

Education and Support for Integration of Refugees

project brochure

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Written and edited by: Natalia Żebrowska, Théophile Raclot, Frédéric
Leon Düe, Przemysław Wierzbowski, Oksana Kovalivska, Pol Jimenez
Isach

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Education and Support for Integration of Refugees

It is an international small-scale partnership project implemented within the framework of the Erasmus+ program, which lasted from April 2023 to March 2025. The project responds to a concrete need. In our associations and outside them, we often cooperate with refugees, help them or have contact. The problem is that we (or more broadly – volunteers working with refugees) in various situations lack concrete knowledge and skills to make this work successful, guarantee safety and self-confidence and help the newcomers integrate into the local society. Therefore, the partners set themselves the task of educating a group of experts on the subject, collecting good practices, creating appropriate tools and materials on the subject, which will be reusable in various languages outside our organizations.

The participating associations are:

- ▷ Bialystok Esperanto Society (coordinator) – Bialystok, Poland
- ▷ World Esperanto Association – Rotterdam, Netherlands
- ▷ Kosmo Strategio – Bremen, Germany
- ▷ Esperanto Cultural Center – Toulouse, France.





Who is a refugee?

Introduction

In recent years, the world has seen an increasing number of people forced to flee their homes due to war, persecution, violence and other crises. In such situations, the word “refugee” is often used to describe these people. But what does it really mean to be a refugee? How do refugees differ from other migrants? What are their rights, needs and challenges?

The aim of this article is to clarify the concept of a refugee, to distinguish it from other forms of migration, and to explore the causes, consequences and international responses to the refugee crisis. It is not only a political and legal issue, but also a human, ethical and social question.

Definition of a refugee

According to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside his or her country and is unable or unwilling to return to it.

This means that a refugee does not simply leave his or her country for economic or family reasons, but is forced to flee to save his or her life or freedom. Refugees do not have the luxury of choice – they flee out of necessity.

There are also internal refugees, who flee within their own country but are not officially considered refugees under international law, although their experiences are often just as painful.

Differences between refugees and other migrants

It is important to distinguish between refugees and other migrants:

Category	Reason for movement	International protection?
Refugee	Persecution, war, threat to life	Yes
Economic migrant	Looking for work, better conditions	No (generally)
Asylum seeker	Applying for refugee status	Maybe
Internal refugee	Fleeing within own country	No (but receiving assistance locally)

An asylum seeker is a person who has fled and is seeking protection in another country, but has not yet been granted formal refugee status. If the application is accepted, the person is granted refugee status; if it is rejected, the asylum seeker must leave the country.

Why do people become refugees?

The reasons for displacement are complex and often combine several factors. Here are some common reasons:

1. War and armed conflict

This is one of the main causes of displacement. For example, the conflicts in Syria, Sudan, Afghanistan and Ukraine have produced millions of refugees.

2. Persecution based on identity or opinion

People can be persecuted for their religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or political views. In many countries, expressing disagreement with the government can put one's life in danger.

3. Unstable governments and dictatorships

When governments fail to protect their citizens, people can be victims of arbitrary arrest, torture or even murder.

4. Group violence or genocide

In some cases, an entire ethnic group or community is targeted. The refugees from Rwanda, the Rohingya from Myanmar or the Yazidis in Iraq are examples of this.

Refugee rights

The Geneva Convention defines the legal status and protection of refugees. Key rights include:

- ▷ Not to be returned to a country where life would be in danger (principle of non-refoulement).
- ▷ Access to a fair asylum procedure.
- ▷ Right to work, education, and healthcare.
- ▷ Freedom of movement (within limits).
- ▷ Right to documentation and identification.

Many refugees, however, do not fully enjoy these rights, due to administrative, political, or practical obstacles. Some spend years in refugee camps with no certainty about their future.

Consequences of taking refuge

For refugees:

- ▷ Psychological trauma: loss of home, family members, identity.
- ▷ Uncertainty: ignorance of fate, long legal processes.
- ▷ Difficulties in integration: linguistic, cultural and economic barriers.

For host countries:

- ▷ Human challenges: providing housing, education, healthcare.
- ▷ Social tension: when misinformation and xenophobia spread.
- ▷ Potential benefits: new workforce, cultural diversity, economic contribution.

Refugees in the world

According to UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), in 2023 there were more than 35 million refugees worldwide, and more than 100 million forced migrants in total (including internal refugees and asylum seekers). Most refugees do not reach wealthy Western countries – they remain in nearby, often poor countries. For example:

- ▷ Turkey hosts more than 3.6 million Syrian refugees.
- ▷ Uganda and Pakistan host millions of refugees from neighboring countries.
- ▷ Poland and other European countries have accepted millions of Ukrainian refugees since 2022.

