

# ACTION PLAN – DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



## FROM FAITH TO ACTION

Inter-religious conference to protect the rights of children affected by migration

This draft Action Plan was developed from inputs provided by participants during the “From Faith to Action” conference.

The Action Plan is a living document that will be continually updated and enriched in response to discussions and consultations taking place within partner organizations, relevant countries, and evolving contexts. It provides general guidance but is not intended to prescriptively define the role that each partner should play in protecting refugee and migrant children.

Continuum of Child Protection		
Recommendations for action: UN agencies	Recommendations for action: National and local governments	Recommendations for action: Faith Actors
<b>KEY ISSUE: Strengthening cooperation and collaboration between international, national, and local actors</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen cooperation with EU and relevant EU institutions to share knowledge and learning on the importance of engaging faith-based actors.</li> <li>Seek partnerships with a full range of local faith actors as part of a multi-stakeholder approach; mapping faith actors in each country to understand which have the appropriate capacities for partnership.</li> <li>Enhance organizational knowledge and religious literacy, appreciating the complexity and heterogeneity of faith actors and avoiding simplistic generalizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen cooperation with EU and relevant EU institutions</li> <li>Seek partnerships with a full range of local faith actors as part of a multi-stakeholder approach; mapping faith actors in each country to understand which have the appropriate capacities for partnership.</li> <li>Develop structures and mechanisms to facilitate cooperation between national/regional educational authorities, and international faith-based actors working with child refugees and migrants.</li> <li>Facilitate ongoing engagement with a wide range of local faith leaders and communities on the issue of child migrants and refugees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop projects with full child refugee and migrant participation and consultation, and not just ‘for’ them.</li> <li>Empower children and young people to develop child-led projects to welcome refugees and migrants.</li> <li>Encourage faith leaders and communities to build relationships within and across religious traditions, developing multi-religious platforms for joint advocacy, information sharing and action.</li> <li>Develop capacity building and development literacy, e.g. on the UN Convention on the Rights for the Child (CRC) within faith-based organizations (FBOs,) religious communities and interfaith actors</li> <li>Address internal tensions through dialogue (including inter-religious dialogue) and by treating all religious traditions and actors with equal respect.</li> </ul>
<b>KEY ISSUE: Enhance capacities of actors providing assistance for refugee and migrant children</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support faith partners in building knowledge and capacity on child safeguarding measures and processes.</li> <li>Raise awareness among teachers and practitioners in health and mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS) about the highly vulnerable situation of refugee and migrant children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support faith partners in building knowledge and capacity on child safeguarding measures and processes.</li> <li>Raise awareness among teachers, and health and MHPSS practitioners about the highly vulnerable situation of refugee and migrant children.</li> <li>Provide additional trainings for teachers supporting refugee and migrant children.</li> <li>Work on joint initiatives with religious communities to develop training for young people on peer support and mentoring for refugee and migrant children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate and build capacities of faith communities on the CRC, international minimum standards, and on national and international laws and conventions on refugees.</li> <li>Where needed, improve the mechanisms and processes safeguarding children within faith communities.</li> <li>Encourage, support and guide young people in becoming involved in peer support and mentoring for refugee and migrant children.</li> </ul>

