

EUROPE



I GET  
YOU

Promoting best practices to prevent racism  
and xenophobia towards forced migrants  
through community building

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Luca from Italy (L) and Mohamed,  
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## I GET YOU EUROPE

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# Foreword

*I Get You* has its roots in Jesuit Refugee Service's experience of accompanying refugees all over the world. In Europe, this commitment to be together with forced migrants has led us to launch initiatives such as Communities of Hospitality, which highlights the successful social inclusion of forced migrants across ten European countries. Local citizens share their own homes, bringing people together to overcome prejudices and to support migrants in their own social empowerment.

The research confirms that community building initiatives are an opportunity to directly welcome those newcomers to our communities. These initiatives aim to create spaces for both forced migrants and local citizens to meet and to exchange experiences. But the desire to serve this population is also intended to provide refugees with the basic needs they require to become self-sufficient in their new societies. These services should enable and empower migrants to become independent agents in their own lives.

JRS and its partners have learned that it is not sufficient to only address discrimination and racism towards migrants through enacting laws that establish specific offences for racism and

hate crimes, but it is also necessary to prevent racism by challenging public perceptions and promoting encounters between migrants and locals to uphold people's dignity. Therefore, some JRS partners have engaged in national public awareness campaigns. One such example is the Hospitalidad campaign of SJM Spain which promotes a culture of hospitality. Similarly, JRS in Croatia launched their "Christmas lunch with a refugee" campaign in 2016 to encourage social interaction between local communities and refugees and asylum seekers in Croatia.

The magnitude of the call we are facing reminds us insistently that in addition to the heart, our efforts must be guided also by intelligence. The experiences analysed in this research offer numerous insights, both for practitioners and for policymakers. To advocate for forced migrants is not merely rhetorical, it rather involves concrete experiences that humanise us all, and requires the adoption of public policies that can sustain the efforts of so many for integration to be effective.

Thank you again to all who have taken part in *I Get You*. Through everyday actions of kindness and friendship we know its spirit will live on.

**José Ignacio García SJ**  
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

# Glossary of Terms

04

**Accompaniment:** A direct and personal approach of individual interaction, cooperation and companionship between people, which places a value on human dignity and in the long-term leads to mutual empowerment.

**Asylum Seeker:** Someone who has made – or intends to make – an application for international protection.

**Community Building Initiative (CBI):** Local initiative that spreads a culture of welcome, promotes interculturalism and provides activities and spaces where forced migrants and local citizens interact. Such initiatives are unique and creative in how they carry out their work. All CBIs have these basic characteristics:

- Bring together local citizens and refugees
- Have regular meeting times in set locations
- Promote social inclusion of refugees into the host society

**Forced Migrant:** This is not an official or legal term. However, JRS Europe uses the definition to describe people who are not refugees according to the 1951 Geneva Convention but who are embraced by the “de facto refugee” definition found in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Hence, for us, a forced migrant is a person who cannot return to his or her country of origin because of human rights violations (or well-founded fear of the same), armed conflict, erroneous economic policy or natural disasters.

**Refugee:** According to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees adopted by the UN in July 1951, a refugee is a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution, for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside his or her country of origin and is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to return to it.

**Social Inclusion:** A process which ensures that those at risk of societal exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It implies that people have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights. According to the United Nations, “Refugees join the many other minority groups who are domestic targets of exclusion.”<sup>1</sup>

**Integration:** For JRS integration is a dynamic, two-way process—between the forced migrant and the society that receives them— of social interaction to overcome separation between people with the objectives of reducing economic and social marginalization and supporting more cohesive, inclusive and robust societies.

**Racism and Xenophobia:** The belief in race, colour, descent, religion or belief, national or ethnic origin as a factor determining aversion to individuals or groups.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Silver, Hilary. UN/DESA Working Papers. The Contexts of Social Inclusion. October 2015. [http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2015/wp144\\_2015.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2015/wp144_2015.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> European Commission. Proposal for a Council Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia. 28 November 2001. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52001PC0664:EN:HTML>

# Introduction

Across Europe, local citizens and organisations have opened their doors to people in search of safety – forced migrants and refugees – sharing meals, learning languages and simply being together, what JRS has termed Community Building Initiatives (CBIs). CBIs spread the culture of welcome in Europe, creating inclusive communities where everyone is valued. Jesuit Refugee Service Europe (JRS Europe) and its partners created *I Get You* to learn more about the work of these local communities in 9 countries of Europe and to share the results of the observations and research. ***I Get You* has seen that Community Building Initiatives promote the social inclusion of forced migrants thereby countering racism and xenophobia in society.**

*I Get You* is a joint research project and awareness raising campaign funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union, with co-funding from the Open Society Foundation and Porticus Foundation. In Europe, JRS has long believed that integration happens from the start. JRS Europe is the lead coordinating organisation for *I Get You* with partners in 9 European Union Member States: Belgium, Croatia, France, Malta, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Romania, Spain. *I Get You* was implemented by the JRS national country offices in each of these 9 countries. Each national partner was responsible for conducting the research in their country.

JRS defines integration as a dynamic, two-way process—between the forced migrant and the society that receives them— of social interaction to overcome separation between people with the objectives of reducing economic and social

marginalization and supporting more cohesive, inclusive and robust societies. *I Get You* has seen that social inclusion is an essential step for the holistic integration of forced migrants and local communities.

In the wake of an unprecedented rise in the number of people coming to Europe, the need for effective and holistic integration is more acute than ever. It is JRS's belief that *I Get You* brings CBIs into focus by demonstrating successful examples of integration through the testimonies of those involved in the initiatives and a study of their activities, characteristics and the similarities that exist between their practices. In this way, *I Get You* can reflect on and learn from CBIs to spread best practices for working with local citizens and forced migrants to counter racism and xenophobia and promote social inclusion and positive encounters between people.

In June 2016, the European Commission released its *Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals*<sup>3</sup> in response to the increases in the number of people arriving to Europe and building upon the *Common Basic Principles*<sup>4</sup> for immigrant integration published in 2004. The plan asserts that integration is the precondition for an inclusive and prosperous society in the long run and calculates that the costs of non-integration will be higher than the cost of investment in integration policies. The key areas identified by the plan to facilitate integration were: language learning, education and training, labour market access as well as skills and qualifications acquisition and recognition, and access to basic services such as housing and medical care. In addition,

<sup>3</sup> European Commission. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals. 7 June 2016.

[https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication\\_action\\_plan\\_integration\\_third-country\\_nationals\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Justice and Home Affairs Council of the European Union. Common Basic Principles. November 2004.

[http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/common-basic-principles\\_en.pdf](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/common-basic-principles_en.pdf)

it is provided that particularly vulnerable groups should have access to specialised services.

In response to the release of the *Action Plan*, JRS Europe and a group of eight other Christian organisations working on asylum and migration in Brussels published *Comments on the EU Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals*<sup>5</sup> in February 2017. This policy paper finds that while the plan proposed by the Commission provided a comprehensive way forward, implementing the plan continues to prove challenging. Therefore, effort needs to be concentrated around fostering inclusive employment strategies, social protection, labour market integration, pre-departure, pre-arrival and post-arrival measures and education. Above all, the paper recognises, “The integration of migrants in Europe must be based on dialogue and shared rights and responsibilities, ensuring full participation in accordance with the law, empowerment and inclusion of everyone in society.”<sup>6</sup> Finally, migrants, although disproportionately affected by, or at risk of, societal exclusion and marginalisation, possess much internal capacity and resilience to become successful and contributing members of their new societies if they are from the very outset included and given proper support and resources.

Our main findings show that CBIs encourage encounters between locals and forced migrants and that these initiatives promote unique models of collaboration between citizens and local authorities. Firstly, encounter between locals and refugees is key to change the way people perceive each other and to combat racism through the grassroots level. Secondly, small-scale, locally based initiatives do not only change the way people look at each other but also the way citizens and administrations interact. Thirdly, the best results to foster social inclusion for forced migrants and refugees are achieved when administrative authorities and citizens work together to build inclusive societies where everyone is valued.

Through the research, *I Get You* has witnessed a paradigm shift in the protection, reception and inclusion of forced migrants and refugees in Europe. What is striking is that civil society

and CBIs are currently implementing many of the activities and services foreseen in the Commission’s Action Plan. They have filled gaps for welcoming forced migrants in communities from the first moments of reception to longer term integration support. They have done this by mobilising volunteers, creating innovative ways of structuring and financing their initiatives, and creating networks of support and service provision in their local communities where forced migrants are received.

### 1.1 CONTEXT: RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA TOWARDS FORCED MIGRANTS

In 2008 the Council Decision on Racism and Xenophobia stated, “Racism and xenophobia are direct violations of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, principles upon which the European Union is founded and which are common to the Member States.”<sup>7</sup> This lays down that in Europe, we are firmly opposed to all forms of hate or intolerance and will take action to correct and prosecute it as criminal behaviour punishable under national law. However, over the past few years, Europe has seen the rise in discourse taking the form of racist or xenophobic speech from various sources and forums, which is particularly directed at migrants. From politicians to media commentators, many public figures have used racist speech and nationalist propaganda, which encourages xenophobic sentiments across several Member States. The message of extremists and populists who resist welcoming refugees is spreading into mainstream political discourse.

During the so-called refugee crisis in late 2015 and early 2016, the negative rhetoric about the threat that a perceived influx of migrants posed to national security and ethnic identity rose. Scholar David Miller presents a tense and heated public debate on migration driven by a poorly informed public, that overlook the benefits that migration can have where opposing views to migrants “stem ultimately from prejudice, or even simple racism.”<sup>8</sup> The predominantly negative images

<sup>5</sup> Christian Group. Comments on the Commission Action Plan for the Integration of Third Country Nationals. 9 February 2017. <https://jrseurope.org/assets/Publications/File/JRS-CG-integration-paper.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> (pg. 1)

<sup>7</sup> The Council of the European Union. Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. 28 November 2008. (pg. 1).

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:328:0055:0058:en:PDF>

and narratives portrayed through the sections of the media had detrimental consequences for how society understood and perceived migrants arriving to Europe seeking protection. Exposure to these stereotypes often influenced readers and viewers to support policy measures directed against migrant minorities and has led to discrimination against them, often subtle, sometimes going as far as physical violence. In a report for UNHCR, researchers documented the use of such discourse by the media in several different European countries.<sup>9</sup> Key findings showed that discourse was largely dependent on and varied across national context, a key factor for media was the degree to which asylum and migration is subject to political contestation and that the rise of the far-right was unevenly reflected in media coverage.<sup>10</sup>

The research of *I Get You* has also been timely in that it complements recent research conducted and reports published by Caritas Europa<sup>11</sup> and the European Network Against Racism (ENAR).<sup>12</sup> As Caritas Europa pointed out in their report *Welcome: Migrants Make Europe Stronger*, much is covered in the Action Plan that focuses on the need to counter racism and xenophobia, “but little is foreseen to give states the responsibility for educating migrants, as well as educating the receiving community about its multicultural richness and need for social cohesion.”<sup>13</sup> *I Get You* has seen that this is where CBIs and civil society have stepped in. That CBIs have taken on the role of educating both locals and forced migrants about each other by simply bringing people together in spaces of encounter, thereby improving the social relations of communities.

ENAR’s shadow report *Racism and Discrimination in the Context of Migration in Europe*, further highlights through research the occurrence of racism and discrimination towards forced migrants

in EU Member States. Specifically, their research has found: there has been an increase in ethnic profiling and discriminatory policing of migrants; racist attacks against refugees and migrants are on the rise as well as attacks to the places where they are accommodated; Muslim and African migrants have been particularly discriminated against.<sup>14</sup>

In its 2017 report, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) acknowledged, “Racist and xenophobic reactions to the arrival of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the EU, which had marked 2015, continued unabated in 2016. These included hate speech, threats and hate crimes. Where perpetrators could be identified, they were most often – but not exclusively – found to be extreme right-wing sympathisers.”<sup>15</sup> Amidst economic crisis, most xenophobic political parties challenge immigration policies as a whole and portray migrants as unwelcome competitors for jobs, housing and public goods. However, policies that seek to create a hostile environment for forced migrants have failed in their objectives to dissuade persons in need of protection from coming to Europe.