International reaction and solidarity

The refugee crisis is a global challenge. It requires solidarity between states and sustainable cooperation. There are international instruments and organizations to help refugees:

- ▷ UNHCR – the main international organization for refugees.
- ▷ IOM – International Organization for Migration.
- ▷ NGOs – such as Caritas, Doctors at Arms, Red Cross, etc.

The UN Compact on Migration and Refugees also aims to better coordinate aid and responsibility between states.

Future of the refugee case

Due to climate change, new conflicts and political instability, the number of refugees is likely to increase. Climate refugees do not yet have a formal status in international law, but they are becoming increasingly common.

The future demands:

- ▷ International cooperation, not isolation.
- ▷ Empathy and respect for the dignity of every person.
- ▷ Sustainable asylum and integration policies.

Conclusion

Refugees are not just a topic for political debates – they are real people who suffer, who lose their homes, but not their dignity. Understanding who a refugee is, what forces people to flee, and how we can help is a moral duty of every society.

Let us remember: anyone can become a refugee – even ourselves, in different circumstances. The world should be a place where people can find not only refuge, but also hope, dignity and security.

Migration policy – why it is needed and what it should be

In a world where migration is becoming increasingly common due to conflicts, climate change, economic needs and other reasons, a clear and humane migration policy is becoming an essential tool for countries that want to respond effectively, fairly and responsibly to these movements of people.

What is migration policy?

Migration policy is a set of principles, decisions, laws, and practical actions that define how a state or region deals with issues related to migration – and the entry and exit of people across its borders. It includes questions such as:

- ▷ Who can enter the country, for how long and why?
- ▷ What are the conditions for asylum, work, study or living with family?
- ▷ How to guarantee the rights and security of migrants, especially the most vulnerable?



Why is a migration policy needed?

Without a clear migration policy, decisions become ad-hoc, irregular and often influenced by emotions, political interests or momentary crises. Migration policy helps to:

- ▷ Protect human rights,
- ▷ Plan services and infrastructure (such as housing, education, health),
- ▷ Reliably inform the population about the situation and prevent misinformation,
- ▷ Support social coexistence and prevent conflicts.

What should a good migration policy be like?

1. Long-term and stably planned

Migration is a long-term phenomenon. Policy must take a broad view, with a vision that goes beyond the duration of one electoral period. This means:

- ▷ Multi-year strategies,
- ▷ Independence from momentary political interests.

2. Complex and interconnected

Migration affects many areas: education, housing, the labor market, health, rights, security. Policy must:

- ▷ Cooperate between ministries and sectors,
- ▷ Link local, national and international action.

3. Based on values and principles

Every decision related to migration must respect::

- ▷ Human rights,
- ▷ Solidarity,
- ▷ Non-discrimination,
- ▷ Legal clarity.

4. Transform into concrete solutions, including legal ones

It is not enough to have nice statements. Migration policy needs:

- ▷ Laws that protect migrants and guide public services,
- ▷ Clear procedures, instructions and practical tools.

5. Inclusive and visible

A good policy must be open to the participation of migrants themselves. Migrants are not just recipients of aid – they must be:

- ▷ Consulted in decision-making,
- ▷ Considered as actors in their own integration.

At the same time, policy must be visible to the whole of society – so that its purpose, resources and benefits are understood. This helps to reduce fears and prejudices.

How to shape policy? Steps

1. Diagnosis

Rely on expert research, data, existing analyses, and in collaboration with organizations that work with migrants. Questions:

- ▷ What are the current needs?
- ▷ What are the challenges?
- ▷ Which population is arriving and in which regions?

2. Vision

Decide: what kind of society do we want to build with and for migrants? What are the main goals – for example: an inclusive labor market, safe housing, equitable education?



3. Multi-step action plan

Concrete actions with::

- ▷ clear tasks,
- ▷ a plan divided into years,
- ▷ responsible persons.

4. Budget

Policy cannot work without resources. It needs:

- ▷ constant, predictable funding,
- ▷ not only foreign funds but also own public resources.
- ▷

5. Regular evaluation

Every year, one must:

- ▷ Analyze results,
- ▷ Correct direction if necessary,
- ▷ Acknowledge problems and improve planning.

What can be difficult?

Developing and implementing a good migration policy is not easy. Here are some possible obstacles:

- ▷ Lack of funding – much depends on subsidies, which are unstable and project-based.
- ▷ Political dependency – if policy changes with each government, there is a lack of progress.
- ▷ Volunteer burnout – when the entire system relies too much on volunteer work, without support, people get tired.
- ▷ Public opinion – if there is no communication with the population, even good policy can meet with resistance or misunderstanding.
- ▷ Lack of knowledge or training – in public services, if professionals are not trained in cultural diversity, languages or trauma, help becomes limited..

