



In this chapter you will find:

- **Possible Measures to Address Violent Behaviour Affecting Migration**
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 - Addressing Hate Crimes
 - Ending Forced Removals to Unsafe or Unknown Countries
- **Possible Measures to Address Structural Violence Affecting Migration**
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 - Family Reunification
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- **Possible Measures to Address Cultural Violence Affecting Migration**
 - Acknowledging the Positive Impact of Migration
 - Addressing Discrimination against Migrants
 - Promoting Social Cohesion



Chapter 7

A Positive Peace Approach to Migration in Country of Destination



INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores how a positive peace approach to migration can be applied in countries of destination where the focus is on welcoming migrants, processing their applications, if applicable, and supporting their integration. The first section identifies some of the core ways migrants are affected by violent behaviour, as well as structural and cultural violence. It will then explore the international migration-peacebuilding nexus in this context. The final section describes measures that can be implemented to reduce both violent behaviour and structural and cultural violence in countries of destination.

As in previous chapters, it is important to highlight that a country of destination can also fit into one or more of the categories covered in other chapters. For example, a country of destination for some migrants can be a country of transit for others, and vice versa.

It is also important to underline that practices recommendable in one context might also be relevant in other contexts. For example, addressing hate crime is not only important in countries of destination, but also in all the other contexts that have been addressed so far, as well as in countries recovering from violent conflict, which will be the focus of chapter eight.

Violent Behaviour, and Structural and Cultural Violence Affecting Migrants

When migrants arrive in their country of destination, they may be exposed to **violent behaviour** that also impacts the local residents. However, migrants might be disproportionately targeted and affected by crimes such as random muggings, rape and violent assault, as well as other hate crimes. Hate crimes are motivated by bias against someone's identity marker, such as race, religion or sexual orientation, and justified by cultural violence. Moreover, human traffickers may force migrants into prostitution and criminality.

There is also some violent behaviour that is targeted only at migrants. This often begins before the migrants have even arrived in the country. Examples include pushbacks and pullbacks employed by national authorities in countries of destination to prevent migrants from entering the territory. In many countries, migrants who are deemed to have entered the country through so-called irregular routes are also routinely detained in camps that resemble prisons while their applications are processed. In many countries, migrants who have had their application rejected are also detained while they await removal, often by force.

Migrants are often exposed to **structural violence** in their country of destination. They may have unequal access to food, housing, education, employment and healthcare. As an example, in many countries, asylum seekers are not allowed to work. Therefore they depend on an, often very small, state allowance to pay for their necessities. They are also often kept in unsuitable and overcrowded temporary accommodation and are moved around without their consent or much advance notice. They are also denied the right to be with their families because family members are not allowed to join them.

In some cases, the unequal access is less apparent. As an example, asylum seekers may be granted access to healthcare. However, if they are not provided with an interpreter who can help them communicate with the healthcare provider, they are still unable to get the help and support they need. Whereas some migrants are given immediate access to rights and resources, mainly because they come through regulated pathways, others must undergo lengthy application processes. Some are also threatened with being sent to third countries to have their application processed. Moreover, in many cases, even when migrants have been granted the right to stay, this is only temporary. Hence, it leaves them in limbo about their future. Even if they gain the right to work, they might still face issues, such as discrimination and a lack of language learning provisions, that makes it much more difficult for them to find a job.

Migrants are also often exposed to **cultural violence** in their country of destination. Stereotyping and prejudice are used to justify treating migrants less favourably than the rest of the population. Unchallenged stereotypes and prejudices also hinder the integration of migrants and their opportunities for building mutually beneficial relationships with their new neighbours and communities. In some cases, migrants are told that their values, culture and religion are inferior to the values, culture and religion of the majority in their country of destination. Sometimes, they are even told that the two are incompatible and that they are a threat to the dominant values, culture and religion, and therefore unwelcome.

The International Migration-Peacebuilding Nexus

In a positive peace approach to migration integration is seen as a two-way process. In this process, migrants and local people integrate with each other, and work together towards developing a shared society where all people are acknowledged as equally legitimate and valued members. Significantly reducing violent behaviour and structural and cultural violence is a central part of this process.

Measures must focus on reducing violent behaviour and structural and cultural violence that also affect other groups in the country of destination.

In many cases, though some violent behaviour and structural and cultural violence is primarily aimed at migrants, a lot of violent behaviour, and structural and cultural violence, also affects other groups living in the country of destination. For example, if stereotyping and prejudices are used to justify discrimination against people belonging to a particular religion, then that affects both migrants and all people belonging to that religion. Hence, though measures are needed to address violent behaviour and structural and cultural violence targeting migrants, other measures must focus on reducing violent behaviour and structural and cultural violence that also affect other groups in the country of destination. Ultimately, it is not just migrants who will benefit but also many others in society. An example is measures aimed at building **social cohesion** in communities that aim to include and benefit everyone.

Though measures are presented as addressing one kind of violence, it is essential to consider how the different kinds of violence are interlinked. For example, hate crime is violent behaviour justified by cultural violence. It is also linked to structural violence, as its prevalence is to some degree linked to the victims' ability, or lack thereof, to place combating hate crimes on the political agenda. Thus, a positive peace approach to migration focuses not only on addressing hate crime itself but also the structural and cultural violence that upholds it.

