



Across Europe, Caritas works on a daily basis with migrants who face barriers to integration and to social inclusion processes. These barriers are cultural, structural and economic and they hinder migrants' capacity to fully participate in the receiving communities. Caritas' experience shows that to overcome these barriers, working with receiving communities is just as important as working with migrants.

In this sense, Caritas provides for innovative experiences that empower migrants and the receiving communities for a better integration and foster a positive approach to migration.

In this leaflet we have gathered some of these innovative experiences, along with some thoughts and stories of the people involved. You can also read more about this topic in our publication “**WELCOME! Migrants make Europe stronger.** Caritas' practices for an inclusive Europe”, available at caritas.eu/publications.



FIGHTING STEREOTYPES

"Be careful, don't get stuck" campaign

Caritas in Biscay, Spain

The campaign "Be careful, don't get stuck" targets receiving communities and raises awareness about the impact of prejudices against migrants. Both migrants and residents participate in awareness raising sessions recognising positive impact and migrants' contributions to receiving communities. In 2016, Caritas organised more than 90 sessions, involving some 600 participants.

"The strategy has helped me to understand that the prejudices prevent us from putting ourselves in our brothers' shoes."

Josu, 65 years old, Caritas' volunteer

"I have stopped feeling guilty for having prejudices, but I am doing everything that I can for finding out and dismantling them."

Ana, 21 years old, student



HOUSING AND PLACE FOR ENCOUNTER

“A refugee at my home” programme

Caritas in Italy

“A refugee at my home” is a national programme through which Italian host families and individuals share their lives with refugees and asylum seekers for a period of 6 to 9 months. The project helps migrants to reach autonomy and it gives residents the opportunity to live an experience of solidarity and cultural sharing. Since 2013, about 500 people have been hosted.



The story of Penda from Senegal

Penda was 16 years old. In 2015, she decided to migrate to Europe to find a way to help her sick father. After a long journey, she arrived to Spain by boat and moved on to Apulia in Italy. There,

Caritas Apulia met her and offered her to participate in the housing and encounter project: “A refugee at my home”. She now lives with a trusted Italian family and goes to school. Penda hopes to come back one day to Dakar.

“Now I have a great hope in my life. I have learned many things since I am here and I really enjoyed the solidarity among the people with a different cultural background.”

Penda from Senegal



HOUSING AND TRAINING FOR WOMEN

Special housing for women and mothers seeking asylum

Caritas in Louvranges, Belgium

This project offers a home to vulnerable women asylum seekers and their children. They live in individual apartments, located in a multiple-unit housing complex. This enables them to combine a general degree of privacy with close proximity to supportive services. Through extensive cooperation with experts and trainings, the project helps women to regain their self-confidence and self-esteem to act autonomously. In 2015, 27 women and their children were hosted in Louvranges.

The story of Solange from Congo

Solange and her two children arrived to Belgium in 2015. They first stayed at the open centre of Holsbeek, then moved to a Caritas accommodation in Ostend before arriving to their final destination in Louvranges. Solange tells her story with disarming serenity: “In Congo, I had many problems, that’s why I came here.

At 10, I was forced to marry a man who abused me.” Her first asylum application was denied, but she remains relatively confident. “I will not return to Congo. I expect my status with great impatience. We need security and reassurance.” Solange is very happy in Louvranges. But she is also eager to move on, get her papers, a job and a life of her own.

“The house is clean, the children go to school and they are treated if they get sick.”

Solange from Congo



SOCIAL BUSINESS AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Magdas Hotel

Caritas in Vienna, Austria

Magdas Hotel is a social business designed to be a role model for combatting poverty by creating jobs for refugees. It is run by 20 trained refugees from 16 different countries and experienced hotel staff. It offers guests from around the world a smart, urban and multicultural “home” with an added social value. Comments from the Internet confirm this:

“Professionalism and Care. This beautiful unusual hotel tells its own story of care and genuine values. It is run by migrants. Fabulous concept and guess what? It works beautifully. Great location, spotlessly clean, breakfast wonderful (great breads, fresh fruit etc.) warm and welcoming bar and chill out area... I recommend highly and wish the Manager and staff great continued success.”

TripAdvisor, client from UK



“The staff is comprised of refugees and are the loveliest people you will ever meet. The hotel is remarkable for their social justice work. The food is good, the coffee is superb.”

TripAdvisor, client from Canada



PLACES FOR ENCOUNTER AND UNDERSTANDING

Cooking atelier

Caritas in Hauts-De-Seine, France

The cooking atelier takes place once a week and promotes socialisation between migrants and residents through convivial moments cooking together and exchanging recipes. It emphasises the important role that intercultural exchange plays for overcoming barriers to migrant inclusion in receiving communities. Approximately 250 ateliers have been organised since 2011.

“This atelier allows us to know each other better because we are often scared of each other. It allows us to meet each other and to break down prejudices.”

Fatima from Morocco

“This atelier allows us to acclimatise to the European way of life, to speak French and to move on confidently in our lives.”

Zoubida from Algeria





WELCOME

Migrants make **Europe** stronger

Download the full publication
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This leaflet has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014- 2020). For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>.