



THE POWER OF CONTACT

Designing, Facilitating and Evaluating Social Mixing Activities
to Strengthen Migrant Integration and Social Cohesion
Between Migrants and Local Communities

A Review of Lessons Learned

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Foreword

In a world of social distancing and growing concern about rising inequalities, discrimination and xenophobia, social integration is no longer just an issue associated with migration. This topic is now of broader societal concern, especially as societies reopen and communities gather once again post-COVID.

While the pandemic has prompted widespread expressions of solidarity from across the world, it has also compounded a pre-existing culture of distrust, xenophobia and intolerance towards minorities, including migrants. This aggravates migrants' feelings of isolation and overall leads to further exclusion – in multiple dimensions – from the rest of society. As the leading migration agency, IOM is no stranger to responding to anxiety, concerns and fears associated with social change triggered by migration even prior to the pandemic. This publication provides some valuable insights in addressing this.

Rooted in the commitments enshrined in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the migration-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this publication provides key guidance, principles and recommendations on how to facilitate social mixing activities between newcomers and their new communities to support broader goals of integration and social cohesion. It consolidates literature on intergroup contact theory and leverages select IOM programming and evaluation experiences to provide a benchmark for designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating effective social mixing approaches. While the primary audience for this publication are practitioners and project managers working at the local level, the publication is also deeply relevant to other actors working on national policies and decision-making activities aimed at strengthening solidarity within the society.

At IOM, we recognize that the integration or social inclusion of migrants should not simply be understood in terms of migrants' service access or labour market integration. Holistic migrant integration also involves the social and relational aspects – where “social mixing” and positive contact between migrants and local communities is central. It is about ensuring that wherever migrants are – be it in the workplace, in school, in shops or just around their neighbourhood – there are opportunities to connect and engage with other people. These social interactions do not only nurture trust and mutually supportive relations in the community but also contribute to efforts in reducing inequalities within the society.

I invite all of you to read this publication. I hope you will find it useful in your efforts to strengthen the integration of migrants and foster cohesive societies.

In these trying times, we must not forget the “power of contact”.



António Vitorino
Director General
International Organization for Migration



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Facilitating the *meaningful social mixing* of people of different backgrounds is an increasingly important tenet of mainstream programming and policies aimed at promoting migrant inclusion and broader social cohesion at the local, national and even global levels. This guidance note aims to provide project managers and developers, as well as event organizers and facilitators, with guidance in fostering migrant integration and social cohesion through social mixing activities.

Through meaningful social mixing in both the face-to-face and digital worlds, migrants and host communities can develop stronger positive social connections and foster peaceful coexistence, allowing for a shift away from xenophobic and anti-migrant attitudes.



Syrian refugee children get ready for class at the Syrian Social Gathering, a multiservice centre supported by IOM in Hatay, Turkey. © IOM 2016/Muse MOHAMMED

Acknowledgements

Objective 16 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration focuses on “empower[ing] migrants and communities to realize full inclusion and social cohesion”. One of the key actions identified to achieve this objective is to “support multicultural activities through sports, music, arts, culinary festivals, volunteering and other social events that will facilitate mutual understanding and appreciation of migrant cultures and those of destination communities”.

IOM’s growing integration and social cohesion programming is intended to facilitate this kind of meaningful **social mixing** in line with the actionable commitments of the Global Compact for Migration. While many of these social mixing activities are part of the Organization’s work on social cohesion related to displacement in transition and recovery context, they have been increasingly used to promote social inclusion of **newcomers** arriving through regular pathways of migration, such as labour migration or resettlement in emerging and traditional countries of destination.

However, despite IOM’s growing work on integration and social cohesion over the years, there have been limited efforts to provide more structured resources on how to design more effective social mixing activities that draw on the wealth of academic literature on intergroup contact and assessments of practical interventions in the field. As such, this note was developed to further strengthen IOM’s programming and policy capacity in this area.

The idea for this resource document originated during the Workshop on Promoting Good Relations: Enhancing IOM’s Social Cohesion Programming, which was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 14 to 15 October 2019. This workshop was jointly organized by IOM’s Labour Mobility and Human Development Division (LHD) and Transition and Recovery Division (TRD) within the framework of **IOM Joint Global Initiative on Diversity, Inclusion and Social Cohesion (DISC) Initiative** funded by the Migration Resource Allocation Committee (MIRAC). This workshop convened various IOM focal points working on integration and cohesion and academic experts on intergroup contact theory, with the aim of developing a more systematic approach to design and evaluate the impact of activities in promoting intergroup trust and good relations. The participating missions and participants at the workshop provided their valuable inputs in brainstorming and laying the foundation for this guidance note, and we would like to provide our highest acknowledgements to them.

We would like to express our thanks to the DISC team for leading this great effort, in particular, to Jobst Koehler (Senior Integration and Migrant Training Specialist), Ace Dela Cruz (DISC Project Coordinator) and Michael Newson (Regional Technical Specialist on Labour Mobility and Human Development). This note would not have also been possible without the support from IOM colleagues who dedicated their time to providing technical input, advice and contributions including but not limited to the following: Larissa Zier, Farid Bhuyan, Andrea Morales Caceres, Oana Timofte, Elizabeth Wai, Paloma Noriega from LHD, Katia Barrech from the Office of the Inspector General for her inputs in monitoring and evaluation, and Jason Aplon from TRD.

We would also like to thank Linda Tropp, professor of social psychology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, for providing her valuable time, insights and expertise to the creation to this note, and her dedication to intergroup relations and reducing prejudice.

Finally, we would like to dedicate this output to the migrants and members of local communities who are involved in promoting good relations between communities – a key foundation for an inclusive and cohesive society.

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Executive summary

Building upon the objective 16 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, this document aims to provide project managers and developers, as well as event organizers and facilitators, with guidance on how to facilitate social mixing activities between newcomers and their new communities to support broader goals of migrant integration and social cohesion. This note draws from a range of assessments conducted by IOM and other organizations involved in implementing intergroup contact activities, as well as the literature on intergroup contact theory, which posits that increased interaction and mixing of people from different backgrounds can cultivate trust and decrease prejudice under the right circumstances. It makes key evidence-based recommendations that project managers and event facilitators can leverage to ensure maximum positive impact of social mixing activities.

The note recognizes that the broader environment and sociodemographic differences of participating target groups can have a significant impact on the participation and success of social mixing interventions. As such, it recommends that project managers carry out an analysis on the type of barriers that may impede participation. This analysis should also seek to identify the types of incentives that may motivate participation to ensure that social mixing activities are well tailored towards target groups. Building trust and empathy is a crucial component of effective social mixing. Project managers, event organizers and facilitators should take care to ensure social mixing activities first establish trust and rapport between participants from migrant and host community groups, and also facilitate the building of positive and sustained social relations and mutual understanding.

The note identifies key principles and corresponding tips and recommendations that enable conditions for effective social mixing interventions:



(a) Be fun and goal driven



(e) Facilitate guided reflection



(b) Promote equality amid diversity



(f) Provide trusted oversight and facilitation



(c) Bolster mutual appreciation of cultures



(g) Support sustained and regular intervention



(d) Encourage shared ownership between participants

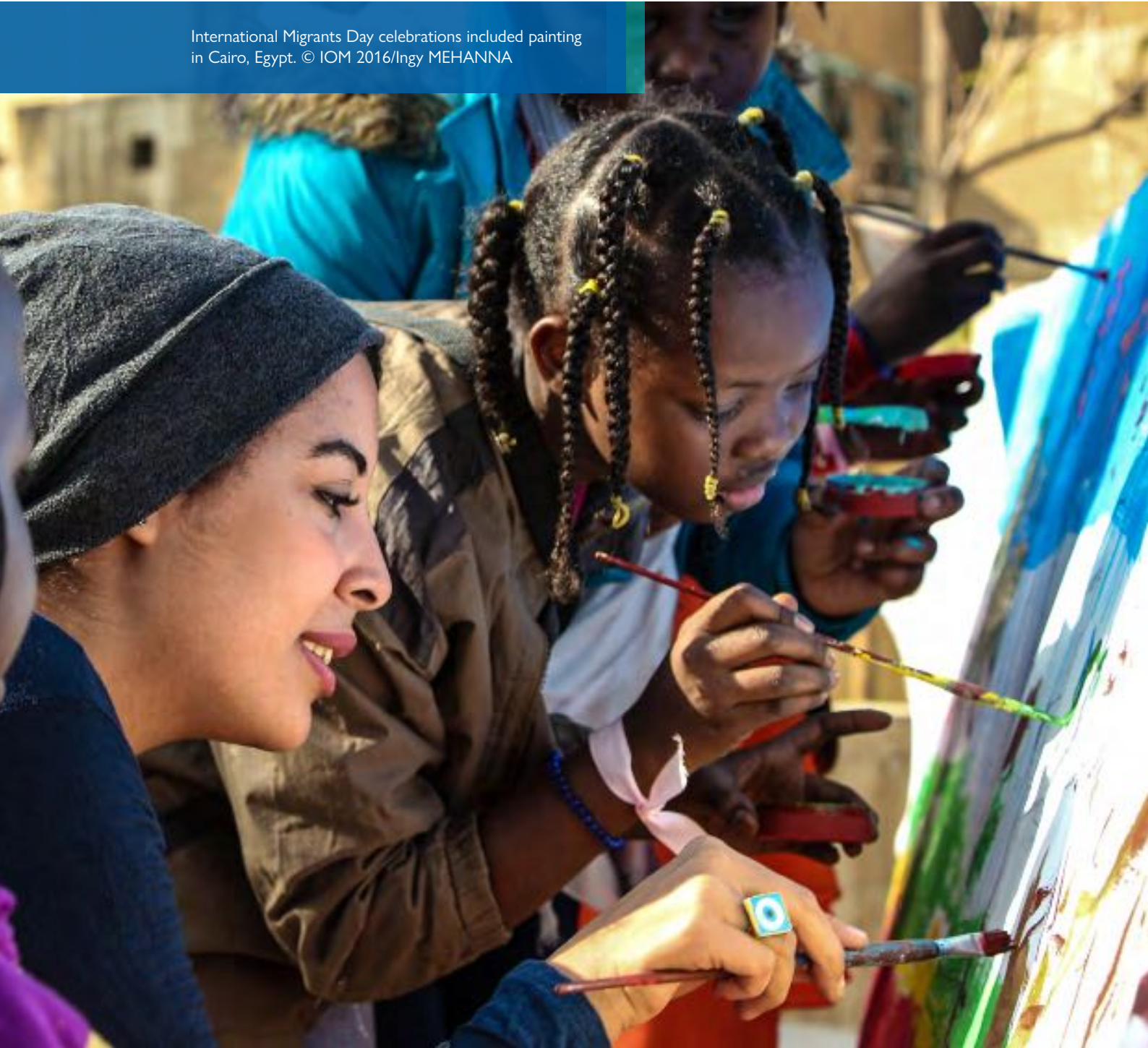


(h) Ensure institutional support and partnership

Social mixing interventions are most effective when target participants and groups are identified and activities are carefully tailored towards them. Monitoring and evaluation, in line with the *IOM Project Handbook*, is a key aspect of ensuring effectiveness, as it allows for future iterations of programming to achieve its desired impact more closely.

Through meaningful social mixing in both the face-to-face and digital worlds, migrants and host communities can develop stronger and more positive social connections, allowing for a shift away from xenophobic and anti-migrant attitudes.

International Migrants Day celebrations included painting in Cairo, Egypt. © IOM 2016/Ingy MEHANNA



Introduction

Facilitating the **meaningful social mixing** of people of different backgrounds is an increasingly important tenet of mainstream programming and policies aimed at promoting migrant inclusion and broader social cohesion at the local, national and even global levels. Although States may have limited capacity to directly influence everyday social interactions and determine who people meet or mix with in everyday life, they can still do so indirectly. For example, States have policy levers to encourage interactions between groups from different backgrounds. States can often do so in two ways: firstly, by ensuring that migrants are able to work and are part of neighbourhood planning; and secondly, by providing public services, spaces and opportunities where all sectors of society can meet and mix. Many of these policies implicitly or explicitly draw on the premise that increased contact between groups of different backgrounds will reduce prejudice, increase trust and eventually lead to greater social connectedness and cohesion.

Many integration and settlement frameworks also include targeted programmatic interventions that more explicitly foster “social connections” between newcomers and receiving communities, often with support of non-traditional partners, such as sports associations, public libraries and arts councils. There is growing evidence that broader institutional support can encourage positive relations between migrants and non-migrants when used to integrate migrants and facilitate interactions between the two groups (Green et al., 2020).

It is therefore not surprising that this particular area has also gained considerable traction in recent global discussions and various global policy agendas, most notably the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The IOM Strategic Vision 2020 - 2024 also emphasizes the importance of linking community cohesion to broader IOM programming to ensure a holistic approach to its work and achieve positive outcomes for migrants.

Social mixing and cohesion in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Objective 16 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration states a clear commitment to “empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion”. It emphasizes the need to “facilitate migrant participation [in the receiving society]” (16f) and “support multicultural activities [...] to facilitate mutual understanding and appreciation of migrant cultures and those of destination communities” (16h). Furthermore, this objective reinforces the importance of promoting intercultural dialogue at the local level by bringing in migrants associations, diaspora organizations and mentorship programmes in order to “improve integration outcomes and foster mutual respect” (16f).



IOM has designed and implemented **social mixing activities** as either a stand-alone intervention or as part of a broader programmatic intervention aimed at migrant integration. In both instances, the intention is to promote positive social connections between migrants and communities. Positive social connections can shift xenophobic and anti-migrant attitudes, thereby strengthening migrant integration and social cohesion in general. Within the context of migrant integration, these activities have increasingly become a powerful tool to enhance interactions and good relations between migrants and local populations, as well as create a more welcoming environment for new arrivals. These interventions can be applied in a variety of thematic areas and contexts that lend themselves for bringing together people from different backgrounds in a non-hierarchical and cooperative environment, in order to reduce intergroup prejudice and build empathy between advantaged and disadvantaged groups.¹

Against the background of growing misinformation and public hostility against migrants, the demand for interventions employing these kinds of “social mixing” activities are expected to grow.

The purpose of this guidance note is to encourage project developers and managers to move towards a more evidence-based and impactful design of social mixing activities by incorporating research on intergroup contact theory (IGCT) and lessons learned from assessments into their potential interventions. The note will first introduce the theoretical foundation of social mixing, explaining the key conditions identified by existing research studies as having the best chances of leading to positive outcomes for intergroup relations. It will also highlight some of the potential barriers to participation in IGCT and ways of

¹ For further information, see Tropp and Barlow, 2018.

overcoming them, as well as identify a set of core principles and corresponding practical recommendations of how to incorporate these principles into the design and implementation of social mixing activities. The note will pinpoint/identify a number of conditions to aim for in order to promote successful intergroup relations, followed by a variety of intervention examples from the field. Finally, lessons learned from the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of those interventions will be provided, reinforcing its importance in the execution of social mixing interventions.

Social mixing in the age of “social” distancing

While public health safety measures around the world have impacted the manner in which intergroup activities are implemented, this does not mean they need to cease altogether. Rather, they can inspire towards exploration of new and creative ways of conceptualizing social mixing activities online.

Digital media platforms have become an essential tool in facilitating online interactions within migrant communities and between their host communities. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, these are done through online tandem language learning and interactive workshops between migrants and host communities, as well as various online mentorship schemes (via video conference) between local mentors/volunteers and migrants who are about to be resettled. Social media platforms and websites also connect migrants with their own diaspora networks in the same destination country and further afield.

The fourth edition of the [DISC Digest on Digitalization](#) provides some examples on how social connections and activities to reduce prejudice and encourage positive attitudes towards migrants can take place in a virtual format (IOM, 2020c).





Much of IOM's programming around *social mixing* and *social cohesion* has been implicitly based on IGCT, which claims that when people from different backgrounds meet and mix under the right circumstances, trust grows and prejudice declines across participating social groups.

Rooted in the field of social psychology, intergroup contact can be distinguished from other approaches that target only one group at a time (such as intercultural or empathy trainings), public awareness-raising campaigns where interpersonal contact is absent, or more problem-oriented interventions like intergroup dialogue in protracted conflict situations.

1. What does the existing literature and evidence say about social mixing?



Much of IOM's programming around **social mixing** and **social cohesion**² has been implicitly based on **IGCT**, which claims that when people from different backgrounds meet and mix under the right circumstances, trust grows and prejudice declines across participating social groups.

Rooted in the field of social psychology, intergroup contact can be distinguished from other approaches that target only one group at a time (such as intercultural or empathy trainings), public awareness-raising campaigns where interpersonal contact is absent, or more problem-oriented interventions like intergroup dialogue in protracted conflict situations.