At times, the perception of difference between local populations and migrants can be used as an excuse to explain away patterns of inequalities as inevitable outcomes of ‘cultural differences’ to justify discrimination.<sup>16</sup> In many countries, migrants are painted as ‘the other’ who are seen as a threat to a unified ethnic identity and discriminated against because of what makes them different from the dominant group of mainstream society. To identify ‘the other’ is to designate them as outsiders and allows for discrimination in a broad sense from indirect to institutional to unintentional.<sup>17</sup> The visibility of the migrant ‘others’ who arrive with their own customs, values, tradition and cultures is often described by policymakers to be in direct conflict with the population of the receiving countries. It is

8 Miller, David. *Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration*. Harvard University Press. May 2016. (pg. 2).

9 Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies: Report prepared for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. *Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries*. December 2015. <http://www.unhcr.org/56bb369c9.pdf>

10 (pg. 10-11)

11 Caritas Europa. *Welcome: Migrants Make Europe Stronger*. December 2016. [http://www.caritas.eu/sites/default/files/welcome\\_2016.pdf](http://www.caritas.eu/sites/default/files/welcome_2016.pdf)

12 European Network Against Racism. *Racism and Discrimination in the Context of Migration in Europe: ENAR Shadow Report 2015-2016*. [http://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/shadowreport\\_2015x2016\\_long\\_low\\_res.pdf](http://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/shadowreport_2015x2016_long_low_res.pdf)

13 (pg. 23)

14 (pg. 3)

15 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Fundamental Rights Report 2017 - FRA Opinions*. “Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.” (pg. 79).

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/annual-reports/fundamental-rights-2017>

# “I cannot change the war, I cannot do anything about the influx of migrants, but I can change the life of one person.”

BRIGITTE

UP TOGETHER, BELGIUM

1

08

this visibility expressed through clothes (such as a headscarf, salwaar/kameez, or saris), religion, language, and food which marks these groups as ‘others’ or outsiders. FRA also reported that Muslims “experienced more hostility and intolerance across the EU in 2016, increasingly perceived as terrorists or sympathisers of terrorism,” with political actors exploiting these perceptions for their own agenda, despite there being “no concrete evidence that terrorists systematically use the movements of refugees to enter the EU.”<sup>18</sup>

Over the past year, examples of racist and xenophobic attitudes towards migrants abound. From members of a group of civilian ‘militia’ and the French police entering the camps at Calais last year, renowned for their slum-like inhumane conditions, and motivated by racism brutally beating migrants,<sup>19</sup> to arson attacks on hostels and shelters in Leipzig, Döbeln, Salzhemmendorf and Berlin, Germany where asylum seekers were accommodated<sup>20</sup> - the prevalence of racist and xenophobic attacks, hate speech and marches was on the rise in 2016.

In the *Action Plan for the integration of third country nationals*, “Fighting discrimination and promoting a positive approach to diversity, as well as combating racism, xenophobia and in particular hate speech, both through the implementation of relevant EU rules and national legislation and through targeted policy measures, are and

should be an integral part of effective integration policies.”<sup>21</sup> The European Union has also recently played an active role in denouncing instances of racism and xenophobia. As FRA asserted, “Promoting equal treatment and combating racism and discrimination is an important element of immigrant integration policies and efforts.”

Ultimately, Europe now stands on the edge of two pressing challenges: to receive and welcome forced migrants into Member States in the interest of protecting human rights and dignity and to seek promising practices and strategic policies for the social integration and inclusion of migrants into the fabric of societies. These strategies must build community between the migrants and local citizens in order to promote the civic and economic engagement of newcomers at all levels while countering racist and xenophobic attitudes and policies.

## 1.2 PROMOTING BEST PRACTICES TO COUNTER RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

JRS Europe and its partners implemented the *I Get You* research on the basis of investigating and analysing what makes CBIs successful in the services and activities they provide for local European citizens and forced migrants. To do this, *I Get You* focuses on the experience of the CBIs themselves – by allowing those who participate in them to articulate through questionnaires and

16 Wrench, John; Rea, Andrea and Ouali, Nouria. *Migrants, Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market: Integration and Exclusion in Europe*. Migration, Minorities and Citizenship. Springer, 27 July 2016. (pg. 236).

17 (ibid. pg. 2)

18 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Fundamental Rights Report 2017 - FRA Opinions*. “Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.” (pg. 80).

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/annual-reports/fundamental-rights-2017>

19 The Guardian. *Police and ‘militias’ attacking refugees at Calais, says charity*. 13 February 2016.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/13/police-civilian-militias-attacked-migrants-calais-charity>

20 Spiegel Online. *Officials Concerned by Growing Far-Right Networks*. 2 September 2015.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/neo-nazi-asylum-attacks-lead-to-fears-of-racist-networks-a-1050760.html>

21 (pg. 13)

22 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Together in the EU: Promoting the participation of migrants and their descendants*. March 2017. (pg. 28). <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/migrant-participation>



in-person interviews the different criteria that have made them successful and the aspects of their work that have been more challenging.

From the beginning, *I Get You* has had two main objectives:

1. Identifying and promoting best practices used by CBIs to prevent racism and xenophobia against forced migrants through encounter between people and social inclusion.
2. Highlight the voices and experiences of forced migrants and local citizens involved to raise awareness about all the positive impacts a culture of welcome has.

What follows is a presentation of the results gathered from the 315 CBIs mapped and the further analysis with 126 CBIs who participated in detailed one-on-one interviews with the JRS partners. While the CBIs represent a diversity of initiatives, in the end, they are a small sample compared to the wide-spread reach of civil society involvement in emergency support, reception and holistic service provision to people seeking safety in Europe.

The *I Get You* research shows that there is a growing movement among local European citizens to welcome refugees, to fill gaps in reception and integration services to migrants and that

experiences of encounter broaden people's perspectives towards one another and leave all people- young or old, European or newcomer, (atheist or religious)- more open to building new relationships with people who are perceived as different from them. By extension, these small experiences of interpersonal relationship building, become opportunities for new, diverse communities to emerge based off of values of hospitality.

The following report presents the findings on a European level, after examination of the data gathered across the 9 countries involved in the project. This report represents the overall methodology for the research designed by JRS Europe and implemented by the partners, a presentation of the main data findings, guidelines for best practices inspired by CBIs and recommendations for policymakers at European, national and local level. Also included is a special feature section on the *I Get You* campaign and videos - the public awareness raising face of the project.

In-depth national *I Get You* reports, by the 9 partners are available separately. Each national report reflects the structure of the European report, but presents the research that was carried out in each specific country. The findings, testimonies, guidelines and recommendations in each national report are country specific and were designed by the partners who wrote the report.

📷 Frans Wandern is a walking initiative organised by Syrians who have brought the idea of their friend Fr Frans van der Lugt to Germany. (Photo: C. Ender / JRS Germany)



# Methodology

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## 2.1 BACKGROUND

*I Get You* was coordinated by JRS Europe in partnership with JRS national offices in 9 EU member states: Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Spain.

JRS Europe and its project partners designed *I Get You* in response to a call for proposals by DG Justice opened in December 2014 and because of its previous experience accompanying and working with forced migrants through social inclusion projects across Europe. At that time of the projects conception, there were not as many refugee welcome initiatives as there were at the height of the so-called refugee crisis or there are today. Therefore, the project was conceptualised to focus only on Community Building Initiatives (CBIs), that is, those initiatives that promote interaction and encounter between forced migrants and local citizens to create a culture of welcome and social inclusion in Europe. There are, however, many great initiatives that provide support, emergency aid and holistic services to forced migrants in Europe that are not covered under the scope of this research.

The initial stages of the project commenced in October 2015. During the Summer of 2017, JRS Europe and the project partners undertook the writing of the Europe wide and national reports, respectively. The *I Get You* results will be disseminated to the public at the European conference in December 2017 in Brussels as well as national events held throughout the Autumn of 2017 in the Member States.

Apart from the research phases of the project, two significant moments for the public awareness

campaign came with the campaign's official launch on April 20, 2016 – two months before World Refugee Day – and with the release of ten campaign videos on World Refugee Day 2017.

## 2.2 DEVELOPMENT

The development of the methodology relied on the expertise of the Lead Methodology Committee while the practical implementation of the methodology through the research was carried out by the Steering Committee.

### 2.2.1 Lead Methodology Committee

The Lead Methodology Committee is made up of an external research consultant and members of the JRS Europe core staff. JRS Europe worked with Dr Julia Inthorn<sup>23</sup> of the University of Mainz. Dr Inthorn reviewed the methodology and data collection tools and suggested the use of the Delphi Methodology. JRS Europe had two in person meetings in Brussels with Dr Inthorn as well as frequent communication over email and Skype. The first in person meeting took place in December 2015 which focused on strengthening the objectivity of the methodology to identify best practices and to revise the quantitative questionnaire used for the mapping phase of the research. The second in person meeting took place at the end of June 2016, which was focused on providing a framework for quantitative data analysis using SPSS statistical software and to revise the qualitative questionnaires used for the interviews with CBIs. Moreover, Dr Inthorn has provided, upon request, technical advice for the research on data analysis and the evaluation of the qualitative data.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Julia Inthorn is a Senior Researcher and Coordinator of the Master Course in Medical Ethics at the Institute of History, Philosophy and Ethics of Medicine, University Medical Centre Mainz.



### 2.2.2 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is made up of the JRS Europe core project coordination staff and one representative from each of the national partners. The committee had three meetings in Brussels over the lifecycle of the project and will meet briefly for a final time after the evaluation of the project is complete. The first Steering Committee Meeting was held in January 2016, and was used to develop the quantitative research and Mapping Phase. The quantitative data collection and analysis continued until the second Steering Committee Meeting, which was held November 2016 to review the results of the Mapping Phase and to develop the qualitative research phase. Finally, the third Steering Committee Meeting was held in May 2017, and was used to analyse and review the results of the qualitative data collection, adjust to limitations of the project implementation and prepare the final report and conference.

### 2.3 PHASES OF THE RESEARCH

For the research, JRS Europe and its partners applied a mixed-methods sequential design to the data collection and analysis. Over the two years of project implementation, the research was divided into two complementary phases: first the Mapping Phase followed by the Qualitative Interview Phase. The intention of these two phases was to first provide a broad picture of existing CBIs in terms of numbers and statistics and then to take a deeper dive to learn

📷 Saddam (L), a refugee from Syria, gets his first surfing lesson from Miguel in Nazare, Portugal. (Still taken from the Portuguese / Get You video: Denis Bosnic / JRS Europe)

*“These are people fleeing the war, who need affection and someone to welcome them with quality. If it were the other way around, I’d like them to do the same for me.”*

JOÃO

SANTA CASA DA MARINHA  
GRANDE, PORTUGAL

more about specific CBIs that emerged from the Mapped sample. The gathered quantitative data enabled the selection of a representative sample (depending on country size) to conduct interviews with during the qualitative phase. The main goal being that the CBIs were objectively selected for interviews and reflected the diversity and geographic spread of the quantitative data set.

### 2.3.1 Mapping Phase

The *I Get You* website served as the main point of data collection as people who worked with CBIs or the general public could 'Nominate an Initiative' by filling out the electronic quantitative questionnaire. JRS Europe intentionally chose to conduct the nomination and data collection through an open online questionnaire so CBIs that are not connected or known to JRS could participate.

Next, the data was analysed using SPSS statistical software on a country by country basis as well as on the European level to get a picture of what CBIs were doing on the national level and to get a comparative view for Europe.

The results of the quantitative phase were published in a European and 9 national Mapping Reports in May 2017. These reports are available on the *I Get You* website in electronic versions.

### 2.3.2 Qualitative Interview Phase

After gathering a broad picture of the work of CBIs in Europe, the qualitative interview phase of the research involved taking a closer look at particular strategies, methods, values and organisational and structural aspects used by CBIs.

The *I Get You* partners conducted, structured individual interviews, with staff, volunteers and forced migrants involved in CBIs from December 2016 to April 2017. By having interviews with three different people involved in a single CBI, enabled triangulation of the data gathered.

Following the interviews, the partners entered all of the interviewee responses into an evaluation grid and undertook an analysis of the data. First, they formed a small evaluation committee with at least two other colleagues familiar with the project goals. Then, the evaluation committee assigned numerical scores to interviewees responses for each question. Finally, CBIs' total scores were summed in the grid to select the initiatives with the highest overall scores. These CBIs represent the overall best practice initiatives that *I Get You* has found, in the case of larger countries there are five best practice initiatives, whereas smaller countries have three.