Possible Measures to Address Violent Behaviour Affecting Migration

1. ENDING THE USE OF DETENTION¹

In this context, the term ‘detention’ refers to the governmental practice of detaining migrants, particularly asylum seekers, for reasons such as verifying their identity and facilitating their asylum application. This practice is also used when people are waiting to be removed due to having had their application rejected or having overstayed their visa. Detention is an important part of what makes many current application processes lengthy and inhumane, and hence, it is one of the most controversial parts of immigration processes. Despite the name, it is meant to be an administrative rather than a criminal procedure. Initially, migrants are usually held in holding or reporting centres before being moved to long-term detention centres or camps, which are often fenced-off and barbed-wired, resembling a prison. When migrants enter these detention centres or camps, they often do not know how long they are going to stay there. This uncertainty, coupled with inadequate and often overcrowded living conditions - at times violent- along with concerns about their families and futures, have a significant impact on migrants’ mental health. Holding migrants in these camps often restricts their access to resources, including legal support that could help navigate the typically lengthy and complex application system.

Such procedures also foster mistrust of local and national authorities, leading migrants to be hesitant to engage with them for fear of detention. Therefore, considering the serious harm detention is causing migrants, it should not be used at all. This has been highlighted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has called on governments to take urgent measures to end detention, especially for vulnerable groups. Instead, the UNHCR has urged countries to develop nonviolent alternatives that fully respect human rights and dignity.

An alternative² to detention is a **community-based case management system** grounded in collaboration and respect for migrants’ freedom and right to fair treatment. This people-focused approach modelled on social work supports migrants’ navigation through the migration processes and procedures and responds to their individual needs. Instead of living in detention camps, migrants can live in communities while processing their applications. This means they can get emotional and practical help from their families, friends and other community members. Through this approach, migrants can focus on getting their cases processed more quickly because they can provide the relevant information while also being able to access legal advice and support when needed. This should help ensure a quicker and much more humane application process.

WHY IT WORKS

- Ending the use of detention of migrants in prison-like camps and centres works because it significantly **improves their living conditions** and reduces the risks of migrants developing mental health problems and mistrust in authorities. It also helps them **build mutually beneficial relationships** with their local communities.
- Ending the use of detention also works because it enables migrants to **gain access to resources and services** that can help the timely processing of their application to stay in the country of destination.

SOME POSITIVE PEACE PERSPECTIVES

From a positive peace perspective, it is important to consider the impact of migrants' intersecting identities on their experiences of detention, and their **agency** and positionality in the application process. Detaining migrants not only causes significant harm, it also further restricts their agency, and therefore their ability to help ensure that their application is processed swiftly and fairly, is based on correct information about their circumstances, and has the appropriate legal support.

It is also essential to consider the critical **role of relationships**. Detaining migrants keeps them away from their family, friends and local community, whereas a people-centred approach supports the building of these vital relationships. For example, a local service that provides legal support to asylum seekers going through the application process can also offer legal support to other community members, such as help with applications for social services. This will bring migrants and local community members together and support them in building relationships. It will also help normalise applying for the right to remain.

Furthermore, advocacy for ending detention of migrants could also be linked with ending or at least reducing the detention of other groups of people. As an example, campaigns focusing on ending the detention of pregnant migrants or migrants with mental health issues could also focus on the importance of ending detention in prisons for all pregnant women and people living with mental health issues. Of course, it is important to emphasise that whereas people detained in prisons are either waiting for their trial or have been found guilty of committing a crime, migrants are detained for administrative rather than criminal purposes. However, there are similarities in the ways being detained affects migrants and people who are detained in the criminal system. As an example, a pregnant woman awaiting trial and a pregnant migrant might share similar concerns, such as giving birth in detention, being away from friends and family, and not knowing what the future will be for them and their baby. They might also both have mental health issues because of abuse they have experienced in the past that cannot be addressed adequately while being detained.



Example of Promising Practice

The **King's Arms Project**³ includes a Refugee and Migrant Advice Service, a community engagement project set up as an alternative to detention. Developed in collaboration with the UNHCR and the British national authorities, the project focuses on helping vulnerable people without a recognised immigration status. Taking a people-focused, holistic and trauma-informed approach that aims to **maximise migrants' agency**, the project employs case workers who provide legal advice and support. This helps migrants understand their options for potentially regularising their immigration status and make informed decisions about how to avoid the uncertainty, challenges and stress associated with an irregular status.

In addition, the project assists people in **accessing resources**, such as food and clothes, as well as services, such as health and social care, mental health support and language learning provisions. The project also welcomes and **helps integrate** refugee families who have arrived through community sponsorship or who have been resettled by the UK government and UNHCR. Furthermore, the project works to **tackle homelessness** in the local community. It supports local people living with homelessness and runs a service that offers short-term supported accommodation as a stepping stone towards independent living. Ultimately, the project helps both local residents and migrants.

LIMITS AND CAVEATS

- Efforts to end detention of migrants need to be embedded in efforts to **change the current criminalisation of migration** that supports this practice.
- Efforts to end detention of migrants need to be incorporated into **broader changes** where values, such as nonviolence and compassion, become the foundations for the treatment of migrants.
- Ending detention of migrants will require **financial resources** to ensure that migrants can be housed in local communities without having to compete with local people for housing, as this has a negative impact on the relationship between migrants and the local community.

2. ADDRESSING HATE CRIMES⁴

Any criminal offence that is motivated by prejudice and hostility towards a person's identity, or perceived identity, based on markers, such as sexual orientation, transgender status, religion/faith, race or disability, is considered a hate crime. Anyone can become a victim of a hate crime, regardless of the composition of their intersecting identity, because it is the offender's perception of the victim's identity that matters. As an example, someone who does not belong to the LGBTQ+ community can still be the victim of a homophobic hate crime, if the offender targets them because they think they belong to that community. Still, people with minority backgrounds and intersecting identities are more likely to become victims of hate crimes. Therefore, in many communities, migrants are more at risk of being targeted by hate crimes. It is especially necessary to address hate crimes in contexts where politicians and media outlets express anti-immigration sentiments, leading to increases in hate crimes against migrants.

