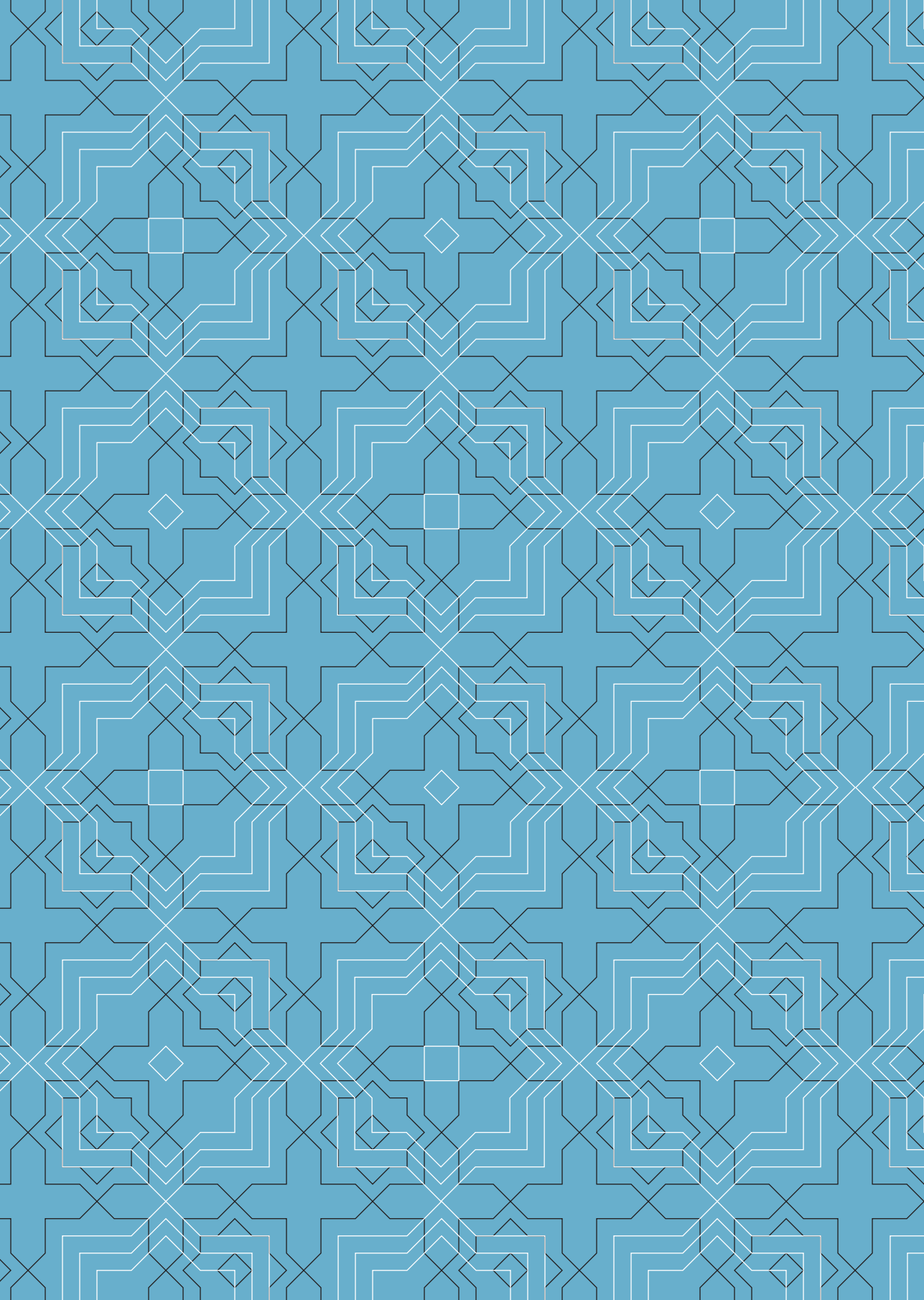
INFORMATION AND
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
STRENGTHENING GUIDE FOR THE BENEFICIARY POPULATION OF THE SYRIA PROGRAMME IN ARGENTINA



IOM UN MIGRATION

PROGRAMA ESPECIAL DE VISADO HUMANITARIO PARA EXTRANJEROS AFECTADOS POR EL CONFLICTO DE LA REPÚBLICA ÁRABE SIRIA

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency



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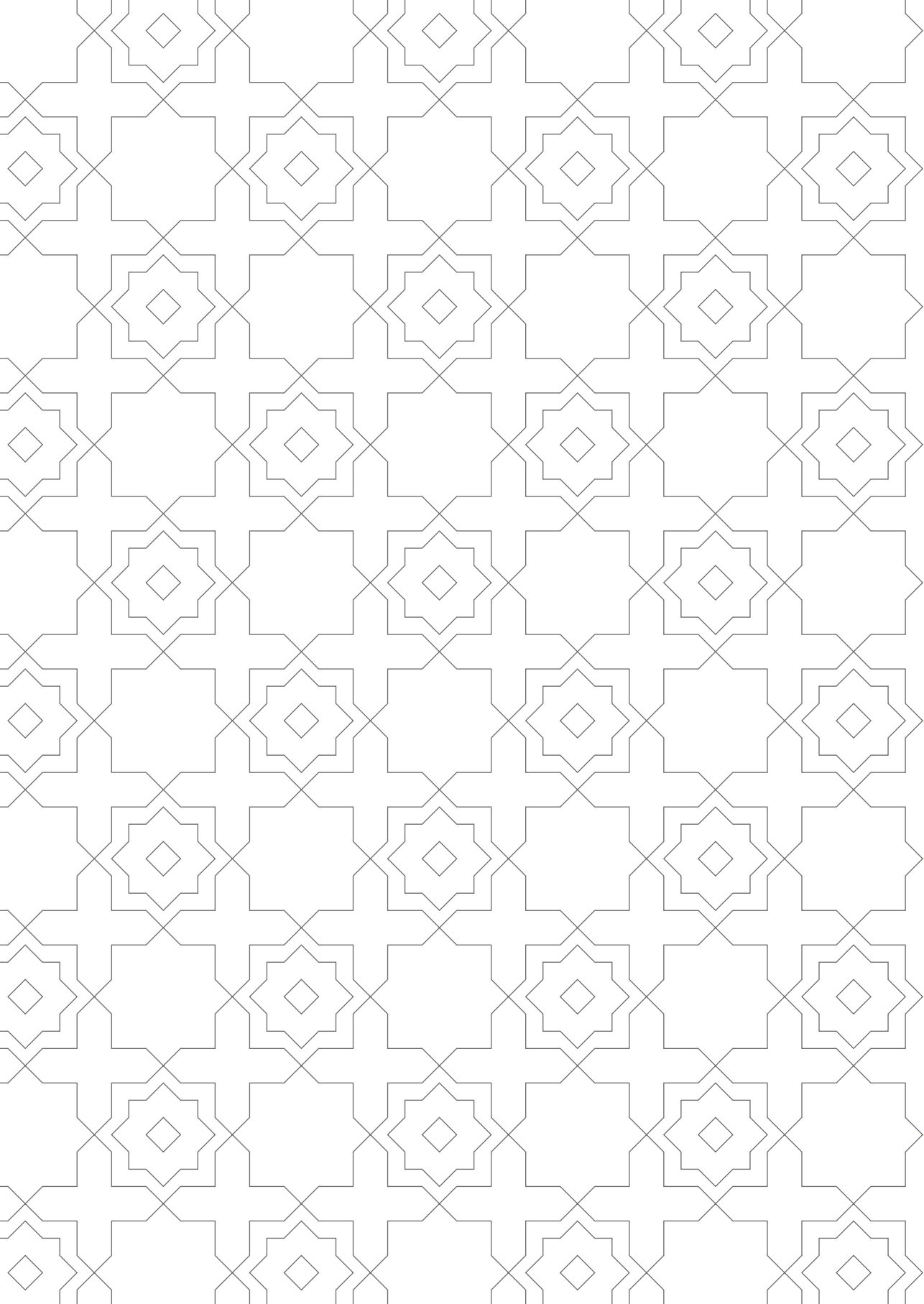
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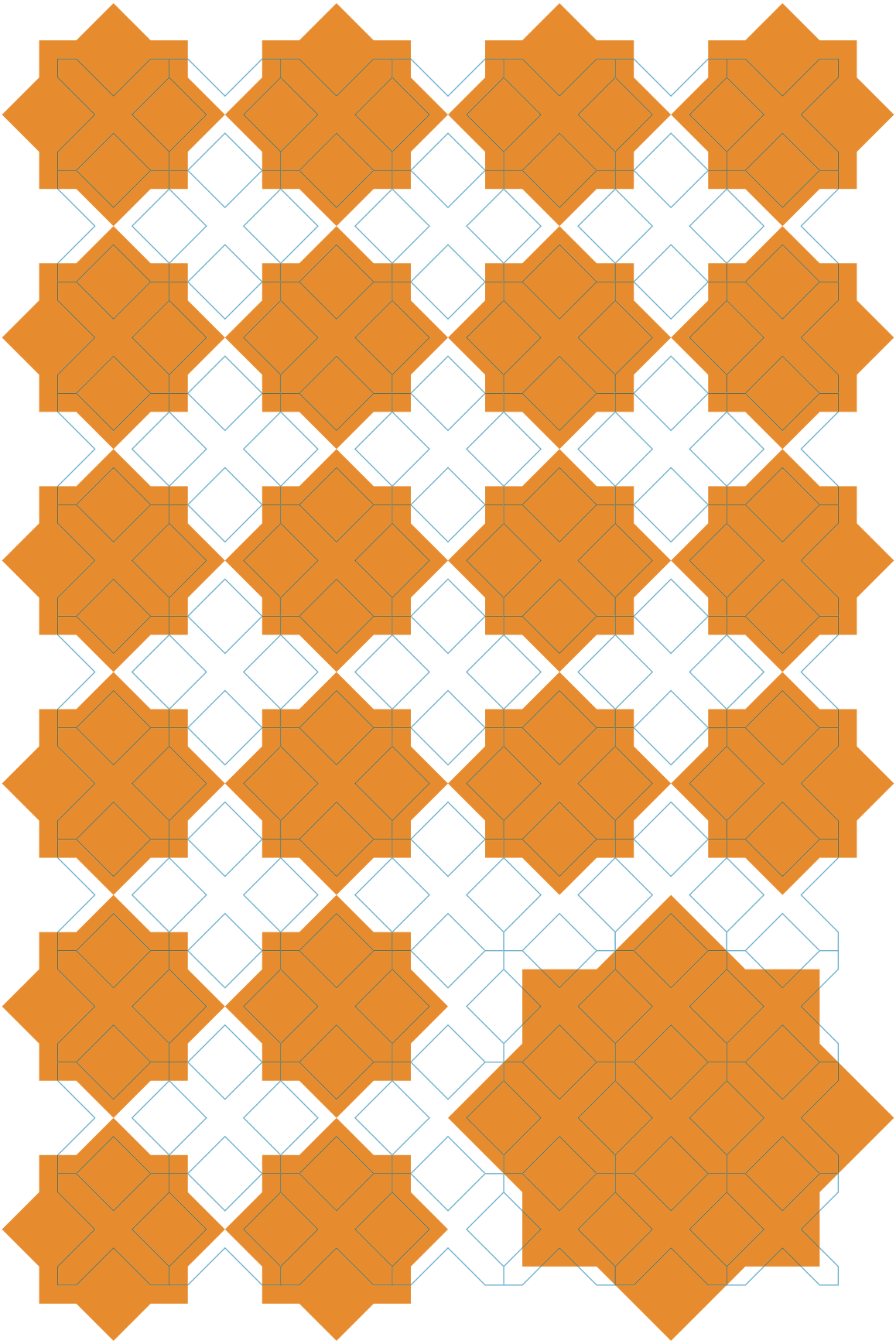
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Relevance of the intercultural dialogue in integration processes

For the Argentine government, it is an honour to preface this 'Information and Intercultural Communication Strengthening Guide for the Beneficiary Population of the Syria Programme in Argentina', which has been developed aiming at facilitating the intercultural communication between the beneficiary population of said programme, callers, health practitioners, teachers and other social stakeholders involved in the integration of the Syrian population.

This work was prepared in the framework of the 'Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism' (ERCM), jointly led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) so as to boost and/or strengthen resettlement

programmes and other complementary procedures for the reception of refugees.

With the support of ERCM, the Argentine government has been carrying out various actions to strengthen the Syria Programme, among them, workshops for raising awareness and training in intercultural communication. To this end, this publication, which is supplemented by the 'Socio-cultural profile of the Syrian population at their place of origin,' is essential as it will allow to raise awareness for participants, inviting them to think about the meeting between diverse cultures. In this sense, this Guide introduces intercultural communication as a transformative work perspective which allows us to revise and overcome different stereotypes and prejudices that often create distance and raise barriers between people.

The theoretical perspective, the empirical material and the different activities that this Guide proposes will strengthen the work that the stakeholders involved in the integration of the Syrian population that resides in the Argentine Republic are doing.

Buenos Aires, September 2018

Fulvio Pompeo
Secretary of Strategic Affairs
Office of the Head of the Cabinet of Ministers

Claudio Avruj
Secretary of Human Rights and Cultural Pluralism
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Support of the international community to the Syria Programme

The Guide presented herein is part of the actions carried out by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) jointly with the Argentine State, so as to strengthen and support the implementation of the Special Programme for the Issuance of Humanitarian Visas for Foreigners Affected by the Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, usually referred to as the 'Syria Programme.'

A part of this articulated work has been materialised through the technical assistance provided in the stage prior to the departure of the Programme beneficiaries, for instance, by means of the identification and selection of refugees by UNHCR, and the preparation of people through health screenings and cultural orientation sessions conducted by IOM.

This Intercultural Communication Guide is part of the actions aimed at strengthening the processes of integration of the Syrian population upon its arrival in Argentina, and at supporting the institutional capacities of government agencies, local governments, and civil society organisations responsible for providing services, guidance and support to the Syrian families residing in the country.

This material, as well as the Socio-cultural profile of the Syrian population at their place of origin, which complements it, arises from the identified need for preparing government agencies and receiving communities, and providing them with the necessary information and practical tools that facilitate the intercultural communication both between them and with the target population.

The aforementioned actions have been carried out through the 'Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism' (ERCM), an initiative designed to facilitate and strategically channel the support provided by the international community for the strengthening of emerging resettlement programmes or other complementary procedures for the reception of refugees, such as the Syria Programme.

ERCM was launched during the United Nations High-level Meeting on Migrants and Refugees in September 2016. At that meeting, the New York Declaration was drafted, the steps to be followed to reach a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and a Global Compact for Refugees were established, and the implementation of the commitments assumed on the 2030 Agenda in connection with migration was debated.

ERCM is the result of the common understanding that the response to large displacements of migrants and refugees must be a shared responsibility, for which it is essential to establish solid partnerships among States and to be supported by the international community as a whole.

