

## COMMUNICATING WITH FORCED MIGRANTS AT THE BORDER CROSSING POINTS AND TEMPORARY CAMPS: WHAT TRAINING IS REQUIRED?\*

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### Abstract

The paper focuses on communication issues between forced migrants and the hosting country staff at the border crossing points and temporary camps. The research based on case studies.

The paper covers general situation and its repercussions that are grounded on official statistics.

The research hypothesis rested on the statement that special programs are required to facilitate communication and terminate tension between large groups of people from impoverished communities which share shelter on the current territories – all the events may lead to tension and misunderstanding.

The research aim was to identify general approaches and key components to design implement training of the border and camp staff who are the forefront forces to adapt forced migrants to new living conditions.

The mentioned goal required a number of steps to be undertaken. First, the forced migrants profile had to be mapped, the temporary camps population had to be studied, and the forms of their members' interaction were supposed to be explored.

With regard to the relevant findings the training program components were explored and identified.

Particular attention was drawn to the temporary camp staff profile and the staff features as responsibilities. Cultural differences between indigenous personnel hired in third world countries and the expatriate recruited members of IGOs, donors from outside and transnational NGOs came to the research focus, as well.

The research methodology stood on literature review and empirical studies of refugee camps' staff opinions and refugees' experiences. The relevant data were taken from the media, refugees' blogs, face-to-face interviews. Totally, 34 face to face interviews were conducted with representatives of 5 ethnic groups, 58 blog posts were analyzed.

The research results allowed for mapping key factors and strategies that should be taken into consideration to design a training program for the border and camp staff to effectively communicate with refugees. The research also allowed identifying those communicative skills that are a must for the border and camp staff of the hosting nation. The preliminary components of the training program were specified, as well.

**Keywords:** Communication with forced migrants, communication at the border crossing points and temporary camps, training for staff communication with forced migrants.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1. Research context

First of all, it is necessary to comprehend the general situation and its repercussions by using approximate estimation method. Recently, the ships of various European navies have rescued more than 6,000 thousand illegal immigrants who were trying to cross the Mediterranean from Libya in leaky boats to try to get into Europe. Federica Mogherini, who is the head of foreign policy for the European Union, has said: «No refugees or migrants intercepted at sea will be sent back to their home countries» A few of the 6,000 landed in Sicily. More of them will stay in Italy, but most in the Northern Europe as there are more jobs and handouts there. Some will end up in the camps in Calais, in France from where they will sneak into Britain. Africans crossing the Mediterranean were not that a big problem before 2011, but after the year of getting rid of the Libyan leader Muammar Kaddafi, nearly 70,000 of refugees left for Europe. Libya fell into complete chaos and the number of refugees were on the increase, approximately 220,000 made the trip. Most of the illegals making the trip are not even Libyan. Instead, they come from such places as Ethiopia, Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, Africa, particularly from the West sub-region, Liberia [Banyard & Miller 2000: 485-505].

Scholars point out that in general refugees and dislocated people can be distinguished according to the physical surrounding they discover themselves in [Hein,1993]. Our principal interest is with displaced people who dwell at organized communities, especially camps, at the same time the concepts can be adapted to situations comprising persons and all families who all of sudden reside in among local populations.

Meanwhile, it is too difficult to describe the situations due to their extended scale encompass the one million Azerbaijanis from Nagorno-Karabakh overflowed 40 camps in Azerbaijan , South Ossetians occupying neglected collective points in their native district of Georgia , Bosnians, Croatians, ethnic Serbs and Roma who fled from Kosovo in Serbia, over 300,000 refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, and Democratic Republic of Congo inhabiting organized settlements in the Kagera and Kigoma regions of western Tanzania the 250,000 internally displaced Tamils living in 500 “welfare centers” in Sri Lanka and the 240,000 “stranded Pakistanis,” referred to locally as Biharis, spread across 66 camps in Bangladesh.

Camp populations are more likely to receive assistance from sources which are outside than from individuals who settle among the local population. Nevertheless, the key requirement for organized settlements is an availability of enormously organized resource-mobilization efforts and of a complex solution to logistical challenges. One or more cultural groups can be provided with assistance within a framework of a single community; for example, Qoriooley in Somalia “consisted of two ethnic groups, Oromo and Somali ...” and the refugee population of Qala en Nahal in Sudan united Muslims and Christians, comprehensive numbers of individuals from five ethnic and language groups within Eritrea, and 3 small clusters from seven other ethnic groups. At the cosmopolitan Kakuma camp in Kenya, “Sudanese form the majority but there are also large numbers of Somalis and smaller numbers of Ethiopians, Rwandans and Ugandans” [8 Reasons Europe's Refugee Crisis...].