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Hate crimes have an impact on individuals as well as communities. On an individual level, hate crimes can cause physical injury and mental health trauma-based problems, as well as anger and fear of facing similar incidents in the future. Being a victim of a hate crime can be particularly traumatic for migrants, because many of them have already experienced violence in their countries of origin and/or transition. Therefore, new hate crimes can re-traumatise them. At a **community level**, hate crimes can also have devastating effects, such as creating fear and mistrust, thereby damaging relationships and threatening social cohesion.

The **Bureau of Justice Assistance**⁵ has developed a community-based approach to preventing and addressing hate crimes, emphasising that hate crimes affect individuals and communities. This approach stresses the importance of building relationships between and coordinating the efforts of key stakeholders- such as civil society organisations, religious actors and educational institutions- regarding strategies and actions aimed at preventing and responding to hate crimes. It emphasises the importance of **developing comprehensive strategies** that include education, outreach and engagement that are sensitive to the local context and needs of the affected populations affected. It also calls for activities that **facilitate dialogue between groups**, helping to reduce intergroup tensions and creating a shared sense of an empathetic community that stands together against hate crime. The approach recognises the clear links between hate speech and hate crime, as well as the need for actions that focus on both. Finally, this approach includes **trauma-informed services** that can address the needs of the victims of hate crimes.

The European Commission⁶ has also developed guidelines for addressing hate crimes at the national level. In addition to criminalising hate crimes, the guidelines emphasise the importance of people being able to **easily and safely report hate crimes** and that law enforcement authorities record and collect data about hate crimes. The guidelines also urge capacity-building and training of people involved in national law enforcement, and support for victims of hate crimes. Finally, they highlight the importance of **addressing hate speech** online to prevent hate speech from fuelling hate crime.

WHY IT WORKS

- Gathering data at the national level is important because it can be used to **inform policies and practices**. Being able to report and record a hate crime can also help make victims feel heard.
- Applying a community-based approach works because it benefits all groups and tackles an issue, hate crimes, that can be detrimental to social cohesion.

SOME POSITIVE PEACE PERSPECTIVES

From a positive peace point of view, it is important for the people most affected by hate crimes, including migrants, to be involved in the scoping, design, planning and implementation of measures against hate crimes. This should include a **participatory process** where migrants, and others who have been exposed to hate crimes, are empathically and compassionately listened to, and their experiences, concerns and needs carefully acknowledged and acted upon. It is also important to consider the impact of experiences of hate crimes, and how they are dealt with, on relationships, not only between groups of people but also between people and the authorities involved in addressing hate crimes. For example, if a community feel that their reporting of hate crimes does not lead to any action from the local police and the local prosecutor, there is likely to be a highly negative effect on the community's relationship with local law authorities.

It is also essential to consider how more complex intersecting identities can make people more exposed to hate crimes. As an example, a migrant might face more hate crimes as a result of belonging to the LGBTQ+ community and living with disabilities than heterosexual migrants living without disabilities. It is essential to remember that hate crimes are directed against many different groups of people. Hence, a comprehensive approach that addresses all these different kinds of hate crimes is needed, rather than one that only focuses on the hate crimes most reported and talked about.

This also means that many different actors, including civil society actors and faith-based actors, should be involved in tackling hate crimes. An important part of enabling this **multi-agency cooperation** is to ensure the personal safety of all involved, as this kind of work can lead to personal threats and intimidation⁷.

From a post-colonial point of view, it is critical to acknowledge that **colonialism has contributed to the development of the stereotypes and prejudices** that are now fuelling hate crimes. Challenging these stereotypes and prejudices might require potentially painful national and community dialogues about how colonialism still affects the ways people see each other.



Example of Promising Practice

In Lithuania, the project **Strengthening the Response to Hate Crimes and the Language of Hate**⁸ focused on **improving national authorities' understanding and awareness** of the effects of hate crimes on vulnerable communities and their needs and expectations. The project also focused on **developing relationships** between these communities and authorities involved in law enforcement, as well as on addressing why hate crimes were under-reported. The project included a roundtable discussion with local police officers and prosecutors, along with representatives from a wide range of communities including religious minorities, migrants, LGBTQ+ and people living with disabilities. The aim was to talk about the communities' experiences of hate crimes, to increase their trust in and cooperation with law enforcement, and to make sure that the victims understood the investigation procedures. One of the outputs of the project was a practical guide on how to better understand and cooperate with vulnerable communities when addressing hate crimes.

LIMITS AND CAVEATS

- Projects focusing on addressing hate crimes need adequate **funding** for their successful implementation.
- Victims of hate crimes are only going to report them if they have **trust** in law enforcement and if offenders are held accountable.
- Plans to prevent hate crimes must also include **countering hate speech** that promotes and supports hate crimes. This includes focusing on how social media platforms are used to plan hate crimes.

3. ENDING FORCED REMOVALS TO UNSAFE OR UNKNOWN COUNTRIES

Research⁹ has shown that increasing removals might prevent some migration in the short term, but it does not significantly reduce international migration in the longer term. This is mainly because removals do not address the underlying causes and complexities of international migration. The assumption that forcing more people to return to their country of origin or transition increases public safety in countries of destination is an important part of the agenda for turning international migration into a security issue. However, research does not support this claim. Nevertheless, some countries not only forcefully remove people whose application for asylum has been declined to countries of origin with low levels of violent behaviour and structural and cultural violence; they also attempt to **forcefully return** some migrants to their countries of origin, even when these are still plagued by similar levels of the different kinds of violence that caused the migrants to leave in the first place. Some countries have also explored sending migrants who have been denied a right to stay to third countries, where the migrants have no family ties or connections. Though these practices have often been successfully challenged in courts, many politicians keep pushing for their implementation.