Key conditions for positive effects of intergroup contact (Allport):

- Equal group status within the contact situation
- Actively work towards common goal(s)
- Intergroup cooperation
- Support and sanctions by authorities (or law or custom)

IGCT was initially formulated by Robin Williams in 1947 and significantly refined by Gordon W. Allport in 1954 and has since been further supported and developed by other scholars. In more recent academic literature on intergroup contact, there is ample empirical evidence that, if certain conditions are met, positive contact between individuals of different groups in society are more likely to improve relations between those groups (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). This is true across all settings, in all countries, and with various categories of out-group (ethnicity, disability, sexuality, age). One of the theoretical bases of this link is Allport's

contact hypothesis, which establishes four conditions³ for positive intergroup experiences and outcomes (Allport, 1954). On the contrary, contact situations experienced by participants in a negative way usually deteriorate intergroup relations. Negative contact situations are even assumed to have a bigger effect on intergroup relations than positive ones.

Research has also revealed that this positive effect of contact can be picked up second-hand – that is, if a friend had positive interactions with an out-group, then this also affects the attitude towards that out-group of an individual despite differences (Schmid et al., 2012).

² In conflict-affected areas and peacebuilding context, intergroup contact activities would focus not only on relationships between migrants and receiving communities but also on relationships between non-migrant groups. *Social cohesion* programming is broader in scope while *social mixing* activities, as used in this paper, is more specifically focused on addressing relationship between migrants and receiving communities (see IOM, 2020b).

³ Intergroup contact literature has not yet come to a final agreement whether Allport's conditions are indeed essential or merely facilitating conditions (Paluck et al., 2019). Either way, anyone designing intergroup contact activities is well advised to get as close to these conditions as possible to ensure positive outcomes.



Very often, migrants arrive and live in neighbourhoods that are characterized by pre-existing *structural inequalities* and *residential segregation*, where opportunities to interact are limited and stereotypes and distrust between social groups already exist. These inequalities and segregation reinforce one another in a vicious cycle that triggers social tensions and aggravates the situation of already disadvantaged groups.

The broader environment and sociodemographic differences of participants (in terms of age, language, gender, economic status, education and residence) have a significant impact on participation and success of social mixing interventions. Understanding these barriers before designing and implementing interventions will ensure that social mixing activities are well-targeted and can encourage equal and collaborative participation.

Art as a reintegration and recreation activity. Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. © IOM 2019/Mohamed Aly DIABATÉ



2. Developing effective and inclusive social mixing interventions



The structure below summarizes the key barriers, solutions, recommendations and target groups for developing and implementing social mixing activities.

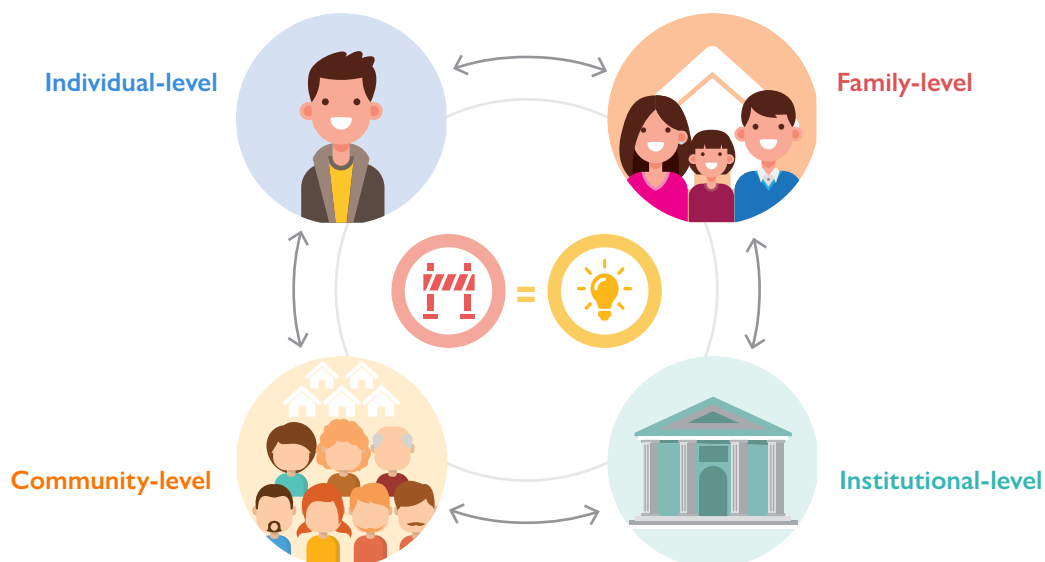


2.1. Understanding and addressing barriers to participation⁴

Before designing intergroup contact or social mixing activities, project developers and managers need to understand the local contexts and the social situations of target groups. Very often, migrants arrive and live in neighbourhoods that are characterized by pre-existing **structural inequalities** and **residential segregation**, where opportunities to interact are limited and stereotypes and distrust between social groups already exist. These inequalities and segregation reinforce one another in a vicious cycle that triggers social tensions and aggravates the situation of already disadvantaged groups.

Project developers and managers need to be aware that the broader environment and sociodemographic differences (in terms of age, language, gender, economic status, education and residence) have a significant impact on participation and success of social mixing interventions. Understanding these barriers before designing and implementing interventions will ensure that social mixing activities are well-targeted and can encourage equal and collaborative participation.

As a starter, it is recommended to, inter alia, carry out an analysis on the type of barriers that may impede participation (such as time resources, traditions, segregation between men and women, financial resources, lack of interest and potential conflict with other groups) and the type of incentives that may motivate participation (such as recognition of migrants' contributions, learning of new skills and provision of letters of recommendation). It is important to consider that different barriers exist and interact at different levels.



⁴ Note on methodology: This guidance note is grounded in both theoretical and practical expertise. This section was created through a review of the existing academic literature on social and behavioural psychology and available project evaluations, as well as consultation with subject-matter experts from academia and IOM's programmatic approaches from the field.

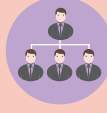
Table 1 highlights some of the most common barriers that both project staff and participants face in social mixing interventions, as well as potential solutions.⁵

Table 1. Key barriers to and solutions for increased participation

Barriers		Solutions	
Limited or lack of individual capabilities and resources 	Individual-level barriers – whether financial, psychological or physical – can block access to participation.	Provide free or affordable and inclusive activities	Social mixing activities need to be designed to be inclusive of individuals with a wide range of abilities and disabilities from the outset. They need to be linguistically, financially and geographically accessible to all participating individuals and communities. This can be achieved by implementing free and bilingual activities, as well as mainstreaming gender and cultural considerations whenever possible.
Limited or lack of opportunities in community 	Opportunities to take part in social mixing activities may not exist or be accessible for individuals in their local area.	Target underserved communities	To enhance and broaden the impact of social mixing, activities should be targeted and implemented at the community level, or in areas where there have been very few or no opportunities to interact. This can be achieved by carrying out general community assessments and consultations to identify the needs and interests of target groups.
Cultural and motivational disconnect 	Some social mixing activities may not be appealing or relevant enough to draw in potential participants. Additionally, cultural barriers, such as perceived mismatch between the migrants and host community's cultural norms and traditions, could also play a role in one's motivation (or the lack thereof) to participate.	Design the intervention to be relevant and appealing	By thoroughly researching and analysing the status differences, cultural norms and prevailing stereotypes of prospective participants, project managers will be able to understand what could potentially (de)motivate them to participate. Depending on the group being targeted, it is crucial to customize the invitation or promotional materials in accordance with their demographic profile and cultural backgrounds.

⁵ This table took inspiration from the Theory of Change of the guidance on strengthening cohesion and integration through sports (Belong Network UK, 2020) and draws on the insights from the principles of intergroup projects (Association for the Study and Development of Community, 1999), practical guide to conduct barrier analysis (Kittle, 2013) and inputs from IOM missions. Please see IOM, 2020a (IOM internal link only) for conflict-sensitivity perspective on context monitoring for different but related framework that place greater emphasis on conflict sensitivity. Depending on the nature and objectives of activity, some of the principles and recommendations may not be applicable.