### 2.2. Research methodology

The above situation led to *the research hypothesis* that special programs are required to facilitate communication and terminate tension between large groups of people from impoverished communities which share shelter on the current territories – all the events may lead to tension and misunderstanding.

*The research aim* was to identify general approaches, strategies and key components of training for border and camp staff who are the forefront human resourced to adapt forced migrants to new living conditions.

*The research methodology* stood on cases empirical studies regarding refugee camps’ staff opinions and refugees’ experiences. The relevant data were taken from the media, refugees’ blogs, face-to-face interviews. Totally, 34 face-to-face interviews were conducted with representatives of 5 ethnic groups, 58 blog posts were analyzed.

The mentioned goal required a number of *steps* to be undertaken. First, the forced migrants profile had to be mapped, the temporary camps population had to be studied, and the forms of their members’ interaction were supposed to be explored.

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## **2 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Organized settlements differ from each other according to such parameters as size, structure, access to resources, level of governance, interference, causes and types of conflict.

### **2.1. Migrants' profile**

People who forfeited all possessions, lost everything including family or cut off from supportive means are united into camps. Other member of camps are people who have survived calamities, poverty, or have been traumatized by tortures, civil wars, serious illnesses and other notorious events in their lives. Such people can represent a threat at the same time for society due to the fact that they are addicted to sow cross-group mistrust and animosity. Malnutrition is the other devastating factor which can lead to up to 40 times higher death rates than normal statistics shows. It might be feasible that most of the adults have some secondary education. Generally, communication-training program which comprise a large quantities of trainees who have mastered immense and diversified short-term and long-term needs. Likely, such circumstances occur that it will be necessary to rely upon limited accessibility to funding from outside.

The vast majority of camps include interactions between internally displaced people, refugees and strangers of diversified ethnic groups who use incomprehensible language or dialect for communication. It presupposes collisions between different cultural backgrounds which arise on a daily basis in a variety of probable (be means of sharing water, accommodation) and unpredictable (arguments in a result of petty crimes) occasions. Camp populations also come in to contact with the representatives of authority those who prove social services and benefits. Sometimes for the purpose to search for food and additional means for existence camp representative take risks to go outside the camp boundaries and interact with other strangers who may arise grave misgivings. Refugees and host community interaction can encompass such forms of interaction as communication, intermarriage, petty crimes or more serious criminal acts and etc.

### **2.2. Migrant-staff interaction features**

According to the principle of frequency in interactions, dislocated people come in to contact with assistance providers and representatives of authority less frequently that with other camp representatives with different ethnic backgrounds and hosts. As for diapason of diversity such encounters occur between two or three different cultures arising on an immediate basis. Among the host community vital communication-interaction situations are likely to involve at least one different cultural encounter- with camp members.

The most effective cross-cultural program for vast majority involved presupposes the development specific learning which will be targeting at minimizing miscommunication [Banyard & Miller 2000: 485-505].

### **2.3. Target audience for training programs**

Aid project participant training program is a specific program where the staff is selected from the professional and semi-professional members of the camps and from more improved educationally range of host-community population from rural settlements, preliminarily in most cases their economic and psychological, nutritional conditions will not differ significantly from the wider populations they reside among. Mostly, the camp representatives and the host ones are expected to possess to completed secondary school education, supplementary technical and teacher trainings or even university level education; whereas most locally recruited members are believed to have knowledge in at least one foreign language and excellent communication skills in indigenous language and its dialects. They participate in multinational projects and practically are operating in overlapping relations inside and beyond the employing organizations and organize much of the essential interface between indigenous community to which he relates too and exogenous assistance-providers and special agencies. They are striving hard to liquidate turbulent moments in communication. As for indigenous personnel six different critical cultural encounters occur and could easily comprise exigent and comprehensive communication with people of different cultural backgrounds. Cultural particularly vast gab can be seen between indigenous personnel hired in third world countries and the expatriate recruited members of IGOs, donors from outside and transnational NGOs.