Moreover, as mentioned in chapter two, forcing large groups of migrants to return to their countries of origin also risks impoverishing and destabilising communities there, fuelling circles of violence that can lead to further migration. Hence an important part of a positive peace approach to migration is to **find alternatives to these harmful practices**.

One of these alternatives is **subsidiary protection**, sometimes called humanitarian protection. Subsidiary protection is an additional form of international protection that applies to a person who does not qualify for refugee status but who, if returned to their country of origin, would face a risk of suffering serious harm, including violations of their right to life and freedom.

Removals do not address the underlying causes and complexities of international migration.

Hence, subsidiary protection complements asylum in ways that account for situations where there might not be sufficient grounds to prove persecution but where a person's rights would be threatened by a situation of war, indiscriminate violence, conflict and widespread human rights violations.

WHY IT WORKS

- Subsidiary protection works because it prevents migrants, whose application to stay has been turned down, from being sent back to unsafe countries of origin or third countries to which they have no prior connection.
- Subsidiary protection offers **basic rights during a temporary stay**, which allows migrants time to consider their alternatives to being forcefully removed.

SOME POSITIVE PEACE PERSPECTIVES

From a positive peace perspective, it is first and foremost vital for subsidiary protection not only to consider the threat of direct violence, but also the threat of **structural and cultural violence**. In addition, it is important for subsidiary protection to consider the impact of **intersecting identities** on how people are affected by the context they are living in. For example, someone living with disabilities might be at greater risk if they return to their country of origin because they will not have adequate access to the right medication and services. Access to these basic rights needs to be taken into account when they are granted subsidiary protection.

It is also important to consider how the temporary aspect of subsidiary protection affects the lives of migrants and their relationships; Not knowing how long they will be able to stay might affect migrants' incentives to integrate and build important mutually beneficial relationships with the local community. Living in constant fear of being deported in the future is also likely to affect migrants' mental health. Hence, migrants living under subsidiary protection must be offered **opportunities to apply** for a status that will allow them to stay indefinitely.



Example of Promising Practice ¹⁰

In Germany, asylum seekers who have had their application rejected but who cannot return to their country of origin can get the so-called **Duldung status**. This literally means 'tolerated stay' and suspends their deportation temporarily. Though their obligation to leave remains in force, Duldung allows migrants to **reside legally for a limited period** which can be extended. However, if the situation in the country of origin improves, making it safer for the migrant to return, they can be deported before their Duldung expires. Immigration authorities can also apply cuts in benefits and ban employment to 'encourage' the migrant to leave. However, migrants who have lived with Duldungstatus" for 18 months can apply for a residence permit if they fulfil certain criteria. These criteria include being able to sustain themselves through their employment, and being able to speak German to a level where the migrant can talk about routine situations and have a basic understanding of laws and regulations. If a migrant has secured employment, their application might be considered before they have lived under Duldung for 18 months.

LIMITS AND CAVEATS

- Subsidiary protection is only **temporary**, so it leaves migrants living in limbo, not knowing if and when they will eventually be deported.
- Subsidiary protection is only offered on the basis of **risk of direct violence**. Hence, it does not consider the impact of structural and cultural violence on migration.
- Subsidiary protection often comes with fewer rights, and these vary significantly from country to country. As an example, in some countries, migrants living under subsidiary protection do not have the right to family reunification, whereas in others they do.

Possible Measures to Address Structural Violence Affecting Migration

1. RIGHT TO JUST AND DECENT WORK

One of the issues that most affects the lives of migrants, regardless of their status, is unequal access to employment, or, in some cases, its total absence. A recent study in the UK showed that 94% of asylum seekers want paid work, which is currently not allowed¹². Enabling all people to work is important both for individuals and societies. On an individual level, employment can bring income and purpose. It can also provide migrants with a place to practise the locally-spoken language, as well as to get to know their new community.

Migrants can also bring **new knowledge and skills** to the workplace and they do not only fill labour market shortages but also contribute to the national economy through taxation. They bring creativity, talent and diverse insights and perspectives. Granting all migrants the right to work, regardless of their status, can also help **shift the harmful narrative** that migrants move to countries in order to depend on state benefits.

However, granting all migrants the right to work is just the first step. It is also important to ensure that migrants do not face discrimination in the process of finding employment, and that they are treated decently and fairly at work, as enshrined in international human rights law, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

WHY IT WORKS

- Enabling access to labour markets in countries of destination increases a person's autonomy, allowing migrants to contribute their skills and knowledge to host communities. It **promotes financial independence** and a reduced reliance on social services.
- Equal enjoyment of rights at work, regardless of a person's legal status, is a key building block of societies rooted in **equality and non-discrimination**. This includes the right of migrant workers to organise, to engage in collective bargaining and to advocate for themselves.
- Greater availability of work permits that are renewable and of reasonable duration would provide **stability** for workers and employers, as well as ensuring that workers can retain mobility and independence from their employers.

SOME POSITIVE PEACE PERSPECTIVES

From a positive peace perspective, allowing migrants to work soon after they have arrived in their country of destination can be embedded in broader legal frameworks that guarantee everyone has the right to work. However, it is important to acknowledge that giving migrants the right to work is not enough to address the structural violence they experience regarding employment. Often, education and work experience gained in the migrants' country of origin are not recognised, or migrants do not have the relevant paperwork to prove their achievements. Requirements for high levels of local language proficiency can also be an important obstacle to migrants gaining employment.

