



# CHESS COMPETITIONS

The game of chess is an eminent brain stimulator, it promotes the acquisition of skills that can be transposed into daily life. Communication and exchange between players are required and facilitated by the playful context. Group creativity strengthens trust in others. The activity is a vector of universality, which makes it possible to unite and communicate in a different way, by bringing together people from diverse, sometimes opposing, backgrounds. Having fun, thinking, interacting, revealing yourself is the very essence of this activity.

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# SOCCER TOURNAMENTS

Sports have in general a positive impact on individual participants physical, mental and social well being. At the Community level, soccer tournaments promote inclusiveness and social cohesion, they enable the creation of strong community bonds among migrants and refugees, communities and returnees, girls and boys, vulnerable and less vulnerable groups, beyond their social, religious or ethnic backgrounds. Soccer tournaments allow the building of relationships among participants the discussions about the risks of migration and the benefits of social cohesion. Finally, supporting sports activities creates safe environments where young people could interact among themselves.

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# NEIGHBOURHOOD RADIOS

This initiative is an original concept which synergizes community in-person events and radio broadcasts in order to stimulate the debate on migration. The neighbourhood radio initiative is an opportunity to give voice to certain migration prone communities to discuss the root causes of irregular migration and possible alternatives. Returning migrants, affected families, mothers grieving over the departure of their children have made their contribution to raising awareness on the dangers of irregular migration through debates, advice for young people but also sharing of migratory experiences.

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# COMMUNITY MOBILIZERS

Who are they and what is their role?

They often come from the same communities and have a multifaceted role. They reach migrants in their neighborhoods, ghettos, bus stations, markets, cafes, or any other meeting place where migrants usually gather. They organize focus groups and discussions and provide valuable information to support. They are trained and they gather feedback after meeting the migrants. Community mobilizers and volunteers from credible CSOs such as the Red Crescent have a crucial role in information campaigns as they are trusted and they are culturally sensitive.

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# GENDER EQUALITY

Gender is about roles, expectations, relationships, and power dynamics associated with being a man, woman, boy or girl, and whether one identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex. It is generally associated with unequal powers, in many societies and cultures.

Through the project activities, focus was given to the: i) Involvement of mothers of potential migrants, migrants or missing migrants in telling stories and sharing their experiences; ii) Involvement of women artists; iii) Engagement of female facilitators during events to specifically engage women during debates and discussions and, ; iv) Involvement of women migrants in social cohesion activities as well as in capacity building sessions and photography exhibitions.

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# MOBILE EVENTS

Reaching in a wide manner migrants, potential migrants and communities is the aim of information campaigns. A mobile event reaches its target and attracts also new people. It creates wonder for everyone. Seeing a traveling stage with dancers and singers as well as theatre or film screenings brings a memorable atmosphere to each locality. It is therefore a way to increase outreach, connect urban and rural areas, involve local actors and influencers and facilitate, through entertainment, the debate on serious topics such as the risks of irregular migration.

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# JOURNALISTS AS CHANGE AGENTS

Engaged and empowered journalists and media professionals are fundamentals in information campaigns. They have the crucial role as change agents to disseminate the right information on migration risks and realities. It is important to encourage ethical reporting and to promote the sharing of information and experience between countries as well as new dialogues at national levels. Activities with journalists include trainings, networking events, webinars, online live events, competitions and involvement in grass-root activities through national and community, radio and TVs.

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# PARTICIPATORY THEATRE

Already in Ancient Greek culture and society, theatre played an important role enabling people to communicate their ideas, to express themselves and to interact with others. Carrying out participatory theatre with youth in schools, in youth centers or in public performances on both the risks of irregular migration and human trafficking and the value of social cohesion has an emotional and a visual impact and develops self-awareness and self-confidence. Participatory community theatre is a creative approach using words and body to collectively critically analyze their own situation and perform artistic and cultural content that reflects their reality. It engages participants in dialogue and action towards a positive change.