Conclusion

Migration policy is more than a reaction to a crisis. It is a way of building a society that respects human dignity, anticipates developments, and seeks a balance between protection and integration. For it to work, it must be visionary, participatory, realistic, and value-based.

Migration is not a problem – but the way we deal with migration can become a problem. If we decide to deal with it responsibly, it becomes an opportunity for more just and inclusive societies.

Particularly vulnerable groups among migrants: why they need special attention

In the context of migration, not all migrants are in the same situation. Some groups are more exposed to dangers, exclusion and lack of adequate support, and are therefore considered particularly vulnerable. An effective and people-centred migration policy must recognise this diversity and guarantee appropriate mechanisms to protect those whose



needs are complex and whose risks are greater. Among these groups we find people with disabilities, members of the LGBT community, women and girls, and children and adolescents. Here is a more detailed description of their situations and requirements.

People with disabilities

People with disabilities – whether physical, sensory, mental or intellectual – are often among the most forgotten migrants. When travelling, even basic actions such as boarding a bus, following instructions or understanding alarms can become a huge challenge. Many people with disabilities are unable to evacuate quickly in dangerous situations, especially if the route is inaccessible or if they do not receive help.

For example, a person with a hearing impairment may not hear alarms or calls in emergencies, and without appropriate visual cues, he or she may be left behind. Blind or partially sighted people need clear, tactile cues or accompaniment. Wheelchair users face barriers to transportation – steps, inadequate platforms or a lack of elevators – that can effectively exclude them from evacuation.

Upon arrival in the destination country, they often encounter similar obstacles. Many reception centres lack basic facilities for people with disabilities: there are no ramps, toilets are not adapted accordingly, there is a lack of support professionals, and information is provided only verbally or in complex language. People with cognitive or intellectual disabilities may not understand their rights, procedures or situation if simple, clearly structured language is not used.

For these people, it is absolutely essential that migration policy guarantees infrastructure accessibility, professional support, and training of administrative staff so that they can recognize, respect and respond to the needs of people with disabilities. At the same time, it is important to consider not only the person with a disability, but also those who care for

them – family members, parents or carers, who also need support, time to rest and psychological help.

People from the LGBT community (including transgender people)

LGBT migrants, and transgender people in particular, face multiple forms of discrimination – often already in their country of origin, and then also during the migration route and in the new country. Many of them are forced to migrate because of persecution, threats or laws that deny their existence. However, even after arrival, dangers do not cease.

One of the first problems is the lack of understanding or competence on the part of translators and staff. If an interpretation does not recognize their gender identity or sexual orientation, or uses offensive or simplistic terms, this can lead to a feeling of invisibility or humiliation.



For example, a transgender person who asks to be called by a certain pronoun or name may be ignored if the official document differs.

Furthermore, participating in a migrant community can be risky, as LGBT identity is often not accepted in all cultures. This means that a person can be excluded, insulted or even attacked by other migrants, and a refugee camp that does not guarantee safe spaces becomes a dangerous place.

The lack of specialized services, such as trans-conforming healthcare (e.g. hormones or psychological support), confidential counselling, and access to a community that accepts them, is another major shortcoming. Many LGBT migrants feel isolated and are less willing to seek help for fear of being discovered or discriminated against.

Therefore, it is important that migration policy is explicitly inclusive, that all professionals working with migrants are informed about LGBT issues, and that safe spaces are created for those whose identity makes them vulnerable to discrimination.

Women and girls

Women and girls are among the most vulnerable groups in the context of migration, often facing a unique combination of risks and challenges that affect their physical safety, mental health and social position. Their vulnerability stems not only from biological factors, but also from socially imposed roles, structural injustice, lack of resources and often from obligatory responsibilities such as caring for other family members. Already during the journey, women are more often exposed to various forms of violence and exploitation. Many of them are forced to cross isolated, dangerous territories, stay in places where basic security measures are lacking, or rely on unknown men – smugglers, guards or even other migrants – who can abuse their power. Rape, trafficking and forced prostitution are not isolated cases, but risks that constantly

hang over migrant women and girls. Furthermore, the lack of separate facilities – such as bathrooms or dormitories – and the inaccessibility of hygiene or health care, prevent them from protecting their dignity and health.

These risks do not stop once they arrive in a new country. Women in refugee camps or reception centers often feel unsafe, especially at night, if there are no supervised, separate dormitories for women or if they have to share accommodation with men they do not know. Such conditions can exacerbate trauma already experienced during the journey. It is essential that women have access to reliable and appropriate health services, including gynecological consultations, pregnancy prevention, trauma treatment and psychological support. Victims of rape in particular need immediate, confidential and understanding services so that they can recover physically and mentally.