Cultural violence, such as stereotypes and prejudices against migrants, can also hinder them from getting a job. Again, it is important to consider the role of intersecting identities and how they affect many other groups' access to employment. Migrants are far from the only groups who face structural and cultural violence when trying to access the labour market. Other groups with similar experiences include people living with disability and mental health problems, as well as people with specific religious identities. Hence, it is important to consider how all these obstacles can be addressed. Similarly, it is important to address the obstacles these same groups encounter once they have gained employment.



Example of Promising Practice¹³

In 2024 the government of Spain decided to give **work and residency permits** to migrants living illegally in the country. Three hundred thousand permits will be issued each year for three years. According to the country's minister for migration, the policy aims to add to the country's prosperity and cultural wealth, as well as showcase its respect for human rights. The policy also **streamlines the administrative procedures** for short and long-term visas and extends the visas provided to job seekers to a year. In addition, it improves the **labour protections** provided to migrants. This is particularly important because many of them are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation as they work in low-paid jobs. The introduction of this policy came at a time when Spain's economy was among the fastest growing in Europe.

LIMITS AND CAVEATS

- Allowing migrants to work is only a first step in engaging them in the labour market. **Structural and cultural factors** that make it difficult for migrants to find employment need to be addressed as well.
- **Equal rights** at work must apply regardless of how migrants have entered the country of destination. Actions must be taken against exploitative work practices, such as very long working hours, ill-treatment, poor health and safety provisions, or wage theft.

2. FAMILY REUNIFICATION¹⁴

Many migrants continue to be separated from their families once they arrive in their country of destination, often causing a severe sense of loss and longing and leading to mental health problems. Family separation is a particularly concern for unaccompanied children, forced to settle and grow up in a new country without their parents or primary carers, often leading to social and psychological problems. Therefore, the provision of family reunification programmes is vital for migrants' wellbeing. Family reunifications are safe and regular channels that can be used by the family members of people who have been resettled via community sponsorship schemes on humanitarian grounds, or more generally persons benefiting from some form of protection in the destination country. Family reunification pathways can also apply to family members of persons who become citizens of the country, or hold a residence permit in the country of destination, be it linked to work or other grounds.

The right to family life is enshrined in international standards. It is a key pillar of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and has led to a set of standards that oversees the reunification of migrants with their family members. Globally, family reunification remains the most used legal channel for migration. In many EU countries, people travelling for family reunification reasons account for the largest share of legal migration.

It is important for family reunification programmes to be inclusive in their scope, and for the admission processes and procedures to be simple. Applicants should be provided with adequate and accessible information about these processes and procedures, together with resources facilitating the swift processing of applications. It is also helpful if accepted family members receive information about welcome and integration services prior to their departure, helping to ensure a smooth transit from their country of origin to the country where their family member is already living.

Finally, family reunification programmes are not only important for migrants who have just arrived in their country of destination, but also to all other citizens who have relatives living abroad with whom they want to be reunited.

WHY IT WORKS

- Family reunification gives a person access to a **secure status** and long-term prospects to settle down with their family and build a new life while restoring some normality in their daily lives.
- Reunited families are systems of **mutual support**. Reunification can give individuals a sense of security, continuity and/or closure, which eases the integration process.

SOME POSITIVE PEACE PERSPECTIVES

From a gender and post-colonial perspective, it is important that family reunification programmes consider family patterns in countries of origin. For example, in many countries of origin women, but also sometimes oldest sons, are responsible for looking after parents and grandparents. Sometimes, these responsibilities also extend to uncles, aunts and cousins if they do not have any other relatives who can look after them. This might especially be the case if they are elderly or if they are living with disabilities or mental health problems. In addition, in some communities, people can be considered family without being related by blood. Hence, family reunification programmes should apply a **broad understanding of what constitutes a qualifying family member**.

It is also important to recognise that people in countries of origin might not have the same available legal paperwork proving their identity and qualifications as people living in countries of destination. This can either be because it was not provided in the first place, or because it has been lost in violent conflict or in countries of transition. Such challenges call for a participatory approach to developing family reunification programmes that includes the **perspectives and experiences of migrants**. Reflective and value-based practice with a focus on compassion, empathy, open-mindedness and curiosity can help ensure that family reunification programmes are sensitive to the needs of migrants and to the contexts in the countries of origin. They also call for an **individual assessment** that considers emotional, cultural, social and individual factors that shape the formation of family ties. This is particularly important for families where members have died, families that include caregivers with no biological link, and people with 'non-normative' sexual orientations and gender identities.



Example of Promising Practice

Several European countries have more **expansive and flexible national definitions** of family enlarging the scope of eligibility for family reunification. For example, in Finland, unmarried foster children are considered family members if they have been under the sponsor's care and custody before their arrival in Finland. An unaccompanied child can also be reunited with minor siblings if they used to live together and their parents are no longer present, either because they are missing or have died. Some level of discretion and flexibility also applies, foreseeing that a residence permit may be issued for offspring over 18 years of age, parents of the sponsor, or siblings of unaccompanied minors or adult sponsors if they are unmarried¹⁵.

LIMITS AND CAVEATS

- Separation from family members has a profound impact on **emotional wellbeing**. Long waiting times are common across the EU as a result of legal, practical and administrative barriers, leaving people worrying about their loved ones left behind and uncertain about the prospects of being reunited. Directing more resources to family reunification schemes would enable smoother, more effective and accessible procedures that are more responsive to the specific needs of reunited families.
- Despite efforts to harmonise standards throughout the EU, **processes and eligibility requirements for family reunification differ** considerably across Member States. In practice, this means groups with the same family reunification needs often face different treatment of their applications, depending on where they are located.
- The right to family reunification is being brought into question across Europe with **increasing restrictions and practical barriers** being erected as a tool to control the number of new arrivals. This may lead more people to travel through irregular channels in order to reunite with their loved ones.

3. UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE¹⁶

Another form of structural violence often encountered by migrants in their country of destination is unequal access to healthcare. Access to healthcare is a social right fundamental to realising human dignity and the capacity of every person to thrive in society. The right to the highest possible attainable health status of health is enshrined in international human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It is also a key right in multiple national, regional and European policy frameworks, including the European Social Charter and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Universal access to healthcare, irrespective of migration status or other considerations, is a fundamental precondition to exercising the right to health and other associated rights.

At the societal level, access to healthcare, in the form of preventive and emergency assistance, contributes to equality and justice by **reducing disparities**, particularly in relation to avoidable suffering and deaths caused by treatable or preventable diseases. Hence, inclusive access to healthcare is essential not only for migrants but also for all other people living in countries of destination.

WHY IT WORKS

- Access to healthcare for everyone, irrespective of legal status, has a positive impact on public health indicators, **reducing the spread of infectious diseases or epidemics**, and **increasing the overall resilience, health and wellbeing** of societies.
- Access to preventative healthcare and early treatment is more **cost-effective** than emergency interventions, meaning that universal access for all treatment options comes at a lower cost in the long run.
- Healthcare access contributes to positive peace by **reducing disparities** between socio-economic groups. When access to healthcare is denied to some groups, the social contract, which establishes that the community should support the well-being of all its members, is put into question, which in turn can affect citizens who are seen as not belonging or not deserving of assistance, such as minority groups.

SOME POSITIVE PEACE PERSPECTIVES

From a positive peace perspective, inclusive access to healthcare is important not only for migrants, but also for everyone, especially for minority groups in the country of destination. It matters not only in terms of health, but also in terms of relationships between groups. When access to healthcare is denied to some groups, this has a negative impact on the relationship between them and other groups. From an intersecting identity perspective, it is important to consider how an inclusive universal healthcare that includes everyone, irrespective of their identity, can be achieved. A judicial right to healthcare is not sufficient if other obstacles are not addressed. For example, a judicial right is not going to make any difference if there are insufficient medical staff and facilities. It is also important for the **resources** available to match the needs of the population.

From a gender perspective, this means that medical staff need to be familiar with women's health issues. Similarly, it is essential for medical staff to be experienced in identifying and treating conditions to which certain groups of people are more prone, such as sickle cell disease. Migrants must be provided with an interpreter when needed so that they can communicate effectively with health professionals. Therefore, to ensure accessibility to healthcare for all, it is important to understand the needs of individuals and groups. This can be realised through participatory processes that engage different groups of people in identifying and mitigating obstacles to access to healthcare.



Example of Promising Practice

Spain remains a **model for universal access** at the European level thanks to the tireless efforts and mobilisation by civil society. In 2012, a legislative change established a more restrictive approach to access, sparking a wide-reaching campaign led by medical professionals. That year, the REDER¹⁷ network was founded (Network for Complaints and Resistance against RDL 16/2012) with the aim of reporting cases of medical discrimination and exclusion throughout the territory and ultimately reinstating universal access. In 2018, Spain adopted a national law that significantly expanded healthcare access to all residents, including undocumented migrants. However, despite successive promises from the government, irregular migrants continue to experience challenges in gaining access to healthcare in Spain. A wide-reaching coalition of civil society, including lawyers, administrative staff and medical professionals, is still working to influence the parliamentary process to amend this law.

Civil society strategies that mirror the Spanish example have emerged in several European countries. In Germany, a **reporting obligation** exists for all public service providers to inform migration authorities when an undocumented person comes into contact with them. In effect, this means undocumented migrants avoid the public health system. Gesellschaft für Freiheitsrechte¹⁸ leads strategic litigation and advocacy efforts to ensure unrestricted access to healthcare for undocumented migrants across Germany.

LIMITS AND CAVEATS

- The right to health is not limited to access to healthcare services – assessments should include underlying conditions and determinants of health, such as provision of adequate education, housing, food, and healthy and safe working conditions.
- Migration policies themselves can be a contributing factor to poor health for migrants, exposing them to violence, exclusion and neglect in a generalised atmosphere of fear. Therefore, plans to guarantee unrestricted access to healthcare should be part of more comprehensive changes in systems and structures.

Possible Measures to Address Cultural Violence Affecting Migration

1. ACKNOWLEDGING THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF MIGRATION¹⁹

In many countries of destination, politicians and the media portray migrants in ways that entrench cultural violence. In the worst cases, nationalist politicians have claimed that migrants are ‘invaders’ who threaten the existence of European cultures and countries and that communities with different religions can never be united. The media often focuses much more on migrants arriving through irregular routes than on those arriving via regulated pathways. The focus is often on what migrants supposedly receive rather than what they contribute. For example, migrants have been portrayed as unwilling to work and scrounging on the welfare state, without any mention of the many migrants who diligently pay taxes and go to work every day. Migrants have also often been assessed on the basis of their financial contribution rather than on the many other ways they enrich their communities. In many places, migrants continue to be portrayed in very negative ways that create or reinforce destructive stereotypes and prejudices, promoting a narrow-minded and un-nuanced understanding of migrant communities. This underpins racism and discrimination against migrants.

In contrast, positive representations of migrants by politicians and the media can help to shift public opinion toward a much more positive understanding and a greater appreciation of all the positive contributions they make. This can help migrants feel seen, heard and valued, and can lead to better relationships between communities.