Table 1 (Continued)

Barriers		Solutions	
Resistance to social mixing 	This challenge refers to an individual's preference to spend time with people who are similar to them (whether they share the same ethnicity, gender, language and others) and reluctance to mix with "others".	Separate the groups to build trust and tackle specific issues	If the situation calls for it, groups can be separated at first with the aim of addressing their own specific challenges (such as language barriers and preconceived notions towards others) so that future mixing is more comfortable for both the in- and out-groups.
Lack of buy-in from institutions and leaders 	Even when there is strong interest from individuals to participate, a lack of support and buy-in from institutions and authorities oftentimes limits the conceptualization and implementation of these activities.	Consult, communicate and partner	It is imperative that local leaders and organizations are closely consulted and well-informed about the intended benefits and impacts of social mixing activities. To sustain their interest and involvement, it is also recommended to include them in the planning and organization of these interventions.
Exclusionary organizational culture 	Some barriers that arise during social mixing activities can actually be caused by the facilitators or organizers of the activities. Oftentimes, the organization can promote an atmosphere of exclusivity or cultural insensitivity that make individuals feel unwelcome or reluctant to participate.	Foster a welcoming and inclusive organizational culture	Programme managers should be aware of the variety of potential needs that may arise from participants throughout the duration of the intervention. Racism and prejudice should not be tolerated under any circumstances or at any point of the activity. Programme managers and facilitators should be sure to integrate conflict resolution and complaint and feedback mechanisms to address situations in which participants feel uncomfortable or unwelcome.

2.2. Designing and implementing social mixing activities to build trust and empathy: Principles and recommendations

After identifying the potential barriers to participation of individuals and communities in social mixing activities, it is also crucial to lay down some key conditions and practical recommendations in designing and implementing these activities to avoid unintended negative consequences and to maximize impacts of intergroup relations. In this regard, targeted interventions should be well-designed and adhere to some basic principles of IGCT. Table 2 draws from a review of relevant literature on IGCT and review of concrete projects and activities to identify some core principles and practical recommendations for designing and facilitating social mixing activities.⁶

This set of eight principles and recommendations aims to support project managers, event organizers and facilitators engaged in social mixing activities to: (a) establish initial trust and rapport between migrants and host communities; and (b) build positive and sustained social relations and mutual understanding between individuals and groups and forge partnerships with key actors.

Table 2. Core principles and recommendations for effective social mixing

Core principles	Tips and recommendations
 Fun and goal-driven Designing and incorporating fun and exciting activities leads to a lighter and welcoming environment for people to meet, mix and build social connections. At the same time, setting a goal that speaks to the interests and backgrounds of all participants makes the activity more enticing and participatory. The goal should be something that neither group can achieve without the participation of the other (cooperative interdependence).	• Provide incentives or positive reasons for people to join in social mixing activities. • Develop an agenda and interventions that spark interest, joy and excitement for all participants with diverse backgrounds, capabilities and status. • Insert some icebreakers and games that would create lighter and fun ambiance for everyone. <i>For example, use an interactive getting-to-know-each-other activity at the beginning with the aim of identifying similarities and making personal interactions more engaging.</i> • Set a common goal that has a compelling appeal and relevance for all members of each group involved. For example, activities that advocate for social causes, such as climate change, youth empowerment or mental health awareness.

⁶ This table took inspiration from the Theory of Change of the guidance on strengthening cohesion and integration through sports (Belong Network UK, 2020) and draws on the insights from the principles of intergroup projects (Association for the Study and Development of Community, 1999), Council of Europe's guide on *Building Migrants' Belonging Through Positive Interactions* (Orton, 2012) and "A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory" (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). The core principles are also based on the inputs and feedback gathered from the academe and IOM staff members who participated in the [Workshop on Social Cohesion](#) in Geneva in October 2019.

Table 2 (Continued)

Core principles	Tips and recommendations
Equality amid diversity It should be guaranteed that participants encounter each other at eye level during all stages of the activity, regardless of group or individual differences. Poor intergroup relations in migration contexts are often rooted in and exacerbated by status differences and the automatic assignment of roles of “the helpless” or “the intruder” versus “the helping hand” or “the defender” (European Commission, 2019b).	• Sequence activities in a manner where rapport and trust are established first (for example, through the use of icebreakers), followed by addressing any group differences that are potential sources of intergroup tension or conflict. • Prevent participants with similar backgrounds from “sub-dividing” into smaller groups by organizing them into mixed groups. <i>For example, mixed sports teams can be formed instead of migrants versus host communities.</i> • Design activities/interventions with the aim of eliminating as much conflict as possible and drawing on the diverse skill sets, unique strengths and abilities of different participants. • Bring together participants as equals in terms of power, respect and importance. Contact activities between superiors and subordinates (such as migrant workers and employers, newcomer students and their instructors) are less likely to be effective in bridging differences.
Mutual appreciation Participants should understand, acknowledge and appreciate each other’s unique and specific cultures, traditions and history as part of the process to bridge differences, maximize each other’s strengths and identify commonalities. Such commonalities should be approved by all groups involved and not be perceived as imposed by other participating groups or third parties (Tropp, 2015; Vollhardt et al., 2008). It is important that participants acknowledge each other’s respective strengths and areas of influence and how their contributions can be impactful towards achieving common goals.	• Avoid and flag instances of a “we versus they” mentality, acknowledge structural inequalities and discrimination experienced by any of the groups, and design activities that focus on cooperation and win-win results. <i>For example, plan activities that are collaborative as opposed to being competitive.</i> • In unavoidable competitive activities or situations, encourage healthy competition and enforce fair and plain rules. • Divert attention away from social and cultural differences during the first instances of interaction and bring attention towards similarities between the groups instead. Set activities that do not just “preach to the converted” but engage with persons whose feelings towards out-groups is mixed. • Design activities with the aim of allowing participants to meet new people, even those from the same backgrounds or communities. <i>For example, use mixed seating arrangements to prevent participants from interacting with members of the same background.</i>

Table 2 (Continued)

Core principles	Tips and recommendations
Shared ownership Engaging migrants and local communities in the activity at all stages will ensure double ownership and increase their buy-in (European Commission, 2016). Such ownership empowers them, raises their self-esteem and opens up new opportunities for engagement.	• Ensure that participants from different groups are equally involved in the design, implementation and review of activities. • Run a range of activities that are highly participatory to ensure that everyone feels included and has a sense of ownership. <i>For example, ensure that discussions are not dominated by one person and everyone is given a chance to speak.</i> • Ensure that all participants will have the chance to be in a leadership position at some time during the intervention. <i>For example, in volunteering activities, provide participants equal opportunities to lead and contribute to specific activities and tasks.</i> • Assign participants specific roles, ideally on a voluntary basis (such as notetaker or timekeeper in classroom settings) that will increase their involvement and sense of ownership of the process.
Guided reflection Dialogues and activities that allow for a certain extent of guided reflection can help create an atmosphere that will be viewed as more trusting, friendly and warm. Processing information and sharing stories, especially personal and sensitive ones that can evoke bad memories, should be guided carefully by facilitators or project members.	• Create an environment where participants can freely speak their minds during the activity and offer a space for communication on a very personal level. • Guide and encourage participants to speak about their personal stories and experiences, when relevant, which could build empathy and affection towards others. • Encourage participants to reflect on what they have learned by taking part in an activity with diverse participants. <i>For example, watching movies or a performance together may be succeeded by mixed-group discussions with the objective of sharing impressions, expectations and lessons learned.</i>

Table 2 (Continued)

Core principles	Tips and recommendations
 Trusted oversight and facilitation Those who are in positions responsible for group interactions, such as team leaders, facilitators, project staff or event planners, must play an active role in endorsing and advocating for equal intergroup relations and creating an inclusive atmosphere for everyone. Such deliberate effort is crucial in overcoming participants' natural tendency to group themselves based on their most salient characteristics and status.	• Selecting effective facilitators that show strong intercultural competence and mediation skills is key to a successful activity. <i>For example, recruit competent facilitators whose backgrounds reflect the diversity of the participants.</i> • Conduct a capacity-building activity with the project team, especially the facilitators, in preparation for the activity. • Explain at the outset the rules and objectives of the activity, group dynamics and intervene when required, such as adjusting group memberships or mediating any kind of misunderstanding or conflict. • Provide participants enough room to build personal acquaintances. By getting to know someone on the individual level, there is less tendency to perceive another group as monolithic and homogenous and allows members of groups to recognize that even though they differ on one aspect of their identity, they may share a common identity on another dimension.
 Sustained and regular intervention It goes without saying that the more frequent, long-term and intensive the participation is, the better the improvement in attitudes toward others. This means adopting an approach that reframes the role of participants who will then define the needs of their communities and eventually take part in the design and organization of appropriate interventions.	• Design the intervention to be challenging and intense (such as a sports activity or a community art project). By making the main activity challenging, participants will stay engaged and motivated to continue to show up for the duration of the activity. • Run and schedule a calendar of activities (with the activities planned from the beginning all the way to the end), with a view to capture the interest and habits, and ensure the continued involvement of participants. The schedule with the planned and upcoming activities should include the objectives, participants and dates of interventions. • Encourage participants to continue building their relationships with each other in their daily lives and stay in contact once the intervention ends. <i>For example, create a social media group that involves all participants of the activity for sustained interaction.</i> • Create a mechanism for continued contact between participants following the intervention's conclusion. <i>For example, organize an informal social gathering or volunteer network that allows participants to reconnect and support any future initiatives.</i>