📷 Syrian rapper, Ali, performs at Timisoara cultural festival in Romania. He says Romanians made him feel welcome. (Still taken from the Romanian *I Get You* video: JRS Romania / JRS Europe)



## 2.4 ESTABLISHING CRITERIA THROUGH DELPHI

In order to develop criteria against which the CBIs could be evaluated, the Lead Methodology Committee chose to employ the Delphi Methodology. The Delphi Methodology is a tool to establish consensus on a topic through the input of stakeholders or experts. The committee chose to engage this methodology in order to overcome inherent bias to ensure that CBIs would not be assessed solely against JRS values, but rather that they would contribute to the European added value of I Get You by establishing the criteria based on a wide range of expertise in various disciplines and that could be applied to CBIs working in different national contexts. The Delphi experts included three people who are members of JRS staff along with seven outside experts who were scholars, practitioners or policy experts.

The Delphi experts were:

### JRS:

- Chiara Peri (JRS Italy)- Project Manager and Coordinator of International Relations and Interreligious Dialogue
- Elisabeth Razesberger, (JRS Belgium)- Detention Visitor to Family Detention Units
- Mark Cachia (JRS Malta), Communications Officer

### External:

- Anne-Claire Orban (Brussels, Belgium)- Project Coordinator and Research analyst at Pax Christi focused on issues of Islamophobia
- Chiara Marchetti (Milan, Italy)- Professor at University of Milan focusing on Race, Ethnicity and Politics, Human Rights, and International Relations
- Michael Collyer (Sussex, UK)- Professor of Geography at Sussex Centre for Migration Research and International Development
- Nando Sigona (Birmingham, UK)- Senior Lecturer and Deputy Director at Institute for Research into Superdiversity University of Birmingham; founding editor of Migration Studies journal and an editor of The Oxford Handbook on Refugee and Forced Migration Studies

“Isn’t it ever so beautiful and inspiring when people who are different in so many aspects – be it religion, culture, nationality – walk together the same path, meet the same obstacles, share smiles and a common spirit?”

MAGUI

FRANS WANDERN, GERMANY

- Thomas Jézéquel (Brussels, Belgium)- Policy Advisor on Migration Integration and Asylum at Eurocities
- Udo Clement Enwereuzor (Florence, Italy)- Senior Adviser on Migration, Minorities and Rights of Citizenship in COSPE
- Melissa Siegel (Maastricht, the Netherlands)- Professor of Migration Studies and Head of Migration Studies at the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance

The Delphi Methodology utilized the experience of a panel of experts and engaged them in a process to come to gradual consensus on ten criteria, the definitions of the criteria and indicators against which to measure the criteria through four rounds of surveys and feedback. The four rounds of the surveys were broken up into the following areas:

1. Gather general information about the link between social inclusion to counter racism and xenophobia to develop hypothesis.
2. Assessment and clarification of initial eight criteria, addition of two more criteria.

**“We spent 15 months in refugee shelters in Belgium and Spain. Now, for the first time in a long time we are calm and thankful. We are eagerly learning Spanish and I am happy to be able to cook again and share a bit of my history and tradition with my new friends.”**

HAIFA

HOSPITALIDAD, SPAIN

3. Validating the definitions of criteria and identifying indicators that should be used for evaluating a CBI against each of the criteria.

4. Division of quantitative and qualitative indicators and weighting of criteria.

Through the Delphi Methodology the hypothesis of I Get You, that CBIs promote the social inclusion of forced migrants thereby countering racism and xenophobia in society, was formally approved.

The criteria and their definitions that have been agreed on by the Delphi experts are:

### Strategies

- **Interaction and Encounter:** Strategies used by CBIs to give voice to the experience of forced migrants and create space for forced migrants and local citizens to meet and exchange experiences over a period of time.
- **Participation:** A strategy used by CBIs to include forced migrants in society by facilitating access to the various aspects of public and civic life. This strategy leads to the individual empowerment of the forced migrant.

### Methods

- **Awareness Raising:** A method used by CBIs to promote interest among the general public about issues faced by forced migrants with the goal of changing perceptions and diffuse a positive message through various media channels.

- **Education:** A method used by CBIs to disseminate experience-based knowledge and promote a well-founded discourse with local citizens, especially among children and young people, about the causes and subsequent effects of forced migration. CBI can also use this method to form collaborations with educational institutions (i.e. schools, universities, research institutes) to disseminate this discourse.
- **Support and Service Provision:** A method used by CBIs to provide a forced migrant with the basic needs they require to become self-sufficient in their new society. These methods should enable and empower migrants to become independent agents in their own lives.

### Values

- **Interculturalism:** A value that a CBI should promote to encourage the integration of cultural elements in order to increase respect and understanding for those cultures that are different from one's own. Alternatively, does the CBI create opportunities for the valuing and inclusion of the forced migrant's culture into the culture of the local society.
- **Dignity:** A value that a CBI should uphold to preserve and respect the humanity, rights and personal story of the forced migrants it serves.
- **Hospitality:** A value that a CBI should uphold to foster a welcoming attitude and environment within the CBI itself and extend this attitude and environment to the larger society.

## Organisational and Structural Aspects

- **Sustainability:** An organisational and structural aspect that a CBI should uphold to be effective and visible in its mission and delivery of services over time.
- **Innovation:** An organisational and structural aspect that a CBI should uphold to be creative and transformational in its methods, ideas and approaches and how it extends this transformation to the rest of society.

Finally, the criteria were ranked numerically on a scale of 100 to ease the eventual evaluation of the CBI against them. In this way, a CBI that was particularly strong in the value of Hospitality, for example, would receive a score of a 10, whereas one that was not as strong in that criteria would receive a lower score.

The Delphi experts agreed that the criteria would be scored in the following manner:

Interaction & Encounter	13
Participation	15
Awareness Raising	10
Education	10

Support & Service Provision	10
Interculturalism	10
Dignity	10
Hospitality	10
Sustainability	7
Innovation	5

## 2.5 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

### 2.5.1 Quantitative Questionnaire

A quantitative mixed-methods questionnaire was developed by the Lead Methodology Committee in December 2016 and presented to the project partners for revision and approval at the first Steering Committee Meeting (SCM). The questionnaire was available on the homepage of the I Get You website as well as in hardcopy form for the national partners to distribute directly to the CBI or assist them with completing it in person. The questionnaire was available in each national language depending on the preference of the person who would fill it out.

The questionnaire gathered quantitative information about the CBI, through directed questions focusing on: gathering basic demographic information about the CBI and organization, general demographic information, general information

📷 Brigitte from Brussels (L) and Flavia, a forced migrant from East Africa, watch Netflix together in Brigitte's apartment. Brigitte hosts Flavia as part of the Up Together project run by JRS Belgium. (Still taken from the Belgian I Get You video: Denis Bosnic / JRS Europe)





📷 A girl tries out a bike that has just been repaired as part of an initiative in Plauen, Germany. (Still taken from the German / Get You video: Denis Bosnic / JRS Europe)

about the beneficiaries (refugees, asylum seekers, forced migrants), general characteristics of the host community (local citizens), and general characteristics of the CBI.

### 2.5.2 Qualitative Questionnaire

The criteria developed by the Delphi experts were finalised and approved in the Second SCM

by the project partners. From these criteria, the qualitative questionnaire was developed—firstly drafted by the JRS Europe team and the Lead Committee and then finalised through a workshop setting during the Second SCM.

The qualitative questionnaires sought to collect comprehensive information about the CBIs and how they carried out, or not, their activities in line with the criteria established by the Delphi experts. The data gathered consists of direct quotes and transcripts of the interviews that were translated in a summarised way from the language the interview was conducted in to English.

Finally, after the interviews were completed, the national partners established small evaluation teams made up of other members of the staff

who were knowledgeable about the project. These teams ranged from 2 to 5 people depending on the country. The evaluation was done in an excel model by allocating points to interview responses based on a numerical rating system of how well a particular answer adhered to the particular criteria. The CBIs that were rated the highest by receiving the most overall points from the evaluation team were ultimately those that are represented as the top best practice examples of CBIs in each country.

In each country, the procedure employed by the national partners varied according to their context and how available the CBIs were. Once the mapping survey was available online, partners bolstered the data collection by conducting outreach via email, phone and word of mouth to contacts, existing partners and known initiatives to complete the mapping survey. On a whole, partners contacted CBIs identified from the mapping phase that were either representative of the larger sample or had something particularly interesting to offer to the research. In order to conduct the qualitative interviews in person and onsite with the CBI, national project partners travelled across their countries to all of the 126 initiatives that were interviewed.



## 2.6 LIMITATIONS

Overall, the problems encountered in the quantitative and qualitative phases of the methodology have been different with the limitations of one phase not affecting the other phase. Limitations also varied across Member States depending on the national context or particularities of CBIs who participated in the research.

Outreach to CBIs across the countries proved more difficult than expected. The website was foreseen to be the main platform for the CBIs to complete the quantitative questionnaire with promotion through social media. However, project partners needed to be more active in dissemination of the questionnaire and in some cases directly contact initiatives known to them to complete the questionnaire. In some cases, project partners filled out a hard-copy paper version of the questionnaire with the CBI during an in-person or phone meeting with a contact person. The project partner then inputted the data into the electronic survey themselves.

For the qualitative interviews, project partners were not always able to conduct the three separate interviews as intended for the data triangulation. This was because three distinct people (staff

person, volunteer, forced migrant) from a CBI were ultimately unavailable for the interview at the pre-arranged time. In most cases, this applies to interviews that would have been conducted with the volunteer or forced migrant as the time during which they would be physically present at the CBI varies while on the other hand the staff member is usually present. In a few cases, this limitation was because the CBI was unwilling to distinguish among the roles of people involved as in some there are forced migrants who act as volunteers for certain initiatives whereas others see the local community as the main beneficiaries of their actions instead of the forced migrants. In almost all cases, interviews with a staff member were conducted.

*I Get You* was not able to provide for translators or interpreters. This then was left to the discretion of the project partners who in many cases used their own resources to translate questionnaires and interviews into several languages. Given the wide range of languages- 9 altogether: English, French, Dutch, Croatian, German, Italian, Romanian, Portuguese, and Spanish- in which the project was carried out, in addition to all of the native languages spoken by the forced migrants who were interviewed, some details or nuances of implementation and resulting data may have been lost.

📷 Ricarda (2-R) has coffee with a Syrian family in Nazare, Portugal. (Still taken from the Portuguese *I Get You* video: Denis Bosnic / JRS Europe)



# Data Findings

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## 3.1 SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS FROM MAPPING PHASE

Across the 9 countries in Europe involved in I Get You, 315 community building initiatives were mapped. The CBIs that were mapped broken down by countries are: 62 in Italy, 55 in France, 50 in Germany, 37 in Belgium, 31 in Spain, 31 in Portugal, 20 in Malta, 15 in Romania and 14 in Croatia.

The main findings have shown that most CBIs across Europe are small in scale and size but have impactful scopes combating racism.<sup>24</sup> Other findings include:

- Participants are mainly working age adults - forced migrants and local citizens.
- Very few initiatives focus on children or the elderly.
- The main countries of origin of forced migrants who participate in CBIs are Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Gambia and Mali.
- 55 percent of the forced migrants involved in CBIs have been in Europe for over one year, while 45 percent have been in Europe for less than one year.
- Among the forced migrants involved in CBIs, 61 percent are men while 39 percent are women.
- Among the locals involved in CBIs, 55 percent are men while 45 percent are women.
- 70 percent of the volunteers are host country nationals (including citizens with migratory background), while 20 percent are from other EU countries and 10 percent from third countries.
- A variety of activities and services for people are covered such as skills training, leisure

activities and intercultural activities.

- On average initiatives operate on budgets of 25,000 Euros or less. Those that have larger budgets tend to be CBIs with operations on a national or regional level.
- Public funding was 53 percent in Romania, 39 percent in Portugal and 36 percent in Croatia.
- Germany, France, Spain and Italy had over 50 percent grassroots funding.

## 3.2 RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PHASE

From the qualitative interviews conducted with 126 CBIs, *I Get You* has assessed the information gathered against the criteria established by the Delphi experts.

### 3.2.1 Interaction and Encounter

Interaction and encounter are seen as essential criteria for the success of CBIs because it highlights the positive experiences that local citizens and forced migrants have had when they have come together and formed interpersonal relationships. The majority of CBIs seem to operate on one to one interactions between locals and forced migrants thereby creating social links and encouraging mutual respect between participants.