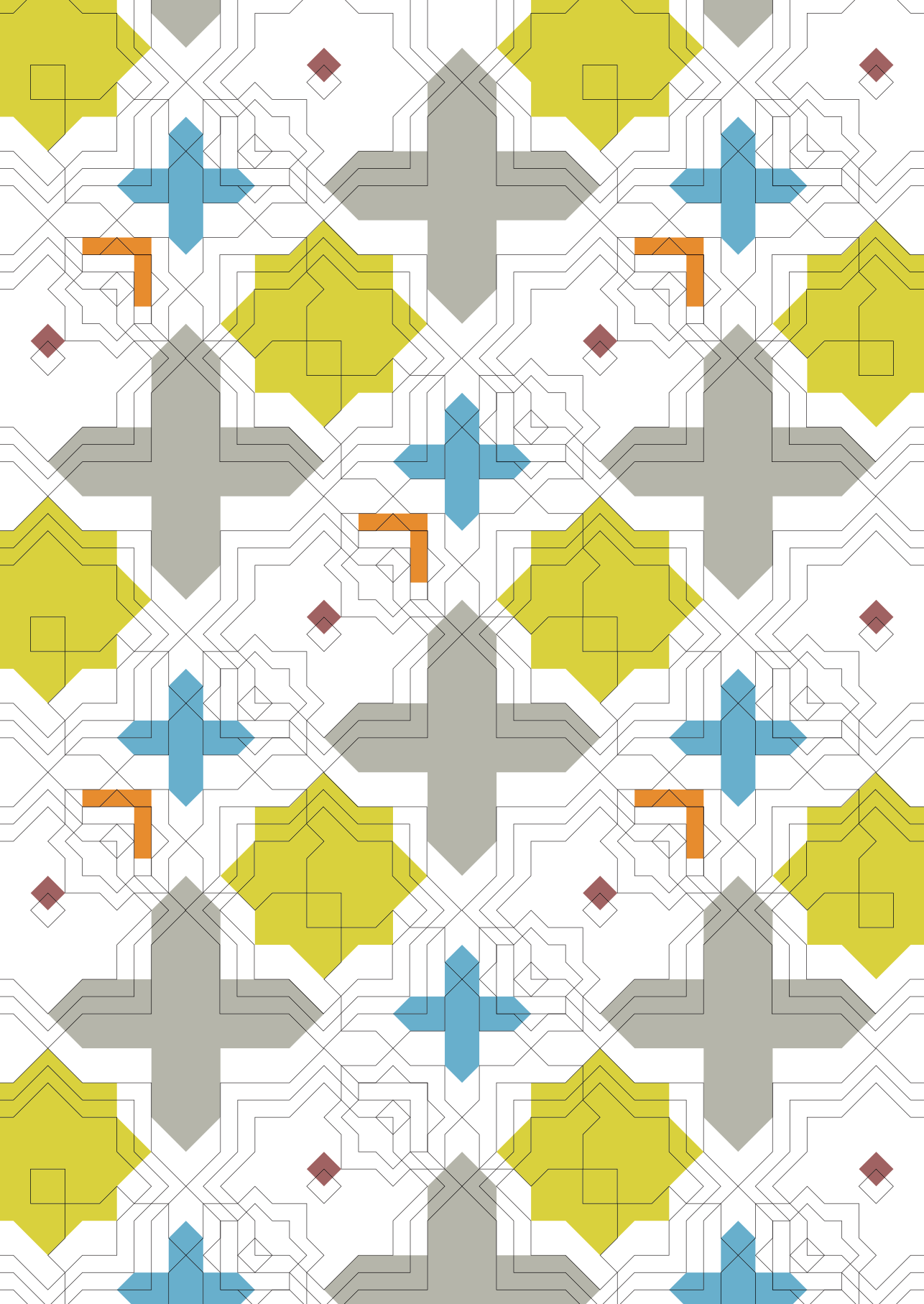
In this sense, the Global Compact for Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration which will be

adopted in the last months of this year reflect the will of the States to assume such responsibility and to reach a consensus reinforcing the framework for the protection of refugees, especially regarding the search for long-lasting solutions based on the principle of shared responsibility and multi-stakeholder response, as well as to contribute to steering the governance of international migrations.

The Syria Programme is inserted in this international context and it is, without a doubt, a clear example of the humanitarian commitment assumed by the Argentine State. IOM and UNHCR will continue to support Argentina to fulfil its goal.

Gabriela Fernández
Head of Office
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INTRODUCTION

The contact among people from different cultural, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds poses challenges for all those involved. This contact is a source of enrichment and development, but also of misunderstandings and conflicts. In this sense, differences in the symbolic frames of reference and images that some groups construct about the others may result in altered communication and interaction. According to Cohen-Emerique (2011), if a sender's reference framework is different from that of his/her receiver, there will be 'noises' and misunderstandings related to the erroneous interpretations of messages on both sides, and, when it comes to the communication among people from different cultures, the risk of misunderstandings or even failures in the communication increases even more.

However, it is necessary to bear in mind that intercultural communication is not reduced to those spaces where people from different countries interact; rather, social class, gender and age

also pose an intercultural communication characterised —frequently— by the emergence of obstacles and misunderstandings. In all cases, it is relevant to consider that communicating does not necessarily mean the same for all cultures, and that communication goes beyond a simple exchange of messages. As pointed out by Alsina (1999: 31), 'in an intercultural communication, it cannot be presupposed that what a sender intends to communicate is what his/her receiver interprets.'

For these reasons, misunderstandings in communication, caused by socio-cultural differences and stereotyped and prejudiced views that come into play, **require tools making it possible to address points of contact/divergence for the purposes of improving the communication of the actors involved** —hence the importance of generating instances to raise awareness of, to develop and to strengthen intercultural competences, working towards the transformation of practices related to socio-cultural diversity.

This material is specifically designed for the information sessions addressed to all actors involved in the processes of receiving and integrating beneficiaries of the Syria Programme in Argentina (although its use in other spheres is not excluded). The objective is to facilitate the intercultural communication among members of the provincial Syrian Round Tables, healthcare and education workers, callers, sponsor organisations, civil society organisations in general and the beneficiary population of said Programme. This Guide thus provides a series of tools to raise awareness of, reflect on and transform the situations of intercultural divergence based on the search for better conditions of expression of the parties involved. In that sense, this material and the information sessions aim at raising participants' intercultural awareness, providing theoretical and empirical knowledge of this topic, breaking down various stereotypes and prejudices, strengthening the intercultural communication competences, and building strategies to overcome communication difficulties. **The contents adopt an intercultural approach based on the respect for and appreciation of cultures, a human rights perspective, focused**

on the promotion and protection of such rights, as well as a gender and generation perspective (IOM, 2017).

This Guide presents some elements related to the Syrian-Lebanese mobility in Argentina, with a special focus on the Syria Programme, and provides tools to strengthen and develop the intercultural communication and intercultural competences. In addition, some essential concepts are dealt with, such as stereotype, prejudice and discrimination, as these are ideas and attitudes that hinder the intercultural communication. This Guide also offers some information and suggestions for healthcare and education professionals, as well as callers and civil society organisations so that all of them can address these issues with an intercultural approach. Finally, the material presents a series of general and specific activities that will serve as input for the information sessions addressed to the various actors involved in this issue.[1]



1: Some contents from these sections were presented in the document: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2017, Migraciones e Interculturalidad: Guía para el desarrollo y fortalecimiento de habilidades en comunicación intercultural (Migration and Interculturality: Guide for the development and strengthening of intercultural communication skills). Buenos Aires.

1

Syrian-Lebanese mobility in Argentina

The presence of Arabs in Argentina is contemporary with the migration processes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Diverse studies usually divide the arrival of Syrian and Lebanese people (at that time, territories of the Ottoman Empire) in Argentina into three distinct stages, in terms of the configuration of the population according to its religious affiliation and the reasons for migrating and the type of settlement —processes that are closely linked.

The first stage spanned from 1860 to 1920. It was mainly due to the great demographic growth in the Middle East and, especially, in Lebanon, which disturbed the balance between land and population. However, for this reason, persecutions suffered by Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire need to be added. Following the spatial distribution pattern of the remaining immigrants who arrived in those years, Syrian immigrants settled not only in Buenos Aires, but also in numerous provinces and towns in Argentina, mainly Tucumán, Córdoba, Santiago del Estero, Salta, Mendoza and San Luis (Katz, 2017).

The second stage may be placed between 1920 and 1945. In it, the percentage of immigrants of Muslim and Druze origins increased, as the territories where Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic are currently located were then under French dominion, which granted more privileges and participation to the population of Christian and mostly Maronite origin. Also in those times Syrians of Jewish origin arrived. After the First World War, and coinciding with the second stage of Syrian migration in urban centres, associations of fellow nationals began to emerge throughout the country, with the generic name of 'Syrian-Lebanese associations.'

The third moment for the study of the Syrian-Lebanese immigration towards Argentina is placed between 1945 and 1974, but especially in 1958, when a civil war started in Lebanon. From then onwards,

other countries were chosen to migrate to, such as the United States, Canada, Australia and Kuwait. Argentina, however, due to the political and economic problems it had as from those years, ceased to be a place of destination as it had been until that moment.

As regards these days, according to the national census conducted by the Argentine Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) in 2010, 1,337 people born in the Syrian Arab Republic and 933 people born in Lebanon would be living in Argentina.[2] The people that may have settled since then, the 371 refugees and the 104 Syrian asylum seekers registered between 2012 and June 2018, and the 400 people who arrived in the framework of the Syria Programme[3]—between 2014 and March 2019— should be added to these figures.

2: Argentine Institute of Statistics and Censuses, *2010 Census* (Buenos Aires, 2010). It can be found at: www.migraciones.gov.ar/pdf_varios/estadisticas/Censo%202010%20-%20Extranjeros%20por%20nacionalidad.pdf.

3: National Directorate of Migration, *Special Programme for the Issuance of Humanitarian Visas: About the Programme*. It may be found at: www.migraciones.gov.ar/programasiria/indexSiria.php?acercaprograma











The Syria Programme

Since March 2011, the Syrian Arab Republic has been suffering a serious political, economic and social crisis, as a result of the protests against the Government of that country, presided by Bashar Al-Assad. Since then, the country has been immersed in a deep conflict characterised by clashes between government defenders and opponents, the latter also being divided by differences. As a consequence of this situation, there is a severe shortage of water, food and electricity, thousands of homes have been destroyed, and it is very difficult to access healthcare and education services.

This has made the Syrian population flee to neighbouring countries —such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt—, try to cross the Mediterranean to get to Greece or Italy, or internally displace throughout the country, suffering serious deprivations caused by the destruction of the economy and institutions.

This conflict has generated one of the greatest humanitarian crises since the end of the Second World War, resulting in more than 250,000 casualties since its beginning,[4] making 13,100,000 people depend on humanitarian assistance in the country, leaving 6,100,000 internally displaced people and 5,500,000 refugees in neighbouring countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt), according to IOM data.[5] In addition, since the beginning of the conflict, thousands of Syrians have been resettled in Canada, the United States, Australia and some countries in Europe and South America, among them, Argentina.

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4: United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), *Consecuencias tras 5 años de guerra en Siria* (Consequences after 5 years of war in Syria) (Madrid, 2017). Available at: https://eacnur.org/blog/consecuencias-tras-5-anos-guerra-siria/.

5: International Organization for Migration (IOM), *IOM Appeal 2018: Syria Crisis*. Available at: www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country_appeal/file/IOM-Syria-Crisis-Appeal-2018.pdf.

Since 2014, the Argentine State has been implementing the Special Programme for the Issuance of Humanitarian Visas for Foreigners Affected by the Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (referred to as 'Syria Programme').

Such programme aims at facilitating the entry into Argentina of foreigners affected by the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, people of Syrian nationality and their family members, or people of Palestinian nationality who are habitual residents or have resided in the Syrian Arab Republic and received assistance from the United Nations Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Specifically, it intends to protect and receive these people through the support of a caller person or sponsor institution undertaking to receive and support them in their integration process during their first twelve months in Argentina.

The beneficiaries of this programme enter the country with a two-year temporary residence, which may be renewed for one more year, after which permanent residence may be applied for. Equal treatment for these people and their families is also ensured, in the same conditions of protection, safeguard and rights enjoyed by Argentine citizens, as well as equal access to social services and public goods, as established by Migration Act No. 25.871, which came into effect in 2004.

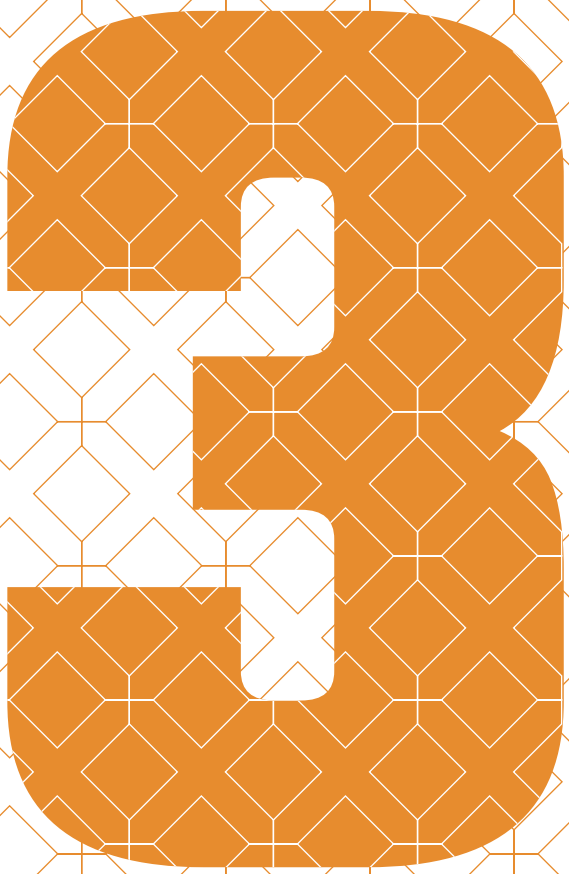
Entry into Argentina with a humanitarian visa does not grant a refugee status. However, beneficiaries, once they have entered the country, are entitled to apply for the acknowledgment of the refugee status by means of the procedures in force.[6]

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6: According to Act No. 26.15, the term "refugee" applies to every person who:
a) Due to genuine fears of being persecuted based on race, religion, nationality, belonging to certain social group or having certain political opinions, is outside the country of his/her nationality and may not be able or may not

want to seek the protection of such country, or who, lacking in nationality and being, as a consequence of those situations, outside the country where he/she usually lived, may not be able or may not want to return there.

b) Has left the country of his/her nationality or usual residence in case he/she does not have a nationality because his/her life, security or freedom have been threatened by generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed the public order.



Tools to ponder interculturality

This section presents some key concepts and provides tools based on which to reflect on cultural diversity, to raise awareness of this topic and develop skills tending to facilitate the intercultural communication among the beneficiaries of the Syria Programme and the actors involved in the processes for the reception and integration of this population.

3.1 From cultural diversity to interculturality

There are nearly as many ideas of culture as ways to think about it and express its diversity. For this reason, selecting a concept of 'culture' is a highly complex task. According to Alsina (1999), every culture is multicultural as it is constructed based on the contacts among different groups contributing their ways of thinking, feeling and acting. Thus, we may say that culture is a construction of shared meanings which influences the shaping of representations, feelings, emotions, ideas and behaviours of human beings.

Alsina (1999) adds that 'we are all born in life communities that are also sense communities because they will give us instruments to make sense of the reality around us.' This does not mean that those who share the same reference framework will think, feel and act similarly; for this reason it is important not to reduce people to the general characteristics of the culture(s) to which they belong. In fact, there is a risk of pigeonholing people with quick generalisations, such as 'Arabs are…,' 'Muslims say…,' losing sight of personal and subjective factors. It is important to take into account that these are socio-cultural aspects, that is, they have been socially constructed, and that every person may have taken a different ownership of the customs, language, and everything related to their symbolic frames of reference, based on the place where they grew up, their families and all the experiences

that are part of their lives. This also means that not everything is cultural and that there are personal matters, which are specific to every person, traversed in turn by gender, generation and social class, among others.

When talking about interculturality, it is necessary to make reference to the notion of cultural pluralism, as a model to deal with cultural diversity accounting for the simultaneous presence —in a same space— of populations with different cultural characteristics, arguing that they can live in harmony. In that sense, institutions and political powers are called upon, for the purpose of making decisions and developing initiatives making it possible to develop relevant strategies to strengthen such coexistence. Cultural pluralism may be expressed as 'multiculturalism' or 'interculturalism.' Even though both concepts acknowledge the value of cultural diversity, the types of relations established within such diversity are not the same depending on the approach. Multiculturalism implies a situation where there are multiple people or groups bearing different identities without implying contact among these groups (Cohen-Emerique, 2011). This perspective is associated with the idea of a 'snapshot' of the society where groups appear in a self-contained manner. On the other hand, **the concept of 'interculturalism' reflects the relations established among the various socio-cultural groups coexisting in a same social space, highlighting the transformations caused by such interactions**.

This approach also embraces the contact among cultures and promotes the dialogue among them, without disregarding the unequal power relations on which many of the alleged cultural differences are based. In this sense, interventions based on an intercultural approach involve not only acknowledging the differences and promoting the contact and coexistence among cultures, but also questioning the conditions through which many of these differences are constructed and hierarchically ordered, by means of a monocultural paradigm which —in the western society— is strongly characterised by a white, male and heterosexual identity (IOM et al., 2014).

The practices of the so-called multicultural, pluricultural, pluriethnic or multiracial education, which took place in the 60s in the United States and the 70s in Europe, gave rise to some of the early experiences developed in the intercultural education sphere in the 80s. Those early American and European practices had aimed at reducing the academic failure of those 'culturally different' children and teenagers (Malgesini and Giménez, 2000).

Meanwhile, in Latin America, their emergence in the 70s was linked to the demand for cultural and political acknowledgement of the indigenous and Afro-descendant population (IOM, 2017). By 2001, after the fateful events of September 11, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity was approved, whose Article 1 states that 'cultural diversity is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.'[7] In this sense, the Declaration offered the States the opportunity of reaffirming 'that the intercultural dialogue is the best way to guarantee peace and to categorically reject the thesis that forecasted an inevitable clash between cultures and civilizations' (Matsuura, 2002: 3).