WHY IT WORKS

- Countering negative narratives in the media and by some politicians with evidence-based research can encourage people to be sceptical of what they are being told.
- Sharing positive stories about migrants helps, because it increases understandings and appreciation of migrant communities, supporting the development and the strengthening of relationships between communities.

SOME POSITIVE PEACE PERSPECTIVES

From a positive peace perspective, it is important that the positive stories about migrants also showcase their diversity, including their intersecting identities. As an example, it is important to include migrants from religious minorities, LGBTQ+ communities, visible minorities, and migrants living with disabilities and mental health problems. The stories must not inadvertently reinforce stereotypes about people with these other identity markers. In addition, these projects must be carefully planned and implemented through a participatory process, where migrants are included in decisions about how they are being portrayed and represented.

At the same time, it should also be possible for the challenges and potential negative impacts of international migration to be openly discussed in safe spaces. The aim must be to challenge the polarisation of views on international migration that is so often prevalent. Views on international migration are often presented as either being for or against. Instead, positive stories must provide a much more balanced view that reflects both advantages and disadvantages. This means moving away from treating conversations on international migration as a debate where one party is right and needs to convince the other person about the rightness of their position. Instead, **dialogues** that carefully explore different perspectives, advantages and disadvantages are needed.



Example of Promising Practice

It Takes a Community²⁰ was a global campaign facilitated by the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), highlighting the contribution of migrants to the development of stronger and more inclusive communities. The campaign was part of a developing movement **countering misinformation and anti-migrant attitudes** by showing the many positive impacts migrants have on their communities across the world. The campaign included a wide variety of stakeholders, such as governments, civil society organisations, businesses and youth networks. It disseminated migrants' authentic accounts of their lives and their contribution to creating welcoming and inclusive communities. The campaign also encouraged migrants from around the world to share their own stories and messages on social media. It included a free online toolkit in different languages, helping people to share messages that promote inclusion, solidarity and collective action. Finally, the campaign asked people to pledge to welcome all people, including migrants, to their communities, and to make them all feel included and valued. It included a commitment to talk to family and friends about the positive impact migrants can have on communities.

LIMITS AND CAVEATS

- Campaigns highlighting positive stories about migrants need to be embedded in **broader processes of change**, focusing on issues such as the lack of journalists with a migrant background, especially at the editorial level, and the stereotypical way migrants are often portrayed in the media.
- Campaigns highlighting positive stories about migrants need to be part of a **continuous effort to change negative narratives** about migration. An important step in this process is for politicians to talk about migration in terms of opportunities and enrichment, rather than burden and threat.
- Campaigns also need to highlight how **uncritical media** enables politicians to spread negative stories about migrants.

2. ADDRESSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MIGRANTS²¹

Discrimination, driven by stereotyping and prejudices, is a very important part of the cultural violence to which many migrants are exposed on a daily basis. Migrants are discriminated against when they are unable to enjoy their rights and are treated unequally because of who they are or what they believe. Discrimination can be based on identity markers such as sexual orientation, caste, class, ethnicity, nationality, gender, language, religion, belief, age or health status. It can be embedded in many ways, including in law, policies, procedures and practices.

Examples include unequal treatment by employers, which prevents migrants from being promoted or getting a higher salary. It also includes unequal treatment by authorities, such as the police, resulting in migrants being disproportionately exposed to harmful or degrading practices, such as 'stop and search'. Furthermore, migrants can also be discriminated against when carrying out everyday tasks, such as opening a bank account or finding accommodation. Discrimination can happen in any part and phase of life, and it can have a devastating effect on the individual, leading to physical and mental health problems. It also enhances **inequality and division** between groups.

Because discrimination is so ingrained in the current system, ending it requires a comprehensive and long-term approach that focuses on all the different factors that perpetuate it. Important first steps in this process are to abolish discriminatory laws and replace them with laws and policies based on diversity, equitability and inclusion. Another essential step is to examine practices in areas such as employment, education, healthcare, and political and judicial systems in order to determine how they discriminate and against whom. In addition, raising awareness about discrimination and calling out discrimination when it is witnessed is critical. Most importantly, it is essential to challenge and change the stereotypes and attitudes that justify discrimination.

WHY IT WORKS

- Addressing discrimination works because it makes people aware of the devastating effects of discrimination on people's everyday lives and the ways in which it also damages relationships between groups.
- Addressing discrimination helps individuals recognise their own stereotypes and prejudices.

SOME POSITIVE PEACE PERSPECTIVES

From a positive peace perspective, addressing the many ways in which people can be discriminated against, including the less visible ways, is essential. For example, it might be easy to identify discrimination if a nightclub refuses entry to groups of people who share the same identity markers. However, it might be more difficult to prove that discrimination was the reason behind someone not being granted a job interview as opposed to other potentially legitimate reasons, such as the level of qualifications.

It is also important to consider the impact of people's intersecting identities and the ways in which people with more complex identities often face more significant impact from discrimination. For example, a migrant living with disabilities is likely to face more discrimination than one who is not living with disabilities. A migrant living with disabilities might also be more affected by discrimination based on their disabilities than discrimination based on their migrant background.

The effect of discrimination on relationships between individuals and groups should also be considered. It is not enough to challenge and change stereotypes and prejudices; it is also essential to focus on how relationships can be developed or rebuilt.



Example of Promising Practice

The German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency²² initiates research on discrimination in different areas. For example, the agency has commissioned research on sexual harassment in employment and the risk of discrimination when using certain algorithms. It also informs the public about anti-discrimination legislation and the importance of upholding human rights, including the right to equal treatment. The agency supports people who have been exposed to discrimination based on identity markers, such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual identities. It additionally offers legal advice on people's rights in cases of discrimination. This includes information about court deadlines and processes in cases of discrimination, including what kind of evidence is needed to prove it. The agency also facilitates contact between the victim and the perpetrator, if the victim requests it, with the aim of negotiating a mutually agreed settlement. Furthermore, the agency facilitates contact with appropriate expert help, if needed.