Interviewees self-reported, without specifically being prompted, that encounters were an important step to integration as well as countering racism. This is because, for local citizens, it challenged them to reflect on their own stereotypes and prejudices that they previously had, though unconsciously, towards refugees and forced migrants. For instance, in Belgium, all interviewees reported that being part of a CBI changed the way that they perceived 'the other' and opened

<sup>24</sup> For a deeper look at these and other statistics please refer to the European and national Mapping Reports available on the I Get You website: <http://www.igetyou-jrs.org/>

their eyes to realities they did not previously know existed.

Local citizens, who are volunteers or staff members of CBIs, expressed that while politicians tend to highlight fears and negative narratives about migration, local citizens are able to make changes through interpersonal levels. They see that the work of volunteers in CBIs is the first step to deal with discrimination in local communities. This is because their interactions and encounters with forced migrants have reduces their fears and also gets many people involved on a community level with one another.

For forced migrants, through participating in CBIs, they have also changed their previously held perceptions of local citizens. This is because the majority of interactions forced migrants had with locals before participating in CBIs that formed their perceptions were from contacts with public authorities. Ali from the CBI Duo for a Job reflected on his relationship with his mentor Xavier, "Before, I would have said 'ah the Belgians, they are not good,' but Xavier's friendship and support allowed me to build a life here, to feel good, and thanks to him, I discovered another aspect of Belgium."<sup>25</sup> On the contrary to authoritarian, procedural or service-based relationships, that at times can be negative or stressful experiences, the relationships that forced migrants have with the locals that participate in CBIs is positive, mutual and reciprocal. Forced migrants also expressed that establishing social connections with locals leads one to feel like a part of the wider community and believe that is will lead to more effective long-term integration in their host society. Regular, even daily, mutual recognition is vital for forced migrants to feel welcome in society. In addition, *I Get You* has seen that it is also pleasing for other members of the broader local community, such as the elderly or students living far from home.

While the criteria of interaction and encounter were somehow present in all CBIs, those CBIs that incorporated mentor-like models into their structure where a local citizen is paired with a forced migrant to provide assistance and accompaniment to one another seemed to have more impactful responses from those involved. Indeed, it seems that the level of success of the

CBI- whether or not people are involved, active and continue with their participation- depends on the quality of the relationships that is built between the participants. This quality is improved when there is a structured way of building these relationships incorporated into the initiative. More widespread attention and recognition is now being given to local initiatives that focus on such encounters as evidenced in Belgium were financial awards and recognition was recently given to CBIs that involved the pairing of people in mentor-like relationships.

On the other hand, informal or one time activities also contributed to people's general feeling of enjoyment or well-being and then, by extension, the ease in which they could relate to others. These activities, which include things like celebrations, community festivals, group dinners or Christmas parties where people are able to mingle and meet casually while at a light, joyous or spirited event, also contributes to promoting encounters between different people who would not otherwise meet in daily life. Therefore, it appears that a balance of structured relationships formed through mentorship, coaching, buddies or duos and non-structured activities and events are the best way to promote interaction and encounter between people.

### 3.2.2 Participation

In their recent report *Welcome: Migrants Make Europe Stronger*, Caritas Europa recognised participation as a "lynchpin of integration."<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the Delphi experts recognised the importance of participation in all levels of society- something that is facilitated by first feeling welcomed and included into it and provided with equal opportunities. The CBIs that ranked high on the criteria of participation focus on exchange and interaction between locals and forced migrants and the empowerment of forced migrants.

For forced migrants, they identified that their participation in CBIs play a big role in helping them to become a part of the local community and feel included. Several forced migrants interviewed expressed that learning the local language is what really helps in meeting people

<sup>25</sup> From qualitative interview in Belgium.

<sup>26</sup> (pg. 22)

and feeling part of their host society. Indeed, depending on the person, many see learning the local language as a barrier to be overcome while some see language attainment as a milestone on their path towards inclusion. Forced migrants participate more when they function as volunteers themselves in the CBI who help others to learn the language or gain other cultural and social knowledge about the host society.

Additionally, forced migrants have seen how their own active participation in CBIs has helped others to become involved. They stressed that migrants should be allowed to self-determine their own level of participation in the CBI and not be obliged to participate. For example, one forced migrant involved with the Migrant Integration Centre in Brasov, Romania describes her experience, "At the beginning we met very often, but now that I have established a life on my own we meet once a month. The interaction helped because I became more confident as I knew who to ask what I did not know. Now I am being asked for help by other migrants and can provide good information to other community members."<sup>27</sup>

For local citizens, participation means having a sense of purpose in achieving goals for themselves and their local communities by welcoming refugees into their communities. Volunteers all expressed that they see their participation in CBIs as a long-term one. Staff members of CBIs also reflected that the volunteers they work with have a high level of commitment and reliability. It seems that when people are involved and have a sense of purpose behind their work, they participate more.

For both forced migrants and locals, having a sense of belonging to the wider community is reinforced through participating in the CBIs. Another theme that came through several times under this criterion was that CBIs that do not exclusively focus on helping refugees and forced migrants but also provide support and services to other vulnerable or marginalised groups were effective at promoting participation. This is because, the interviewees felt these types of CBIs strengthen social links and make the wider communities more inclusive in general.

### 3.2.3 Awareness Raising

It was clear, across countries involved in *I Get You* and the CBIs that were interviewed, the way that awareness raising activities were carried out varied greatly. Mostly, this is because such activities are linked to the size, capacities and resources available to CBIs. Smaller CBIs rely on the participants themselves to share information about the activities and work with their families and friends. While well-established initiatives, rely on social media and informative events to recruit volunteers and raise awareness about their activities to forced migrants.

Most CBI do not have a clear strategy or targeted stakeholder group with which to raise awareness, but without any such strategy use social media, newsletters, flyers, posters and a website to publish information about their activities. Some CBIs rely on national programmes and government institutions to develop awareness raising programs for them. Other CBIs have developed face-to-face awareness activities in parishes, health centres, and financial departments as a way to spread the word about their work, mission and services. The CBIs with the most resources have promoted conferences, events and concerts as a medium to raise awareness. Josip, a volunteer with the Welcome Initiative in Croatia, said, "I like to get involved in the campaigns and activities that are bringing the topic of refugees closer to younger populations, and I believe that this has a positive effect, which is visible when people, after some public presentation, contact our organisation for more information or decide to volunteer with us."<sup>28</sup>

In all CBIs, volunteers feel like they have become ambassadors within their own communities for the cause of forced migration. These volunteers describe how their involvement in a CBI has positively changed the attitude of their friends and family towards refugees, but others express their difficulties to 'justify' their work towards close friends and family.

In some countries, CBIs opt not to engage in awareness raising activities so as not to subject forced migrants or volunteers to media exposures. This is especially the case when choosing to share, or not share, posts on social media that directly expose people. While it is acknowledged that

<sup>27</sup> From qualitative interview in Romania.

<sup>28</sup> From qualitative interview in Croatia.



📷 Neighbour Martine, helps Manuel, a refugee boy from Iraq, to learn French in her home in Taize, France. (Still taken from the French / Get You video: Denis Bosnic / JRS Europe)

awareness raising, through sharing people's stories, testimonies and photos, promote the human interest side of CBIs, some find it equally important to shield people who may be living in vulnerable situations from potential hate speech or internet trolls.

### 3.2.4 Education

People interviewed for *I Get You* believe that education is an important aspect of preparing the host society, starting from a young age, to welcome refugees and forced migrants into their communities. However, most CBIs do not have the resources or expertise to provide systematic awareness raising outreach to schools and to young people to promote education. The few CBIs that do focus on education as part of their activities, implement these activities in an effective way.

One of the best examples *I Get You* found is the School without Racism in Belgium, which organises workshops in secondary schools that equip children with knowledge to better understand migrants in order to prevent prejudices and racism. Schools provide important reference points for awareness raising and education should start from a young age. Another example comes from Portugal where CBIs involve entire school communities in welcoming

newly arrived forced migrants, including students, parents' associations, and alumni in activities. This project has especially focused on involving young members of the community in activities to promote understanding among them and because the forced migrants welcomed in the schools are of the same age.

While in Italy, a programme run by JRS Italy called Windows- Stories of Refugees, puts priority on children learning directly from refugees about their stories. Windows engages these encounters with local school communities by bringing forced migrants to speak to students to share about their experiences and tell more about the context and current conflicts going on in their countries of origin. During the interview, one of the coordinators described how listening to their experience also creates visible empathy in the children. One of the refugee involved confirms that the experience encourages students to learn more about forced migration saying, "I like meeting students, and I love their questions because they show they are curious to know more."<sup>29</sup>

### 3.2.5 Support and Service Provision

Most CBIs arose in response to voids in public service structures and they fill the gaps of the

29 From qualitative interview in Italy.

services that public authorities do not satisfy. These voids could be in providing services directly or helping people to navigate complicated social service systems that is difficult to a newcomer to do on his or her own. The gaps that CBIs fill were usually decided upon after conducting a needs assessment of public service structures or hearing from people continually in what areas such gaps were.

*I Get You* has seen that for many forced migrants, they first come into contact with CBIs when they need some sort of assistance, such as help finding accommodation, applying for a job, a place to learn the local language or for legal aid. The common ground for all forced migrants is that once they receive support in these vital areas, they are more free to engage in relationship building, leisure and recreational activities that the CBI might offer. Needing some sort of service, is what brings forced migrants in the door, but the environments and relationships that they find and build within the CBI is what encourages them to return.

The way that local citizens engage in providing services to migrants is by providing knowledge of local networks and opportunities to help people find sustainable housing and work. *I Get You* has seen that many volunteers work as language tutors or teachers in various initiatives. Through working with forced migrants in CBIs, volunteers come to understand how hard it is to overcome bureaucratic difficulties of settling in a new country. They see the challenges for migrants in navigating local systems and applying for services. Most volunteers end up feeling frustrated by these hurdles and express that policymakers do not support forced migrants to be integrated or them to be successful volunteers in their work. This was especially the case in Germany.

It is unclear, at least through the research of *I Get You*, whether these frustrations motivate people to take the next steps, such as through advocacy, to work towards changing these systems or getting policymakers to support them. On the other hand, national networks that some CBIs are involved in, such as the Welcome Project of JRS France and the Platform of Refugee Support (PAR) structure in Portugal, are essential for unblocking bureaucratic barriers in access to areas such as social security, finance and health services that many forced migrants face.

### 3.2.6 Interculturalism

The value of interculturalism is not a specific or systematically pursued goal of CBIs but rather a consequence of people spending time together and getting to know one another better. Most do not have specific projects that focus on cultural exchange but take for granted that there is an exchange of cultures. Space and time are needed for intercultural exchanges to occur. CBIs acknowledge that cultural elements contribute to differences in how people form relationships

In some cases, volunteers expressed that working in a CBI was the first time that they had dealt with people whose cultural background was different from his or her own. People who participate in CBIs need to overcome challenges in regards to the cultural differences between each other, such as in ways of communicating. These challenges have led to growth and understanding rather than being barriers for people. Learning other people's cultural codes gives people the opportunity to establish respect and confidence in relationships. Forced migrants feel that CBIs give space to the culture of forced migrants in their initiatives. This may be because many CBIs reported they take cultural differences into account when planning activities. Seeing interculturalism as a cross-cutting value that underlines their work, some CBIs organise more specific cultural events. Some of these events are focused around food, visiting mosques, attending religious festivals and having Christmas parties.

In Lisbon, intercultural exchange happens through the Renovar a Mouraria Association where forced migrants act as tour guides in the city centre for people interested in local culture and history. In this way, the migrants have learned more about Portuguese customs and traditions from local tour guides and are now sharing this knowledge with visitors to the city. In Italy, a particular case was also made for the way that CBIs provide a space for interfaith dialogue. They found that there is a deep interest and mutual friendship that develops when people share their knowledge of their religion with each other. This is because people work together around the boundaries of their religion and share customs and practices together. People gained respect for each other when exchanging about their religious practices, when previously such practices may have evoked suspicion.

### 3.2.7 Dignity

For many CBIs, the criterion of dignity is embedded in their principles, values and mission without specifically or overtly being a point of focus. People who were interviewed expressed that dignity was found in the strong emphasis of mutual respect displayed by the CBI with which they were a part. Local citizens saw that dignity was related to treating forced migrants with respect, valuing them and listening to them. These are important aspects of creating a culture of respect and openness in CBIs because several forced migrants mentioned during their interview that they initially found it hard, in general, to ask for assistance or help. In this regard, a strong point for CBIs is that they strive to meet people where they are at personally, in order to provide them with the best possible assistance and accompaniment.