As mentioned above, the cultural diversity that is expressed in the spaces where the intercultural points of contacts and divergence occur on a daily basis goes beyond the presence of migrants, as all people, in general, have multiple and diverse ethnic and cultural characteristics or life experiences, knowledge, values and backgrounds (Capelo, 2003). For this reason, the practices built in those spaces should be framed within dynamic conceptions of culture and cultural diversity, where the difference is acknowledged and respected, and where it is understood that socio-cultural identities are constantly given new meanings, and it is impossible to categorise the different groups in an arbitrary and self-contained manner.

7: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001). Available at: http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

In that regard, actions based on an intercultural approach propose the following objectives:

☛ 'To acknowledge the existence of diversity;

☛ To understand the historical-political nature based on which differences are built and organised in a hierarchical system leading to inequalities;

☛ To promote equal and mutual exchange relations, including the key participation of the groups involved (IOM, 2017).'

CULTURE SHOCK: set of reactions and feelings experienced by people who are in a new cultural context. They are normal responses to a drastic change in the physical, social and cultural environment.

In the specific case of migrants and refugees, it is important to bear in mind that adaptation to a new context involves living intense experiences at a physical, psychological and emotional level. These experiences include finding similarities and differences with one's culture and country of origin, where some traditions, customs and habits will be familiar and others, new. These factors may cause stress, anxiety, disappointment, anger, guilt and mood swings, and lead to a phenomenon known as **culture shock.**

Culture shock may be expressed as a conflict due to the cultural and personal differences of the actors involved in a given situation. It has to do with what calls our attention from the other person, what we find the strangest and most unusual. This 'strangeness' may be

manifested with defensive and frustration and rejection reactions, and/or fascination, enthusiasm and amazement reactions. Interactions, resulting from an approach to otherness, may be lived either positively or negatively. However, these shocks or 'critical incidents,' as Cohen-Emerique (1999) calls them, invite us to reflect and become aware of our own culture and that of others, and give us an opportunity to rethink our own attitudes and prejudices in an intercultural situation.

Various studies (Berry, 1999; Hofstede, 1994; Hulewat, 1996; Oberg, 1960) describe the stages of culture shock, generally identifying the existence of between four and five stages. These may be coped with differently based on each individual's previous experiences and own subjectivity. Knowing these stages may help the people involved in the process of reception and integration of the Syria Programme beneficiaries to better understand this population.

1) Honeymoon phase: arriving in a new environment generally arouses feelings of happiness, euphoria and enchantment. These feelings are accompanied by enthusiasm, many expectations, and the hope that integration will be easy and quick. In this stage, in general, similarities with the place of origin are found, and differences are disregarded. For example, finding and valuing that family is central both in Argentina and Syria, and setting aside the differences between the family configurations and roles of each family member. In certain cases, it has been seen that some people completely omit the honeymoon stage and directly experience phase 2, as there is a great difference between moving to another country out of a wish and life project, and moving due to security reasons.

'Customs are very similar to those of Argentina (...). In this sense, it is very easy to integrate; there are not many differences between Syria and Argentina, as if they were a single country.' Beneficiary of the Syria Programme.

'It is not easy to leave your country... a country is much more than a place in the world' (...). 'Another land, another culture, other food, everything is different; it is not easy and my family is in Syria...' Beneficiary of the Syria Programme.

2) Frustration phase: finding the differences from one's own culture outweighs the similarities that have been identified. Solving daily life problems, such as learning Spanish, finding a job, enrolling children at educational institutions, validating diplomas, etc., may give rise to disappointment, isolation, great uncertainties, nostalgia, and the conviction that integration will be a challenge difficult to meet. In general, this phase is characterised by frustration, indifference, loss of appetite, anger, trouble sleeping, tiredness, uprootedness, sudden mood swings, regret and guilt for having left one's country and family.

'It is very hard to leave your country, job, life, family, friends and whole past to start from scratch in another country (...). The truth is that, when we arrived, everything was difficult for us. Difficult because of the situation in general· another country, another culture, other customs, another language... Everything was different (...). In the beginning, we all thought about coming back because we felt sad, there were great differences in the customs, in life itself, even in the food... a complete difference...' Beneficiary of the Syria Programme.

3) Recovery phase: the culture shock starts to ease away and integration starts to be perceived as something likely. Command of the Spanish language is attained, relations with people from the new place are established, and their way of life and culture are understood. The main daily life problems are solved and, even though some uncertainties persist, a life project is defined or, at least, some clear goals to be achieved in the new country (for example, taking up a course of study, learning a trade, or taking part in some community organisation or group with which one has affinity or to which one relates).

4) Adaptation and integration phase: the differences of the new environment are more accepted and respected, certain harmony between the similarities and differences is attained, and a feeling of comfort and confidence appears. In general, this results from having learnt the language, having achieved certain economic independence and found a job, and having established a network of social and emotional relations deemed satisfactory. In this stage, the idea that the country of destination is the new home is consolidated.

'Now I can say that, once I got over the culture shock and started to adapt to the new customs, I could cherish my dreams again; I thought that was impossible.' Beneficiary of the Syria Programme.

Thus, integration *per se* is a complex and dynamic process that can take months, even years, and depends on each person. It should also be pointed out that it is a process involving both those arriving in a new environment and those receiving these people. That is, integration is a **two-way process** where both the migrant population and the receiving society integrate themselves into one another's culture, customs and ways of living. It is a mutual adaptation process where all its participants are transformed by virtue of their reciprocal

contact. For those who arrive, integration into a new country involves adapting to a new lifestyle, without implying the loss of cultural identity. For those who receive, integration requires an attitude of openness, flexibility and respect.

'Then, little by little, you start noticing what is positive about having come here. You see your children learn more every day, grow up in a place free from war, and receive all the care they deserve.' Beneficiary of the Syria Programme.

3.2 Intercultural communication

It is necessary to start from the basis that communication does not imply a mere exchange of information, but the act of sharing, in the sense of pooling. As Alsina points out, 'culture owes its existence and permanence to communication. Thus, we may consider that it is in the communicative interaction among people where culture, preferably, manifests itself (1999: 67).' On the one hand, we must remember that the behaviours of the person talking to us are immersed in a given cultural configuration and, on the other, that communicating does not mean the same or is not done in the same way depending on those configurations. According to Gudykunst (2005), most times we interpret other people's messages based on our frames of reference, and they interpret our messages based on their own frames.

Thinking about an efficient communication implies acknowledging that, for both parties, that interaction produced results that were close or similar to those expected at the beginning of the exchange: knowing something, understanding something, expressing something, etc. In that sense, if both parties to the communicative act can meet several of the objectives they had when they started the dialogue, and the general balance of such exchange is positive in terms of comprehension, apprehension, understanding or clarity for action, such communication

METACOMMUNICATION: exercise that —within an intercultural interaction— makes explicit again what was intended to be communicated, why and what for. Metacommunicating is assuming that the first form of communication experienced some 'noises' and, for that reason, it is necessary to explain oneself again.

has been effective, even though it may not have been ideal or perfect.

In addition, in order to overcome those 'noises' which may appear in an intercultural communication, all the people involved need to make an effort, resorting to metacommunication, that is, explaining again what was meant to be communicated.

In addition to the efforts related to the metacommunication, there are some basic and essential rules to train the intercultural communication:

1. Enriching one's own communicative competence: paying attention to both the verbal and non-verbal communication, without forgetting that both are extremely important in each interaction. Gestures, posture, gaze, the level of physical proximity, the way of breathing, the tone of voice, the hesitations and silences must be all taken into account, and even more when there are limitations in the verbal communication.

2. Taking an interest in the other person's culture: to be able to communicate better, it is necessary to take an interest in our interlocutor's cultural frames of reference. Expressing interest in the others'

culture, wanting to know them more closely will help us to better understand the position from which they talk and what they may understand about what is being said to them.

3. Reflecting upon the contents and practices of one's own culture: being aware that we all communicate from our own cultural backgrounds, which manifest themselves in the ideas and values expressed. On many occasions, we convey aspects of 'common sense,' a sense which may not be that 'common' for the person with whom we are communicating. This person may not know the content or may not manage it as easily, which leads to incomprehension or misunderstanding.

It is important to point out that a person's psychological state (cognitive and emotional), as well as the levels of anxiety and uncertainty, will have a considerable impact on the intercultural communication. In situations related to the access to rights, and to the solution of major challenges, it is usual to see anxiety, stress and pressure to solve such situations. For this reason, it is important to bear in mind the intercultural tools presented herein, and to develop and/or strengthen certain intercultural competences which will make communication easier in their varied contexts.

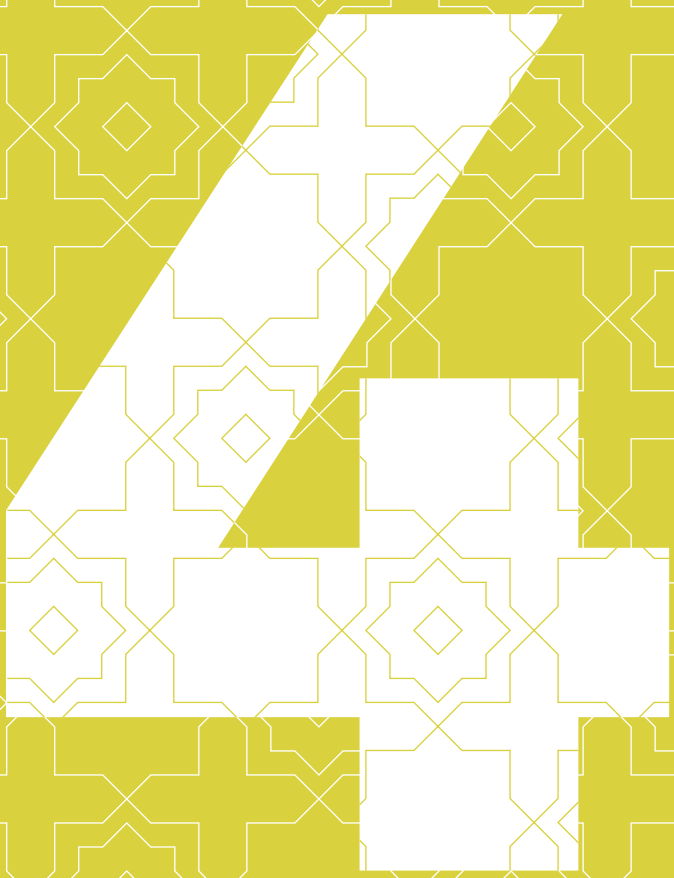
3.3 Development of intercultural competences

It may be said that intercultural communication calls for specific competences of the actors involved and that these facilitate the exchange and understanding in various situations. Developing intercultural competences requires recognition of some values, such as **openness to others, equal rights for people and respect for all beings, regardless of their place of origin, ethnicity, mother tongue, religion, social class, gender and age**.

Competences —construed as resources set in motion in a given situation (Cohen-Emerique, 2013) — imply complex processes that require

effort and explicit willingness. Becoming a culturally competent professional requires certain sensitivity, reflection and analysis of intercultural situations, and certain interest in improving the quality and communication of those encounters. **In order to develop or strengthen such competences, de-centring —understood as a reflection process where some distance is taken from one's own culture— is necessary. This reflection makes it possible to start de-centring from oneself and relativise one's own points of view. This process makes it possible to reflect upon one's own cultural aspects coming into play in a situation where there is a culture shock (Cohen-Emerique, 2011)**. However, this exercise is only possible in the interaction with another person who comes to reveal, to show us our identity. De-centring also makes it possible to visualise 'sensitive areas,' understood as those where professionals have more difficulties to communicate with migrants, those where misunderstandings are more frequent. Being able to recognise these areas makes it easier to become aware of prejudices and stereotypes, and allows one to watch for asymmetrical situations in social relations which may hinder the creation of a relationship of trust (Cohen-Emerique, 2011).

Moreover, developing and strengthening intercultural competences imply taking an interest in the other's culture, expressing an interest in the other person's cultural context, even though that context may seem very different from ours, and even puzzling. In this line, as Cohen-Emerique (2013: 22) says, 'it is about taking an interest not only in the other's cultural differences, but also his/her background and migration projects, in the experiences that have enriched him/her, as well as the traumas that have thwarted his/her projects. The experiences of discrimination, how they are lived and dealt with, should also be borne very much in mind, without forgetting the changes inherent in any long stay in a new country.'



Stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination

The contact between people is permeated by the ideas or images that one has about the other, thus guiding the communication being established. Although those images may not be necessarily negative, when they are, they may create obstacles in the communication, in addition to a reduced vision of the actors involved. A 'generalised image of a person or group,' that is, a stereotype, is always assumed, and this image manifests itself in the attitudes towards that person or group, becoming prejudices. These may turn into acts of discrimination if they influence the decision making in relation to those groups.

Alsina (1999) relates an interesting anecdote about the question that the British writer Chesterton was asked about his opinion concerning French people. The writer simply answered, 'I do not know them all.' This story invites us to reflect upon the need to be alert to the generalised images about certain groups and not to reproduce them. The writer could have answered referring to any stereotype associated with the French population, but instead of that, he wisely responded that he did not know every French person.

Different groups (Muslims, Arabs, migrants, refugees) are mentioned on a daily basis through generalised images that do not match reality and are based on groundless rumours. These images —and what they involve— not only hinder the intercultural communication, but also move us away from other people, given that, on most occasions, they are pigeonholed in places which do not allow for empathy, respect or understanding. For this reason, knowing people helps us to stay away from preconceived and erroneous ideas, and it is a positive way to improve our interaction with others and achieve more efficient results in the communication.

Stereotypes: they are the generalised images that people create in their minds about a person or group of people. They

somehow help to organise oneself in the world's diversity and to provide general guidelines about how to behave oneself when something is not completely known. But, at the same time, as they are based on scant or fragile knowledge, they simplify and give a limited view. When such a schematic characterisation leads to valuing judgments about that person, or group of people, the stereotype becomes a prejudice.

Prejudices: they are expressed in the attitude adopted towards a person, or group of people, and this attitude or behaviour is based on the content of a stereotype.

Discrimination: when that attitude influences the decision making about matters related to that person (or group), prejudices become the basis of an act of discrimination. This is the implementation of what is suggested by a prejudice.

Practical example:

'All Arabs are Muslims.'

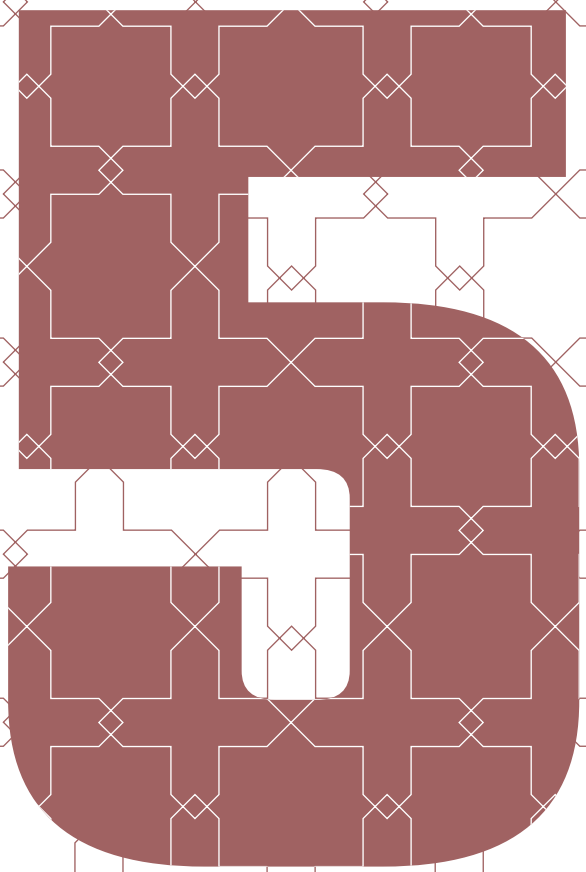
'All Arabs are Muslims, and therefore, dangerous. I think that any of them could be a terrorist.'

'All Arabs are Muslims and they are dangerous, I think that any of them could be a terrorist, that is why, when they come here, I tell them to go somewhere else, I do not deal with them.'

We thus see a way of discriminating due to a stereotype-based prejudice. In the case of the Arab community, usual stereotypes are generally based on the idea that everyone is a Muslim. Then, prejudices associating Muslim people with terrorism and religious extremism are built. These prejudices may turn into discriminatory practices, as seen in the example.



'Many times they are told 'be careful not to bring a bomb with you' (...) and women are told 'your clothes are strange'.' Member of the Syrian community, making reference to Syrian refugees and/or beneficiaries of the Syria Programme.