Table 2 (Continued)

Core principles	Tips and recommendations
Institutional support and partnership Support from institutions (such as local governments, funders, the media, government agencies and intermediary organizations) is instrumental in promoting and facilitating constructive efforts to strengthen intergroup relations. These institutions sanction the effort and can reinforce the relationships or divisions among groups. The coordination of such institutions creates an enabling system that can provide resources and incentives to promote and strengthen intergroup relations.	• Organize meetings or consultations with institutions before the event to ensure that they are well informed about the activity. This is also a way to explore possible partnerships (for funding, logistics, media support and others) in organizing the event. • Invite leaders or representatives of organizations to become involved in the activity. <i>For example, invite a leader to speak at the outset of the activity to share the welcoming words and talk about diversity and inclusion in the community.</i> • Invite media and journalists to cover concerts, festivals and other similar cultural events that can help spread positive narratives towards migrants. • Design activities that allow for interaction between participants and authorities. • Link activities to broader institutional strategies aimed at improving social relations and reducing prejudice, such as integration strategies, anti-discrimination action plans and equal opportunity frameworks at the local or national levels.

2.3. Identifying and communicating with target individuals and groups

It is important to carefully identify and target the participants or groups who will participate in any social mixing activity. Consultations with the community institutions and leaders, as well as with existing research studies on social behaviour and cultural sensitivity are crucial to select groups for whom such types of engagements may be of relevance and interest.



- **Participants with past intergroup experiences:** The easiest and safest audience for such activities are individuals with past intergroup contact activity experiences. In cases where their experiences were positive, they are likely to enter the intergroup activity with a positive attitude and focus on the positive aspects of the situation. This minimizes the risk of possible negative aspects of the activity affecting the participants' attitude.



- **“Conflicted” middle:** Activities should also try to engage those individuals whose feelings towards migrants or migration is more ambivalent or neutral. Studies show that it is easier to shift attitudes of those who do not have a fixed and strong opinion about migrants (Dempster et al., 2020).



- **Multipliers and leaders:** Another option is identifying the “multipliers” and/or authorities within communities and specifically targeting them. Winning community leaders and reputed influencers and personalities as partners or participants can entice more individuals to join because they generally tend to trust and welcome authorities and public figures.



- **Young people:** Young people, especially university students, are also an ideal target group, as they are generally more open-minded and dynamic. They can carry their intergroup experiences into their future workplaces and other surroundings.

In a lot of circumstances, disadvantaged groups like migrants or refugees might be suspicious of intergroup activities and other public events. In such cases, it might be easier to approach them through **personal networks** or other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with them. Additionally, it might also be helpful to reach out to them in their typical meeting places, such as their respective neighbourhoods, schools or kindergartens.

It is also crucial to identify the communication channels or tools that the target audience use to advertise these activities. Social media could be used with precaution. Facebook pages, events or groups and WhatsApp groups could also be created or utilized to disseminate information/invitations, using fun and enticing communication messages.

3. Selected interventions and project examples



This section outlines the types of select activities that have proven particularly suitable for creating space for individuals from migrant and host community groups to meet and engage with each other in a positive and meaningful way.

Digital social mixing interventions

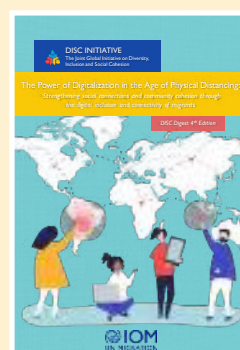
As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact human mobility and migration, global digital connectivity has become increasingly important to governments, organizations and migrants alike. Yet the pandemic has also highlighted the importance of social connections amidst the physical distancing measures and mobility restrictions.

Social mixing initiatives from [IOM Peru](#) and [IOM United Kingdom](#), for instance, have adapted events/activities promoting positive relations between migrants and local communities and community integration online. Activities such as the ones mentioned below are especially crucial during this time, as the global pandemic threatens to put migrants and refugees at an increased risk of stigmatization and xenophobia. The initiatives that follow particularly focus on social mixing and campaigns in a virtual format.

In 2018, IOM Peru launched a joint initiative with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations and various national and international NGOs to lead a social inclusion campaign for Venezuelan nationals in Peru, known as #TuCausaEsMiCausa (“Your cause is my cause”). Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, #TuCausaEsMiCausa has continued to promote social cohesion activities through their social media platforms, among them an at-home talent contest for called *Casa Talentos*. Participants could upload a video of their songs, dance performances, poetry and more to their Instagram pages with the hashtag #CasaTalentos to enter the contest. The finalists and winners were announced through the initiative’s Facebook page.

IOM United Kingdom celebrated the United Kingdom’s Refugee Week 2020 in partnership with Together Productions by launching a new online global music video project. People around the globe were invited to participate in the creation of this video to celebrate the extraordinary contributions of refugees and migrants to the world. In the video, migrants and communities filmed themselves singing, dancing, playing instruments and sharing important moments from their daily lives. This initiative united people from all over the world to work in solidarity together, highlighting the strength and resilience of refugees and migrants.

More examples of IOM’s work in digital intergroup mixing can be seen in [third](#) and [fourth](#) editions of the [DISC Digest](#) (IOM, 2020c).





3.1. Train and volunteer

Sports activities – whether through a one-time match or recurring ones – are a popular way of bringing people together. Through playing together in one team, all participants are on the same level, making it easier to fulfil the condition of equal group status. Moreover, a match compels team members to collaborate and rely on each other to achieve a common goal – to win.

On the other hand, community volunteering has the advantage of providing an activity with a shared objective and passion valued by all participants. In addition to bringing participants from different social groups together, it also brings in a sense of working towards a common goal for all.

Football match organized in the framework of the European Union-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in Daloa, Côte d'Ivoire.
© IOM 2000/Mohamed Aly DIABATÉ





Example 1: Migrants and local youth associations (IOM Austria)

This intergroup contact activity targeted young migrants and refugees who were receiving post-arrival orientation trainings from IOM Austria, as well as members of local Austrian youth organizations. The first step was building trust and raising the local youth associations' understanding of the situation of young migrants and refugees. Secondly, it was important to target local youth organizations who were interested and committed to expanding their member composition to include young migrants and refugees, by exempting them from paying the membership fee. Previously, get-togethers were organized for young migrants to meet the members of the associations (such as youngCaritas (volunteering youth association), Austrian Alpine Climbing Youth Association and provincial scouts' associations) and increase their understanding in what kinds of services and activities were provided by them. These get-togethers break the ice and do away with inhibitions on both sides, allow for eye-to-eye exchange and prove beneficial to both the newcomers (improving their language skills, making friends, discovering new hobbies or having access to enjoy their existing hobbies free of charge, increasing their knowledge and changing attitude about the host community) and the host communities (learning new languages, making friends, increasing their knowledge and changing their attitudes about the newcomers through the personal contact and interaction).

Example 2: The Ball Has No Flags initiative

This intergroup contact activity leverages Latin America's most popular sport, football, to bring together children and youth in communities in Peru, with high concentrations of refugees and migrants. There were 337 Peruvian and Venezuelan girls, boys and teens who benefited directly from this project, strengthening community participation and networks between the two groups. An evaluation report by IOM Peru shed light on the effectiveness of this social mixing activity. Over 80 per cent of participants in this activity indicated that they "have more friends from other countries" and "are able to connect with boys and girls from [other] countr[ies] after participating in The Ball Has No Flags". In addition to facilitating intergroup contact through sports, this programme provided leadership training; 10 Peruvian and Venezuelan youth were certified as youth leaders to co-execute social sporting classes, while 9 representatives were certified for their participation in the leadership school. Through sports, participants learn leadership and cooperation skills through the prism of equality and inclusion to strengthen values, such as resilience, integration and community cohesion.