Continuum of Child Protection		
Recommendations for action: UN agencies	Recommendations for action: National and local governments	Recommendations for action: Faith Actors
<b>KEY ISSUE: Monitoring and overseeing legal, moral, and spiritual obligations to supporting refugee and migrant children</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support faith actors and FBOs in combating national and local legislation that criminalizes providing humanitarian assistance to migrants and children on the move.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support work to ensure that reception and accommodation centres meet national and EU standards and that refugee and migrant children and families living in these centres are able to observe dietary, cultural and religious practices.</li> <li>Work with faith actors to understand and communicate legal pathways for refugee and migrant children to resettle.</li> <li>Support faith actors and FBOs in combating national and local legislation that criminalizes providing assistance to refugee and migrants and children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness of the precarious situation faced by refugee and migrant children and encourage faith communities and FBOs to provide material and spiritual support.</li> <li>Work with local governments and local community groups to promote social inclusion and integration.</li> <li>Address internal tensions through dialogue (including inter-religious dialogue) and by treating everyone equally</li> </ul>
<b>Key Issue: Absence of mental health and spiritual support for children and their families</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In reception centres, work with faith actors to raise awareness about the psychosocial importance of spiritual identity and practices for many refugees and migrants who come from non-secular contexts.</li> <li>Build an evidence base on good culturally / religiously sensitive practices in reception centres and promote this knowledge.</li> <li>Advocate for policies which support religiously and culturally sensitive modes of reception.</li> <li>Encourage refugee and migrant support organizations to develop partnerships with a variety of religious and inter-religious communities and organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide access to safe worship spaces for children and their families with accompanying religious 'chaplains' sensitive to the appropriate religious traditions.</li> <li>Encourage/incentivise migrant support organisations to develop partnerships with a variety of religious and inter-religious communities and organizations.</li> <li>Work with religious communities and FBOs to ensure provisions for child refugees and migrants that nurtures their spiritual and social wellbeing, and is consistent with the religious teachings and customs which they are familiar with.</li> <li>Ensure existing policies support and promote religiously and culturally sensitive modes of reception.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide access to safe places of worship for children and their families.</li> <li>Improve understanding of children's and caregivers' spiritual and psychosocial needs.</li> <li>Ensure unaccompanied and separated children receive support which enables them to maintain their religious identity and spirituality.</li> <li>Encourage a diversity of religious and multi-religious presence at reception centres in order to model inter-religious cooperation and harmony.</li> <li>Train religious and community leaders on trauma awareness, referral and support to help support migrants/refugees entering their congregations.</li> <li>Facilitate peer-to-peer support groups amongst migrants/refugees.</li> <li>Create safe spaces for refugee and migrant children to talk about and share their feelings and concerns.</li> </ul>

Continuum of Child Protection		
Recommendations for action: UN agencies	Recommendations for action: National and local governments	Recommendations for action: Faith Actors
<b>KEY ISSUE: Ensuring access to education for refugee and migrant children</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lobby governments to ensure all children can access schools during the entirety of their time on the move and in refugee and migrant accommodation / settlements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure all children can access schools during the entirety of their time on the move and in refugee and migrant accommodation / settlements.</li> <li>▪ Enhance cooperation between the formal and non-formal education organizations, including faith-based educators.</li> <li>▪ Lobby for more flexible educational systems, supporting the development and delivery of multiple/alternative modalities of education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lobby governments to ensure all children can access schools during the entirety of their time on the move and in refugee and migrant accommodation / settlements.</li> <li>▪ Enhance cooperation between the formal and non-formal education organizations, including faith-based educators.</li> </ul>
Fostering Social Cohesion and Combating Xenophobia and Discrimination		
Recommendations for action: UN agencies	Recommendations for action: National and local governments	Recommendations for action: Faith Actors
<b>KEY ISSUE: Lack of programmes and training that promote inclusiveness and social cohesion for all ages</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create tailored projects to support host communities to learn about other religions, especially those less known in receiving countries.</li> <li>▪ Provide possibilities for host communities to have face to face communication and encounters with representatives of minority religions, learning about their culture, traditions, customs, etc.</li> <li>▪ Provide support and invite / educate small in-country NGOs to join larger coalitions of organizations and platforms in combating xenophobia, and promoting interfaith dialogue and support to migrant and refugee populations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enact policies which promote rapid access to special education, vocational training, and health care for unaccompanied and separated minors.</li> <li>▪ At least initially, provide education to refugee children in their own language, and in host communities access to individuals and groups from similar religious/cultural backgrounds.</li> <li>▪ Provide education and training on host culture, religion and society, to enable refugees to interact confidently and integrate more easily.</li> <li>▪ Review curricula to integrate interfaith learning in schools beyond simply teaching about religion. Emphasis should be placed on learning to live together through practical and experiential activities.</li> <li>▪ Support schools in developing programmes to create a culture of mutual and respectful encounter, and for youth to initiate such programmes in schools and communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create resources to help host communities to educate children on interfaith and interactive activities built around life skills.</li> <li>▪ Introduce mandatory training on topics such as xenophobia, hate speech, discrimination within the formal and/or informal education of individuals assuming religious or lay (e.g., women and youth) leadership positions,</li> </ul>

