Čačak and Belgrade from 1999 until 2011. He has been the Executive Director of ADRA Serbia since 2011. His interests are theology and spirituality, culture and community building. He is part of developmental and relief work with ADRA and all its other partners, lecturing in undergraduate studies at the Belgrade Theological Seminary (of the Adventist Church), and preaching and working with local Adventist churches in Serbia.



- **Badi Niyazi** works as a Project Coordinator for KAICIID and focuses on the development of KAICIID's programme to support people seeking refuge in Europe. Prior to joining KAICIID, Badi worked as a class teacher, teaching German and history. Besides his teaching work, he has developed various integration projects with pupils newly arrived in Austria. He has completed the Teach for Austria fellow programme striving for educational justice by supporting socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. Badi holds a master's degree in Political Science from the University of Vienna and a bachelor's degree in German and History from the University College for Teacher Education in Vienna.



- **Elisabeth Palugyay** was in charge as Head of Section for refugee aid and migration for Red Cross Austria in Vienna, when starting her cooperation with KAICIID and becoming a founding member of the Network for Dialogue. She was responsible for integration projects in Vienna that were implemented by the Red Cross, with a special focus on intercultural exchange. Before coming to Vienna, she completed her studies of Political Science and International Law in Munich, Germany. As an alumna of the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, she put a special focus on international relations and humanitarian law. In her current role, Elisabeth is promoting interreligious dialogue as an essential part of intercultural integration projects and long-term social inclusion.



- **Archimandrite Panteleimon Papasynefakis, Dr.** was ordained priest of the Greek Orthodox Church in 2001. He has studied theology at the University of Athens where he also concluded his postgraduate degree. In 2019 he obtained his doctorate in inter-Christian dialogue summa cum laude from the Pontifical Oriental Institute. He is the head of the Cathedral of Nea Philadelphia in Attica where, among other things, he has developed active charity activities. In 2017, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece appointed him Director of Integration at the Integration Centre for Migrant Workers – Ecumenical Refugee Programme (KSPM-ERP).



- **Mabrouka Rayachi** originally comes from Tunisia but has been living in Austria for 29 years. She was an Islamic religious teacher and Arabic teacher in Austrian public schools and since 2012 has been a supervisor for Islamic education in Lower Austria. Mabrouka was a KAICIID Fellow 2015 and is actively engaged in many integration programmes in Vienna and Lower Austria.

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