Intercultural approach in education and healthcare spaces

Interculturality manifests itself in various forms and multiple spaces. However, education and healthcare institutions are almost unavoidable places, both for the native population and those arriving from different backgrounds. For the purpose of facilitating the intercultural communication and implementing the tools and competences needed to work in spaces characterised by cultural diversity, some concepts, good practices, suggestions and examples are presented.

5.1 In the education sphere

In the field of education, interculturality is related to learning to live together, understand and respect each other regardless of the social class, gender, age, ethnic or national origin, mother tongue and beliefs of the people involved. It is also conceived as an approach seeking to fight against discrimination and violence through knowledge, experience and development of skills. In intercultural education, cultural diversity is a pedagogical challenge cross-cutting the educational process, where all the actors of the process (head teachers, teachers, students, families) are expected to be involved. As Leiva explains (2010: 68), 'intercultural schools reflect upon the opportunities offered by cultural diversity, promoting dialogue, cooperation and exchange of values as a basis for cultural and educational enrichment. (...) It is not only based on the coexistence of people with various cultures, but on the appreciation of these subjects as providers of culture and knowledge.'

In addition, adopting an intercultural perspective in an educational sphere implies understanding the characteristics, modalities, causes and consequences of migration processes, as well as the way in which these processes are experienced by children and adolescents. It is important to underscore that the processes inherent in human mobility imply a deep change in the lives of those going

through it, as their cultural frames, language, social and coexistence rules, housing, family roles, life conditions, among other things, are dramatically altered. For this reason, it is necessary to know these students' migration trajectories so as to understand the difficulties that may arise and to develop strategies facilitating their inclusion in educational spaces.

The intercultural approach in educational spaces acknowledges and respects all cultures, promoting the dialogue and recognising the enrichment generated by the exchange among children and adolescents.

Knowing these trajectories makes it possible to develop certain sensitivity and understanding about how complex adapting to and integrating into a new educational space can be. Moreover, it makes it possible to understand that the difficulties that may arise in learning must not be reduced to a 'cultural cause;' rather, it is preferable to conceive them within a wider process including the migration trajectory itself and the social consequences of the displacement. This will make it possible to develop more efficient strategies to facilitate the inclusion of students in local educational spaces.

In addition, it is necessary to know the students' linguistic background. This recognition generally decreases the linguistic insecurity created when there is limited understanding of the language. For this reason, doing activities in class that value the various languages in a classroom contributes to the recognition of each student's linguistic

'Last year, my child cried a lot at nursery school, because everything was different· the language, the people, the classmates... the whole environment was unfamiliar.' Beneficiary of the Syria Programme.

identity, to the visibility and collective enrichment resulting from that diversity.

SOME EXPERIENCES AND GOOD PRACTICES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SPHERE

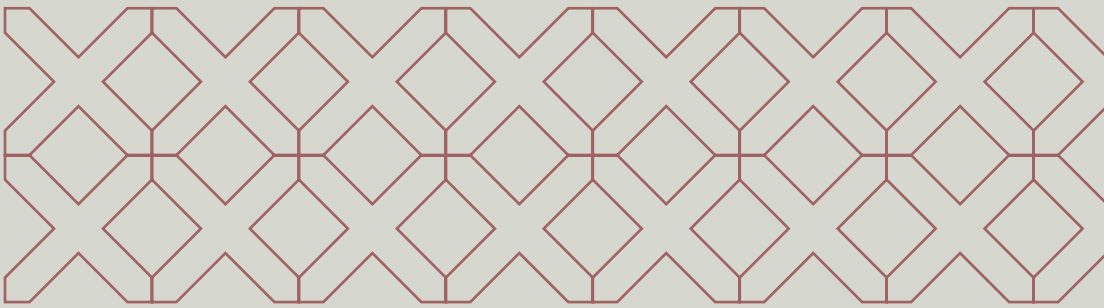
➔ A school in Pilar, Córdoba, Argentina, made a series of adaptations to the toilets so as to allow for the hygiene practices of girls of Orthodox Christian religion.

➔ Several religious schools in the country have granted scholarships to children and adolescents who are beneficiaries of the Syria Programme. This would facilitate the processes of integration in the new environment where they are given the possibility to keep their family religious practices.

➔ The students in the sixth grade of a primary school in Ontario, Canada, wrote letters to welcome the Syrian children arriving in Canada.

➔ In a school in Oslo, Norway, a wall was painted with letters of alphabets from all over the world, and decorated with fabrics and objects from other regions, thus creating a friendly and intercultural environment.

➔ In Canada, some schools have included therapy services and minimised potential triggers related to previous traumatic situations, such as dark corridors, explaining the function of bells, fire alarms and evacuation exercises. Connections between teachers and families have been fostered, as well as the professional training of teaching staffs.



Statements of teaching teams from the province of Córdoba about the integration process of Syrian children and youngsters.[8]

(School 'Nuestra Señora del Calvario' from the city of Valle Hermoso)

'In the child-teacher-school relation, children are given and offered the same knowledge as the other classmates, as a form of real inclusion and not a kind of parallel work.'

'We worked with a team, with the legal representative, and the students in question were pre-enroled even when they were not in the country yet.'

'They feel they are part of this, they are people who teach by giving the example, respecting and listening. They have generated empathy, both with adults and their peers, from a socio-emotional dimension. They know how to build with others in other ways.'

'Family mediation strategies were used, with the participation of an aunt of the children who speaks Arabic, and we worked jointly with the teacher, clarifying each one's role.'

(School 'Gobernador Álvarez' from Córdoba)

'As teaching resources, we used mobile phones and Google Translate. Images were shown to illustrate daily moments, for example when they wanted to tell us what they had eaten, images and ingredients were searched, they were named in Spanish for the purpose of naturally incorporating a second language.'

'Today it has been the first time that she dared read in front of everyone, her classmates kept a dead silence to listen to her. She read hesitantly, but she read, and the look of satisfaction that she had was amazing.'

'The main challenge was the language.'

'The school community is also committed, including the parents who collaborate and organise themselves to support them (the Syrian families), for example, to pick up the children and take them to birthday parties, to play sports, because they know they do not have a car.'

8: Extract from the working document: 'Conclusions from the First Discussion about Experiences with Syrian Children and Adolescents in the province of Córdoba.' Technical Syrian Round Table from Córdoba, Syria Programa, 01/06/2018.

Summary of suggestions to facilitate integration in the educational sphere:[9]

- Taking into account that this is a displacement resulting from a conflict that has extended for several years, and the various consequences that this uprooting may have on the protagonists' lives, in physical, psychological, cognitive and emotional terms.

- Using tools making it possible to spatially locate the countries around the world (virtual and physical maps, globe, web resources, etc.) for the purpose of bringing students closer to ethnic, national and linguistic diversity.

- Making children's and adolescents' interests, experiences and trajectories visible, considering them as collective learning opportunities enriching the whole group.

- Taking an interest in students' cultural and linguistic background in an integral manner, to know them better and be able to prepare more adapted activities, aiming at collective enrichment.

- Encouraging those children and adolescents who speak another mother tongue to learn Spanish, respecting each student's pace and timing.

9: Some of these suggestions were made from the proposals found in *Libro Blanco de la Educación Intercultural* (especially, number 20). Available at: http://aulaintercultural.org/2012/11/26/disenar-medidas-de-atencion-a-las-distintas-capacidades-presentes-en-el-aula-en-contextos-multiculturales. Others are inspired by Sainz, E. (2017). Refugiados sirios en Cantabria. Final thesis. University of Cantabria. Available at: https://repositorio.unican.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10902/11798/SainzOrtizEmma.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

- Strengthening solidarity, cooperation and communication in the classroom, creating instances for students to interact with one another and with the teaching staff.

- Promoting activities making it possible to work on equal rights, prejudices, stereotypes, discrimination and xenophobia.

- Including students' families as valuable actors in the teaching-learning process. At any age, whatever students can say about their family history and displacement experience is always important.

- Creating instances so that families can know each other and support networks can be built.

5.2 In healthcare spaces

The lack of knowledge of the cultural and linguistic frames of reference of those who make a consultation at a healthcare centre may give rise to conflicts and misunderstandings. If, in addition to the linguistic difficulties that may be present in the consultation, patients show insecurity, uncertainty and mistrust towards professionals, the health care is likely to be insufficient or not completely effective. For this reason, it is necessary for healthcare professionals who work in the various health centres to adopt an intercultural approach making it possible to communicate effectively, to bridge the professional-patient gap, and to generate a relationship of trust to provide an efficient and relevant healthcare service.

It is about respecting the beliefs of the person making the consultation, overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers, and proposing a health care that does not conflict with his/her frames of reference. For this reason, it becomes relevant for professionals to know culture and religion-related practices, as they greatly influence people's points of view regarding health, pathological processes and their healing (Cerruti, Mombello and Caggiano, 2010; González Sanabria, 2016; Jelin, 2006).

It is necessary to start from the basis that there are different conceptions related to health-disease processes, according to the different cultures. As Langdon and Wilk state (2010: 184), 'each and every culture has concepts about what it means to be ill or healthy. They also have classifications about diseases, and these are organised based on symptoms, seriousness, or other kinds of criteria. Their classifications and concepts of health and disease are not universal and rarely reflect biomedical definitions.' Understanding these issues may help not to judge a patient's beliefs and conceptions, and to realise that these conceptions are part of his/her cultural configurations. Those configurations, even though they may be different from those of the healthcare professional, cannot be considered to be either inferior or superior. On the contrary, it is desirable to listen to and respect them.

In the case of the Syrian population, it may be said that, even though it accepts and respects Western medicine, it is important to bear in mind certain characteristics or preferences:

✕ this population generally prefers to receive medical care by professionals of the same sex.

✕ it is important to deal with sexually transmitted and genital organ diseases in a very sensitive manner. Questions concerning these topics generally cause shyness and shame.

✕ hospitalised women prefer loose and closed clothing, instead of open gowns.

✕ it is desirable for women requiring reproductive health care to be treated by female gynaecologists and nurses.

✕ Syrian people feel responsible for looking after their elders or relatives. Family support, as an emotional support network, is highly important during periods of illness and hospitalisation.

- once symptoms disappear, patients usually drop their treatment and do not come back for check-ups.

- mental pathologies are usually considered as something shameful for people and their families. However, since the conflict started, the Syrian population is more willing to seek and receive psychological assistance.[10]

- in the case of hospitalised Muslim patients, it is important to bear in mind that, during the Ramadan period, they may reject food or medication. Ramadan is practised during the month of the same name, which is the ninth month in the Muslim calendar. This calendar is based on the lunar cycle, and months start when the lunar crescent is first seen after a new moon. For this reason, its dates change every year. In practice, it involves fasting on a daily basis, therefore eating, drinking and smoking are not allowed from dawn to dusk. This fasting is considered as a method of self-purification to enhance reflection, generosity and self-control. The end of Ramadan is celebrated with days of prayer and three days of family visits and feast, called Eid al-Fitr.[11]

10: According to the Cultural Orientation Resource Center, mental healthcare was already scarce before the conflict. The country only had two state-owned psychiatric hospitals and 70 psychiatrists for a 22-million population.
Source: Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Refugiados de Siria (2014). Available at: www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.tttp.eu/files/cal_syrianbackgrounder_ES.pdf.

11: Sources:
Cultural Orientation Resource Center, *Refugiados de Siria* (2014). Available at: www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.tttp.eu/files/cal_syrianbackgrounder_ES.pdf.
Cassio, *Ramadán: definición y beneficios* (2013). Available at: www.webislam.com/articulos/89627-ramadan_definicion_y_beneficios.html.

✕ Muslim patients may ask for food adaptation to respect the halal (permitted) Islamic tradition. According to the Islamic Centre of the Argentine Republic, the term halal is an Arabic word translated as 'licit,' and is used in the Muslim religion to designate actions and food accepted by the Islamic law. The Quran mentions some animal meat considered to be forbidden, as they are presumed to be dangerous for human beings. These kinds of meat include pork, meat from animals found dead, animals feeding on carrion, with claws, from animals killed by other animals, from those that died of suffocation, and any animal meat that has been slaughtered in the name of anyone, but the name of God. To sum up, the following is forbidden food: pork, wild boars and derivatives, dogs, snakes, monkeys, birds of prey, harmful animals, mules and domestic donkeys, and poisonous animals. As regards drinks that are illicit, alcoholic drinks and narcotics stand out.

A culturally competent professional proposes health care that effectively responds to the various needs of a patient and his/her family. To that end, it is essential to bear in mind the cultural, linguistic, educational and socioeconomic context of the person making the consultation, and, in the case of professionals, to be aware of their own system of values, the concept of culture and its relevance in the healthcare field (Bowen, 2000).

The development and strengthening of intercultural competences by healthcare workers allows for a greater understanding of these preferences and cultural practices. In addition, in these spheres, communication may be affected not only due to cultural and linguistic differences, but also due to the emotional state (concern, distress, anguish, uncertainty) of those resorting to these spaces.

It should be recalled that the current conflict has left many people without access to any kind of healthcare, including children's vaccination. Since 2013, more than half of the healthcare centres have been destroyed. It should also be considered that, while going through the various resettlement places, people's medical conditions may get worse, due to their exposure to diseases other than the ones in their environment (Davis and Alchukr, 2014).

HEALTHCARE ACCESS BY THE BENEFICIARY POPULATION IN ARGENTINA

In the case of Argentina, various callers have highlighted the access to healthcare as something very positive for the Syria Programme beneficiaries, especially because healthcare and medicines are free. However, for many beneficiaries, communication with the medical staff is still a great concern to explain their children's conditions.

Likewise, it must be borne in mind that, as a consequence of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, many people arriving in Argentina have had to escape from places where their lives were in danger, have had traumatic experiences, have probably suffered violence or rape, or witnessed them, some have lost part of their families or have become separated from them, and are now facing the challenge of integrating into a new country, whose language and culture are significantly different from theirs. These elements make this population have more vulnerabilities concerning physical and mental health.

In general, people who have had to leave their country due to security reasons and who are now facing the challenge of integrating themselves into their country of destination go through the culture shock phases described above. In addition to that, in Argentina, it has been seen that some of the Syrian people who arrived suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, characterised by sleep-related problems (nightmares, insomnia), alertness, lack of concentration, fear, irritability, concern, anxiety, among others.

Additionally, people may be affected by multiple losses, thus going through a mourning process. According to Fernández (2016),[12] forced migrants would go through 7 mournings:

◆ Mourning for the **family and friends** that were left behind. Deterioration of the social support network they used to have.

◆ Mourning for the loss of their **ethnicity**, especially, traditions, food, music, etc.

12: C. Medina et al., *¿Explica la esquizotipia la discordancia entre informantes de alteraciones conductuales en adolescentes?* (2007).
Available at: www.infocop.es/view_article.asp?id=6079#inicio.

◆ Mourning for the loss of their **language**. Not being able to interact gives rise to limitations in their integration. In addition, difficulties in expressing themselves and feeling understood and recognized appear.

◆ Mourning for the separation from their **culture**. A way of life, certain habits, ways of acting, etc. are left behind.

◆ The loss of **landscapes**, their land. This is a mourning related to the loss of familiar landscapes, 'the usual path, rivers, mountains, forests or city streets where they so often walked with relatives or friends, etc.'.

◆ Mourning for the loss of **status**.

◆ Mourning for **physical changes**. Sometimes great physical changes are experienced (loss of weight, ageing) making people have difficulties in recognizing themselves.

However, and in spite of the cases reported, it cannot be asserted that the Syrian population in general has or will have this kind of difficulties. It is always desirable to relativise situations and not to extend them to an entire population.

Summary of suggestions to facilitate the intercultural communication in healthcare spaces:

✹ Bearing in mind that patients, healthcare professionals and administrative personnel of healthcare centres may have different conceptions about the health-disease process, based on their beliefs, practices and values.

✹ It is advisable to be informed about these conceptions, to try to understand them, respect them, looking for points of agreement between professionals and patients for their care and treatment.

- It is important to develop and strengthen intercultural competences for the purpose of proposing more adequate, efficient and relevant health care.