3.2. Create and perform

The field of visual and performing arts is another platform where intergroup contact can take place, either in the form of one-time workshops or regular classes. Ideally, these are followed by a joint exhibition or performance for a wider audience because this increases ambition, esteem and a sense of achievement, thus intensifying the group experience and social bonds in the community. Other possible formats are festivals, competitions or the establishment of intercultural orchestras, theatre companies and the like.



Using street art to engage with migrants and community members in Niamey, the Niger. © IOM 2020/ Daniel Kisito KOUAWO



Example 3: Street art for social cohesion (IOM Niger)

For one month, artists, migrants and locals worked together to beautify the cities of Niamey and Agadez in the Niger by painting public spaces. While the artists and migrants residing in local transit centres were the primary participants of the activity, everyone passing by could join the free painting sessions. In this way, migrants and locals could easily meet, share a passion for art, work together towards a common goal and be proud of the beautiful outcome. Moreover, the project gave the migrants an opportunity to give something back to the host community, gain confidence in themselves and have a positive impact on perceptions of migrants through this visible intergroup contact activity.

Example 4: Dominican–Venezuelan Symphonic Orchestra (IOM Dominican Republic)

Based in the Dominican Republic, the Dominican–Venezuelan Symphonic Orchestra brings together about 50 Venezuelans and Dominicans on a regular basis for rehearsals and public concerts. One of its aims is to support the integration of Venezuelan migrants. It does so by including them into this cultural activity and bringing migrants together with members of the host community to have fun and collaboratively work towards the concerts. This is especially valuable for Venezuelans with irregular immigration status who have limited access to opportunities (IOM, 2019d).

Example 5: IOM Panama broadcasted *Venezolan!stmo: Music and Action in Times of Quarantine*

Through YouTube Live, this virtual concert aimed to unite Panamanians and Venezuelans through music and art. There were 25 musicians and poets, as well as hundreds of virtual attendees, who joined their voices to generate ties of empathy and trust. As part of the celebration for Children's Day, IOM Panama organized the virtual camp, "We are the Same" for around 50 children aged 5 to 12 years old. This free and digital activity included storytelling, song learning and a yoga session. It aimed to entertain, educate and share in an environment steeped in values, such as peace, respect and solidarity. These initiatives are part of IOM Panama's #SomosLoMismo campaign, a joint campaign with the UNHCR, which aims to promote solidarity, respect and empathy between all migrants and refugees living in Panama.



3.3. Celebrate and play

There is a wide array of activities where celebrations and gatherings can be made more socially interactive to promote positive intergroup relations. Possible options include sharing cultural or religious customs, jointly celebrating important holidays, cooking together and playing fun games in mixed groups. Through these activities, participants increase their knowledge of each other's traditions and customs while simultaneously offering an opportunity to discover similarities between seemingly different traditions.



Majd, a 25-year-old Syrian refugee, cooks together with a member of his new community in Cordoba, Argentina. © IOM 2019/Angela WELLS



Example 6: Christmas Eve without Borders, Instytut Myśli Schumana (Poland)

This programme brings foreign and local individuals together for Christmas Eve. After an initial meeting during which the matched participants get to know each other, Polish families invite their foreign counterparts to traditional Christmas celebrations at their homes. With Christmas being one of the most important holidays in Poland, this activity provides foreign participants with valuable insights into Polish culture and at the same time gives them an opportunity to share their own stories with members of the host community on a personal level. Participants are able to develop lasting friendships through the support of follow-up Schuman group meetings.

Example 7: Kitchen on the Run, Über den Tellerrand e.V., Germany and other European Union countries

The heart of this project was a mobile kitchen that travelled from town to town and aimed to bring together people with and without a refugee background. It did so by providing an open and cost-free space for joint cooking and other community events. Thus, it reduced barriers for interaction and overcame the traditional distribution of roles of those giving and receiving help, establishing an atmosphere of equal status and closeness. Moreover, the residents were invited to actively participate in the activities, and the local communities were supported through the association even after the kitchen container had left (European Commission, 2019b).

Example 8: Cooking Together (IOM Turkey)

This initiative brought together 40 Turkish and Syrian women from host and refugee communities to share experiences and bond over cooking activities. As part of IOM's WeTogether campaign, the women learned more about each other's cultures, enhancing each group's knowledge on the other's way of life. The shared experience of cooking together allowed participants to build long-lasting relationships with members in their community. Participants reported that they began visiting their neighbours more frequently and highlighted the commonalities between Syrian and Turkish culture. Through social mixing, this activity promotes the inclusion and acceptance of cultures to strengthen solidarity among community members.



3.4. Discover

Another category of activities are those related to nature and cultural trips (such as museum visits and city excursions). As with other activities, these can be realized as singular events or as a series of events, for instance within the framework of an association. Discovering new places together produces shared experiences and adventures, and puts participants from migrants and host communities on the same journey of learning new things about the places they visit and the people they travel with.

Syrian refugees join a museum tour alongside host community members in Istanbul, Turkey. © IOM 2016/ Muse MOHAMMED





Example 9: Safarni Integration Initiative (IOM Egypt)

This initiative offered children from different cultural backgrounds living in a culturally diverse district a special travel opportunity: an imaginary journey, realized by meeting children from other countries and getting to know their food, songs, dances, games and language. This simulated travel experience was accompanied by geography classes and field trips. This activity helped children who otherwise do not get the chance to travel to benefit from the positive effects of travelling: “It shapes one’s personality, frees one’s mind and nurtures one’s soul.” Consequently, it taught the children about cultural diversity on a very personal level and to accept each other by offering a safe and positive space for personal interaction with people that they would never have met in their daily activities.

Example 10: A different type of treasure hunt (IOM Austria)

This intergroup contact activity targeted young migrants and refugees who were receiving post-arrival orientation trainings from IOM Austria, and the youth volunteering association youngCaritas in Vienna. IOM developed a treasure hunt throughout the most historically charged districts in Vienna, combining knowledge quizzes (both relating to the country of destination and countries of origin of the participants) and challenges that included convincing passers-by to participate (points were awarded for various challenges, such as selfies and mirroring of statues). This activity has positive implications on various levels: solving a task together increases trust and promotes a sense of solidarity while allowing participants to gain knowledge on various countries in a playful manner and maintain a level of equality. Likewise, everyone can contribute, which increases participants’ self-confidence and feeling of belonging. Being able to discover and explore the city one is living in gives newcomers a strengthened sense of independence and increases the chances of them being more active members in the host community. Based on the exchanges during the treasure hunt, newcomers were made aware of the possibility of continuing interaction with their team members through the local youth volunteering association. For this type of activity, it is important to know the target group very well, include tasks that require every member to contribute in and build fun challenges.



3.5. Learn and discuss

Increasingly, buddy programmes with local mentors are being used outside educational settings to support newly arrived migrants or refugees to familiarize themselves with their host communities, build their self-reliance and broaden their social networks. Moreover, joint trainings on specific topics of interest to the target groups can be held, either focusing on skills like conflict management or on more knowledge-oriented topics such as ecology or human rights. Also popular are film screenings, which can be upgraded by holding mixed-group discussions on the movie and its topic after the screening.



Workshop on drama therapy held in Amman, Jordan.
© IOM 2009



Example 11: TandEM (IOM Croatia/Cyprus/Greece/Italy/Malta/Spain)

One component of the TandEM project is a mentorship scheme at selected Italian and Spanish universities led by student associations. Through a one-to-one pairing scheme, local and foreign students were given the opportunity to meet and share diverse aspects of a student's life. The project thus established interpersonal contacts that would otherwise have taken a lot of time and effort to develop. In addition to the support from locals in administrative and other matters and increased accessibility to local society for migrants, an advantage of this kind of intergroup contact was its particularly personal nature that provides an ideal platform for intercultural friendships. Peer-to-peer meetings were connected to and facilitated other types of intergroup activities, such as city tours or intercultural dinners. This happened within the community of buddies and the broader student community that mentees were empowered to play an active role in. Empowering migrants in such a way can have a snowball effect within their respective communities, making them function as role models and ambassadors for positive intergroup relations.

Example 12: Library for social cohesion (IOM Turkey)

IOM Turkey partnered with the Kilis municipality to convert an old building into a new public library where youth from host and refugee communities can access educational materials and socialize with each other. Once COVID-19 restrictions are eased, the library will serve as a hub of interaction for young people, allowing both communities to come and learn about each other's cultures.

