



FROM
SO FAR
TO
**SO
&
CLOSE**

**Forced Migrations
Social Cohesion
Cultural Heritage**

**DIGITAL TOOLS
CATALOGUE**



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THE SO-CLOSE DECALOGUE



Recommendations for the Digital Sharing of Cultural Heritage of Forced Migrations in Europe

1 Sharing cultural heritage is a valuable resource for the construction of a complex identities

Integration is not only about economic well-being and access to basic rights and services but also about the possibility of sharing spaces and develop mutual relationships. Sharing cultural heritage can lead to the development of common meanings between local communities and forced migrants.

2 Integration is a two-way process

Integration is a two-way and dynamic process that involves the commitment of both the host society and the newly arrived. Cultural heritage and the memory of forced displacements can be a field of interaction between the refugees and the local communities.

3 Sharing the experience and memory of forced displacements can contribute to social cohesion

There are connections, some obvious, others more subtle, between present-day experiences and historical experiences of forced displacements. Refugees, displaced ethnic groups, political exiles, economic migrants, diasporic populations, and other migrants from past and present conflicts share common experiences and memories that can be used as a resource to facilitate mutual understanding and promote social cohesion.

4

Historical narratives are a core element of cultural heritage

Besides sharing their stories, refugees also demand taking part in the construction of historical narratives. Despite food traditions, religious ceremonies and arts are often viewed as “safer” spaces, cultural heritage also includes memory of the past. Aside from their personal stories, anecdotes and experiences, refugees also hold views, reflections, and analysis about the historical episodes they have lived. Thus, besides sharing their stories, they also demand to take part in the construction of the explanations of present facts that are going to remain for future generations and become part of the narratives of our common history.

5

Meaningful participation starts from the acknowledgement of refugees' agency

Cultural heritage can be used by refugees as a political and cultural resource to ensure greater involvement in their communities and redefine their position or place in the host country. Refugees need to participate actively in the framing and implementation of cultural heritage and not be considered mere “consumers”. Enhancing their agency allows taking advantage of the potential that forced migrants bring to the host societies in terms of energy and knowledge and avoids views based on victimhood.

6

Refugees are diverse and have different stories

It is necessary to acknowledge the diversity of refugees and their past experiences. Forced migrants were not born the day they arrived into Europe nor when they started their journey. The excessive focus on those aspects leads to homogeneous views, which fail to understand that every person is unique, comes from a different background, holds specific views and has a unique story.

7

Policies addressed at refugees need to involve all agents

A specific multilevel strategy for the support of refugees is necessary to unify the systems, guarantee coherence and facilitate access.

The development of policies and services of support benefit from the active involvement of all agents, including refugees and asylum seekers, local communities, cultural institutions, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders.

8

Co-Creation processes involving refugees, local communities and other stakeholders facilitate the development of meaningful digital solutions

The use of technology does not only rely on technical components, but also on the adaptation of methodologies to each particular context. Co-design of digital technologies based on user-centered approaches lead to meaningful solutions designed according to the needs, values and experiences of users.

9

Improving access to digital technologies and foster digital capacity are paramount

The risk of digital divide urges the promotion of policies to facilitate access to digital technologies. Aside from solving connection limitations, specially in camps, actions to foster digital capacity need to be implemented. Education plays a key role here, both for the young as well as lifelong learning programs for adult users.

10

Digital technologies can facilitate cultural exchange

Digital technologies have the potential to play an important role in creating networks and channels of communication between refugees and local communities and in enhancing the intercultural exchange of information. The intangible cultural heritage of refugees, in the forms of storytelling, songs, music, recipes, oral traditions, art, rituals, or festive events, among other- can be used as a way of transmitting information about refugees.