

# Conclusion

The successful implementation of a positive peace approach to migration requires **challenging** and **changing** many of the ways migration is approached, thought of and talked about. It requires acknowledging the many harmful practices that migrants are currently exposed to and the need to end them. It means recognising that currently violent behaviour, and direct, structural and cultural violence are widespread, causing devastating effects on people's lives globally. This leads many people to see migration as their only coping strategy- their only option. If these different kinds of violence are not thoroughly addressed, they will continue to force people out of their homes. Successful implementation also requires seeing migrants for what they are: fellow human beings, not a threat to anyone's security. They are human beings who mostly did not want to leave their country of origin, friends, families and communities, but were forced to do so because of the circumstances they found themselves in. Human beings who hope to create a better life for themselves and their loved ones. Often, human beings who dream of returning to their country of origin one day.

## Miguel's Story

My life back in Cameroon was not a great one. I grew up very poor and life in the village was hard. I couldn't afford school. If I had work, I would not have left my country. But when things are not going well and you feel stuck, you are forced to leave for better opportunities elsewhere, no matter the cost. It's not a matter of choice, it's a matter of survival.

I am happy with my new life in France. I have all the things that I used to dream of: a job, a house, a car, access to public and social services — I am comfortable. I may not be at home, but I feel at home here. I spend most of my time working, because for me, work is a luxury and something I take seriously. I don't take for granted that I came here and found a way to gain employment and earn a living.

It's a shame that one has to travel thousands of kilometres to someone else's land to create a better life. I blame our leaders for most of these problems and if I had the chance to exchange words with African leaders, I would probably need an eternity.

It's actually very simple: create opportunities for young people. Make sure our young children are in school and not out selling in the streets. Empower our girls and women. Provide access to services like health care. We should take these basic issues as human rights.

I tell my family and friends at home the truth about life here. I tell them about the difficulties of integrating and succeeding in this society. I feel it is my responsibility to be honest about the conditions, so they can make informed decisions. At the same time, I have been where they are now, and I know how trapped one can feel.

## Lina's Story

My journey in the UK started 17 years ago when I came to Scotland as a student. After finishing my studies, I was not able to return home to Syria because of the war that devastated my country.

What people often don't realise is that the decision to stay here in the UK wasn't an easy one. I came as a student and was proud of myself and my achievements. I could have returned home, but I certainly wouldn't have taken my son back to a country torn apart by war. No one in their right mind would risk their child's life.

When I think about my life back in Syria, I remember how wonderful it was. I spent 24 years there and they were the best years of my life. Syria was a peaceful and safe country. The country's multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious richness made it a great place to live in and dream of a good future.

Staying here in the UK came with a lot of challenges. I had to prove that I deserved refuge and protection in the UK. I had no job, no support system and no family, but at least there was peace and a better future for my son. Staying here meant that I was fending for myself and trying to find a good life for my family. I've hit rock bottom and had to pick myself up so many times. With everything happening back home, I was living in between worlds. I was neither fully here nor fully there, parts of me were still at home. I was always trying to reconcile the two worlds.

I was also trying to belong and "integrate" – a word I am not very fond of. The thing about integration is that it's often promoted as a one-way process while integration should be both ways; it's not solely the refugee's responsibility to integrate. Host communities should take a step towards the marginalised groups so that marginalised groups can take a step towards them and meet somewhere in the middle.

There are so many biases against and stereotypes about refugees. These stereotypes are about the way they look, speak, dress or even about their lives back home.

It's important to remember that being a refugee is not an identity or a label, but rather a temporary state, an experience. It really is a transition from one thing into another. It changes you. Anyone could find themselves in that position one day.

For refugees and marginalised groups to challenge myths and stereotypes, they need to be given a platform to share their stories and speak for themselves. Stories are a human right and a responsibility – but most importantly, stories are a privilege that the majority of refugees do not enjoy.

If people want to inform themselves about refugees, they need to listen to different stories, the refugees' stories.

A positive peace approach to migration brings hope and a vision of a world where people and communities work together to eliminate all kinds of violence, replacing it with socially integrated and cohesive communities where everyone feels welcome and valued, and can live a decent life in peace. A world where politicians create processes and policies that support these essential local efforts. A world where millions of people do not see migration as their only strategy to cope with the situations they find themselves in. A world where migration is a voluntary choice that people can freely make. A world where people who choose to migrate can do so safely and in an organised way, and be welcomed and valued in their new community and country. A world where people who have migrated can safely return to their country of origin if that is what they want to do. A world where migration is seen as a normal part of life.

This handbook has offered many examples of the kind of processes, policies, projects and practices that are needed to create such a world. Such a world is possible if everyone listens to each other, shows each other compassion and empathy and works together towards creating it.