*I Get You* saw that CBIs that employ social workers better succeeded in being able to truly empathise with forced migrants who come to them looking for assistance than those that did not. These CBIs also strive to encourage forced migrants to not perceive themselves as 'victims' but rather as agents in their own lives. Here though, a tension exists between actively empowering people and encountering people who may not be as comfortable with or ready for the concept of empowerment for various reasons, such as trauma they may have undergone or differences in cultural concepts.

The feelings of dignity and mutual respect that CBIs try to embed throughout the initiative was also felt by forced migrants who expressed that they go to activities and meetings precisely because they feel that their dignity will be respected there. This was also seen as a crucial first step towards integration because, for forced migrants, having their basic needs met and feeling safe proved to be vital to feeling comfortable and included in a new place. An example of a way a CBI does this can be found in Croatia where forced are involved in workshops with the help of volunteers to repair bikes. Hamzah, a refugee involved, says, "Having a bike gives me the feeling of independence and free movement, I feel a bit important now, and I will keep and maintain my bike well."<sup>30</sup>

Some forced migrants were involved in awareness raising activities of the CBI, such as giving talks at schools or providing written testimony for campaigns. In these cases, forced migrants felt a sense of dignity because their story was given a place of importance in both the overall work of the initiative and contributed to spreading new experiences in the host society.

### 3.2.8 Hospitality

Many of the CBIs *I Get You* has heard from, were started by people wanting to promote a more generous culture of welcome in Europe. Therefore, we see hospitality as a value that again underpins the mission and principals of most CBIs. This was strongly evident in Belgium where people who started CBIs, or those who volunteer with them, were driven by a strong desire to actively contribute to what they perceived as a challenge to welcome refugees and create conditions for them to stay. Hospitality was spread when local citizens, staff and volunteers wanted to make forced migrants feel more like a part of their local community. In Spain, there is a strong link between hospitality and feeling like one is 'part of the family.' For example, Abdul, involved in the Hospitalidad project in Madrid expressed that the CBI was not only helping him but also "it's a family for us because the first day we got here, we met Mariana, and now she is family."<sup>31</sup>

There was a common sense of welcome both among the local citizens and forced migrants interviewed. People saw that spending one's free time to help others is, in itself, an expression of hospitality. Because all people felt welcomed and well received in CBIs, they kept returning to it week after week. The level of personal service and accompaniment people received through CBIs was stressed by many of the forced migrants and how friendly and positive the attitudes were of the locals that they met. Others expressed how hospitality is not related to how much someone has to give, but how he or she perceives his or her level of involvement in tangible actions that have a positive contribution to society.

A particular aspect of hospitality that came up again and again was cooking together or sharing a meal together. Sharing food and cooking for one

<sup>30</sup> From qualitative interview in Croatia.

<sup>31</sup> From qualitative interview in Spain.

another were associated with hospitality because inviting friends for dinner have important symbolic, and even sacred, origins for many people across cultures. Forced migrants especially consider cooking activities important and valuable and felt included both in the CBI and in the local society when there was space for activities that involved sharing food.

### 3.2.9 Sustainability

Through the CBIs interviewed, *I Get You* has seen that the sustainability of the initiative is dependent on the kind of support that the CBI provides. This is because CBIs that are more service oriented tend to focus on the professionalisation and efficiency of the initiative, for example, while CBIs that coordinate leisure activities value flexibility and the low cost of the activities can enable smaller initiatives to continue.

CBIs agree that their organisations need to be well managed and coordinated, and many CBIs have expressed that the way that they do this most effectively is by providing structured support and training to their volunteers. Managing and organising the volunteer teams within CBIs has provided a higher quality of support and assistance to the people the CBIs seek to serve. Training in areas such as cultural competency, burn-out prevention and developing boundaries also seemed to be helpful for CBIs that wanted to

support volunteers. Supporting volunteers with adequate resources is important, especially when the volunteer first starts with the CBI, in order to maintain his or her enthusiasm and energy about the project over time.

In addition to the kind of support provided, the sustainability of CBIs also depended heavily on the national context within which the CBI was operating. Since *I Get You* first began mapping CBIs in March 2016, the number of CBIs tend to be growing in countries like Germany and Belgium but diminishing in Malta, Croatia and Romania. Therefore, it seems that the number of refugees residing in a country does not affect the level of support that the country provides. The presence of CBIs could be seemingly conditioned by the number of refugees and forced migrants living in the country. Many CBIs in Germany that were established as grassroots initiatives in 2015 are now undergoing processes of formalisation and professionalisation to expand activities or give more structure to areas such as management, administration and the collection of monetary donations. We have seen in Germany that the response of civil society started strong and has remained strong over time due to the involvement and positivity of locals and volunteers and the continued number of people arriving.

The flexibility of some CBIs have allowed them to be adaptable in the way they work with people

📷 Sadou a forced migrant from Senegal looks on as people take the food he has cooked as part of the Taste of Home project in Zagreb, Croatia. (Still taken from the Croatian *I Get You* video: JRS SEE / JRS Europe)





“Here you can be completely accepted for who you are. Come to the game and you will feel the feelings that are slowly disappearing in the world: the unity and love.”

SADOU

ZAGREB 041, CROATIA

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in changing contexts. Not all CBIs started out working with refugees, such as the Autremonde association in France, but have accepted to do so by welcoming and tailoring their own activities to refugees. CBIs that have always focused on serving broad target groups in communities have succeeded in providing steady support and activities. In Autremonde, they run both a program for people living in precarious situations in society and a programme for migrants. These two programmes share common cultural activities, but when the staff realised that two groups involved held some prejudices about the other, they started “accueil de jour” (daily welcome). At the beginning of every day both groups have tea, coffee, and play cards, over time this simple activity has started to unwrap those preconceived prejudices and make people more open toward one another.

Funding, or lack thereof, plays a role in whether or not a CBI will be able to continue operations and actions in the future. Projects that receive European funding, such as the CBIs in Portugal that are under the PAR structure and work with relocated refugees, have less of these worries for the years that the programmes were running; however, in this case questions arise as to the future of the relocation programme after 2017.

### 3.2.10 Innovation

Of all of the Delphi criteria, innovation was perhaps the most difficult for the members of CBIs interviewed to identify with or to find examples of. What emerged, though, is that many thought that the simplicity of CBIs was in fact their most innovative element because simple projects tend to work well, responding to the needs of people and communities. Consensus seemed to be reached that traditional ways

to ‘manage migration’ that are big in scale, expensive and complex do not work to create valuable social links in communities in the ways that CBIs do. In Malta, Spark 15, which creates spaces for dialogue between refugees and local youth, acknowledged the need for creativity in their approach. Mohammed, one of Spark 15’s founding members explains, “It cannot be done through traditional and formal ways, but by organising events, music sessions and sports activities, which will attract members from different communities, to be and work together.”<sup>32</sup>

An interviewee in Belgium expressed that the CBI in her community prompted locals and newcomers alike to simply “say hello when meeting on the street.” While not revolutionary by any means, in societies that are increasingly closed, private and alienating, these simple day-to-day gestures and meetings of people seem to make a difference.

Another interesting aspect of CBIs is the way that they attempt to overcome the distinctions between beneficiaries and service providers. For example, in Arte Migrante in Italy, both local citizens and forced migrants declared that they were beneficiaries and participants at the same time. While this example also speaks to the dignity with which CBIs strive to uphold, it also represents a grassroots or community based reversal of how organisations are used to structuring the responsibilities and decision making power of their initiatives. One interviewee related, “We work for migrants and with migrants. Innovation is in the word ‘with’.”<sup>33</sup> Indeed, forced migrants interviewed expressed that their experiences in CBIs differed from other types of service providers they had encountered. They felt that elements of participation, dignity, hospitality and even friendship all contribute to this.

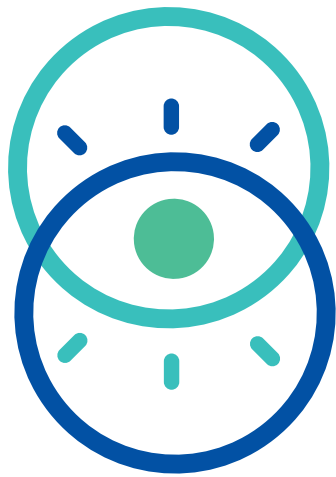
<sup>32</sup> From qualitative interview in Malta.

<sup>33</sup> From qualitative interview in Italy.

# THE CAMPAIGN

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Alongside the research to find best practices for CBIs, JRS Europe and its partners designed the whole project from the outset to be as participatory as possible. Throughout, we have been collecting and sharing information about grassroots initiatives in the 9 European countries taking part. We campaigned to raise awareness about these initiatives, encouraging people to either support them or to actively take part. This campaigning has driven the project and been a crucial element in spreading the positive message of *I Get You*.



I GET  
YOU

## Concept and Logo

Through over 30 years' experience of working with refugees around the world, Jesuit Refugee Service, knew that personal encounters between refugee and local are the best way to counter stereotypes and build trust. How to encapsulate this in a simple, yet direct message?

We held a targeted brainstorming session with internal and external practitioners and stakeholders to come up with a catchy slogan for the campaign, taken from everyday life. Home, diversity, shared humanity, meetings and building were the main themes that came out with sub-themes such as cooking, gardening and sport. After a period of testing, we settled on the phrase 'I Get You' as the shortest and most direct way to express the ethos of the campaign.

'I get you' is a common English expression to say 'I understand you' or 'I know what you mean.' It is sufficiently short to be basically understood in other countries too. It is a two-way process, highlighting the moment when two people 'click.'

This in turn led to the styling of the logo. The circles stand for two different worlds or views coming together. As they meet, they give shape to an eye: a new world-view created by the two. The eye also alludes to the expression "to see the world through someone else's eyes" and the empathy required to do this.

## PART ONE

# Launching the Online Campaign

Part one of *I Get You* was launched on 20 April 2016, exactly two months ahead of World Refugee Day. It kicked off with a simultaneous social media post, with a combined reach of over 80,000 people, inviting the public to nominate refugee initiatives in their local area.

This outreach phase was primarily conducted through the social media accounts of the *I Get You* partners. All Facebook posts and Tweets had links to the campaign website with integrated electronic survey for people to log the details of their nomination.

As soon as a nomination was successfully made, a pin would appear on the map of Europe on the website showing the exact location of

the initiative. Moreover, the campaign called for members of the public to share their photos and stories with us. By the summer some 200 initiatives had been mapped and by the end of the mapping phase we had 315 initiatives taking part in *I Get You*.

At the same time, we published the personal testimonies and photographs of over 40 individuals taking part. These short first-person accounts by refugees, volunteers and locals, highlighted the power of personal interaction to change opinions extremely effectively. As they were shared in the local language – Croatian for Croatia, Portuguese for Portugal, and so on – they had an even greater reach with national local audiences.

## PART TWO

# Video Campaign

The next step in campaigning was to show the initiatives in action on film. There were many videos out showing the dramatic nature of refugee arrivals on Greek shores, but next to none dealing with social inclusion head on.

From the Mapping Phase, we identified 9 fantastic initiatives to film, with people full of warmth for the project. The result is 9 videos highlighting diverse Community Building Initiatives in 9 countries. Each video is about three and a half minutes long and features animated subtitles. The videos show how both host community and newcomer can cope, help, be helped and be enriched by doing diverse activities together.

We released one European video with scenes from all countries, national videos with English subtitles and the same videos with local language subtitles. The videos were launched on World Refugee Day, 20 June 2017, via YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

Two months later, on 8 September, the videos had a combined reach via Facebook alone of 81,367 views, 5,555 comments, reactions and shares and 46,073 total minutes played (768 hours). The videos raise awareness about the possibilities for volunteering and providing a positive message of solidarity and cooperation. They are an inspiration and morale boost to those involved in CBIs and those thinking about joining one.

PART THREE

# Public Conferences

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Finally, all aspects of the campaign and the research will be presented during 9 national conferences hosted by each *I Get You* partner. The videos will be screened here and a diverse set of local actors will be invited to hear the results of the research and exchange views about best practices to combat racism and xenophobia through social inclusion.