Another fundamental need is support for economic independence. Many women arrive without any resources, often with children in their care, and they need real opportunities to participate in work or education. The ability to support themselves and their families not only strengthens their social position, but also reduces the risk of them falling victim to exploitation again.

It is important that women have access to safe channels to report violence or harassment, without fear of reprisals, without publicity, and with the certainty that they will be heard and protected. The lack of reliable mechanisms often means that women remain silent and remain with their suffering.

Furthermore, women who migrate with their children often bear the entire responsibility for their needs – physical care, education, emotional support – and this happens in an environment where they themselves need help and protection. In such cases, it is important that parental responsibilities are also recognized, and that women receive assistance in the form of childcare, psychological support and educational opportunities for their children. Supporting them means supporting the future of the entire family.

Children and adolescents

Children and adolescents among migrants form a group whose needs and vulnerabilities are often underestimated. They are at a critical stage of personal development, and migration – especially if it is forced by conflict, disaster or persecution – can have profound, long-lasting consequences on their psychological, social and educational development.

The experiences of migration – separation from family, loss of home and country, travelling through dangerous places, sometimes violence or witnessing violence – can cause severe trauma, which without adequate support remains untreated. Children without parents are

particularly vulnerable: they face not only uncertainty, but also the risk of being exploited, abused or forgotten.

In order for children to regain security and balance, they need a stable and predictable living environment. Refuges or accommodation for children must be safe, with clear structure, regular meals, sleep, and boundaries that give them a sense of order. Added to this is the necessary access to education: children need to learn, not only to develop knowledge, but also to rebuild normality, have a purpose and a sense of progress. Education also serves as a space for integration, friendships and self-expression.

At the same time, psychological support is fundamental. Many children carry with them unspoken experiences of loss, fear or sadness, which can manifest themselves in silence, aggression, withdrawal or other symptoms. They need professional, child-friendly help – sometimes through play, drawing or storytelling – to process their experiences.

Adolescents, although often more physically independent, are in a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. Many are forced to take on adult responsibilities too early, either due to the absence of parents or because they have to take care of younger siblings. If they do not receive adequate support, they can easily slip into marginalization, a sense of uselessness, depression, or even be recruited into dangerous or illegal activities.

Therefore, for children and adolescents, it is not enough to provide a bed and food. They need an understanding, structured, safe and stimulating environment where they can rest, play, learn, express themselves and regain confidence in the future. Their well-being is not a side issue – it is fundamental to the health of the entire community, now and in the future.

The perfect refuge: a vision of a dignified and inclusive first stop for migrants

When a person crosses a border after a long journey fleeing war, persecution or despair, he or she needs not just a bed – but a sense of security, humane treatment, a chance to gather strength and hope. A refuge, as the first place migrants find themselves after crossing, must be much more than a technical point of registration. It should be a space that reflects the highest values of human dignity, solidarity and precaution. Every aspect of that place should be designed in such a way that it truly works for everyone – especially for those who need protection the most. An ideal refuge is first and foremost safe. Every person, regardless of their age, gender, physical or mental condition, must be able to rest without fear. Safety means not only physical protection, but also a sense of respect and calm. Women and girls, who have often experienced violence or lived in constant fear during their journey, must have separate, safe spaces to sleep and wash themselves, with lockable doors, good lighting and access to menstrual hygiene supplies. These spaces should not be accessible to others, unless authorized. There should be trained women on the team who can offer help, listening and – if necessary – confidential psychological support.





For people with disabilities, the space must be accessible in all senses. It is not just about ramps or wide doors, but about overall planning, where people in wheelchairs can move around without assistance, the deaf receive information through light or vibration signals, and the blind find pictograms or information in Braille. The sanitary facilities – toilets and showers – must be adapted, and there should even be spaces for rest without loud noise or sensory overload, for those suffering from autism or other neurological diseases.

It is also important not to forget the caregivers – parents or family members who accompany a disabled person. They are often exhausted, physically and emotionally, because they have been responsible for their relatives throughout the journey. They need support not only for their companion, but also for themselves: time to rest, help with organizing care, and access to counseling.

The needs of children and families must be equally central. Children require a stable and playful environment to recover. In an ideal refuge, there are safe spaces to play, with toys, books, and activities that aim to rebuild a sense of normality. Parents can receive help with orientation,

answer their children's questions, and access basic health services - including gynecological consultations for women or pediatrics for young children.

No less important are people from the LGBT community, who often migrate precisely because of persecution related to their identity. A refuge must be a space where people can express themselves and be respected. This includes training for staff on gender identity and sexual orientation, and the use of inclusive language in documents and conversations. When it comes to translation, care must be taken to ensure that interpretations do not misrepresent a person's identity or history due to a lack of adequate vocabulary or understanding.