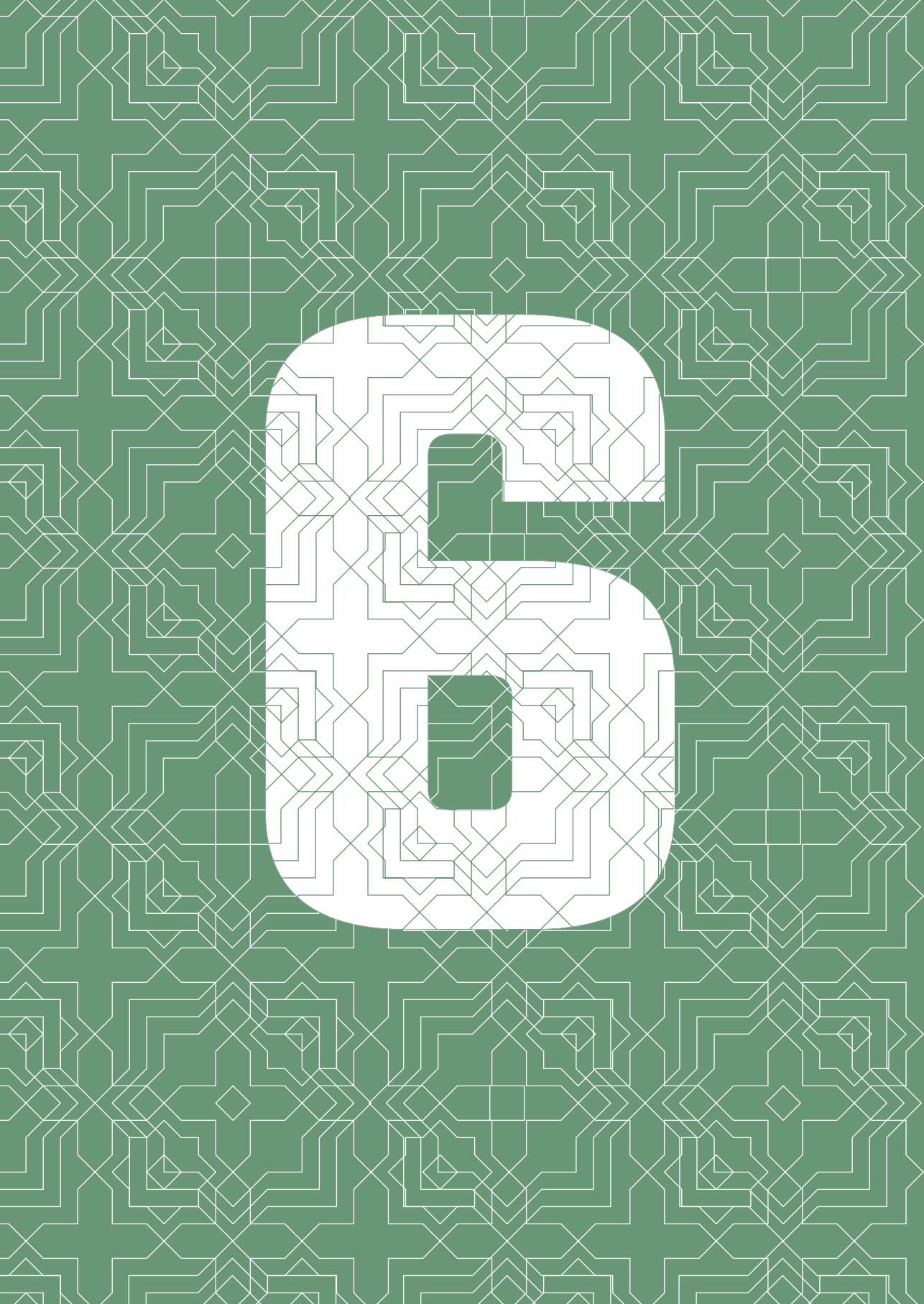
- Generating a relation of trust with patients, showing empathy and tolerance towards the cultural and linguistic barriers that may appear.

- In addition to verbal communication, it is necessary to pay attention to non-verbal elements, such as gestures, expressions, postures, tone of voice, silences, etc. This kind of communication may give valuable information about the person making the consultation.

- As far as possible, writing down the diagnosis and treatment so that, if the person was not able to understand or remember it, someone could read the result of his/her consultation. It does not take much time and may avoid several misunderstandings and delays.

- Asking or seeing if patients understand the language being spoken, or if they have difficulties in understanding it. If so, resorting to an interpreter, asking the healthcare centre staff or, if that were not possible, using graphic means of communication: drawings, signalling of the body parts, etc. Where possible, avoiding situations where the children of those making the consultation act as translators. In general, and as they usually learn the language and adapt to the new environment before their parents, they are assigned this kind of responsibilities, resulting in an overburden for children and adolescents, the discouragement of parents to learn Spanish and the reversal of roles, which ends up structurally affecting families.

- On many occasions, difficulties do not lie in the language, but in the vocabulary; for this reason, it is advised to clearly explain a patient's situation and ask if he/she has understood it well, as part of the information may not have been grasped. Knowing their medical condition is their right, and professionals have an obligation to collaborate with this objective.



Suggestions to facilitate the integration process, addressed to callers and civil society organisations

This section presents some suggestions resulting from the experiences between the beneficiary population of the Syria Programme and callers or civil society organisations. This information is intended to work as a tool making it possible to improve the reception and integration processes of this population, and to strengthen the intercultural communication of all the people involved in those processes. To make reading easier, some key areas have been defined to present such suggestions.

Management of expectations

- It is important to take into account that both callers and beneficiaries have certain expectations regarding the reception and integration processes, giving rise, in general, to a clash of expectations. For this reason, it is essential that callers do not heighten the unreasonable and unrealistic expectations that beneficiaries may have. The idea is

'Both the one arriving and the one receiving have very high expectations. There are many expectations regarding what the caller and the country may offer.' Member of a faith-based organisation.

that they arrive with expectations related to the environment where they will lead their lives. For that reason, it is necessary for all the people, organisations and institutions working in the reception and integration processes of this population to offer a view in line with reality, avoiding conveying wishes or projections in that view.

- It is necessary for callers to try to understand the beneficiaries' situation, their needs and timing, realising that everyone has their own pace to face the uprooting and integration process.

- It should be borne in mind that a beneficiary's current life conditions may not be satisfactory to him/her. Having fled from the conflict and being safe does not necessarily lead to full satisfaction or happiness, as beneficiaries are going through an uprooting and integration process in the new country, characterised by processes related to loss and adaptation at the same time.

'In the case of Christians in Syria, we see that the Church is quite provident, they go to church to look for what they need.' Member of a faith-based organisation.

Cultural aspects

- Cultural differences pose a challenge for all the parties involved in the process. It will be necessary to understand, negotiate and respect those differences to live in harmony. Dialogue, respect for the other person's timing and space are absolutely necessary.

- Gender roles in the Syrian Arab Republic vary according to social class or place of residence (urban/rural). Therefore, the role of men and women may be different from the usual or known ones in Argen-

tina. When arriving in the country of destination, many of these roles may be affected, thus creating tension in the family.

✕ It should be taken into account that the people arriving have a family and social structure where family relations are very close. The nuclear family is a tight network of very close relationships.

✕ It is necessary to know that, in the Syrian Arab Republic, faith-based organisations fulfil community tasks and usually satisfy several needs of the population. For this reason, people very frequently resort to these organisations looking for help.

Understanding of the main challenges

✕ One of the first challenges faced by the beneficiary population is the language. The language barrier is the one that mostly hinders the access to rights, as it does not allow for communication in an autonomous way. In addition, that barrier makes it difficult to establish bonds with other people, having a direct impact on the integration process. Even though many beneficiaries have a solid base of English, which is positive for learning Spanish, being able to keep a fluent conversation implies a learning process that takes several months, as well as cognitive and emotional efforts.

✕ Another great challenge is the access to the labour market. It has been proven that this is a significant difficulty related to the previous one, as language difficulties have a direct impact on finding and securing a job in the country. Moreover, many of the people who arrive in the framework of the Syria Programme are overqualified, doing jobs that are not related to the academic and professional experience they had in the Syrian Arab Republic.

✕ Obtaining appropriate identity and travelling documentation is another challenge for beneficiaries. The impossibility to contact the authorities in their country of origin and/or the various countries where they lived before coming to Argentina, as well as the difficulty in re-

newing or obtaining new passports, are part of the challenges having an impact on the integration processes of this population. Likewise, potential delays in obtaining identity documents, the difficulty in meeting certain administrative requirements and the costs involved in these processes may pose additional challenges.

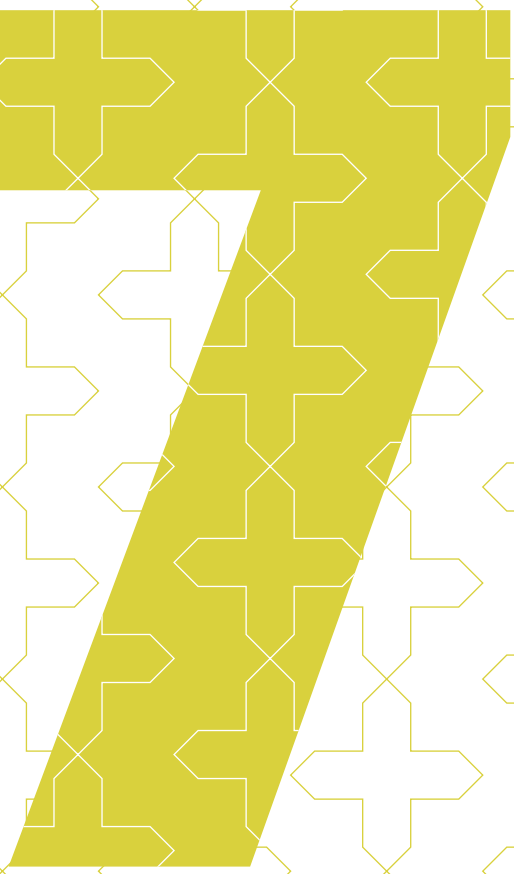
- It has been proven that another challenge faced by beneficiaries of the Syria Programme is accessing adequate housing and being able to financially support it. In certain situations, families live with their callers and typical coexistence difficulties may come up. In addition, in the middle term, a family's income may not be sufficient to rent adequate housing or, even if it is adequate, it may not match their expectations. What is more, the difficulty in accessing bank accounts, guarantees and loans also gives rise to challenges in the access to housing.

- It is important for callers to understand these challenges without losing sight of the fact that the timing for adapting, integrating and developing certain

'The language was one of the difficulties we have faced here. This is because people here speak Spanish and in Syria we have no idea about this language. There, even if you have no studies at all, you may know a little English or French, but never Spanish.' Beneficiary of the Syria Programme.

'We could not go out on our own, we did not understand anything; we always had to take someone from my family to translate for us; that lasted for the first four months.'
Beneficiary of the Syria Programme.

autonomy varies from one person to the other. The idea is to promote and facilitate the beneficiaries' integration process and autonomy without creating, however, further pressure for them.



Proposal of general activities addressed to teachers, healthcare workers, callers and civil society organisations

This section presents some activities addressed to all those actors involved in the reception and integration processes of the Syria Programme beneficiaries, to be dealt with in workshops or other training instances. The objective of these activities is to raise the intercultural awareness of the various actors, provide theoretical and empirical knowledge of these topics, overcome different stereotypes and prejudices, strengthen intercultural communication skills, build strategies to solve difficulties in communication, and transform situations of intercultural divergence.

ACTIVITY 1: FAMILY HISTORIES FROM HERE AND THERE[13]

Objective: to raise awareness of the country's essential cultural diversity and of the fact that nobody is completely detached from the processes inherent in human mobility. To bring visibility to the migration processes in the family, understanding how migration crosscuts the lives of numerous people, approaching the topics to the participants through the reconstruction of their personal stories.

13: Activity extended and adjusted from one of the exercises ("Migration Family History") appearing in the document: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2017, Migraciones e Interculturalidad: Guía para el desarrollo y fortalecimiento de habilidades en comunicación intercultural. Buenos Aires.

Description: the workshop facilitator asks those who were not born in Argentina to raise their hands, immediately after he/she asks those whose parents were not born in Argentina, and so on with grandparents and great-grandparents. In a second instance, he/she may ask people of Syrian-Lebanese descent to raise their hands. Then, the participants will form subgroups of 4 people to reflect upon the mobility background in their families: who were they?; where did they come from?; did these people migrate alone or with others?; under what conditions did they migrate?; what anecdotes were told in the family about those migrations?; do you know what difficulties or situations they experienced in the country of destination?; do you know what was said about those people when they arrived? The idea is that the members of the subgroup recount their respective stories, write down the main points of each account and choose a spokesperson to convey to the others what has been discussed in the subgroup. Based on these accounts, the workshop facilitator will be able to deal with different issues concerning human mobility and cultural diversity, for example, the notion of interculturality, stereotype, prejudice, as well as the challenges to be faced by migrants. For this task, the workshop facilitator may resort to the theoretical material and practical examples in this Guide.

Risks:

> There may be people who show certain resistance or unwillingness to tell others their personal or family experiences.

> Listening to certain family histories or telling others one's own may arouse various emotions in the participants, such as nostalgia, sadness, pain, among others.

> Some accounts may mobilise and affect participants in ways that may not have been expected beforehand.

Activity assessment: the exercise may be considered successful if the workshop facilitator sees that people developed or strengthened their sensitivity to migration issues and cultural diversity, through their own experiences and those put forward in the group.

ACTIVITY 2: RETHINKING MYTHS AND KNOWLEDGE

Objective: to provide information about the Syrian population and to reflect upon the prejudices and stereotypes associated with this population.

Description: the workshop facilitator will present 11 statements to the participants. They will be shown one at a time, asking a different volunteer to read each statement. Once a statement has been read, a collective discussion is opened up, seeking to deal in depth with all the answers given by the group in connection to such statements, and paying attention to the knowledge/lack of knowledge, the myths and prejudices about these people. After the members of the group have expressed their position, the actual answers will be worked on.

These are the 11 statements:

1 | The population of the Syrian Arab republic is entirely Muslim.
2 | Arabs are Muslims.
3 | Syrian people only speak Arabic.
4 | A large part of the Syrian population is used to drinking mate.
5 | All the people from the Syrian Arab Republic pray 5 times a day.
6 | Syrian people are very different from us and therefore they cannot adapt.
7 | Chickpeas and aubergines are practically unknown ingredients in the Syrian Arab Republic.
8 | Some animals are not eaten by Muslim people.
9 | People from the Syrian Arab Republic usually greet each other with kisses and hugs.

10 | Celebrations in the Syrian Arab Republic depend on each religion.
11 | The Syrian society is patriarchal.

Answers to work on with the participants:

1 > False. The Syrian Arab Republic is a country with a great religious diversity. Ninety percent of the population is Muslim, but there are great divergences within that religion. Within the Islam practised in the country, there are Sunnis, Alawites, Shia (there is a clear division between Sunnis and Shia) and Druze. The remaining 10 percent of the Syrian population is Christian (Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Syriac and Orthodox Armenian). Greek Orthodox Christians predominate over Catholic ones. It should be mentioned that there is a small Arabic-speaking Jewish community, whose presence dates back to biblical times.

2 > False. According to the Real Academia Española (RAE), the term Arab means: native to Arabia, region in Asia / belonging or related to Arabia or Arabs / belonging or related to Arabic-speaking peoples.[14] Arab also refers to 'a culture that shares its ancestors, traditions and, mainly, a language. It has nothing to do with religion, as many Arabs are Christians.'[15]
Arabs are people from Arabia, also referred to as 'Arabian Peninsula,' that is, from Arab countries. These are places where the Arab people and Arabic language predominate. Their name comes from the Arabian Peninsula where the language was born, which later spread to other geographical areas. Nowadays, Arab countries are located in northern Africa (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Libya, Egypt and Sudan), in the Middle East (Oman, Jordan, Lebanon, Djibouti, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates,

14: Dictionary of the Real Academia Española, available at: http://dle.rae.es/?id=3NVJ9wq.
15: United Nations Agency for Refugees, *Países árabes, desde Marruecos hasta Oriente Medio* (Madrid, 2017). Available at: https://eacnur.org/es/actualidad/noticias/eventos/paises-arabes-desde-marruecos-hasta-oriente-medio.

Kuwait, Iraq, Yemen, Syrian Arab Republic, and other Palestine territories) and in the Horn of Africa (Somalia). In addition, Muslim refers to any person who practises the Islamic religion (who follows Islamism, according to RAE), who does not necessarily come from the Arab people. This is the case of countries in Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia or Brunei, or in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, and Uganda. In fact, 80 percent of Muslims do not speak Arabic.[16]

3 > False. In addition to Arabic, some people speak Kurdish, Syriac, Armenian, Turkish, French and English. All Syrian people speak colloquial Arabic (which shows great differences based on the country, sometimes making comprehension difficult among populations from various national origins), and most of them can read and write in standard modern Arabic (also known as 'al-fushaa,' language used in the entire Arab world for various specialised activities, such as education, the media, the written press and formal situations).