Example 13: Green footprint: Green business and environmental entrepreneurship for Migrants and their host communities (IOM Egypt)

IOM Egypt partnered with YouThinkGreen to launch an environmental entrepreneurship programme, empowering beneficiaries with the tools, training and space needed to turn ideas into innovative and sustainable solutions for a better future. This programme combines two of the most pressing issues in contemporary global agendas: climate change and migration. Migrants from a variety of different nationalities worked in small teams with host community members, coming together to meet new people, learn new skills, collaboratively solve problems and share ideas. There were 19 start-ups prototypes launched through this programme, ranging from businesses that collected cooking oil for biofuel, to projects that recycled textile waste to produce a line of new bags and wallets. IOM's mentorship schemes, workshops and knowledge-sharing opened new avenues for cooperation, thus changing certain stigmas that migrants and Egyptians had about different nationalities, enhanced community cohesion and collaborative idea-sharing, and empowered migrants with the skills needed for long-term economic self-reliance.



Robust monitoring and evaluation of IOM initiatives is crucial to ensure a results-focused programming, and provide government officials, IOM staff, partners, donors and civil society with better means to informed decision-making, meeting accountability obligations to beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders, and draw lessons learned for the improvement of future interventions and service delivery.

Football match organized in the framework of the European Union-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in Daloa, Côte d'Ivoire. © IOM 2000/Mohamed Aly DIABATÉ

4. Monitoring and evaluating intergroup contact activities



While there is growing evidence of the effectiveness of social mixing activities emerging from academic research, few projects that implement social mixing interventions lack a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. A review of social mixing interventions in the area of sports, for instance, found that out of 53 interventions, only 2 were evaluated (European Commission, 2016).

Robust monitoring and evaluation of IOM initiatives is crucial to ensure a results-focused programming, and provide government officials, IOM staff, partners, donors and civil society with better means to the following:

- **Informed decision-making** by providing timely feedback to management on the intervention's context, risks, challenges, results, as well as successful approaches;
- **Meet accountability obligations** by informing donors, beneficiaries⁷ and other stakeholders on IOM's performance, progress made in the achievement of results and the utilization of resources;
- **Draw lessons learned** from experience to provide feedback into the planning, design and implementation of future interventions and improve service delivery.

In order to improve project implementation and ensure desired results in social mixing interventions, it is important to integrate both monitoring and evaluation during intervention design, implementation and completion.⁸

Engaging in monitoring and evaluation during the intervention design stage is essential, as it can help to better understand and define desired results, as well as how such results will be achieved, and how progress towards these results will be measured. Similarly, findings, lessons learned and best practices from existing evidence, such as previous evaluations, can also help enhance an intervention design and enrich the formulation of results. Integrating monitoring and evaluation into implementation can, inter alia, help assess the quality of a social mixing intervention's results, as well as its progress and completion stage. Monitoring and evaluation in integration can also shed light on whether the intervention's desired results have been achieved, why, to what extent and the impacting factors that facilitated the achievement of these results. The checklist and design principles in this document could be the starting point for gathering available existing evidence, as they identify the key factors that are likely to contribute to the success of an intervention.⁹ In addition, this thought process could be guided by the techniques of developing a Theory of Change. This would

⁷ The IOM Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines uses the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/ Development Assistance Committee definition of beneficiary/ies or people that the Organization seeks to assist as "the individuals, groups, or organisations, whether targeted or not, that benefit directly or indirectly, from the development intervention. Other terms, such as rights holders or affected people, may also be used." (emphasis added) (OECD, 2019:7)

⁸ For more information, see *IOM Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines* (forthcoming), chapters 1, 3 and 5. Please also see modules 2, 4 and 6 of the *IOM Project Handbook* (IOM, 2017a).

⁹ The IOM Evaluation repository contains all available evaluations and is a good resource (IOM, n.d.b).

not only increase the likelihood of this intervention being successful but also facilitate the monitoring of its delivery, as well as evaluation of its results.¹⁰

4.1. Why monitor?



Monitoring helps identify whether:

- Planned activities are actually taking place (within the given time frame);
- There are gaps in the implementation;
- Resources have been or are being used efficiently;
- The intervention's operating context has changed.

Once the implementation of a social mixing intervention begins, it is important to assess whether it is going according to plan, and whether it is likely to achieve its desired outcome.

Monitoring is necessary, because it continuously generates the information needed to measure progress towards results throughout implementation and enables timely decision-making.

Monitoring helps decision makers be anticipatory and proactive, rather than reactive, in situations that may become challenging to control. It can also bring key elements of strategic foresight to IOM interventions.

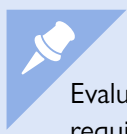
Monitoring can be particularly useful to identify risks in a timely manner, to allow decision makers to introduce corrective measures. Like all projects, social mixing interventions carry risks that need to be carefully identified and mitigated. Some of the risks a project manager should be aware of include the following:

- Participants experiencing the activity as a form of negative contact due to reasons, such as feelings of threat or discomfort, a failure to achieve conditions of equal status and cooperative interdependence, or the activity providing mere exposure rather than meaningful interaction;
- Societal instability;
- The targeting or social stigmatization of those engaging in intergroup contact activities by broader social networks;
- A lack of political support.

4.2. Why evaluate?

Evaluation can be considered a means to discuss causality in a social mixing intervention. While monitoring may show whether indicators have progressed, it remains limited in providing a detailed explanation as to **why** a change occurred. Evaluation, on the other hand, looks at the question of what difference the implementation of an activity and/or intervention has made. It answers this question by assessing monitoring data that reflects **what** has happened and **how/why**, in order to identify **why** certain impacts occurred.

¹⁰ For further guidance on the Theory of Change, please refer to chapter 3 of the *IOM Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines* (forthcoming).



Evaluation provides practitioners with the required in-depth and evidence-based data for decision-making purposes, as it can assess whether, how, why and what type of change has occurred during an intervention.

Evaluation is also critical in assessing the relevance and performance of the means and progress towards achieving change. Effective conduct and the use of credible evaluations go hand in hand with a culture of results-oriented approach, evidence-driven learning and decision-making. When evaluations are used, they contribute not only

to accountability, but also create space for reflection, learning and the sharing of findings, innovations and experiences. They are a source of reliable information to help improve IOM's service provision to beneficiaries, migrants, Member States and donors. Findings, lessons learned and best practices from previous evaluations can also help enhance future interventions' design while enriching the formulation of results and the results framework. Evaluations have their own methodological and analytical rigour, determined at the planning stage and depending on their intention and scope.¹¹

Example 13: Scaling the evaluation of change: Learning lessons from social cohesions surveys in Turkey and Kosovo¹²

Pre- and post-test surveys are means to measure the impacts of interventions, ideally comparing results against a control group or the general population. In Turkey and Kosovo,¹² IOM implemented pre-tests immediately prior to participants engaging in intergroup contact activities, post-tests one month after the interventions were complete, as well as a single survey of the general population.¹³ In Turkey, interviews were conducted with 608 beneficiaries and 798 members of the public. This allowed IOM to get a sense of, inter alia: (a) general opinion of Syrian and Turkish populations towards one another in the communities; (b) key differences between the public and those inclined to participate in IOM's intergroup contact activity; and (c) general results/impact of the intergroup contact activities on participants, including types of individuals with whom interventions appeared more and less effective. For example, survey results found that participants in IOM activities were already more likely to have a positive perception of and have friends or acquaintances among the other group than the public. However, the interventions had the greatest positive impact among participants who did not have regular interaction with members of the other group prior to the activity, in particular Syrian women. While the results of the survey were extremely useful, because they were not compared against a control group, it was not possible to clearly determine the effects the interventions had on participants' perceptions of out-groups.

¹¹ For more information on evaluation, please see *IOM Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines* (forthcoming), chapters 1 and 5. Please also see modules 2 and 6 of the *IOM Project Handbook* (IOM, 2017a).

¹² References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

¹³ For further information, you can read the evaluation reports from Turkey and Kosovo,¹² which are currently being finalized for publication at the time of writing.