Following these national conferences, many of the participants of *I Get You* will come to Brussels for the European report launch on

7 December 2017. JRS Europe believes the *I Get You* campaign has brought added visibility to hundreds of grassroots refugee initiatives around Europe and provided a space for mutual learning and exchange of best practices. A multitude of positive connections have been made that will contribute to the future social inclusion of forced migrants.



Faces from the *I Get You* video campaign. JRS Europe would like to thank everyone who took part.



# Inspiring Community Building Initiatives at National Level

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From the 315 CBIs that were mapped across Europe, here we present those from each country that stood out because of the excellent evaluations they received against the criteria established by the Delphi experts. These initiatives represent a diverse and interesting mix of all the community based actions taking place in Europe. While they do not fully encapsulate the richness that exists, they are worthy of recognition here for their innovative response to apparent needs in the communities that they are present in. Please refer to the national reports for more information about the other CBIs mentioned here.

## 4.1 BELGIUM | DUO FOR A JOB

Duo for a Job is a mentoring project located in Antwerp, Brussels and Liege whereby experienced professionals coach young migrants for 6 months on how to integrate into the Belgian labour market. By using their expertise and professional and personal connections, the mentors share knowhow and create invaluable social links for their refugee mentees.

Duo for a Job features a high level of professionalisation in areas such as in the selection and coaching of the volunteers and in the financial structure, which is based on social investment models. The results of the CBI have also been very successful with about 770 duos formed since it began and 56 percent of mentees finding a job after 12 months. The professional standards of the CBI are balanced with values of respect and dignity that both Belgians and migrants tangibly feel.

Other best practice CBIs in Belgium include:

- Syrimont
- 'Buddybegeleiding' Refugee Forum Denderleeuw and Social Welfare Office
- L'Hirondelle
- Up Together
- School without Racism

## 4.2 CROATIA | ZAGREB 041

Zagreb 041 is a football club that fights racism and prejudice. It includes refugees as players, club members, fans and even the coach is a refugee. It is more than just a football club, it is the place for encounter where people of different backgrounds, nationalities and religions perform as one team. The club trains every day for three to four hours and play matches on the weekends. After the matches, they organize a get-together for players and friends, which includes members of the local community. These range from concerts, campaigns and informal social events. It is a great opportunity for refugees to show their skill and knowledge, as well as to broaden their social networks upon arrival in Zagreb.

The CBI uses social media for the promotion of refugee issues, they are also present in other media, both Croatian and international. Now they also started a football school for local children and refugee children. Above all, values of hospitality, acceptance and equality is what sets this CBI apart as worthy of mention. An intercultural football club that welcomes refugees is something that had never been done before in Croatia.

Other best practice CBIs in Croatia include:

- Taste of Home
- Welcome Initiative

## 4.3 FRANCE | AUTREMONDE

Autremonde, an initiative located in East Paris, is a local association strongly anchored in a network of local partners. On a daily basis, it welcomes forced migrants, provides French classes, assists with job searching and provides further accompaniment to people on the path toward integration. The project also organises cultural activities onsite at their location and trips out into the city. These activities are open to migrants, volunteers, and locals welcomed by the

association in the program for vulnerable people.

This CBI highlights the essential role of volunteers bolstered by a team of experienced staff members. The volunteers create real bonds with the persons they teach. It is an initiative that is open not only to refugees or forced migrants, but serves as a target group other people from vulnerable backgrounds.

Other best practice CBIs in France include:

- Kodiko
- Cedre & Sesame
- Taize
- Federation Entraide Protestante

#### 4.4 GERMANY | COMPETENCE CENTRE FOR INTEGRATION

The Competence Centre for Integration (Kompetenz-Zentrum für Integration) started as a grassroots organisation of volunteers in 2015 and today employs a few paid staff members and refugees. It is situated in Plauen, a town in a region of East Germany where strong racist and right-wing tendencies are widespread among the local population. With the motto: "Integration not isolation," this CBI offers a variety of services and focuses on encounter and interaction with the local population. It also has a strong collaboration with other local institutions and together offers various kinds of events such as urban gardening and mixed football teams.

The inclusive approach of the initiative is unique because it creates spaces for integration and encounter among different groups of marginalized and vulnerable people in Plauen, such as young people with disabilities, unemployed and underprivileged locals. The CBI envisions promoting an inclusive community for all rather than competition among locals and refugees. They also use networking activities to counter and prevent racism and break down stereotypes.

Other best practice CBIs in Germany include:

- Frans Wandern
- Begegnungschor e.V.
- Projekt Ankommen
- Café International

#### 4.5 ITALY | ARTE MIGRANTE

Arte Migrante Palermo is part of a national network which aims to promote social inclusion through art. The activities of the network are

*"I strongly believe that these seeds will bear fruit in the future, in the form of a Maltese society, which will be more welcoming and inclusive. Malta will thus become a common home for different people."*

VYACHESLAV

JRS SCHOOL OUTREACH  
PROGRAMME, MALTA

*“What makes me happy here is that finally I am able to create my new life; to stand up on my feet. I like it here, in Timsoara, that people are so very supportive to me because I’m a stranger here, and I have this kind of music that maybe not everybody likes but they support me because they know my story and they know that I have a message in this story.”*

ALI

AIDROM, ROMANIA

implemented in 14 Italian towns as well as in Germany and Spain. The concept is very simple: a social night is organized once every two weeks, open to anyone- migrants and locals, of any age and background. The social night is structured in four phases: introduction of the participants, free sharing of art performances such as of dance, singing and poetry, dinner and finally the ‘goodnight’ phase where all participants stand in a circle holding hands and each one says ‘goodnight’ in his or her own language.

In Palermo the initiative is very successful, with about 100 participants gathering for each meeting in Santa Chiara, a parish in the historical neighbourhood of Ballarò. Although they do not organize awareness raising activities, regular and open participation is encouraged and believed to be the best message against stereotypes and xenophobia. Two strengths of Arte Migrante are the low cost of activities and that the coordination group is flexible to promote long or short term participation. Because a core value of Arte Migrante is equality between all participants, they do not use distinctions such as staff, volunteer and beneficiary for those who participate. The success of this CBI has depended on the gathering of people in a central, lively location and the recurrence of the meetings once every other week.

Other best practice CBIs in Italy include:

- Casa dei Venti

- Tandem
- Casa Scalabrini 634
- Consorzio Solidalia’s Archeological Excavations

#### 4.6 MALTA | THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONAL SUPPORT NETWORK (TSN)

This CBI is the first national network of third country national organisations working for the welfare and integration of third country nationals in Malta. TSN Malta believes that there is no one better than the migrant communities to advocate for equal rights and opportunities for themselves and their members. It is for this reason, that it committed to a 12-month programme, where the focus was to bring together members from 16 different refugee and migrant organisations. The overall aim of the initiative was to enable the migrant communities to further develop their skills as trainers and peacebuilders. This was achieved through weekly sessions focusing on education, social tools, volunteering, conflict resolution and strategic planning.

The training and workshops go a step further in equipping migrants with the knowledge and tools they require to become full and active members of society. The value and reach of this CBI is immeasurable, in that, all the participants have the potential to eventually become trainers themselves, and in turn offer support and guidance to the other members of their





📷 Mariana sings during a rehearsal of the Luz y Norte Musical group, formed of migrants and Italians in Rome, Italy. (Still taken from the Italian / Get You video: JRS Italy / JRS Europe)

community. In the words of one of the Sudanese community leaders, “TSN is unique, as it allows the members to continue to bring their problems to the group, where they discuss, share ideas and solve problems together.”

Other best practice CBIs in Malta include:

- Integra – Dinja Wahda Centre
- JRS Malta – Communities of Hospitality
- Spark 15
- Centre for Missionary Animation (CAM) School Awareness Raising Programme

#### 4.7 PORTUGAL | CONFRARIA NOSSA SENHORA DA NAZARÉ

A member of the larger Plataforma De Apoio Aos Refugiados (PAR) network, a growing platform in Portugal which brings together all stakeholders working to help refugees, the Confraternity of Our Lady of Nazare welcomes relocated refugees in their town. This CBI operates a social centre that acts as a host organisation for the refugees that helps to arrange housing, support in enrolling the children in school, provides legal information, assistance registering for training courses and provides supplemental food for the family during their early days of adapting to life in Portugal.

The refugee families have been warmly welcomed by the locals of Nazare into the fabric of the community, where neighbours get to know the refugee families through simple, daily interactions and surf instructors help children to become accustomed to the waves that have made their town famous around the world. This CBI demonstrates the importance of working within a larger national network to provide a highly structured reception and service provision to newly arrived forced migrants as well as shows the strong, genuine value of hospitality that has emerged from local citizens willing to welcome people seeking safety in Portugal.

Other best practice CBIs in Portugal include:

- SPEAK
- Renovar a Mouraria Association
- Centro Comunitário São Cirilo
- Guimarães Acolhe (Câmara Municipal de Guimarães)

#### 4.8 ROMANIA | AIDROM: CENTER FOR COUNSELLING AND ACCOMMODATION FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

With two locations in Romania, in Timisoara and Bucharest, AIDRom provides accommodation social services, medical care, legal support,

language classes, educational activities and multicultural events for the most vulnerable forced migrants in Romania. These accommodation schemes offer an alternative to the state-run open asylum centre which has limited capacity that does not always meet the need of the amount of people coming to the territory. AIDRom also strives to organise many recreational and social activities for those they accommodate, such as theatre workshops and cooking evenings.

Asylum seekers involved report that they feel independent and autonomous, mostly because they are encouraged and supported to find a job, and they do not have the sense of institutionalisation like they did when they lived in the open centre. This CBI is also impactful in the local community because of the visibility it generates about forced migration e.g. through an arts festival dedicated to refugees. In addition, the initiative is sustainably funded with a diversity of sources which is different from many other CBIs in Romania who are majorly dependent on funds from the European Union or have had limited operational spans, opening or closing in response to the increased needs or presence of forced migrants in Romania.

Other best practice CBIs in Romania include:

- Migrant Integration Centre Brasov
- Alternative to Detention for Tolerated Persons
- Save the Children Romania: Assistance for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Children

#### 4.9 SPAIN | GAUEAN

This CBI provides temporary accommodation for three to four months for young migrants

who arrived in Spain as unaccompanied minors and lost state protection after turning eighteen. A hospitality network, supported by about 45 intergenerational volunteers under the coordination of Fundacion Ellacuria, provides shelter, food, vocational training and recreational activities to the young people hosted in the apartment in the city of Bilbao. By meeting local young people and families who come to volunteer and provide support, the young migrants build personal networks and learn skills to find a job and plan for their future.

This initiative covers a gap in the protection system for unaccompanied minors provided by the national government in Spain. This is because social services do not foresee transitional protection for former unaccompanied minors who frequently end up living on the streets without access to a shelter after turning eighteen. Gauean has a holistic approach because it covers the basic needs of the young migrants but also provides a stable environment and personal accompaniment in their path to become self-sufficient and independent, something indispensable for the dignity of every young person as they grow into adulthood. The hospitality of the local community is shown through the high participation of volunteers from different ages and backgrounds, such as students, families, sisters from religious congregations and even former beneficiaries accompany the young migrants daily.

Other best practice CBIs in Spain include:

- Hospitalidad Project
- Mambré
- África Imprescindible
- Red de Intercambios

*“I had never met Christians, I only knew through what the Qur’an says. In the Qur’an, we read that there are different paths to God and that we must live together in peace with people of other religions.”*

HASSAN

TAIZÉ, FRANCE

# Conclusions, Guidelines and Policy Recommendations

Europe still has a long way to go in creating societies free from discrimination, racism and xenophobia. Through the experience of people involved, *I Get You* has seen how racism and xenophobia may not always be outright or obvious but covert forms of discrimination exist in the micro-aggressions of everyday rhetoric or are built in structurally to societies. More than rules and legislation, Europe needs strong examples of leadership from those in positions of power as well as positive narratives that reach the public ear in order to bring about openness and dialogue to overcome prejudice and fear.

Nevertheless, European societies are not standing still. In welcoming migrants into the fabric of local communities, *I Get You* has seen that small-scale initiatives that keep the involvement of people – locals and migrants – at the centre of their activities and mission work best. They do this through a balance of structured relationships formed through mentorship and non-structured activities and events that promote interaction and encounter between people.