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16: Idem.

The Arabic language in the Syrian Arab Republic is closer to the Lebanese/Palestine/Jordanian dialects (known as Levantine or Shami Arabic), sharing with them very similar grammar and vocabulary. Syrian Kurdish and Syriac Christian people speak Arabic as their mother or near-native tongue, and may know how to read and write it. Moreover, Kurdish people usually speak Kurdish, and Syriac Christian people usually speak Syriac. Armenian people speak Armenian and can speak colloquial Arabic, but, in general, cannot read or write it. Turkmen people speak a variety of Turkish and also Arabic, but most of them cannot read or write it.

4 > True. The immigration of Syrian population to Argentina, which took place between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, made this people adopt the local custom of drinking mate. When many of those immigrants returned to their country, by the mid-20th century, they took this custom with them. Nowadays, the Syrian Arab Republic is the first country of destination of the yerba mate produced in Argentina. However, the way it is drunk slightly differs, as it is

drunk individually and in a glass or ceramic cup. Similarly to what is done in Argentina, a straw is used to drink it and a kettle to pour it. This kettle may be circulated among the people present.

5 > False. Only Muslim Syrian people do it. Praying is done in private, and a prayer may be postponed if it is not convenient to pray at the scheduled time. Before praying, one's feet, forearms and face must be washed, which is why there are bottles or jars in the toilets to that end.

6 > False. Propose reflecting on what makes us different and what makes us similar as human beings. As Alsina points out (1999: 65), 'human beings, at the deepest level, are very likely to be all the same. For example, we all undergo a socialisation process in a given culture. However, it is clear that the culture where we have been socialized makes us have certain thoughts, feelings and behaviours that may be similar to, occasionally, and different, at times, from those of the people socialised in other cultures.' Here, it is important to stress the terms 'occasionally' and 'at times,' as it is essential to relativise the cultural aspects so as not to reduce people to the overall characteristics of the culture(s) to which they belong. It is necessary to rethink these issues so as not to pigeonhole people with quick generalisations, such as 'Arabs are…,' 'Muslims say…,' losing sight of subjective factors and extending to an entire community those characteristics that have been found in a single person.
As regards the idea that Syrian people are different from us, of course they are, just as our neighbour surely is. It is important to work together to understand that, even though there are cultural differences expressed in customs, beliefs, values, food, ways of talking, getting dressed, relating to others and greeting, that does not mean that such difficulties will result in the impossibility to get to know and relate to each other. It is true that communication may be altered based on those differences, but not only based on them, as social class, gender and age also contribute to misunderstandings.

7 > False. One of the most usual preparations in the Syrian cuisine is the use of pita flatbread, which is round, and over which a layer of

hummus (chickpea-based preparation) is usually spread, thus making a kind of dip. The other typical Syrian dish is Mutabal or Baba ghanoush, made with aubergines.

8 > True. One of the main precepts of the Quran (holy book of Islam) is to maintain a healthy body, as the soul will subsequently be so, and it may be developed and perfected to be able to worship and obey God. Among the suggestions to maintain a healthy body, there is food that is allowed (halal) and food that is not (haram). The term halal is an Arabic word translated as 'licit' and is used in the Muslim religion to refer to actions and food accepted by the Islamic law. The Quran mentions some animal meat considered to be forbidden, as they are presumed to be dangerous for human beings. These kinds of meat include pork, meat from animals found dead, animals feeding on carrion, with claws, from animals killed by other animals, from those that died of suffocation, and all animal meat that has been slaughtered in the name of anyone, but the name of God. As regards drinks that are illicit, alcoholic drinks and narcotics stand out.

9 > It depends on the context. In formal environments, greetings only imply shaking the right hand. Shaking a woman's hand is not appropriate unless she extends her hand first. Informal greetings between same-sex people may include a hug or two kisses on each cheek between men. Kissing someone's forehead denotes extreme respect, but it is not acceptable for a man to kiss a woman in this way if they are not related.

10 > True. Celebrations depend largely on each person's religion. The most important Islamic holidays (based on the Islamic lunar calendar) are Eid al-Fitr (the last three days of Ramadan), Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice, held during the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, celebrating Abraham's willingness to slay his son), prophet Muhammad's birth (November 25) and Ashura (day of Shia atonement). Christian groups celebrate Easter and Christmas in various ways. Armenian Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas on January 6, while other Christian people celebrate it on December 25.

11 > True. The family dynamics is patriarchal: the father or eldest

man has the highest authority in the household and he is expected to be financially responsible for his family. In general, his opinion prevails in a discussion. Based on this information, it is possible to deal with, inform about and reflect upon the role of women and men in the Syrian society. Largely speaking, women are expected to cook, clean and look after children, whereas men are mainly responsible for working and financially supporting the whole family. When it comes about boys and girls, the same roles are reproduced: girls help with household chores, and boys may contribute to their family income by doing deliveries or agricultural work, although most boys and girls do not work until they complete or drop their studies. However, roles vary according to a family's socioeconomic level, education level and area of residence (rural or urban). Nonetheless, the conflict that has been affecting the country for seven years has also brought about changes in the role of women. Both the women who have stayed in Syria and the ones who have fled are changing their role in the family and the society. Thousands of women who have become widows or have been separated from their families, and who had never left their quarters or towns, needed to flee from the conflict taking unknown and, in many cases, dangerous routes after becoming widows, and to adapt to new living conditions in reception camps or resettlement countries.

⚠ Risks:

> Some people may be so sure about their opinions that they may find it difficult to accept or respect the information given by the workshop facilitator. In that case, and based on the person's willingness and permeability, some material may be suggested to go further into the issue.

> Some people may show some resistance to address their prejudices and stereotypes.

🔑 **Activity assessment:** this exercise may be considered successful if participants have obtained new information about aspects relating to the Syrian population, and if they have been able to identify and overcome prejudices and stereotypes associated with this population.

ACTIVITY 3: METHOD OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Framework: the method of culture shocks, also known as 'method of critical incidents,' used by Cohen-Emerique (2011; 2013), is a research and training tool that makes it possible to survey the culture shocks in a given situation. This tool makes it possible to identify, analyse and understand culture shocks generated due to cultural differences in the people involved. The intercultural conflict, as approached with this method, enables de-centring, that is, taking some distance from one's own frame of cultural reference and entering the logic of another person's frame of reference. In addition, it also makes it possible to be informed about the other's cultural context, thus enabling the reflection on and overcoming of prejudices and stereotypes.

Objective: to raise people's awareness of intercultural situations, encouraging them to identify cultural differences, recognising their own values, rules, frames of reference, prejudices, stereotypes and other obstacles that may come up in an intercultural communication. To analyse the way in which culture shocks occur, to comprehend misunderstandings that occurred in a past situation, for the purpose of improving the intercultural communication in future situations.

Description: participants are requested to describe a situation where they have experienced culture shock. This description must be as detailed as possible, specifying what happened at a verbal and non-verbal level, the emotions felt and the behaviours adopted by the people involved. Then, at least two cases are chosen from the culture shocks expressed, and participants are divided into subgroups to analyse one of the critical incidents. The idea is that each subgroup discusses about the actors involved in the case, the situation and frame of cultural reference of those actors. After that, the subgroups tell the other participants about the case analysed. If necessary, the facilitator will ask the members of the subgroups to expand on certain aspects of the analysis to answer in depth the following issues:

➔ Actors:

> Who are the actors involved in this intercultural situation? Their identities: age, sex, social and national origin, profession and religious affiliation.

> What kind of relationship is there between the various actors? (Equal, asymmetrical, of dependence). Who contributes what?

> What kind of relationship is there between the groups to which the actors belong? What are the historical backgrounds and prejudices of one towards the others like?

➔ Situation and cultural frame of reference:

> The situation where the scene is developed: historical, physical, social, psychological, economic and political context.

> Reaction to the culture shock: feelings experienced by both parties and conducts seen.

> Issue with reference to which the situation arises: identify sensitive areas, different conceptions in the space, roles, relationships, images of one and the others.

> The representations, values, rules, conceptions, prejudices, that is, the frame of reference of the one who has experienced the shock.

> Predominant image with respect to the other group: neutral, negative, very negative, ridiculous, stigmatised, positive, very positive, real, unreal (what is it that the one who has experienced the shock thinks he/she knows about the other?).

> Does this critical incident pose a problem to respect differences in intercultural situations? How could a strategy be built to overcome challenges? What alternatives could be used?

After this instance, the workshop facilitator questions those who have experienced these two culture shocks, subject of the group analysis, for the purpose of knowing if these analyses made it possible to better understand those experiences. The idea, in this final stage of the activity, is that the entire group understands that the 'noises' in communication, what calls us our attention from the other person, what we criticise, what we do not understand are elements that 'reveal' our own representations, values and rules.

For the workshop facilitator's knowledge:

In general, the experience of using this method shows that the main shock areas are:

a] The conception of space. In some cultures, there are spaces for men and others for women. There are sacred spaces for some, and profane for others. For some, a personal space is necessary, and for others, it is not. The distance needed for intimacy varies.

b) The perception of time: clock time, physical time, metaphysical, sacred, profane. The perception of time is not the same for all people.

c) Family: configuration, concept of kinship, parentage, motherhood and fatherhood, matriarchy, patriarchy.

d) The notion of person/individual, individual freedom, the collective self versus the individual self.

e) The role of women.

f) Corporal punishment.

g) Social level and role, hierarchies, respect for elders.

h) Gifts and exchange.

i) Coexistence codes.

⚠ **Risks:**

> Participants may analyse only certain aspects of the critical incident, leaving others aside. In that case, the facilitator shall encourage them to expand their analysis.

> The understanding and tolerance of cultural codes that are very distant from those of the participants may be difficult and require more time than the one allowed for the activity.

> There may be expressions of rejection, stereotypes and negative prejudices about certain populations, which the facilitator shall have to frame within the respect for culture diversity and equal rights.

> The exchanges made between participants may be tense, conflictive or devoid of a position of openness.

🔑 **Activity assessment:** this exercise may be considered successful if participants have been able to analyse at length the two critical incidents chosen. The success of the activity lies in the group's understanding of the 'noises' in communication and awareness of their own frame of cultural references and that of the other person involved in the intercultural situation.

ACTIVITY 4: HETEROGENEOUS MESSAGES[17]

🚩 **Objective:** to know other forms of communication. To reduce the possibilities of stereotyping or misunderstanding the behaviour of people with a cultural background other than one's own. The activity seeks to show that many cultures have their own rules and styles of communication, thus minimising the 'noises' that may arise in future situations of intercultural communications.

Description: the workshop facilitator asks participants to divide themselves into 4 subgroups: A, B, C and D, and hands out a sheet of paper with instructions to the members of each subgroup. The instructions are different for each subgroup and they cannot be shared. For example, subgroup A does not know the instructions of subgroup B, C or D.

Instructions for group A: Avoid visual contact when talking to your interlocutor. Touch your interlocutor when speaking.

Instructions for group B: Approach the interlocutor 15 cm closer than what is usual for you. Frequently point your finger at the interlocutor while talking.

Instructions for group C: Speak more loudly than usual and interrupt your interlocutor rather frequently. Show your interlocutor signs of approval (raising your index finger or nodding).

Instructions for group D: Speak more quietly than usual and do not interrupt your interlocutor. Make a lot of gestures when you speak.

After handing out the instructions, participants are asked to stand up. The members of group A shall look for a person from group B, and those of group C shall look for a member from group D. Each pair of participants shall have a conversation for two minutes with the instructions that they have been given and then they shall sit down.

Once all the participants have taken a seat, the facilitator asks them how they felt and then asks a member of each subgroup to read the

17: This activity has been adapted from Selma Myers's and Jonamay Lambert's proposal, which appears in Aneas, M. A. (2010). *Formación intercultural en las organizaciones*. Barcelona: University of Barcelona. Available at: http://diposit.ub.edu/dspace/bitstream/2445/13842/1/Formaci%C3%B3n%20intercultural%20en%20las%20organizaciones.pdf.

instructions they had and opens the ground for discussion. To that end, the following triggering questions may be asked:

> Was it easy/difficult to follow the instructions?

> What surprises did you have?

> How was your partner's behaviour interpreted during the activity? (For example: the person whose interlocutor looked somewhere else thought that this person could not be trusted, thought that he/she was not interested, or, perhaps, bored).

> What hypotheses could be made regarding those people with communication styles other than ours?

> What results could there be if these differences were misinterpreted?

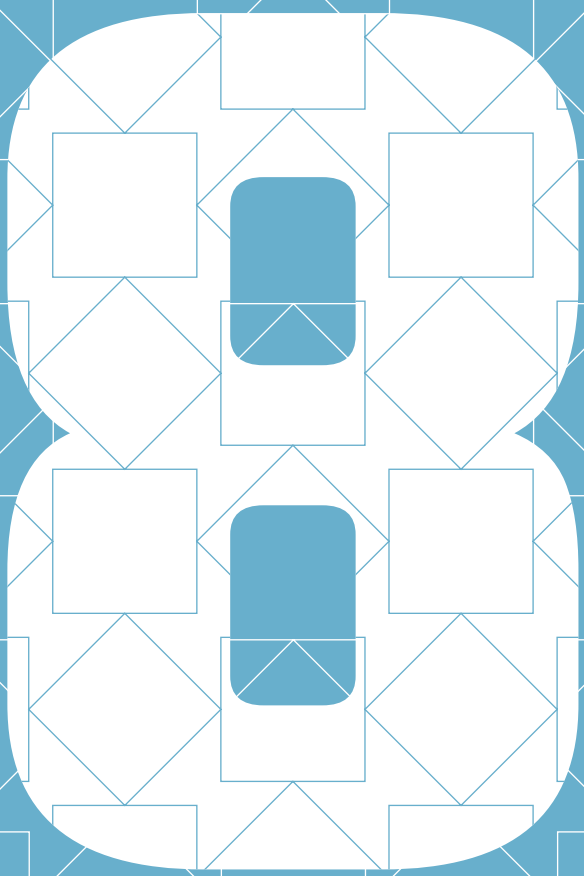
> What life situations does this remind you of?

> How could we overcome communication barriers and accept communication differences?

> What are the main lessons learnt?

⚠ **Risks:** During the exercise, certain tensions may be created as a consequence of the lack of knowledge that people have of their partners' instructions.

🔑 **Activity assessment:** the activity's success will be guaranteed if the members of the group followed the instructions, thus giving rise to the possibility of experiencing other forms of communication and understanding that there is not a single way of interacting. It is desirable for that understanding to generate respect and tolerance in future situations of intercultural communication.



Specific activities

8.1 For callers and civil society organisations

LEARNING IN INTERCULTURAL SITUATIONS

Objective: to collectively reflect upon certain situations where 'noises', incomprehension, misunderstandings, expectations or prejudices among the parties involved are manifested in the communication. To learn about some cultural and religious aspects of the Syrian population.

Description: the workshop facilitator presents to the group a series of situations, which, hypothetical though they may be, are based on multiple real accounts. The idea is to present the situations one at a time, to open the debate starting from certain key questions, to reflect on and discuss about the answers, and move on to the next question. The answers to many of the questions are in this Guide and in the Socio-cultural Profile of the Syrian Population.

> SITUATION 1: The Abdul family arrived from the Syrian Arab republic two months ago and was received by the López family, who lives in a province in the north of the country. Today is the birthday of a member of the beneficiary family and neither this person nor his/her family expresses any intention to celebrate. The López family then decides to organise a surprise party for the birthday person inviting other people. They are planning to grill asado, prepare some salad and serve some typical Argentinian drinks. A millefeuille filled with dulce de leche (similar to caramel) will be prepared. The whole family are very excited and convinced that the Abduls will love the surprise. When the beneficiary family arrives home, all the lights are off. Suddenly, several people shout, 'surprise!'.

> How will the beneficiary family react?

> Why is it likely that they have not considered celebrating?

> Will the beneficiary family like all the food and drinks? Will they be relevant according to the religion they practise?

> Do all cultures celebrate birthdays? What happens in the Syrian Arab republic as regards this celebration?

SITUATION 2: The Hadad brothers lived in a small city with their mother and father, studied engineering and had excellent jobs. As a consequence of the conflict, they obtained a humanitarian visa and arrived three months ago in Buenos Aires, staying at their caller's home. They are learning Spanish, looking for a job and finding the way to validate their diplomas. The callers have tried to provide them with contacts so that they can incorporate into the labour market, but even though they have attended interviews, they have not been contacted again. The members of the family are starting to feel frustrated when seeing that the Hadads are not learning Spanish at the pace they had imagined, when witnessing the difficulties in finding a job, when seeing that the brothers prioritise their search in engineering-related areas, when listening to their complaints about the long journeys they have to make when they leave the house, and when sensing certain sadness in the Hadads.