## Fostering Social Cohesion and Combating Xenophobia and Discrimination

Recommendations for action: UN agencies	Recommendations for action: National and local governments	Recommendations for action: Faith Actors
<b>KEY ISSUE: Presence of divisive and xenophobic narratives in societies on multiple levels</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create dialogues between different sectors (i.e., governments, faith communities, civil society organizations (CSOs), education) to develop narratives of the 'other' that are positive, engaging, and inspiring, and help to create joint collaborations.</li> <li>▪ Support faith communities in implementing campaigns which positively challenge narratives of fear, to better enable improvements to policies on supporting migrants and refugees.</li> <li>▪ Engage with multireligious actors in the design and implementation of strategies, structures and practical projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Share refugee and migrant children's journeys and experiences with other children, to help enhance faith literacy and cultural awareness within host communities amongst young people and parents.</li> <li>▪ Reduce social alienation and distrust by increasing social contact between young people through shared activities focusing on sport, culture, and environment.</li> <li>▪ Address politicisation and other issues around terminology (e.g., conflation of economic migration with forced displacement can be highly destructive and lead to discriminatory and unfair policies and actions).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify, address, and challenge harmful narratives within and between faith communities.</li> <li>▪ Connect families, children, youth, and adults, from local faith communities with refugee and migrant families as much as possible to increase mutual understanding.</li> <li>▪ Appeal to journalists to cover stories and use language that shift negative conversations and public opinion about migrants and refugees.</li> <li>▪ In addition to speaking directly to religious communities, harness social media to positively influence public opinion in promoting the dignity and inclusion towards refugees and migrants.</li> <li>▪ Incorporate children's rights (especially the CRC) into sermons and religious community activities.</li> <li>▪ Actively speak out in public declarations on these issues from a multi-religious platform.</li> </ul>

## Advocating for and influencing policy-makers towards more inclusive approaches

Recommendations for action: UN agencies	Recommendations for action: National and local governments	Recommendations for action: Faith Actors
<b>KEY ISSUE: Lack of legislation on state level concerning refugee and migrant children</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage States to comply with their obligations under the CRC when enacting domestic legislation to address the vulnerable situation of all refugee and migrant children, and especially those who are unaccompanied or separated.</li> </ul>	<p>Support the CRC by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding religious actors not only as “doers”, but as “thinkers” and include their voices in policy considerations.</li> <li>▪ Adopting measures that serve the best interests of the child, for example, identifying alternatives to detention.</li> <li>▪ Providing foster care or guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children.</li> <li>▪ Establishing separate processing centres for families, children and adults.</li> <li>▪ Adopting procedures that guarantee legal and social protection to children, and assuring education without interruption.</li> <li>▪ Ensuring access to healthcare and safe conditions in registration centres, camps and other reception facilities for refugee and migrant children and youth.</li> <li>▪ Adopting policies that require compulsory registration of birth, providing each newborn with a birth certificate.</li> <li>▪ Establishing and enhancing safe and legal migration routes for children, e.g., humanitarian corridors, resettlement and private sponsorship programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Religious leaders use their collective voices to encourage States to comply with their obligations under the CRC when enacting domestic legislation to address the vulnerable situation of refugee and migrant children (especially those who are unaccompanied or separated) and dealing with all minor migrants.</li> <li>▪ Religious leaders actively speak out on social humanitarian issues and harness the support of their communities to effect change.</li> <li>▪ Religious leaders use their collective voices to encourage States to comply with their obligations under the CRC when enacting domestic legislation to address the vulnerable situation of refugee and migrant children (especially those who are unaccompanied or separated) and dealing with all minor migrants.</li> <li>▪ Religious leaders actively speak out on social humanitarian issues and harness the support of their communities to effect change.</li> </ul>
<b>KEY ISSUE: Strengthening measures for protection of unaccompanied or separated children</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build on faith actors’ expertise to strengthen policies on criteria for resettlement.</li> <li>▪ Advocate for the reunification of refugees and migrants with their families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enact laws and policies which allow the reunification of refugees and migrants with their families.</li> <li>▪ A minimum level of income, or proof of the ability to provide financial support, should not be a requirement for the reunification of children with their families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with local actors to raise awareness of the polices/ global compact/rights of the child in their communities.</li> </ul>