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# MARKET ADVOCACY

Raising awareness in local markets, walking around the stalls and engaging women and men, mothers, fathers and community leaders, in conversations on the risks of irregular migration and safe migration promotion was one of the key activities. “it sheds more light on issues intending migrants need to know before they travel out of the country” stated a market seller in Nigeria. Awareness-raising is impactful when it reaches out to people where they live and work, through volunteers and community mobilizers, and engages them in collectively thinking about the irregular migration topic.

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# YOUTH AND CHILDREN EMPOWERMENT

Youth are very much engaged and willing to take part in shaping the activities in their communities. They have also broad networks of friends and peers through neighbourhoods, schools, universities, youth centres, etc. Youth have also the power to act on mentalities and are therefore drivers of social and innovative change. They are also key for sustainability as they could continue conveying messages and actions beyond the project timeframe. Both social cohesion and awareness raising activities are focused on children and youth through cultural and craft activities as well as social and outdoor artistic experiences.

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# PHOTOGRAPHY: CAPTURING A STORY

“Photography is an art of observation. It has little to do with the things you see and everything to do with the way you see them.” Elliott Erwitt. This tool is crucial in awareness-raising as it acts on perceptions through the emotional impact of images and the story telling of the visuals. Behind or in front of the cameras’ objective, migrants are empowered and the feeling of self-esteem is increased. Looking at the images and the portraits of migrants, communities are more aware of the issues of migration. Photography can be a catalyst for change.

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# SCHOOL COMPETITIONS

Through art, writing and drawing competitions as well as games in schools, the project brought the theme of migration into the classrooms and this initiative has been revealed to be very important for teachers, pupils and their families. Including migration in the education environment could contribute to raise awareness, tackling rooted mentalities. It may be a long process, however if this is integrated in a systematic way in the projects, it may lead to the inclusion of the topic of migration in the education curriculum and would contribute to the change of behavior regarding irregular migration.

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# CULINARY EVENTS

Migrants travel with their culinary specialties and traditions but they also adapt to the culinary habits in their new homes. Cooking and sharing allow the gathering of people and cultures ,breaking down stereotypes thus contributing to integration. Culinary events bring social cohesion among migrants in transit and host communities as they are opportunities to share, to promote understanding and to dialogue around food.

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# CONVEY THE MESSAGE THROUGH MUSIC

Along with other artistic expressions such as cinema, dance, reading, craft, and theatre, music has been at the heart of the Aware Migrants campaign. Music is a universal language, it has the power to engage, to impact emotionally, to make people feel alive, to give hope and to influence them. Music is also embedded in the local culture and transmits the group identity. Musicians are drivers of the message in information campaigns. The Aware Migrants has seen the participation of several artists including Rokia Traore, Coumba Gaolo, Will B Black, Ousmane Sisse, Adiouza, Zara Moussa, Ewled Leblad, Jalimadi Kanthe, Miss Espoir, Fatou Guewel, Osmane Bangora, Big Makhou, Sister LB, Les slammeuses, Abigaëlle, Akeem, Andal Sukabe, Barakina, Elsa, Mahaman Sani Mati, Mr. Kal, Mr.Paz, Pheno B, Sage Soldat, Toumast, Z.M Zara Moussa.

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# MIGRANTS TRUE STORIES

Migrants are powerful and credible messengers in information campaigns. Testimonies are about sharing one's own experience and outlining both its positive and negative aspects. Whether they are recorded or live, testimonials speak directly to listeners' hearts, create time for introspection, and through them it is possible to rethink myths and beliefs. The project has given migrants - as important messengers - a physical and a digital venue where they may share their experiences with other migrants and the community at large, for someone else to benefit from them.

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# INVESTING IN THE CULTURAL FABRIC

National cultural events and festivals are connected to local cultures and to places, they bind people to their own communities and reflect their own identity. In some cases they are central to their cultural heritage. Inserting the Aware Migrants campaign in those events allows to increase the outreach, make it more diverse and reinforce the sense of ownership as the project becomes part of their realities. Examples include the Cure Salée and Aïr festivals in Niger, the Anoumabo Urban Music Festival in Cote d'Ivoire, or the Global Migration Film Festivals in all African countries.

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