Local citizens and civil society organisations were able to more quickly and adequately provide for the needs of forced migrants during the height of the so-called refugee crisis by filling identified gaps in service provision that the local authorities had not or could not foresee at the time. Adding to this, they did so in a spirit of altruistic optimism, in contrast to one of negative resistance motivated by fear. Over time this altruism transformed into something of reciprocal benefit as locals began to realise how much newcomers bring to their communities through valuable multicultural perspectives through regular encounters with them in the activities of CBIs.

CBIs do not only change people's perspectives of one another, but they change the ways that citizens and administrations interact. Authorities and citizens need to work together and build upon their unique strengths to continue to build

inclusive communities across Europe. While CBIs filled gaps in service provision typically the competence of local authorities to provide, CBIs often struggled with the professionalisation and sustainability of their activities. At the same time, authorities and professional structures will never be able to provide the human element that citizens' initiatives provide. Therefore, the future challenge lies in finding and maintaining a balance between governments' and citizens' engagement.

Our research concludes with guidelines for best practices for CBIs and a series of policy recommendations. The guidelines for best practices are meant to support people who want to engage further in the work of community building between locals and forced migrants. While the recommendations are for policymakers at all levels, to help shape and implement effective policies for social inclusion.

## 5.1 GUIDELINES FOR BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

If you have been inspired by what you have seen and want to start a CBI of your own, *I Get You* has identified the following guidelines as good practices:

### 5.1.1 Before you start:

- **Interpret the local context and its needs before beginning a CBI:** The activities and services provided by CBIs, as well as the beneficiaries they intend to target, must be meaningful and tailored to the needs of the local context. A needs assessment of the local community and population should be conducted before starting a new CBI. While responding to contextual challenges can be particularly difficult at times, creativity and innovative approaches can be incorporated into the design to counteract these challenges.

- Find a niche that is not currently being provided for:** There are many initiatives and organisations out there who are providing services to forced migrants and other vulnerable groups. The key is to find where you could fit in to the variety of projects, activities and practices out there. This might be in the type of service you provide or in the target group of your beneficiaries. Examples of such niches *I Get You* has encountered are vocational training for young migrants in Spain who have aged out of state protection services and accommodation schemes for unreturnable forced migrants in Belgium.
  - Go beyond service provision to focus on interaction between people and relationship building:** The hallmark of all CBIs is that they foster social bonds between people because having social relations and living in a community is a need in itself. To build a genuine CBI, the initiative must be founded on the criteria of the interaction and encounter between local citizens and forced migrants and provide plenty of opportunities for these encounters to take place. Some CBIs have found that this is achieved by removing labels from the participants, such as beneficiaries or volunteers, while others have found simply providing people with the space to have a chat and get to know each other is enough for friendships to form. (Of course, throwing a party also helps!)
  - Build CBI with the values of flexibility and adaptability at the foundation:** Because CBIs are usually grassroots initiatives that are small in scale, their existence is dependent on a number of factors that go beyond what they intend to do. Questions of changing context, funding structure and civil society will all play a role in what and how the CBI goes about its work. If initiatives are flexible and adaptable from the start, making changes to get things right will be smoother to get right and implement. Being flexible was especially relevant for CBIs in a country like Croatia, where the context of forced migrants has shifted in the last few years from a country of transit along the migration route to other European countries to now a country that is working to welcome and integrate people who have applied for asylum.
  - Operate as part of broader networks:** CBIs should complement existing structures while working to fill the gaps that such structures have not yet taken care of. Partnerships or collaboration should be established where possible with existing networks such as local authorities, NGOs, schools, universities or parishes. CBIs that are just starting out were able to be more successful when linked with these pre-established stakeholders of community life, with many CBIs able to branch out on their own after a few months or years. When thinking about creatively connecting to networks, a CBI might link itself to existing self-organised refugee initiatives in order to complement the work and strengthen their capacity. Here, there are also two levels:

    - A network of people** who contribute to one another's social networks and strengthen community ties, such as neighbours, families, co-workers and peers, such as the collective mobilization of community members in the CBI Syrimont in Belgium.
    - A network of structures** that is well coordinated to manage the overlapping and complimentary needs of the people it serves, best practice examples include the PAR structure in Portugal and Comprendre Pour Apprendre's web based platform in France that provides language support but also links one to opportunities for higher education, training and cultural information through a network of universities, research institutes and administrative services.
- 5.1.2 Keeping People at the Heart:**
- Encourage the active participation of forced migrants through outreach:** In order for a forced migrant to be aware of the services and activities offered by a CBI, they need to be targeted by outreach strategies for membership. Seek help with outreach from other organisations already working with forced migrants, such as national social service providers or non-profit organisations active in reception procedures for asylum seekers. Develop a relationship with these organisations that can refer migrants to your CBI and get them involved from the start of their stay in Europe.
  - Promote membership and leadership of forced migrants within CBIs:** It is important to promote migrants as active members of CBIs, not only as service recipients.

- Migrants should be engaged in the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives as well as take responsibilities related to the organisational aspects of CBIs. *I Get You* has seen positive results in CBIs that are run and organised by refugees themselves as well as those that utilise a train the trainer model; whereby forced migrants who were former beneficiaries of CBIs now act as language teachers, cultural mediators or coaches for other newly arrived people to the initiative. This is important not only because forced migrants are the best placed to determine what their own needs are from CBIs, but also because it demonstrates the false nature of the paradigm that migrants are overly dependent on aid but have much to offer local communities. For an example of a self-organised refugee initiative, see the Sudanese Migrant Association in Malta and how they are providing newcomers with a variety of useful tools and skills.
- **Think about alternative ways to involve forced migrants in CBIs:** CBIs work better when there is reciprocity in the relationship, when the distinction between beneficiaries and helpers is as minimal as possible. Encouraging forced migrants to act as volunteers in CBIs works best to uphold people's dignity and helps to overcome difficult transitional periods to a new place. Some CBI even organise volunteering programs specifically for forced migrants to help, contribute positively, and build-up work experience and networks. Examples include an archaeological dig in Italy with Consorzio Solidalia and the University of Palermo, a bicycle repair shop in Croatia, or a project in Portugal where migrants give tours in the city of Lisbon.
  - **Give forced migrants a platform to use their voice for things that are important for them:** CBIs should create spaces for open and honest dialogues within their initiatives. A place where there is freedom to share and debate ideas, lets people know what is really on the minds of others. Such conversations can then be taken to broader public debate or used as advocacy and awareness raising strategies by the CBI to work towards creating a more positive discourse around issues facing forced migrants by leveraging the voices and experience of people directly involved in CBIs.
  - **Target the initiative to be open to including other vulnerable or marginalised groups:** Having a broad number of focus groups served by CBIs, and not just including forced migrants or refugees, breaks down stereotypes or prejudice within communities and promotes equity of service provision among members of communities. While some needs are unique depending on an individual's profile, the work of CBIs- that is creating inclusive communities where people feel welcomed- is something that is needed by many people and not just those who fit certain criteria. *I Get You* has seen initiatives, such as the Competence Centre for Integration in Germany and Autremonde in France that complementarily target other groups such as socially isolated individuals or people at risk of poverty, help to encourage all to become agents of change in their own lives.
  - **Clearly define the role of and set boundaries for volunteers:** The role and the limits of each volunteer involved in a CBI should be well established and communicated about between the volunteer and the CBI coordinators. Some CBIs in Belgium have also found that work descriptions and volunteer codes of conduct are useful resources for organisers and volunteers alike. Defining levels of commitment should be set according to the nature of the CBI. In cases where volunteers are very engaged, such as those that involve hosting forced migrants in their homes, this becomes especially important to lay out what is expected from volunteers as well as what is not expected and to manage these expectations appropriately and set boundaries.
  - **Institutionalise recruitment, selection, training and supervision of volunteers:** A hallmark and huge added value of all CBIs *I Get You* has come across has been the contribution of local volunteers. Therefore, matching the skills, experience and profile of the volunteer to the correct initiative, role and responsibilities is crucial. To attract and retain qualified volunteers CBIs should set-up a screening process for potential volunteers and be ready to not accept everyone who might like to take part. Next, selected volunteers should be trained in the mission and ways of working of the CBI as well as in the tasks and functions that they will need to carry out. Then, over the

course of volunteers' time with the CBI, they should be provided with either one-on-one supervision with a qualified member of the CBI coordination team or a model of group supervision and reflection could work well. If through this process, some volunteers emerge as not the right fit for collaborating with the CBI, be ready to point them in the direction of other initiatives that may be more suitable fits to avoid disappointments and to redirect their energy into the most productive places. Such continuity will contribute to the professionalization of the CBI and benefit all involved.

The specific type of training that volunteers receive depends largely on the activities offered by the CBI, but topics could include:

- Developing cultural competency
- Engaging in interfaith dialogue
- Standardise curriculum for teaching or tutoring language learning
- Understanding the legal reality of refugees
- Developing self-awareness and emotional resilience to prevent burn-out

### 5.1.3 Organising the Activities:

- **Aim to empower forced migrants to be autonomous:** CBIs should orient all assistance or service that they provide to enable forced migrants to create for themselves a dignified life in Europe. This is achieved through the mentorship models, capacity and skills training opportunities, and activities that encourage forced migrants in more ambitious ventures such as speaking up through advocacy or engaging in social enterprises or entrepreneurial activities. CBIs like Taste of Home in Croatia achieve this with their goal of financially empowering migrants by involving them in their social business.
- **Set-up regularly recurring meetings in a physical space:** The most successful CBIs carry out weekly meetings between participants and provide a physical space, such as a community centre, sports field, or office where people can get together. These measures also help people to feel that they belong to a part of something, that their commitment matters and that the initiative is sustainable.
- **Create a mentorship structure within the CBI:** People learn from and rely on one another and CBIs that promote networking and social capital for both locals and forced migrants. Models such as duos, buddies or one to one coaching work best for things like helping newcomers become acquainted with the housing market, job search or applying for training programs because they pair the desire of the newcomer to learn about local structures and be involved with the know-how of a local. An example here is the mentoring of the CBI Kodiko to facilitate access to the labour market for forced migrant job-seekers in France.
- **Include some low-threshold activities in the CBI:** Low-threshold activities are those that require minimal commitment from participants. To make people feel more comfortable, or to accommodate people with busy schedules but would still like to be involved, host a few low-threshold events, services or activities a few times per month. While *I Get You* believes that participants of CBIs should be engaged and committed, such activities could act as a tester for those who are more sceptical of joining or are unsure of the time commitment they could offer to initially take part and then judge the level of participation they are willing to take up.
- **Engage in awareness raising activities:** Disseminate the good work that your CBI is doing to a broader audience, this will help to raise awareness among the general public about issues faced by forced migrants in a transparent way. Awareness raising strategies work best when human stories are the focus, such as direct testimonies from migrants or locals. If you have more resources, social media activity, articles, videos and communication campaigns can all be used to spread messages about your CBI, your mission and your work. Activities can have a broad or a narrow scale to suit the size and capacities of your CBI, but make sure that you do something to share your story.
- **Engage with local authorities and policymakers to share experiences:** CBIs working on the ground should act as a link between what is going on at the local level in their communities and with those responsible for decision making. Engagement between CBIs and local authorities and policymakers can improve local implementation of policies and open pathways for further collaborations. If CBIs have the capacity to engage in



📷 Migrant youths and volunteers play cards as part of the Gauen project in Bilbao, Spain. (Still taken from the Spanish *I Get You* video: Denis Bosnic / JRS Europe)

such activities, they will be able to share experience, concerns and recommendations more easily with local policymakers.

- **Explore diverse funding opportunities and schemes:** Financial health and well-being is important for sustainability. Keep in mind all funding possibilities: public funds, government contracts, private foundations, individual donors, fundraising campaigns and socially conscious businesses with corporate giving programmes. While partnering with the state and local authorities for funding is important for sustainability, other streams for funding should be explored to keep the CBI balanced. *I Get You* has seen that there is a unique place for innovative and grassroots funding schemes within CBIs because they leverage the local nature of the structure. Being creative in the way that the CBI raises funds is a way that allows for necessary flexibility in changing contexts because it eliminates restrictions often placed on funds by private or public funds. CBIs that used crowd funding or micro-financing grants are growing in their reach. Duo for a Job got off the ground with the first use of social impact bonds in Belgium.
- **Conduct monitoring and evaluation for activities:** Even though CBIs are usually small

and oftentimes have limited or stretched resources, channelling energy in certain activities that help the overall organisational structure go a long way to future growth or strategic professionalization down the road. Engaging in monitoring and evaluation helps organisers to understand the impact the CBI is having on the people involved and assess if there are areas to be addressed or adapted. Regular monitoring and evaluation processes of the activities of a CBI will also serve to compliment defining the roles and regular supervision of the volunteers.