> What are the processes that the Hadad brothers may be going through? In what phase of the culture shock may they be placed?

> What are the expectations of the caller family?

> What strategies may be used to overcome frustration?

> Why is it important to take into account each person's own timing in the integration processes?

> What could be done to improve the situation of all the parties involved?

> SITUATION 3: Yamila is a young Syrian woman; she's a Muslim and a Maths teacher, who arrived in Argentina 11 months ago. All her family members are in her country of origin. Here she was received by a civil society organisation, which took on the commitment as a caller. Since she arrived in the country, she has been studying Spanish very hard, and one month ago she found a job for which she is overqualified. Some members of the organisation have felt uncomfortable as Yamila, on many occasions, raises her voice when having a conversation. In one opportunity, she asked for typical ingredients to cook and spend an enjoyable moment with the members of the organisation. Today, coming back from work, amid laughs and prejudice, two people looked at her with contempt because she was wearing her hijab. Even though this had never happened to her here, Yamila felt sad and misunderstood.

> Why does Yamila raise her voice? Does it mean she is angry or may there be other reasons?

> What kind of ingredients may she have asked for? What kind of food can she prepare with them? What kind of food will she not prepare?

> Why might the hijab have worked as a trigger for prejudice and contempt?

> What can be done to improve Yamila's situation?

After having collectively discussed each situation, the workshop facilitator will ask the group to share the main difficulties found to carry out this activity, the aspects that called their attention, and the thoughts and emotions present during the process.

Risks:

> These situations may arouse others that have been experienced by the members of the group. The facilitator will encourage the discussion about these other situations, without neglecting the key questions of each situation in the exercise.

> Some participants may not be willing to contribute to the discussion. In that case, the facilitator will encourage them to participate in the activity, explaining that the experiences of the entire group are necessary to deal with these issues.

Activity assessment: the workshop facilitator assesses the exercise based on the depth of the collective debate and the answers given for each situation. The activity will also be successful if the participants build new learning about the Syrian population and reflect upon the situations proposed, as well as others that they may want to share.

8.2 For healthcare spaces

SURVEY ABOUT PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES IN INTERCULTURAL SITUATIONS

Objective: to reflect upon the professional practices that each healthcare worker develops in intercultural situations, as well as upon the challenges in those situations. To develop collective strategies to face the challenges, guiding participants on the application of the basic rules of intercultural communication and the development and strengthening of intercultural competences.

Description: each participant is given this survey with 5 questions, and is asked to write, on the other side of the sheet, the answer to each question.

1 | Do you think your culture influences your professional practice? How?

2 | What main differences do you identify between providing services to a migrant and to another person that is not?

3 | What are the challenges involved in working with migrants?

4 | Have you experienced any situations with migrant patients where the communication was not enough due to the 'noises' that may have appeared? If so, could you describe those 'noises'? Were they exclusively related to linguistic matters or did you identify, in addition, cultural aspects? Which ones?

5 | Have you ever experienced a situation where a patient rejected the treatment proposed or requested to have it adjusted according to his/her values or beliefs? If so, how did you handle the situation?

Once all the participants have completed their answers, a space for discussion is opened up. At that moment, the workshop facilitator probes into what the questions aroused, whether they were easy or difficult, if they are matters previously reflected on or discussed with colleagues. Subsequently, the answers will be worked on. To this end, the workshop facilitator will go through the list of questions, asking participants to share their answers with the group. The idea is to create a space of trust where participants can express those experiences related to an intercultural situation and discuss professional practices. The questions aim at working on some aspects related to intercultural communication and healthcare. Then, the basic points expected to arise in the discussion are listed. If this does not occur, it is advisable for the workshop facilitator to stimulate the discussion on these aspects made explicit in the Guide, thus providing the opportunity to put them in practice in future situations.

1 | Culture is a construction of meanings shared by the mem-

bers of a group and it influences the shaping of representations, feelings, emotions, ideas and behaviours. In addition, and based on the various cultures, there are different conceptualisations regarding the health-disease processes. For this reason, it may be asserted that a healthcare professional's culture will exert an influence on his/her professional practice as the latter is, in turn, immersed in a system of beliefs, values and knowledge spatially and geographically situated. In that sense, no professional practice is 'neutral' or devoid of socially constructed meanings.

2 | The idea is to address the specificities involved in the healthcare provided to migrants and the professional competences required for those situations. It will also be mentioned that migrant populations are not the only ones requiring adjusted healthcare as a patient's social class, gender and age equally need certain adjustments. In this part of the exercise, it is important to identify how professional practices may vary from one public to the other, and when it would be desirable to do so when the objective is to provide relevant, efficient, and culturally adapted healthcare.

3 | This implies reflecting on the challenges faced by healthcare professionals when working with migrant populations. The challenges expressed by professionals may be related to 'noises' arising from the intercultural communication, health-disease conceptions, frustrations experienced due to the lack of tools with which to reflect and work on cultural and linguistic diversity, etc. The idea is to clearly identify them by means of concrete situations experienced by healthcare providers. The answers to this question will be necessary for the activity proposed at the end of the exercise.

4 | It is a question linked to the immediately previous one and which specifically probes into whether the challenges, misunderstandings and conflicts experienced may be solely related to the fact that the people involved do not speak the same language or whether, in addition, they have identified that that difference in the cultural frameworks between the professional and his/her patient influences the healthcare.

It is attempted to deepen the reflection on these aspects, understanding that, even though such differences may exist, what matters is developing strategies and competences allowing for more adequate healthcare, based on respect, dignity and equality. In addition, the idea is to identify whether those challenges may be related to mutual stereotypes and prejudices.

5 | With this question, the idea is to reflect on the influence of patients' religious beliefs, values and customs on the healthcare proposed. For instance, we may think of a Muslim person that, during the lunar month of Ramadan, does not accept to take medication, have food or drinks during the daylight hours, as well as other cases which may have been experienced. Participants are asked to explain to the group the way in which that situation was dealt with, whether they looked for alternatives so that the treatment could be adhered to, whether, at some point, they negotiated with the patient or just gave up.

Once this instance has been completed, participants are requested to collectively develop some strategies to provide healthcare respecting people's cultural diversity and dignity. For this last part of the activity, they may build on the answers to questions 3, 4 and 5, or others which may be deemed relevant and allow them to reflect on other mechanisms, practices or competences related to this objective. At the end of this instance, participants will have created a list of strategies to be displayed in a visible place for the entire group (blackboard or cardboard).

⚠ Risks:

> Some healthcare professionals may not have provided services to a migrant population before.

> It may happen that people are not motivated to provide details on the situations experienced or their professional practices.

> Participants may not express many strategies for the final exercise. In that case, the workshop facilitator may stimulate the discussion and present some strategies to encourage collective reflection.

Assessment of the activity: the workshop facilitator assesses the proposal based on the reflections shared in the group, the variety of situations and practices fuelling the discussion and the quality of the strategies devised to improve the healthcare.

8.3 For the education sector

ROLE PLAY: PUTTING ONESELF IN SOMEBODY ELSE'S PLACE

Framework: role plays are dynamics implying that participants assume an identity other than their own, representing a situation proposed by the workshop facilitator. These activities open up the possibility to put oneself in somebody else's place, trying to understand his/her experiences, emotions, thoughts, behaviours, etc. It is a way to decentralise from oneself as it allows people to assume a role and face a situation that, fictitious though it may be, may be based on real facts. These exercises make it possible to arouse tolerance, empathy and understanding towards other people that are generally identified as 'distant' or 'very different' from us.

Objective: to arouse empathy and to raise education professionals' awareness of the various places where the problem-situations are experienced. To collectively generate feasible solutions to them.

Description: participants are requested to divide themselves into subgroups and each group should be made up of approximately the same number of people. The workshop facilitator hands out to each subgroup a paper strip containing a brief description of a problem-situation. Each subgroup must reflect on that situation, find the means to solve or improve it, and distribute all the roles deemed necessary to that end. It is important to clarify in the instructions that each member of the subgroup must have a role in the representation to be made. Once the people have completed this phase, each subgroup

is asked to represent the problem-situation described on the paper strip and the continuation of the story so as to solve or improve it.

FIRST PROBLEM-SITUATION: it is the first day of school at a public primary school in an urban location which has a great number of students, among them, some migrant and refugee children. Fatimah (6 years old), her father, her mother and her brother (4 years old) arrived in the country 2 months ago, as a result of the violence and insecurity in their country. They still do not speak Spanish, although Fatimah and her brother understand some words. The family feel somewhat anxious about the start of school as, even though they know the head teacher, they do not know the teaching staff or Fatimah's classmates. When getting to school, the family is received by a large part of the teaching staff and the head teacher, who welcome the girl. However, a few minutes later, the communication is hindered due to the language, the participants start to feel tense and Fatimah starts crying.

SECOND PROBLEM-SITUATION: María is a basic-cycle Geography teacher from a private school in Buenos Aires. Last class she sensed some tension in the group, a lot of distraction, lack of concentration and identified that one of her students, Samir, was particularly quiet. Samir obtained a humanitarian visa and arrived in the country alone one year and a half ago. His family are performing all the procedures for family reunification. Even though Samir has no difficulties with Spanish, his accent denotes a distant origin. He does not socialise with the rest of his classmates and the situation seems to be getting worse. Today, when getting into the classroom, María perceived that Samir was nervous, anxious and that some of his classmates were laughing at him. His backpack and all his belongings were scattered all over the floor.

THIRD PROBLEM-SITUATION: In a nursery school of a small town in a province (where several families have recently set-

tled), the teaching staff and school officials are organising a meeting to know better the families of those children, so that they can meet each other and to deal with some topics (classroom painting and changes in the canteen).The team is considering the possibility to hold the meeting next Saturday, from 9 to 12. Everyone believes that it would be convenient to ask families to bring food and drinks to be shared that morning so that the moment can be more enjoyable. Suddenly, the head teacher remembers that one of the families is Muslim and that Ramadan starts today. The team starts questioning the relevance of sharing food and drinks, as one of the families will be fasting.

After the representations by the subgroups, the workshop facilitator opens up the discussion asking participants to share the main difficulties faced when performing this activity, the aspects that called their attention, and the thoughts and emotions aroused during the process. It is important that, in this stage, the facilitator asks how the participants felt when playing the role in question, when putting themselves in the place of others. Then, the facilitator resumes each of the problem-situations and asks the group to comment on the strategies represented, the aim of which was to solve or improve the situation, also probing into other possible ways to meet this objective.

⚠ Risks:

> Some participants may show resistance, shyness or reluctance to participate in the activity. It is important that the facilitator encourages all the members, explaining that it is a process that must be collectively experienced.

> Some of the problem-situations may remind participants of personal experiences, resulting in uncomfortable emotions.

🔎 Assessment of the activity: the activity is considered successful if people can assume the roles, represent the problem-situation and

contribute a feasible solution. In addition, the success of the activity will depend on the development, by the participants, of certain empathy towards the various people involved in the teaching-learning processes represented in the situations proposed.

Next, we propose 4 activities that the teaching staff can carry out in the classroom, depending on the students' education level (pre-school, primary, secondary).

1- Story 'Everything fits in a mug'

Laura Devetach, 2007. Ediciones Colihue.

Education level: pre-school.

Objective: to raise children's awareness of solidarity, promoting reflection on the importance of 'making room' for others, coexisting with others, at nursery school, at home, in the neighbourhood and in every social space.

Description: the teacher reads the story 'Everything fits in a mug.' To that end, it is necessary to create an atmosphere of silence and listening in the group. The story is about a single-toothed old woman living by the River Paraná who would sing 'everything fits in a mug if accommodated well.' In spite of living alone, she was generally visited by dogs, cats, hens, parrots, neighbours, mosquitoes, and other beings with which she shared talks and mates. One afternoon, it started raining heavily, the river started to overflow and the placed was subsequently flooded. Restless, the animals decided to take shelter in the old woman's house to save their lives. Little by little, all of them arrived and got inside the mug where the old lady made mate cocido (boiled mate), accommodating themselves so as not to squash one another. So, the cow, the calf, the donkey, the pigs, the tatu, the sheep, the turkey, the ducks, the ticks, the lice, the cat, the iguana, the dogs, the parakeet, the parrot, and the old lady squeezed

themselves into the mug, which managed to get out of the house and sail along the river.

After reading, the teacher creates a space so that children can share their impressions and opinions on the story. They may be asked: who are the characters in the story? What happened? How did they save their lives? With that final question, it is intended that the group reflects on the forms of solidarity and coexistence. Next, children may be asked: would you be supportive if more children came to the nursery school? What if many boys and girls went to your house? Would you make room for others? How can we be more supportive to others? How can we coexist better?

After that exchange, participants may be asked to draw the end of the story. It is advisable to encourage them to imagine that they are themselves in a small container where everyone needs to fit into.

⚠ **Risks:**

> Children may be distracted or reluctant to listen attentively to the story. For that reason, it is recommended that the teacher assesses the overall atmosphere in the classroom, as well as the right time to perform the activity.

> Some children may be willing to enrich the discussion, which is why it is desirable that the teacher encourages them so that the entire group participates in the process.

🔎 **Assessment of the activity:** the activity will have been successful if the members of the classroom have listened carefully to the story, if they have exchanged their impressions and opinions on it, if they have reflected collectively on the forms of solidarity and coexistence, and if all of them have drawn the end of the story.

2- Activity: the tree of migration[18]

Education level: primary.

Objective: to raise children's awareness of the various national origins that there may be within the group, creating a space where they can perceive that, in spite of ethnic or national differences, every child has the same rights, can share a same place of residence, and many wishes for the future. To promote respect for ethnic or national differences, thus strengthening the solidarity and support of the group members.

Description: the teacher invites participants to collectively draw a tree representing the ethnic diversity of the group. For this activity, pencils and several assembled cardboards are needed so that the entire group can draw on the same paper support. On the tree roots, the children must write their national origin; the trunk represents the present: there they must write the place where they are currently living and the words that represent the most important things in their current lives. The tree branches are related to the future: there they must write what they wish for themselves and their families. It is very important to build the tree little by little and jointly, thus giving room to the group's reflection during the entire process. Then, the teacher asks the participants to draw apples on the tree, together with a word that represents what they have learnt in the activity. The apples, therefore, symbolise the fruits of the exercise. After that, the group may hang the cardboard on a visible place in the classroom. Right away, the teacher will open a space for the children to express how they felt when doing the activity and what emotions they identified, giving the possibility to relate the activity to personal or family

18: This dynamics was adapted from the one proposed by Aynilab, a group that promotes the inclusion and positive assessment of cultural diversity and gender in primary and secondary education institutions in Iquique, Chile. http://aynilab.cl.

aspects. Later, the teacher may guide the debate towards some notions regarding migration, respect, equal rights and solidarity.

⚠ Risks:

> Stereotypes, prejudices or mockeries may come up during the activity, due to the national origin of some students. In this case, the teacher shall work with the group, providing conceptual elements and aiming at transforming those opinions and behaviours.

> Some children may not be willing to discuss or share their experiences, emotions or opinions.

🔎 **Activity assessment:** the teacher assesses the proposal based on the interactions generated in the group, the collective production of the tree, the reflections shared and the awareness that the activity may have contributed to the participants.

3- Activity: The language flower[19]

Educational level: primary.

Objective: the objective of this activity is to make students become aware of the language diversity in their own classroom. The idea is to generate knowledge and empathy for those classmates with a language background different from their own, thus avoiding future situations of discrimination, exclusion or school bullying. In addition, the purpose of this activity is to make students become familiar with the notions of mother tongue, second language (second official language spoken in a country or second language spoken by a person), foreign language, monolingualism (person who speaks only one language), bilingualism (person who speaks two languages), trilingualism (person who speaks three languages), and multilingualism (person who speaks more than three languages).