Added to all this are fundamental needs for everyone: access to clean drinking water, food that takes into account religious and health restrictions, basic healthcare, information in an understandable language, and sufficient heat or coolness depending on the season. And above all – people must be treated not as files or problems, but as people. Each person in a shelter comes with their own story, their own losses, their own hopes. A perfect shelter is a place where these stories are heard, not ignored.

In conclusion

A perfect refuge is not a luxurious building, but an atmosphere. It is born from a desire to understand and anticipate the needs of others, to design a space that is not the same for everyone, but is suitable for everyone. When we care for the most vulnerable – for the disabled, women, children, autistic people, transgender people and caregivers – then we create a shelter that is truly for everyone. And only such a place can be the first step towards a new life with dignity, security and hope.

Misinformation about migrants: forms, effects and dangers

In today's world, where information circulates rapidly through social media and online channels, misinformation about migrants has become a serious and dangerous phenomenon. Such misinformation can be spread intentionally or unintentionally, but its effect is often the same: it contributes to prejudice, fear, stigmatization, and even political polarization.

1. False statistics and generalizations

One of the most common forms of disinformation is the dissemination of false or misleading statistics that portray migrants as a threat. For example::

- ▷ “Migrants commit more crime than locals.”
- ▷ “Migration causes an increase in unemployment among citizens.”



- ▷ “The majority of migrants come only to benefit from social systems.”

Such claims are usually based on misconceptions, selective data, or completely fabricated numbers. They neglect the complex causes of migration and ignore facts, such as the fact that many migrants perform jobs that locals avoid, or that migrants often have lower crime rates than the local population.

2. Sensationalism and selective reporting in the media

The way the media reports on migration has a strong influence on public perception. Sensationalist headlines, emphasis on individual negative cases (crimes, conflicts) and rare but dramatic events (e.g. riots in refugee camps) contribute to the creation of negative prejudices about migrants.

The public thus receives a very limited image: the migrant as a threat, a problem or a stranger, rather than as a person with their own history, needs and contributions.

3. Conspiracy theories and nationalist propaganda

Some groups or influential figures spread conspiracy theories related to migration, for example:

- ▷ “Migration is planned by elites to destroy national culture.”
- ▷ “Migrants are given luxurious conditions while locals suffer.”
- ▷ “There is a ‘replacement plan’ to change the population of Europe.”

Such theories use fear, anger, and a sense of injustice to polarize society and strengthen extremist political goals. They aim to present migration not as a social reality, but as a threat to identity or national sovereignty.

4. Misunderstandings and lack of nuance about the reasons for migration

Many people are unaware of the complexity of migration. They see migrants simply as “economic opportunists”, without considering factors such as:

- War conflicts and persecution,
- Climate change and natural disasters,
- Family reunification,
- Political or sexual persecution.

This simplification of motivation leads to a lack of empathy and paves the way for judgments based on partial information.



5. Images and videos without context

In the age of social media, images and videos can quickly go viral. But they are often miscontextualized or completely wrong. For example:

- ▷ A picture of a line of men at the border is presented as an “invasion of young militant migrants,” even though they are asylum seekers or workers.
- ▷ An old video of a riot is attributed to a modern-day refugee camp, even though it took place elsewhere and at a different time.

This kind of visual disinformation can be very effective, because it plays on emotions and prejudices. It is often difficult to refute, because the viewer already has a strong reaction before receiving the truth.

6. Blaming migrants for systemic problems

Migrants are often a punching bag for broader social problems, such as:

- ▷ Shortages in public housing,
- ▷ Strained health or education systems,
- ▷ High unemployment or inflation.

Politicians and the media can present migration as the main cause of these problems, even when they stem from long-term policy decisions, disinvestment, or structural injustice.

Such discourse redirects public anger away from the real source of the problems, and encourages hostility toward migrants instead of a constructive search for solutions.



7. Unrecognized diversity among migrants

Another subtle but important misinformation is the homogenization of all migrants. They are presented as if they were a single group, often with negative labels: “they don’t want to work”, “they don’t adapt”, “they have a different culture”.

In fact, migrants are extremely diverse: in terms of education level, profession, language skills, reasons for migration, family situation, religion, etc. Ignoring this diversity facilitates stigmatization and hinders effective inclusive policies..

Why is it important to combat misinformation about migrants?

Misinformation about migrants is not a simple matter of truth versus falsehood, but a phenomenon with profound social, political and human consequences. The spread of false or misleading information can

change perceptions, influence public opinion and decisions, and even endanger the lives and safety of real people. This is why it is essential to combat this phenomenon.