## 5.2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

During the last years, we have witnessed a rise in racist and discriminatory language in the political debate, also among some important political actors. Policies adopted and implemented focussed on preventing migration and securing border, rather than inclusion and tolerance. Political actors often justified such approach by saying that they act according to what mainstream European citizens think. Contrary to this discourse, the direct experience of *I Get You* demonstrates that there is large support across Europe for the inclusion of forced migrants in our societies. Many citizens come together all over Europe to welcome forced migrants and refugees.

“When in class the students ask me why I’m doing the project *Finestre* (windows), I answer them: to share with you my past, for letting you understand that behind everyone there’s a story, to tell that my country, Afghanistan, is not only war and terrorism. I am a chef and a cultural mediator: I want to share with you my culture and traditions.”

SHADAM

WINDOWS: STORIES OF REFUGEES, ITALY

They open their doors for people in need of shelter, they share meals, they help them learning the language and they simply spend time together, getting to know and understand each other.

JRS Europe and its partners strongly believe that the responsibility to welcome, protect and facilitate the integration of forced migrants lies in the first place with the authorities. Citizens’ initiatives cannot become a substitution for state involvement. At the same time, as *I Get You* clearly shows, citizens’ involvement in activities for and with forced migrants is a crucial element to work towards social inclusion, create understanding among different communities and effectively combat racism and xenophobia. A part of governments’ action to create a cohesive and welcoming society should therefore be to encourage, promote and invest in such community building initiatives.

Although the competence for social inclusion and integration of newcomers lie primarily with the Member States, the EU can play a key role by shaping a common framework based on best practices and by creating incentives for Member States to invest in inclusive national policies. Therefore, drawing conclusions from the best practices identified by *I Get You*, JRS Europe has elaborated a set of recommendations both for the EU institutions and for the national governments. Specific recommendations adapted to the different national contexts can be found in the national reports.

### 5.2.1 Recommendations for EU Institutions

The European Commission’s *Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals* from 2016, as acknowledged by the Council conclusions on integration of legally staying third-country nationals, already contains many important and necessary steps towards migrants’ integration and social inclusion. JRS Europe welcomes the efforts that the Commission is doing in its implementation. We therefore first of all recommend that these efforts continue, are evaluated and do not stop after 2017.

However, the experience of *I Get You* shows on the one hand that the plan does not address all the relevant issues and on the other hand where already existing efforts should be intensified.

We therefore address the following recommendations to the European institutions.

#### Concerning Policy Priorities and Implementation

- **Leverage the existing experiences and best practices at community level when adopting policy and frameworks on social inclusion, countering racism and xenophobia and promoting integration, for example in the follow up of the EU Action Plan on integration after 2017.** The EU Action Plan also indicates the following policy priorities: pre-departure and pre-arrival measures, education, labour market integration and vocational training, access to basic services (adequate and



affordable housing and health services and active participation and social inclusion. *I Get You* shows that citizens have been active in all those fields, often reacting to the existing needs much faster than the authorities. The EU needs to capitalize on these experiences when developing future policies.

- **Enlarge the scope of pre-arrival measures to prepare host societies for the arrival of forced migrants beyond resettlement programmes and mainstream them throughout the asylum and reception system.** The *I Get You* experience in countries like Portugal and France clearly confirms what the Action Plan on integration that informing the host communities about the situation of forced migrants who will come to live among them is beneficial to foster a welcoming attitude and social inclusion. However current pre-arrival measures, as referred to in the *Action Plan*, are generally limited to the framework of resettlement. *I Get You* initiatives show that such measures are beneficial also as a part of the EU relocation scheme and more generally in connection with the national reception system. They help to dissipate local population's fears and prejudices and foster understanding also for the situation of people who are still in the asylum procedure.
- **Foster direct dialogue and cooperation between authorities and citizens' initiatives by making it possible for the civil society to participate in the European Integration Network.** One of the best way to capitalize on citizens' initiatives experiences is to make sure authorities and civil society can exchange directly and work together. Enlarging the participation to the EU Integration Network, or establishing a clear link between this network and the European Migration Forum would be conducive to this end.
- **Play a stronger dissemination role, by making best practices of one Member State known in other Member States, and facilitating exchange among citizens' initiatives in different countries to replicate success stories.** *I Get You* shows that often citizens in different countries took initiatives to answer to same kind of challenges. Some initiatives proved more successful than others. It is important that lessons learned are passed on, so that citizens in other countries do not have to start from scratch and repeating

mistakes each time. Programmes whereby citizens go abroad to learn or do voluntary work, such as the European Voluntary Service and Erasmus+, in addition to being powerful tools for intercultural dialogue and social inclusion, can also play a role in disseminating good practices. The European Website on Integration is a welcome tool in this sense and should be developed further.

#### Concerning Funding

- **Encourage actions that strive to mainstream integration of migrants within broader policies on social inclusion by prioritising the funding of projects with mixed target groups, both migrants and other local vulnerable groups.** The *I Get You* finding show that these initiatives have higher chances to be successful in combating racism and xenophobia. A positive example can be found in Plauen, Germany, where a grassroots organisation composed mainly of volunteers adopted an inclusive approach, organising activities both for forced migrants and different groups of marginalized and vulnerable locals, such as young people with disabilities and unemployed people. This approach proved successful in promoting an inclusive community for all rather than competition among locals and refugees in a town strong racist and right-wing tendencies are otherwise widespread among the local population.
- **Encourage national governments to invest in local, small scale, community building initiatives, by giving priority to the financing of such projects within the relevant European funds.** Attention should also be paid to encourage national governments to invest not only in inclusion and integration projects in the capitals or big cities, but also in smaller towns and rural areas, where the experience on these issues often lacks. This is particularly necessary when forced migrants are distributed
- **Simplify the existing EU funding channels or create new specific ones to make it possible for small scale initiatives to apply and obtain them.** In particular, review and simplify the application system or reporting obligation, that represents a major obstacle for small initiatives, as they simply do not have the capacity to dedicate to such lengthy, technical and time-consuming processes.

- **Explore the possibilities for microfinancing schemes** or other creative ways to support directly small-scale citizen's initiatives, that are otherwise not in the position to apply directly for EU funding.

#### *Concerning the Legislative Process*

Prioritise and embed the goal of integration of newcomers throughout the revision of the Common European Asylum System and in general in all other legislation concerning migration, in particular:

- **Move towards a system that takes into consideration asylum seekers needs and preferences** when establishing new rules for the determination of the Member State responsible for the examination of an asylum application (the so-called Dublin regulation).
- **Extend and simplify the possibilities for family reunification** both for asylum seekers under the Dublin regulation and for all beneficiaries of international protection.

The total impossibility for asylum seekers of having a say about where they can seek protection in Europe and obstacles to family reunification for both asylum seekers and beneficiaries of protection appear as a recurrent obstacle to integration and the feeling of belonging to the host society throughout the *I Get You* research.

- **Provide for permanent permits of stay to beneficiaries of international protection.** Certainty about the legal status is beneficial to forced migrant's mental health and motivation to actively invest in finding their place in their new societies. It also decreases the obstacles they often face in finding employment or housing, as a permanent residence permit appears offers more guarantees for both employers and landlords too.
- **Promote small scale reception facilities as the preferred reception model for asylum seekers within the Reception Conditions directive.** Best practice citizens' initiatives are most likely to develop where asylum seekers live as close as possible to the local community. Small scale reception, distributed throughout a country's territory and both in urban and rural area are conducive to encounter, exchange and fruitful cooperation among

reception structures and citizens' initiatives. When working on a recast of the Reception Condition Directive that aims at the further harmonisation of reception conditions among Member States, the EU should clearly include provisions encouraging the use of small scale reception facilities.

#### *Recommendations for National, Regional and Local Authorities*

- **Play a coordination role, by providing room for exchanging of good practices, lessons learned and for evaluation of activities and guaranteeing quality of services provided.** A recurring recommendation for the national and local authorities by JRS's national partners is authorities to leave enough space to citizens' initiatives for innovative and experimental activities. At the same time, they ask them to play an active coordination role to maintain an overview and streamline work to make their actions more efficient. Also, they ask the authorities to constantly evaluate results, in order to keep investing in activities that have proved to work.
- **Establish structural long-term cooperation with citizens' initiatives, whereby each actor plays a clear role: governmental administrations provide professional services, citizens provide interpersonal relations and community.** In the past years, citizens often filled gaps in providing services that should be provided by authorities. This should change in the long term and government should take their responsibilities. However, authorities and professional structures will never be able to provide the human element of horizontal encounter and community that citizens initiatives provide. Cooperation between authorities and citizens is crucial to achieve social inclusion.
- **Promote and invest in local, small scale initiatives.** Local initiatives have the advantage of being closer to the ground, knowing the local reality and challenges and adapt to it. Moreover, forced migrants need to gain access to local networks to achieve integration and social inclusion. *I Get You* clearly shows how small-scale initiatives are more conducive to establish real human and personal contacts between the local population and the forced migrants.

- **Provide citizens' initiatives with structural core funding for them to be sustainable on the longer term.** The great majority of initiatives that were mapped by *I Get You* financed their activities in a grassroots way (small scale donations, selling homemade goods, crowdfunding and innovative fundraising). Most initiatives rely heavily on volunteers for their work. This is positive in the sense that it shows the high level of good will and civic commitment. However, it is seldom sustainable in the long term. Core funding is necessary to make citizens' initiative sustainable in the long term.
- **Ensure the availability of professional training for volunteers who are active in citizens' initiatives.** Professional training on topics such as asylum and migration legislation and on combating racism and xenophobia, should both be provided by authorities and by independent organisations. Funding should be made available to citizens' initiative to organise independent professional training for their volunteers.
- **Promote and invest in initiatives with a wide range of activities, such as cultural, spiritual and sports, in addition to focusing on integration on the labour market.** Finding a job is extremely important for forced migrants to become financially independent and further build their life in their new home country. However, our research shows that investing in personal relations has a long-lasting impact on their perception of the home-country, to their self-esteem and their empowerment.
- **Promote and invest in initiatives that work with a mentorship model or 'buddies'.** One-to-one contacts and individual, tailor-made assistance are the most effective way to foster mutual understanding and help forced migrant to effectively find their ways in their host societies. Initiatives based on buddy or mentoring systems are the most suited for it. It is about establishing links among peers, for example students living with other students in Italy, or professionals helping other professionals to find a suitable job in Belgium.
- **Promote and invest in initiatives that are meant for broad target group, including both forced migrants and other vulnerable social groups.** Forced migrants are not the only groups suffering from social isolation and discrimination. People living in poverty, homeless people, people in long-term unemployment, single parent etc. often face similar challenges. Investing in services that are only meant for forced migrants can exacerbate differences and result in a negative competition for scarce services among vulnerable group. This in turn can fuel racist feelings towards new comers. Initiatives that are meant for a broader target group lead to mutual understanding of the shared difficulties and to empowerment to overcome them.
- **Actively consult with and listen to forced migrants in deciding which initiatives should get priority and give them ownership on the activities put in place.** Our research shows that in many initiatives forced migrants are not simply the receivers of services. They are actively involved in developing and implementing them on the same level as locals. This is important not only because forced migrants are the best placed to determine what their needs are, but also because it helps break the paradigm in which migrant are depending from aid. It shows that migrant have a lot to offer to the local communities too, therefore fostering acceptance among locals.
- **Provide community building initiatives with physical space to meet.** A consistent finding across the majority of the 315 initiatives mapped in the research was the importance of a physical meeting place in which to conduct regular meetings. While the frequency of meetings varied from initiative to initiative all were creative in finding locations for their actions to take place. All the initiatives were creative in finding locations to meet. However, if governments intend to promote community building initiatives, providing meeting spaces, such as office space, sports facilities or polyvalent rooms, would be an important support.



I GET  
YOU

*“People need to sit down face to face and get to know each other. Talking is not enough, but it’s nice to cook together or throw a party together. That’s how you get to know one’s character. That’s when changing one’s mind can go really fast.”*

**MANDY**

**COMPETENCE CENTRE FOR  
INTEGRATION, GERMANY**



Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees and others who are forcibly displaced.

[Jrseurope.org](http://Jrseurope.org)

[Igetyou-jrs.org](http://Igetyou-jrs.org)