Description: the teacher may start the activity by showing some language maps so that, first, the group understands that many languages are spoken all over the world (around 7,000). Then, he/she may explain that some people speak more than one language, thus introducing the concepts of mother tongue, foreign language, monolingualism, bilingualism, etc. After this instance, some volunteers in the classroom are asked to say what languages they speak and how they learnt them, using the concepts that have just been explained. All the children must participate, even monolingual ones.
Right away, the teacher hands out a printed questionnaire to each

19: This activity was adapted from the dynamics proposed by ELODiL (Éveil au Langage et Ouverture à la Diversité Linguistique). ÉLODil is a project implemented in the city of Quebec, aiming at raising the students' awareness of language diversity and at developing their metalinguistic skills. The complete dynamics is available at the following link: www.elodil.com/pdf/activites_primaire/Fleurdeslangues.pdf.

student. The idea is that the children speak about these issues, working in pairs, one interviewing the other about his/her linguistic background and the language(s) he/she wishes to learn. Once the interaction between the students has finished and the questionnaires have been completed, the pair exchanges the documents so that each one has his/her own. Then, each student is asked to write the language(s) they know on a paper petal of a colour to be chosen, previously cut in class. On the pink petals, the students will write the language(s) they wish to learn. Finally, the teacher sticks the centre of a paper flower (without petals) in a visible place in the classroom and asks the group to come and stick their petals in the centre. The goal is to form a flower that represents all the languages known by them as well as the ones they wish to learn.

At the end of this exercise, the teacher opens a space for discussion and reflection where everyone can express what they felt when doing the activity, what challenges they found and what contents they remember. It will also be the time for the children to understand the importance of respecting their classmates regardless of their mother tongues, their accents or ways of speaking. It is recommended to explicitly mention that linguistic diversity can enrich us all if we share and respect it.

⚠ Risks:

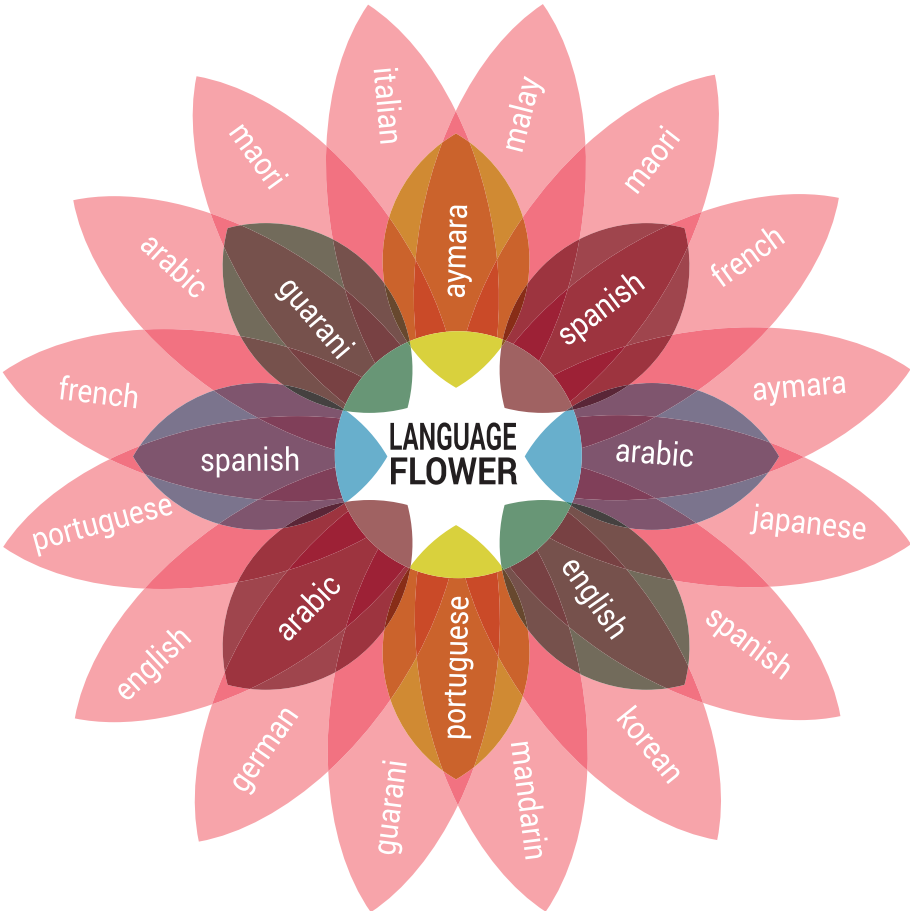
> Some members of the class may decide not to mention their mother tongue if it is part of a linguistic minority or if it is a devalued language.

> Stereotypes or prejudices may come up during the activity, due to some students' mother tongues. In this case, the teacher shall work with the group, aiming at transforming those opinions and behaviours.

Activity assessment: the teacher may consider the exercise successful if the group has been able to understand that there is a multiplicity of languages in the world and that this diversity may be found in the classroom itself. The success

20: See the questionnaire in Annex 1.

will also depend on the empathy and respect that the children may develop towards those classmates with linguistic backgrounds different from their own.



Example of a Language Flower

Source: www.elodil.umontreal.ca/fileadmin/documents/Guides/eal/01-introduction-contexte-pratique.pdf

4- ACTIVITY: I AM A MIGRANT

Education level: secondary.

Objective: to raise teenagers' awareness of migration issues, to contribute conceptual elements and life stories making it possible to reflect on this topic, arousing empathy.

Description: the teacher will present a video produced by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Argentina and the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI, for the Spanish acronym), as a result of the campaign 'I am a migrant.' The material, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=W94U8-cDeXg, shows several life stories of migrants from different countries, who have settled in Argentina in different periods of history. In it, men and women of various ages mention some of the reasons that led them to migrate, the challenges they found when arriving in the new country, their family histories, their wishes and feelings. This audiovisual material will serve as a starting point to generate a debate among the students, using some key questions:

1 | What do all the people that we see in the video have in common?

2 | What are the differences among those people?

3 | Why have the protagonists migrated?

4 | What differences are there between Norma's and Paola's account?

5 | One of the protagonists says, 'A migrant carries a bag full of stuff,' what does she mean?

6 | Why do you think that Manuela says, 'It is also a period to be reborn because it is like starting anew'?

When approaching the answers, the idea is to guide the debate towards the reflection upon some core issues and certain concepts:

> Even though the people who appear in the video have a migration experience in common and have all settled in Argentina, they differ in their age, gender, places of origin, reasons that led them to migrate, family structure, life story, among other aspects.

> People migrate for various reasons: economic, family-related, professional, educational, etc. In addition, it is necessary to mention in the debate that some people are forced to leave their countries to save their lives, as they are in danger. The teacher may work conceptually on these terms: migrant, refugee, displaced person.

> The people who have left their places of origin or residence, regardless of the reason for having done so, bring with them a cultural and linguistic background full of customs, values, traditions, representations, emotions and experiences. It is desirable that such background be understood and respected by everyone. The teacher may work conceptually on the terms 'culture' and 'interculturality.'

After the debate, the teacher will guide the debate towards the discussion about the students' personal and family stories. In that sense, he/she may ask if they or their families have gone through a mobility experience, pointing out that it may not have been an international migration, but they may also talk about regional, provincial or even neighbourhood migrations. To further the debate and be able to generate more awareness and empathy in adolescents, it will be necessary to ask how they and/or their families felt in that process, what the most significant challenges were, what difficulties they found, what projects they had.

⚠ Risks:

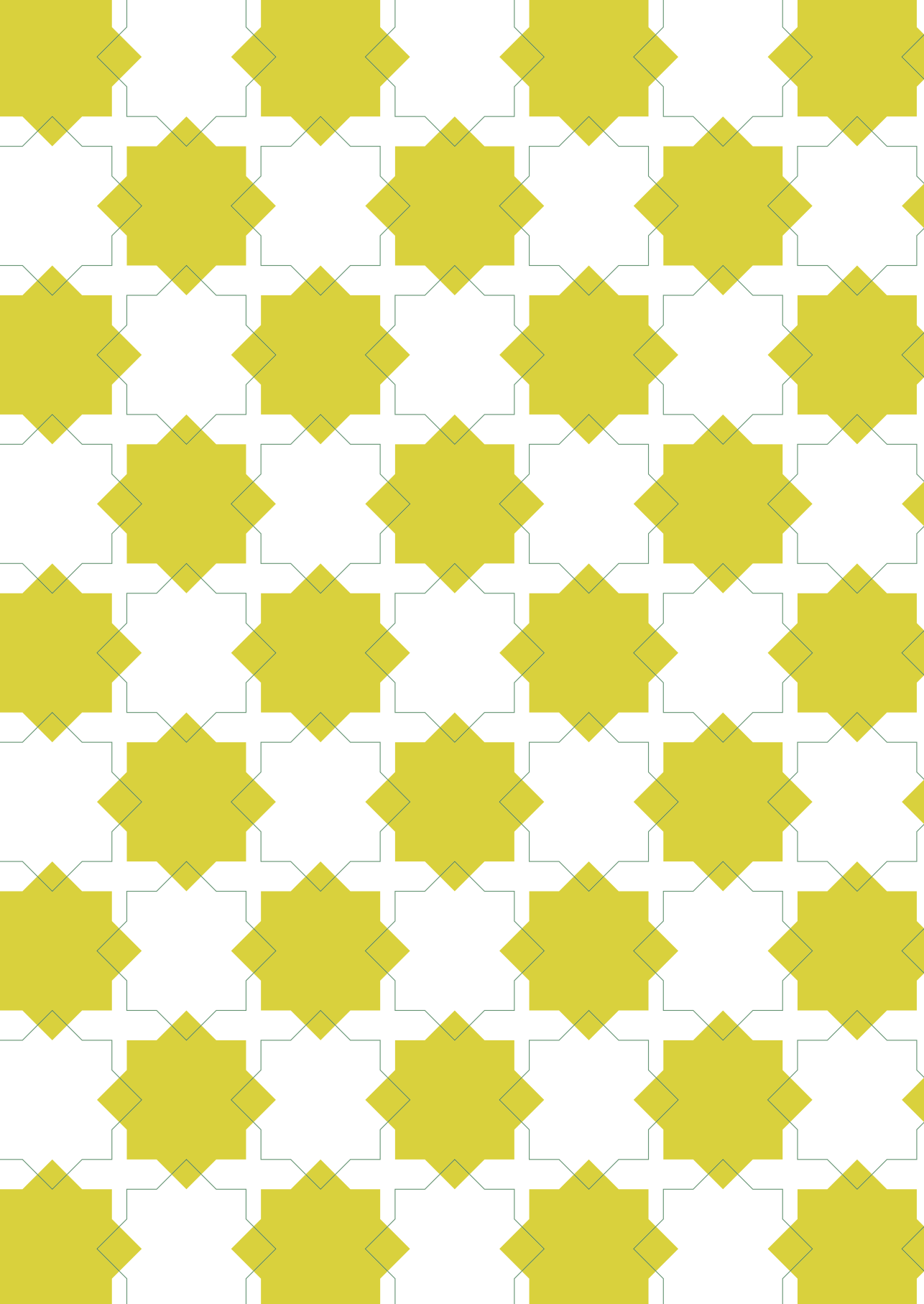
> Stereotypes and prejudices may come up in the debate, in which case the teacher shall work with the group on people's equal rights

and the necessary respect for every person regardless of their place of origin, ethnicity, mother tongue, religion, social class, gender and age. Additionally, the teacher may promote more activities in the classroom making it possible to work on these issues, even involving families.

> Some students may not be willing to tell their personal stories.

Activity assessment: the activity may be considered successful if, after watching the video, the group and the teacher contribute to a debate that is rich in ideas, concepts and experiences. This exercise will also be successful if the group can become aware of and empathic with migrants, whatever the reasons for their mobility.





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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Questionnaire

Name and surname:

Class:

Place of birth (city and country):

Parents' place of birth (city and country):

Countries where you have lived:

Countries visited:

Mother tongue(s) (passed on by your family and still spoken by you):

Languages you can speak:

Languages you can read:

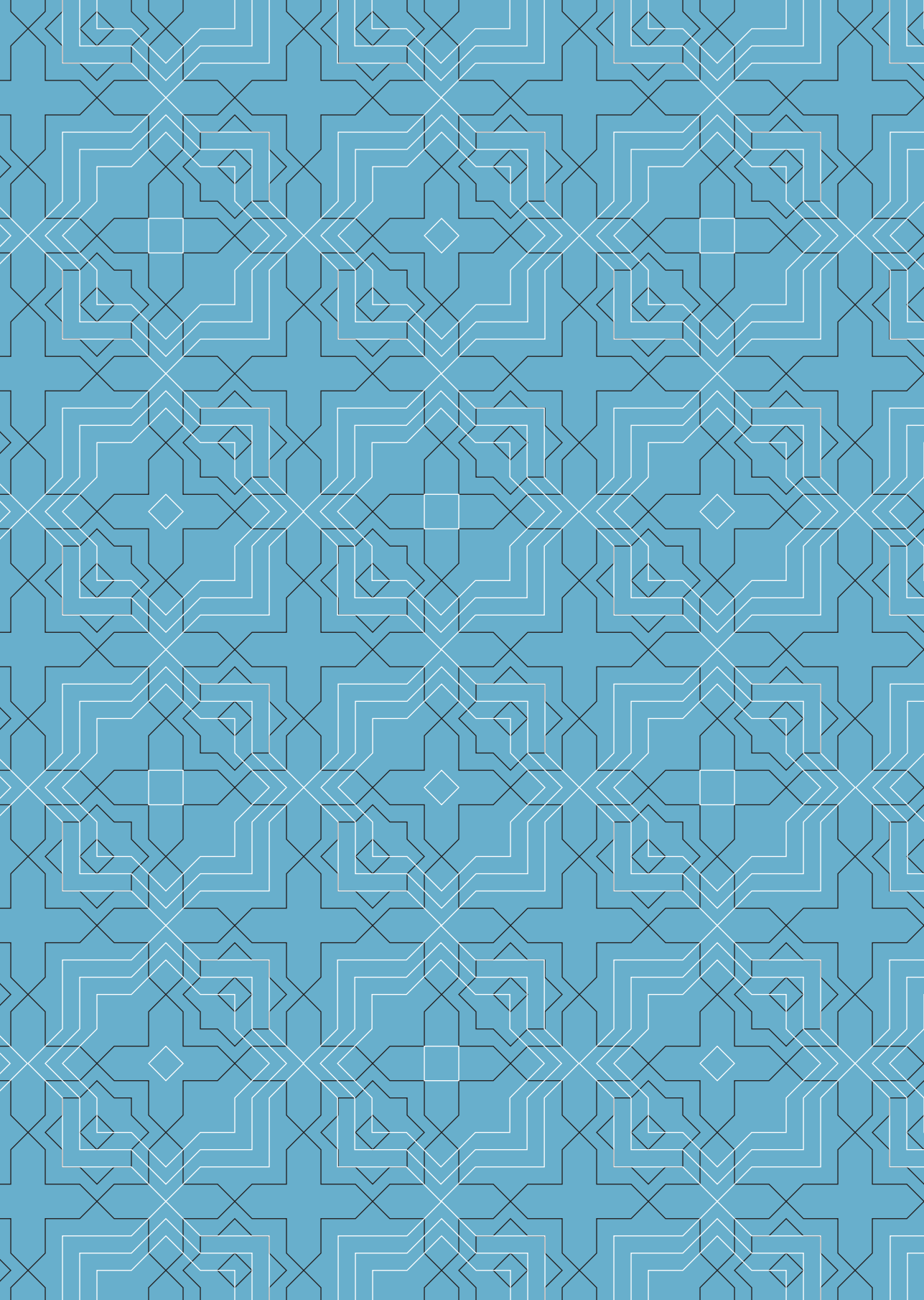
Language(s) learnt at school:

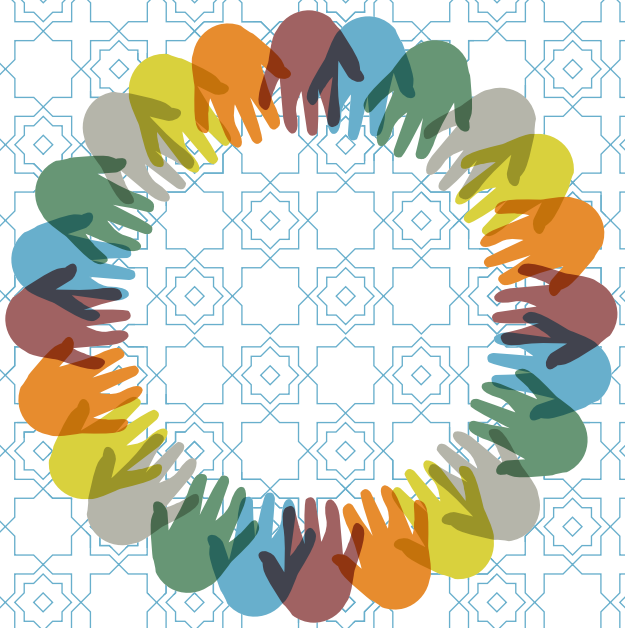
Language(s) used with the family:

Language(s) used with friends:

Language(s) heard in the neighbourhood:

Language(s) you would like to learn:





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