1. It incites hatred, discrimination and violence

When migrants are portrayed as a threat – as criminals, job thieves or “foreign invaders” – it cultivates fear, anger and hostility in society. Such feelings do not remain in the virtual world, but can lead to:

- ▷ harassment of migrants in public spaces,
- ▷ attacks on refugee camps or reception centers,
- ▷ verbal and physical violence against individuals because of their origin or appearance.

In many countries, we can see that such attacks are on the rise after periods of intense campaigns based on disinformation. This means that words can lead to actions, and those actions can have very real and tragic consequences.

2. It undermines solidarity and coexistence

A society with a high level of misinformation becomes less open, less united, and more polarized. Instead of mutual understanding and cooperation, suspicion and hostility between “us” and “them” prevail.

- ▷ People no longer see migrants as neighbors, colleagues, or fellow citizens, but as intruders or adversaries.
- ▷ This makes social inclusion and the building of a coexistence based on respect and equality difficult.
- ▷ Misunderstandings between groups increase, and the path to peaceful relations becomes more difficult.

In such an atmosphere, even individuals who would like to help or understand migrants may feel social pressure or even fear to express themselves publicly.

3. It hinders effective political solutions

When public opinion is shaped by misinformation, the political debate on migration is no longer based on facts, needs, and reason, but on emotions, fears, and populist rhetoric. As a result:

- ▷ Politicians may avoid or delay important decisions, for fear of losing popularity.
- ▷ Bills aimed at protecting migrants or improving reception facilities may be blocked or rejected.
- ▷ All political energy may be consumed in conflicts based on false premises, while the real problems remain unaddressed.

Thus, misinformation acts as an obstacle to rational and humane politics, and in the long term weakens the functioning of the democratic system.

4. It strengthens extremism and political populism

Extremist and populist movements often capitalize on fears and misunderstandings. They use disinformation to build their support, spreading simplistic messages and blaming migrants for all of society's problems.

- ▷ Such movements can widen social divisions, propagating nationalism and xenophobia.
- ▷ They often aim to silence or stigmatize opposing voices, accusing them of being “enemies of the nation” or “innocents”.
- ▷ This dynamic erodes public debate and hinders the construction of a shared vision of a just, inclusive and stable society.

In the worst cases, extremist rhetoric can lead to laws that restrict migrants' rights, or even to systematic persecution.

5. Countering misinformation requires a multi-level approach

An effective response to misinformation cannot be limited to simple “fact-checking”. A multi-level and long-term approach is needed, which includes:

- ▷ Educating the public to develop critical thinking, the ability to analyze sources and understand the complex realities of migration.
- ▷ Responsible journalism that does not sensationalize migration issues, but addresses them with facts, nuances and the voices of migrants themselves.
- ▷ Support for organizations and initiatives that fight discrimination and prejudice, including intercultural projects, arts programs and community work.
- ▷ Creation of counter-narratives that present real stories of migrants, their contributions, struggles and human aspects.

Only through such synergistic actions can we build a more truthful, more understanding and more just society, where migrants are treated with dignity and equality, and where the public has access to reliable information.

How to be a good host to a refugee?

Introduction

Hosting a refugee is a deeply human act, often done in a spirit of solidarity, empathy and interpersonal connection. Unlike a simple traveler, a refugee faces complex living conditions: trauma, loss of home, uncertainty about the future. The host in such a situation does not just offer a bed or a meal, but participates in a delicate human experience.

But good will is not enough. For hosting to be sustainable, healthy and ethical – for both the host and the refugee – clearly defined rules, recognizable boundaries and an awareness of the ethics of helping are necessary. This article aims to explore these three key dimensions.

1. Rules: a structure for coexistence and respect

In any coexistence, but especially in the context of hosting a refugee, clarity about ground rules is essential to avoid conflicts and to build trust.

a) Preliminary discussion and information

If possible, the host and the refugee should receive some basic orientation before the hosting begins. Many organizations help with such preparations. Communication should be:

- ▷ How long will the refugee be able to stay?
- ▷ What are the customs in the home (e.g. meal times, religious practices, use of the kitchen)?
- ▷ What is allowed and what is not (e.g. smoking, using devices, receiving visitors)?

b) Respect for private spaces

The refugee often arrives after a long journey, carrying an emotional burden. For this reason, it is important to offer a private or at least

separate place to rest. The host also needs to maintain his or her private space. Mutual respect for these boundaries helps to avoid tensions.

c) Shared tasks and responsibilities

Although a refugee is in a vulnerable situation, he or she can contribute to home life. Helping with cooking, cleaning, or childcare (if agreed upon) can create a sense of dignity and participation.