Example 14: An exploratory study of the impact of the Global Migration Film Festival on perception of migration and attitudes towards diversity

Since 2016, IOM has held the [Global Migration Film Festival \(GMFF\)](#), an annual film festival that aims to cultivate a deeper empathy for migrants through films and documentaries that capture the unique contributions migrants make to their new communities. In 2019, IOM's Joint Global Initiative on Diversity, Inclusion and Social Cohesion (DISC) and Global Migration Data Analysis Centre conducted a pilot evaluation on the impact of GMFF, surveying over 4,000 respondents from over 40 countries, on public perceptions towards migrants and their understanding of migration. The evaluation found that shifts towards a more positive perception of migrants was most significant among those who had no previous interactions with migrants prior to the event. This evaluation suggests that social mixing activities have the strongest positive impact on those who previously had little or no association with the other target group. At the same time, the evaluation revealed persistent “implicit bias” within the festival’s audience. The overwhelmingly well-educated, wealthy and relatively young audience had a very positive perception of migrants after the screening (74%). However, only half of the attendees reported that migrants can be trusted, and slightly under 60 per cent believed that they enrich cultural life. Thus, initiatives such as GMFF should be targeted towards audiences with less favourable views towards migration and diversity, and those with less personal contact with migrants to maximize the positive impact of social mixing.



Global Migration Film Festival in Geneva, Switzerland. © IOM 2018

5. Conclusion: Moving from social mixing towards social cohesion



The purpose of this guidance note is to encourage project developers and managers to move towards a more evidence-based and impactful design of social mixing activities. As indicated in the earlier sections of this document, the impact of well-designed social mixing activities extends beyond the football pitch, cooking classes or the theatre. As social mixing interventions purport to contribute to better social relations within the community, it would be important for evaluations to consider the impact of the intervention on the wider social circle (family and friends) and broader community (see Annex 2).

Considering time points and levels or scales of impact of a project will allow managers to assess the impact of their intervention in relation to broader policy goals on migrant integration, community cohesion or community development. The latter task would be particularly facilitated if surveys or questions used for evaluation draw on validated questions extracted from national or regional statistical surveys. This will provide project managers benchmarks to compare their results against and allow them to communicate more clearly on how their activities contribute to higher-level outcomes in action plans or other strategic instruments. For instance, the [DISC Survey Bank on Migrant Integration and Social Cohesion](#) provides an excellent pool of validated and field-tested questions from well-reputed organizations and academic institutions.

Where appropriate resources are available, project managers may also consider more rigorous evaluation methods such as an impact evaluation. An increasingly accepted tenet of impact evaluation is to measure progress against outcomes by comparing the changes in the outcome measures between participants and an otherwise similar group that did not or has not yet participated in the social mixing intervention. This kind of approach will allow project managers to better understand the role of participation in the intervention, and the observed changes and impacts in the individual and society in general. One way of conducting this more rigorous evaluation is to compare the participants of intervention with those who have not participated (that is, the control group). While this is ideal, this is not always possible given several practical constraints (Belong Network UK, 2020).

Well-designed social mixing activities are facilitated by a robust monitoring and evaluation framework and a broad range of external stakeholders. Working with non-traditional partners, such sports clubs, arts councils and film associations, project managers are to show that social mixing activities do not only bring enjoyment to those who participate but also contribute to increased trust and support within the broader community. Institutional support and partnership will be critical for making social mixing interventions more impactful and sustainable. To leverage the most from these kinds of interventions, practitioners and policy makers need to develop social mixing strategies and policy levers that operate at multiple levels – individual, community and institutional levels.



Annexes

Annex 1. Checklist for project managers and staff

Ten points to consider when designing and implementing intergroup contact activities

Key questions	Recommendations
Is the intervention fun and goal driven, designed with incentives to participate? Does it foster a welcoming environment that is conducive to building social connections?	☐ Icebreakers and games have been integrated into the intervention. ☐ A common goal(s) has been set, which appeals to all members participating in the intervention.
Does the intervention encourage equality amid diversity? Do participants meet each other at eye level?	☐ An analysis was carried out prior to intervention to understand the types of barriers that may impede participation. ☐ Activities are arranged in an order where rapport and trust can be established first (for example, icebreakers). ☐ Participants are organized into mixed groups to prevent subdivision into migrants versus host communities.
Does the intervention encourage mutual appreciations of each other's unique cultures and histories?	☐ Activities are set up to focus on cooperation and win-win results. ☐ When competition is unavoidable, fair rules are designed, healthy competition is encouraged. ☐ Mixed seating arrangements and other tools are used to allow participants to meet as many new people as possible during the intervention. ☐ Similarities are emphasized over differences during first interactions between groups.
Does the intervention encourage shared ownership and engagement at all stages?	☐ Participants from different groups are equally involved in all stages of the activity. ☐ Activities are highly participatory, and everyone is given a chance to speak. ☐ All participants are given a chance to take a leadership position during the intervention. ☐ Participants are assigned specific roles, ideally on a voluntary basis (such as notetaker or timekeeper).
Has the intervention been designed to allow for guided reflection and the processing of information?	☐ Participants are encouraged to speak freely about personal stories and experiences when relevant. ☐ Debriefing sessions are held after activities to encourage participants to reflect on what they have learned with diverse groups (for example, mixed group discussions).

Key questions	Recommendations
Have the facilitators and project members been trained to provide trusted oversight and facilitation? Do they play an active role in advocating and endorsing equal intergroup relations and creating an inclusive atmosphere for everyone?	☐ Facilitators are strong intercultural mediators with backgrounds that reflect the diversity of participants. ☐ Activities and rules have been designed based on equal status and sharing subordinate roles. ☐ Facilitators adjust group memberships and mediate misunderstanding or conflict when needed. ☐ Conflict resolution and complaints and feedback mechanisms to address participant discomfort are integrated into the intervention.
Is the intervention designed to be sustained and regular? Has the intervention been designed to encourage contact between groups after its conclusion?	☐ A set of activities is prepared and communicated to capture interest and ensure continued involvement of participants. ☐ Participants are encouraged to continue building their relationships with each other after the intervention ends (such as through social media groups). ☐ Participants are introduced to mechanisms for continued contact after the intervention's conclusion (such as informal social gatherings).
Have the relevant institutions and partners been contacted for support? Does the intervention draw on these partnerships to strengthen intergroup relations?	☐ Relevant institutions have been well informed about the activity and contacted regarding possible partnerships in organizing the event. ☐ Leaders or representatives of organizations have been invited to join the activity in some form (such as inviting community leaders as keynote speakers). ☐ Journalists and other media have been invited to cover cultural events. ☐ Activities have been designed to allow for interactions between participants and authorities.
Have the appropriate target groups been identified? Has the intervention been targeted towards these groups to ensure maximum impact?	☐ Local community institutions and leaders and existing research studies have been consulted to identify groups best suited for this intervention. ☐ The intervention includes participants from at least one of the following groups: (a) participants with past intergroup experiences; (b) the conflicted middle; (c) multipliers and leaders; and (d) young people. ☐ Communications promoting the intervention is conducted through channels that target audience use.
Has monitoring and evaluation been considered in every stage of the intervention?	☐ Monitoring and evaluation has been integrated into the design, implementation and post-intervention stages.

Annex 2. Outcomes in scale and time in social mixing activities

Illustrative example of outcomes in scale and time

	Prior to activity (baseline)	Immediately post-activity	6 months on	12 months on
Individual	Reported feelings towards different groups	Reported feelings towards different groups	Reported feelings towards different groups	Reported feelings towards different groups
Family and Friends	Family reporting feelings towards different groups	Family reporting feelings towards different groups	Family reporting feelings towards different groups	Family reporting feelings towards different groups
Community (within 15–20 mins. walk of home)	Self-reported community cohesion		Self-reported community cohesion	More positive discussion of local community on social media (versus baseline)
Regional and national				Changes in reported hate crime within the area (versus baseline)

Source: Belong Network UK, 2020.

It is imperative to consider the **scale** or **level** at which social mixing activities take place, and the **time period** in which the impact can be measured. Scale goes beyond individual-level effects to the social networks of family and friends that the individual is situated in, and then again at higher levels, such as the local community, the region and even nationally. In terms of time, it is assumed that impact can be measured immediately after the activity at the individual and family and friends level, while it will take longer at the community level and beyond (Belong Network UK, 2020).

Annex 3. Relevant DISC Resources and About the Initiative



The **DISC Initiative** is a flexible, demand-led and multiphased initiative that aims to elevate IOM's capacity and programming to support Member States and relevant partners in the areas of social cohesion, migrant integration and inclusion. The DISC Initiative serves as a global platform to share, learn, develop and implement innovative strategies and interventions in this area.

For more information about the DISC Initiative, please download our [infosheet](#) or visit our [SharePoint](#). Do not forget to check the resources above!

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