Example of Promising Practice

The Greek Forum of Migrants²³ organises an annual protest against discrimination on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Participants include more than 100 civil society organisations and representatives from communities and groups affected by discrimination. These includes migrants, Roma, LGBTQ+, religious minorities, and people living with disabilities and mental health problems. They also include defenders of human rights who are targeted because of their work. The event includes a ceremony where an individual or organisation is given an award for their work on human rights and anti-racism.

LIMITS AND CAVEATS

- Discrimination against a wide variety of people is rife in many communities and countries. Therefore, a very comprehensive approach is needed that carefully identifies the many kinds of discrimination and how they can be addressed.
- Changing the stereotypes and prejudices that underpin discrimination is a **long-term process** that requires sustained commitment and investment.

2. PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION²⁴

In socially cohesive communities, all people, regardless of their identity markers, feel a sense of inclusion, participation, acknowledgement and belonging. Hence, homogeneity is not a precondition for socially cohesive communities but a shared respect and appreciation for social diversity is. Therefore, in socially cohesive communities, it is assumed that everyone is willing to cooperate and work together, regardless of their differences. There is a shared sense of connection, unity, trust and goals. Thus, developing socially cohesive communities is an important part of **addressing the inequality and discrimination** that lead to the social marginalisation and exclusion of migrants and other minority groups.

According to The Commission on Integration and Cohesion of the UK, the following objectives are the foundation for developing social cohesion:

- There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a **future vision** for a neighbourhood, city, region or country.
- There is a strong sense of an individual's **rights and responsibilities** when living in a particular place. People know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in return.
- Those from different backgrounds have **similar life opportunities and access to services and treatment**.
- There is a strong sense of **trust** in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny.
- There is a strong **recognition of the contribution** of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common.
- **Strong and positive relationships exist** between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and in other institutions within neighbourhoods.

WHY IT WORKS

- Developing socially cohesive communities works because these communities value and appreciate **diversity**, which can help prevent and counter cultural violence against minority groups, including migrants.
- Developing socially cohesive communities works because they focus on **developing and maintaining relationships** between diverse people, which can help prevent and address cultural violence.

SOME POSITIVE PEACE PERSPECTIVES

From a positive peace perspective, it is important that all efforts aimed at developing social cohesive communities be **sensitive to the local context**. One of the ways this can be achieved is by adopting an inclusive and participatory approach to the scoping, design, planning and implementation of activities aimed at improving social cohesion. It also means listening carefully to communities in order to achieve a thorough understanding of what a socially cohesive community means to them, and facilitating the development of a shared and inclusive vision for the future. Rather than seeing local people, including migrants, as participants, it is essential to see them as **change-makers** who can initiate and lead their own projects focused on improving social cohesion. It is especially important to identify which members of the community have traditionally been seen as insiders or outsiders, and to focus on building relationships within and between different community groups.



Example of Promising Practice

The **Human Library**²⁵ was initiated in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2000. The Human Library is a learning platform where people who defy stereotypes act as open human books and share their experiences with other people, known as readers. The aim is to **challenge stigma and stereotypes through personal conversations and dialogues** with people who are different, helping them understand how much they also have in common. The human books are volunteers with personal lived experiences which they are happy to share openly and about which they are willing to answer questions in a safe dialogical space. This offers the readers the opportunity to ask difficult taboo questions and that challenge their own stereotypes and prejudices without being judged. The project aims to **bring people together** who would not normally converse, to **counter discrimination and conflict**, and to **build bridges** across cultural, ethnic, religious and social divides in order to help create cohesive communities. The project hosts these dialogues in a wide variety of places, including libraries, educational institutions, companies and festivals. The project also provides diversity, equity and inclusion training to companies. It operates in more than 80 countries across the world.



Example of Promising Practice

“**Goda Grannar/Good Neighbours**²⁶” is an integration project based on an inter-religious cooperation between the Stockholm Mosque, the Katarina Church and Islamic Relief in Sweden. The project includes different activities, such as a language café, a baby group and a counselling service that offers personal legal advice and information about how to gain access to services and institutions such as schools, healthcare providers and job centres. The project welcomes all migrants, regardless of their status, and draws on personnel and volunteers from the two congregations. The project also includes a friendship programme that pairs migrant families with volunteer families. The purpose is not just to help migrants integrate, but to provide opportunities for people with different ethnic and religious backgrounds to come together and support, trust and learn from each other. The participants are urged to respect each other’s differences and to be open to new cultural experiences and understandings in order to create a more inclusive, humane and peaceful community.



Example of Promising Practice

Initiated in 2005, **City of Sanctuary**²⁷ is a growing movement focusing on welcoming people seeking sanctuary in the UK. The movement includes not only cities, but also schools, universities, libraries, art institutions and local councils and community groups, all of which work to make their spaces more welcoming and inclusive. The idea is not only to foster inclusivity, solidarity and compassion for migrants, but also to build mutually beneficial relationships between different groups of people. The organisation provides practical training, facilitates initiatives, events and activities, shares promising practices and inspires people to act. It also grants awards to organisations that work to become welcoming spaces and thereby contribute to developing cohesive communities.

LIMITS AND CAVEATS

- In order for local efforts aiming at developing cohesive communities to fully succeed, **national policies and practices need to be supportive.**
- If all people are to be able to feel welcome in their local communities, national politicians must change their negative narratives about migrants and other minority groups.

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