2. Restrictions: how to protect yourself and continue the help

Many hosts feel a sense of obligation to help, but it's important to recognize that you can't sacrifice yourself indefinitely. Sustainable hosting requires clarity about personal boundaries – emotional, physical, and practical.

a) Recognize your own limits

Can you really dedicate the time, space and energy to supporting a refugee? If you are stressed out, sleeping poorly or feeling constantly tense, this is a sign that your limits have been reached. Then it is necessary to seek support – from family members, friends or professionals.

b) Prevent dependency

A good host helps the refugee regain autonomy, not create dependency. Avoid doing everything for him/her – it is better to show how the system works, where to find information, how to use public transport, etc.

c) Taking care of your own relationships and needs

The presence of a refugee can affect the dynamics of your home. If you live with family or roommates, it is important that everyone agrees on the hosting and expresses their needs. If your own life is suffering, helping can become a burden rather than an act of solidarity.

3. Ethics of aid: between solidarity and respect

Hosting a refugee raises ethical questions: How to avoid patronage? How to respect cultural differences? How to preserve the human dignity of the guest?

a) Treat the refugee as a partner, not an object of aid

Helping means accompanying, not controlling. A refugee must maintain his or her voice, choice and perspective. Ask, listen, suggest – but do not impose.

b) Respect for culture, religion and personality

Not all refugees behave according to “Western” norms. They may have different ideas about time, gender, food or religion. It is important not to judge, but to seek mutual understanding. At the same time, explain what is basic in your home – e.g. equality between men and women, respect for the law and for other residents.

c) Be realistic and humble

A host is not a savior. The process of integration and recovery from trauma is long. You will not solve everything. Ethical aid also means connecting the refugee with professional help: language courses, psychological support, legal services.

Conclusion

Hosting a refugee is one of the most human acts we can do in a world marked by conflict and migration. But this action requires clarity, maturity, and empathy. With rules, we create order; with boundaries, we avoid burnout; and with ethics, we ensure that help does not humiliate but strengthens.



A good host is not a perfect person, but a person who dares to offer space with a sincere heart, while still taking care of their own goodness. Only in this way does hospitality become a true bridge between two worlds – one violated, the other ready to accept.

How to work with refugees correctly?

Introduction

Working with refugees is not just a humanitarian task – it is a deep human connection that involves responsibility, empathy and awareness of global realities. A refugee is someone who has been forced to leave their home country due to war, persecution, disaster or other crises. Many of them have experienced trauma, loss and life-threatening experiences.

Therefore, working with refugees – whether as a volunteer, teacher, social worker, psychologist or member of a host community – requires not only goodwill, but also competence. This article explores the essential principles for responsible, ethical and effective work with refugees.

1. Understanding the context: refugee is not just a status

Many mistakes occur when refugees are treated first as a “problem” or a “project”, rather than as complex people with a past, identity and dignified needs.

a) Avoid stigmas and simplifications

Refugees are not a homogeneous group. They come from different countries, with different religions, education levels and values. It is important to avoid generalizations (e.g. “they don’t work”, “they don’t adapt”) and instead focus on each person’s individual experience.

b) Recognise the effects of trauma

Many refugees have experienced war, torture, sexual violence or prolonged isolation. These experiences can affect their behaviour, communication and trust. Patience and respect are essential. Not everyone wants to talk about their past right away, and this should never be forced.

c) The transitional state

A refugee often finds themselves in an uncertain, temporary state – between an abandoned country and a new future. This state can cause anxiety, helplessness or depression. All aid must be sensitive to this temporary reality.

2. Respect the principles of ethical helping

Effective work with refugees is not about “saving”, but about accompanying people as they rebuild their lives.

a) Active listening and partnership

Don't be patronizing. Refugees are subjects of their own lives, not objects of our help. We need to listen to their goals, questions and abilities. They often know what they need – we need to help them find the resources, not impose solutions.

b) Clear boundaries and roles

Whether you are a teacher, a helper, a translator or a volunteer – make your role clear. Don't promise something you can't deliver. Don't get too intimate. Relationships with refugees can become emotionally intense, but it is important to protect yourself and them with professional boundaries.

c) Protection of privacy

Information about the past, religion, health or personal experiences of refugees should be treated confidentially. Avoid sharing stories or photos without explicit permission.

3. Supporting integration without assimilation pressure

Many refugees want to participate in the new society, but face barriers: linguistic, cultural, legal. We can help them step by step – without requiring them to abandon their origins.

a) Language learning as a key

Language is a door to independence. Support learning the local language, but understand that the pace can be slow. Use simple words, clear gestures and avoid complex bureaucratic procedures without translation.

b) Directness and understanding of cultural differences

Sometimes misunderstandings arise due to different customs – gender relations, religious practices, concepts of time. Instead of judging, it is worth explaining local norms and at the same time showing respect for the other person's culture. Culture is not a problem, but a dialogue.

c) Support for independence

Real help is help that enables independence. Teach where to find work, how to use public services, how to navigate the city. Bring refugees together with locals so that they feel part of a community. This reduces loneliness and enables mutual learning.