There are circumstances which are critically important:

- shortage of social support because relatives and family member cannot be in close interaction
- challenges that arise can turn out beyond one`s own capacity to regulate and cope with and, thus, undermine or damage self-confidence
- international contacts often arises at the intergroup sub-level

- the long-term efficacy of the overall training program will be mediated by intergroup dynamics, especially interactions with host members

These set above training circumstances along with special remarks regarding displaced people and host communities identify the context for the training program that can be designed for facilitating communication. This training should be based on an experimental and didactic approach.

## **2.4. Training program approaches, strategies, components**

Both cultural-general and cultural-specific approaches are vital for training and they should include the appliance of simulation games and role plays in order to help the trainees understand the fact that people from different cultures act differently and also to assist in setting up the general system which will tell about verbal and non-verbal communication skills required for intercultural collaborations. All these approaches aim at achieving communication competence, mitigation of adjustment conditions and task efficacy.

The following key factors should be taken into consideration: trainees` attitude towards feelings, stereotypes regarding the cultural group by conducting a survey, the larger socio-structural and historical background and the mediate social situation, intergroup identities, unintentionally and automatically providing assistance, intergroup identities in cross-cultural interactions, interaction processes themselves.

The research findings follow the earlier research statement [Haque, 2010] that key strategies must be achieved in separate and sequential stages. Our study revealed the following ones: awareness development and enhancement, changes towards attitudes, new skill development and stress resistance.

For the purpose of awareness raising the trainees are introduced to the subject of culture, historic backdrops, relevant from historic point of view figures, data and primarily values of those with whom they will be socializing. A positive attitude regarding diversity and multiculturalism and realizing how approaches, level of education and socialization affect patterns of behavior must be developed.

The training program should presuppose the general approaches and several components such as camp-population-host community training program; intercultural-mediator training program; aid project training program and different levels including several levels host staff community training.

The previous research underlies that the intercultural-mediator program should pay significant attention to the skills of displaced populations` leaders [Alloush,2016]. Our research (refugee blogs data) confirms that inside camp community selectively some members have leadership traits and communicative abilities in at least one or two second languages and possess completed education of secondary school. It is expected that so called dislocated leaders will be responsible for ensuring communication and acting as a cultural mediator between the host and displaced people by deterring an aggression, tension, eliminating conflicts, forming productive alliances.

Moreover, empirical data confirms that their responsibilities include such tasks as endeavouring to terminate and prevent volatile behavior and rampage which can arise, to provide assistance for people who are continuously the subject of threatening hostility outside and inside the camp and for those who lost everything and their security is undermined. Our empirical analysis coincides with other scholars` data regarding the role of communication in migration issues [Gordon, 2015]

Definitely, such working activities, where the performance of cultural mediator`s roles take place, requires inter-cultural knowledge and skills. Moreover, to the situations they encounter as a host-community-population member, these individuals are frequently obliged to cooperate with the leaders of camp communities as well as with local governmental authorities and worker who provide assistance. The analysis of the target audiences experience confirm previous research data that in case if only two culturally different people coexist in one organized camp and members of local government selected from their cultural group, host community mediators probably can be inserted into a minimum of three encounter with different cultures [O`Driscoll,2016,Westermeyer, 1990].

The capacity to react towards ambiguity, to withhold judgements, reduce ethnocentrism must also be taken into consideration.

## **2 CONCLUSION**

The research data allowed us to make preliminary conclusions regarding the type and quantity of relevant skills for migrant-staff intercultural communication at border crossing points and refugee temporary camps. These skills can differ, instances can encompass the actions specified below:

- providing interpretation and usage non-verbal signs
- socializing with representative of diverse cultural backgrounds effectively
- negotiating agreements in intercultural context
- crisis management in culturally diversified environment
- forging techniques that help to organize and simplify learning process during cross-cultural encounters
- establishing observational skills that ensure learning peculiarities of new cultures

Trainers should conduct survey among those who are invited to become cultural mediators and assistance providers in culturally diverse environment and write down their opinions and recommendations throughout the training program.

Thus, trainees are expected to become valuable source for trainers from outside by delivering valuable information regarding the situation and to have at least some communication skills in the indigenous language and the second required language depending on what languages in community prevail, sometimes they need to have the knowledge of several languages.

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