Addressing hate by creating spaces of encounter and fostering communities

Promoting smart and humane migration across the Mediterranean

Shannon Pfohman
Caritas sees a need and responds

- humanitarian aid interventions
- development aid and projects
- legal channels for migration: humanitarian visas, community sponsorship, family reunification, etc.
- creating welcoming spaces of encounter fostering integration
From the lens of Pope Francis - a loving role model

- 4 verbs: welcome, protect, promote, integrate
- “all people of goodwill… to commit to building a more and more welcoming and inclusive society”
Caritas vision of an inclusive Europe

- A welcoming environment with equality, human dignity and respect
- All are enabled and encouraged to participate in their community and their contributions to social and cultural life are acknowledged and valued.
- It takes a community to welcome a newcomer.
“Welcome. Migrants make Europe stronger” publication

- presents 3 categories of integration barriers: cultural, structural and socio-economic
- presents Caritas Europa’s vision of Europe
- presents promising practices for overcoming the 3 types of barriers
“Share the Journey”
Caritas’ global campaign

- advocate for rights of migrants and refugees and for right to a diverse and peaceful society
- rights concretised in 2 UN Global Compacts (on migration and on refugees)
- Pope Francis launched campaign in Rome in September, actions ongoing
“Welcoming Societies”
online toolkit

- focuses on addressing cultural barriers via spaces of “encounter”
- encounter evokes dialogue, bridges, solidarity, fraternity and charity
- “culture of encounter” used in sphere of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue
Spaces of encounter

- diplomacy of encounter toward deeper mutual knowledge and mutual respect, of dialogue to resolve conflicts, of dialogue to promote unity and fight exclusion
- key for promoting peaceful, inclusive societies for integral human development
Caritas colleagues throughout Europe and the MONA region in Jordan sharing experiences about migration from different perspectives, strategizing solutions and potential projects. It takes place annually, organised by Caritas Italiana.
MIND project

- DG Devco-funded project on migration and development (M&D)
- 3 year advocacy and campaigning actions
- to raise awareness in Europe of the M&D interlink and change the negative rhetoric and lack of true understanding about M&D
Caritas’ recommendations to policy makers

- Work with communities to change thinking and contribute to a positive, constructive narrative about migrants. Recognize their many contributions and publish statistics and facts about these.
- Create spaces of encounter, fostering dialogue and exchanges between migrants and European communities.
- Support festivals, classes, etc. that educate the majority about migrants, their cultures, language, histories, etc. Remove the fear factor of the unknown by getting to know migrants on a personal basis.
Caritas’ recommendations to policy makers

- Recognize Europe’s cultural and historical past and explore how “native” cultures are already hybrid. Migrants do not make culture “impure,” because culture is never “pure” or “static”.

- Accept that migration is a natural part of our history. It is not something that can realistically be stopped or rolled back. Instead of fearing it, let’s manage it as a natural phenomenon and treat migrants as human beings!

- Find innovative ways to empower migrants and foster their participation in society.
Caritas’ recommendations to policy makers

* Increase human rights oversight for external dimensions of asylum and migration policies. Ensure external surveillance/immigration staff have human rights training.

* Apply a more harmonized asylum policy, responsibility sharing, solidarity between countries.

* Curb the strict security approach taken at borders. Preventing migrants’ entry to Europe and isolating them as a border/security/justice issue guarantees a narrow approach – the opposite of welcoming - that discourages real integration.
Caritas’ recommendations to policy makers

- Implement national integration strategies aimed at creating welcoming attitudes in receiving societies, in cooperation with key stakeholders, including migrants and CSOs.

- Find solutions that avoid competition over economic resources and don’t restricting budget lines for one population group over another (migrants versus poor residents).

- Guarantee access to basic services for everyone, including migrants.
Caritas’ recommendations to policy makers

- Review coherence of migration/integration policies: ex. allowing children to stay, but expelling the parents or not allowing the parents to work, of course reconciling policies in favor of migrant rights.
- Work with journalists about bias/stereotypes and clear up misconceptions and inaccurate practices, such as the use of blanket terms (i.e. calling all migrants asylum seekers, criminals, etc.).
- Mainstream migrants and their needs into different policy areas and foster their participation in political processes.