4. Collaboration with professionals and inter-organizational networks

You don't have to do everything alone. Effective work with refugees requires a team: lawyers, psychologists, teachers, translators, housing assistants.

a) Referral and support networks

If you see that a refugee needs more help than you can offer (e.g. with violence, psychological problems), help him find professional support. Know where to turn – to associations, hospitals, cities.

b) Continuing education

Educate yourself about the countries of origin, about current migration policies, about intercultural strategies. Training, meetings and specialist manuals help to avoid mistakes and deepen cooperation.

c) Certainty about legal frameworks

Each country has different rules for asylum, labor rights, education. Know the basic laws so as not to misinform. If necessary, work with experts or NGOs.

Conclusion

Working with refugees is more than a charity – it is an invitation to mutual human growth. Through understanding, respect, and sustainable support, we can not only help people rebuild their lives, but also enrich our own communities with diversity and solidarity. The path is not always easy, but with open hearts, open ears, and thoughtful action, we can make a difference – not as saviors, but as people who accept other people with dignity.

New Family Association in North Kivu

Refugees are often only perceived when they arrive in a wealthy country. Refugees are noticed when they are seen in a controversial news story about crime statistics, when a shop assistant has a different skin color, or when a child speaks with a foreign accent after returning from kindergarten. The way to deal with refugeeism is often most focused on a close-up frame, within the borders of one's own country, or at the discretion of the European Union. However, refugeeism is often connected to a long history of seeking safety, of overcoming obstacles while crossing dozens of countries in an atmosphere of uncertainty, and of remembering the home that one has decided to leave. Refugeeism does not begin when a refugee applies for asylum, it begins when a person decides to risk their own life to achieve something better, when a person realizes that it is no longer possible to stay at home.

Perhaps the most effective strategy for dealing with problems in life is to ensure that a problem does not arise. If you want to prevent a house from burning down, it seems sensible to put fire extinguishers in it. This way, one will be prepared to fight the fire when it starts, but if instead one ensures that the house is built of stone instead of wood, so that it cannot burn, the problem is truly solved. Action that builds peace in a foreign country should therefore deserve as much attention as a debate about closing borders. Building peace may seem like a complex and idealistic or unrealistic activity, although it can be achieved through simple actions. In Eastern Congo, where there is now a war over natural resources that are used in electric cars and computers, there are many children who lose their families and become orphans. Completely alone and without help, they soon learn how to get by in an environment without rules and gradually they themselves become perfect candidates for new warriors. To break this circle, it is necessary to ensure that the orphan is not left alone, but finds a family to be adopted, that the orphan

does not go hungry, and that the orphan has prospects for the future, that he can go to school. People who do this do exist, they do not accept simply being, but want to change the world around them.

Enriko was one of them, who noticed that more and more children came to his Esperanto course without help. He founded with others an Association to support them well, the Asocio Nova Familio, and for many years has been distributing food, clothing, and enabling them to attend school with donations from Esperanto speakers and other caring people. The situation is difficult. In recent months, the city itself, which was previously an island without soldiers, has been captured by rebels and even more than before, uncertainty and difficulty in making a living are growing. In these times, it is particularly important that there are people who are fighting to prevent this suffering from being repeated, so that peace can finally prevail.



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the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are under 15 years of age is expected to increase by 1.5 billion.

As the world's population grows, the demand for food and other resources will increase. The world's population is expected to reach 9 billion by the year 2050. This means that there will be 9 billion people competing for the same resources that we have today. This is a huge challenge for the world's leaders and citizens.

One of the most important ways to address this challenge is by increasing the world's food production. This can be done by using more efficient farming techniques, such as precision agriculture, and by increasing the number of people working in the agricultural sector. This will help to ensure that there is enough food to feed the growing world population.

Another important way to address this challenge is by reducing the world's consumption of resources. This can be done by using more sustainable practices, such as recycling and reducing energy consumption. This will help to ensure that there are enough resources to go around for everyone.

Finally, it is important to ensure that the world's resources are distributed fairly. This can be done by implementing policies that support the poor and the vulnerable. This will help to ensure that everyone has access to the resources they need to live a decent life.

These are just a few of the ways that the world's leaders and citizens can address the challenge of a growing world population. It is important that we all work together to find solutions that will ensure a bright future for everyone.

The world's population is growing rapidly, and this is a challenge for the world's leaders and citizens. There are many ways to address this challenge, and it is important that we all work together to find solutions that will ensure a bright future for everyone.

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