



Building partnerships to promote inclusion and counter anti-migrant narratives: an expert and multi-stakeholder meeting

Geneva, 11 May 2017

**VENUE: Salle communale du Môle, Rue du Môle 21
1201 Genève**

The UN Human Rights Office is seeking ways to challenge and change anti-migrant and xenophobic narratives. We aim to ground our effort in the power of story-telling. As we know, in situations in which we are tempted to label one group as ‘the other’, telling a story that reveals shared values helps us to come together. The narrative ceases to be the property of one side’s rightness over another side’s faults. We want to be part of developing these cohesive, cogent narratives on why societies in all regions of the globe should, in their own way and in their own words, include and protect migrants. We advocate for changing the narrative on migrants from one based on prejudice, fear, and misperceptions, to a positive narrative based on evidence, on positive values like human rights, diversity, solidarity, humanity and the contributions of migrants. A human rights-based approach seeks to empower migrants and the communities into which they arrive through building empathy. It differs from an approach focused only on charity or the simplistic evocation of sympathy.

As part of this effort, we are bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders to build partnerships on inclusion and countering anti-migrant narratives. Participants at our forthcoming workshop will include representatives from academia and research institutes, community and faith leaders, representatives of cities, city networks and local authorities, journalists and media professionals, business and the private sector, social media campaign groups, filmmakers and creative artists, non-governmental organisations, regional organisations and UN agencies.

The workshop aims to provide a space where participants can

- Share experiences and successful strategies of countering anti-migrant narratives
- Discuss areas of concern and alert on what doesn’t work
- Provide input to OHCHR’s developing initiative on migration narratives
- Come away from the meeting with concrete areas for follow-up and possible partners to engage on future initiatives

This meeting takes place just days after the first informal thematic session of the consultation phase of the global compact on safe, regular and orderly migration which will focus on *Human rights of all migrants, social inclusion, cohesion, and all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia and intolerance* (8-9 May). Selected conclusions of our workshop will be made available to the co-facilitators of this process, as well as to the Special Representative of the Secretary General on International Migration.

AGENDA

8.30: Registration

9-9.30: Opening remarks: Peggy Hicks, Director of the TESP RR Division, OHCHR
Laurent Sauveur, Chief, External Outreach, OHCHR

9.30-11h

Session ONE: What are we seeking to change?

What is the issue we wish to address? Migration is a broad and sweeping issue, and migrants are a diverse group of people who interact with society in many different ways. Whose stories are we trying to tell?

One of the challenges of making an initiative like this work is that of defining the groups who are included in its scope; how to ensure that some groups of ‘deserving’ migrants are not privileged over others; and how to ensure that citizen minority communities are not further marginalized while recognising the specific challenges faced by non-citizens.

Moderator: Peggy Hicks

Discussion starters:

- Heaven Crawley, University of Coventry
- Chris Gale, Ben & Jerry’s
- Nicki Hawkins, Equally Ours
- Simon Hodges, Words that Change

Followed by plenary discussion

Questions for consideration in the session:

- What is the issue that we want to bring change to?
- Why is it important to change the public narrative on migration?
- Are there or should there be different strategies on ‘migrants’, refugees, minorities, citizens, foreigners, “the other”? Does terminology matter? How do we ensure that we ‘do no harm’ when taking this forward?
- Can we build a “big tent” of the target issue (e.g. ‘tolerance’, ‘diversity’) to bring in diverse stakeholders? What are the risks and opportunities of this approach?

11-11.30: Coffee/tea

11.30-13h

Session TWO: How can we bring change at the local, city, community or grassroots level?

There is a clear need for a concerted effort to change the public narrative. This can be accomplished through a number of ways, including investing greater resources; generating better data such as through implementing surveys and running focus groups; creating new partnerships and coalitions to make the case for diversity and tolerance; targeting different communications strategies to particular audiences (e.g. youth); recognising that the messenger is often as important as the message in terms of reaching specific audiences. How can change be brought at the local level?

Moderator: Laurent Sauveur

Discussion starters:

- Ninian Hubert, City of Geneva
- Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, London
- Kim Turner, Cities of migration
- Maria Rydinger, “Tillsammans för Sverige” (Together for Sweden)
- Kerri Miller, Minnesota Public Radio

Discussion in small groups

Questions to discuss:

- What is needed to catalyse change at the local level?
- Who do we need to persuade? Who is our audience?
- How do we reach them? What narratives are most effective at reaching particular audiences?
- Who are the most important stakeholders and why?

13-14h: LUNCH BREAK

14-15.30h

Session THREE: What strategies to bring change are needed at the national, regional and global levels? What role can the United Nations play?

This session will ask us to take a step back and look at the broader national, regional and global narratives, to examine what strategies have worked, and why these would be more likely to work than others. We will also explore how to build partnerships and coalitions on this issue.

The session will include an introduction to OHCHR’s developing initiative on countering anti-migrant narratives.

Our key messages

1. *Protecting the human rights of migrants is in everyone's interests. Our societies are weaker when we allow responses to migration to be based on fear or misperception.*
2. *Every migrant has a story to tell. Some of these might be stories of strength and bravery against tremendous odds, or of contributions to host and transit societies, and others are stories of vulnerability and the need for protection. It is important to look at the person behind the statistics.*
3. *Migration is a reality in a globalising world. Rather than 'us' and 'them', it is important to build stronger communities of 'we'.*

Moderator: Lene Wendland

Dominika Tomaszewka, Together campaign, United Nations Information Service

Christina MacGillivray and Pia Oberoi, Presentation of OHCHR’s initiative and key messages

Discussion starters:

- Richard Wilson, Stop Funding Hate
- Bill Orme, Global Forum for Media Development
- Nazia Hussein, Open Society Foundation

- David Goldberg, Founders Pledge

Discussion in small groups

Questions to discuss:

- What strategies have worked and why? Where do efforts need to be increased, and what would this look like?
- What doesn't work? And why?
- How are coalitions built on this issue?
- What role could the UN most usefully play? What feedback do you have on OHCHR's key messages?

15.30-16h: Coffee/tea

16-18h:

Session FOUR: What is the way forward?

This session aims to ensure that we will come away from the meeting with concrete plans for going forward; in terms of ideas, partnerships, commitments, best practices, and strategies.

Moderator: Pia Oberoi

Discussion starters:

- Osama Bhutta, Amnesty International
- Tendayi Achiume, UCLA
- Aine O'Brien, Counterpoints Arts
- Michele Aiello, ZaLab
- Jean-Yves Art, Microsoft

Plenary discussion

- How we can build on existing good practices?
- What would such efforts look like?
- What are the lessons that we have learned from where strategies have not worked?
- What is our way forward?
- What commitments can we take away from this workshop?

Closing