



IOM's Response to Xenophobia and Discrimination in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery

The pandemic has exacerbated the pre-existing inequalities in society. While the virus does not discriminate, it has inadvertently exposed migrants, refugees, IDPs and other people on the move to new heights of racism and xenophobic backlash both online and in the streets.

As the world continues to battle against the pandemic and as some societies re-open, targeted interventions and concrete policy solutions are of paramount importance to break down barriers to

migrant integration and their full inclusion in the COVID-19 response and recovery.

Hence, IOM, through the support and key contributions of the Joint Global Initiative on Diversity, Inclusion and Social Cohesion (DISC Initiative), has crafted policy recommendations and developed targeted interventions, and tools that address xenophobia and foster social cohesion to promote programmatic innovation and better support partners in their response and advocacy.

Release of the IOM Issue Brief on Countering Xenophobia and Stigma

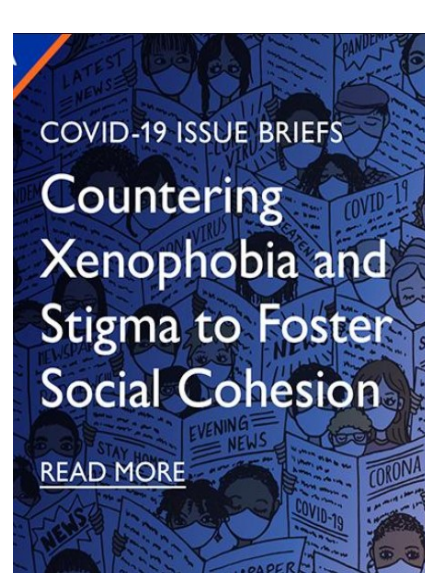
IOM has released an issue brief entitled [Countering Xenophobia and Stigma to Foster Social Cohesion in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery](#) which articulates how the ongoing pandemic has heightened already existing xenophobic attitudes and the stigmatization of migrants in numerous contexts. The issue brief builds upon the call of the UN Secretary General for a multi-stakeholder response to countering the "tsunami of hate and xenophobia", exacerbated by COVID-19 related misinformation and 'fake news'.

It provides case studies, policy recommendations and solutions to combat xenophobia and hate speech in the context of a pandemic: (a) adopting legal and policy frameworks to prevent xenophobia and discrimination whilst promoting inclusivity; and (b) addressing prejudice and xenophobia through community-based models and social mixing activities. More specifically actionable recommendations were developed in relation to:



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- Enhance legislative and policy frameworks against hate crime and its implementation, including improved access to remedies
- Proactively address xenophobia and hate speech in online fora
- Promote evidence-based and stigma-free language in all communication channels that respects and empowers people.
- Strengthen 'whole of community' approaches to reducing prejudice and promoting social cohesion
- Develop or strengthen prejudice-reduction and anti-discrimination measures within recovery plans



Issue Brief | News Article

Launch of the IOM Online Page on Xenophobia



The IOM has launched a dedicated [web page](#) that provides balanced and evidence-based media content on countering xenophobia. The page serves as an online hub of information on IOM initiatives on addressing hate speech towards migrants, latest statements regarding COVID-19 and xenophobia, videos, campaigns and events on countering misinformation and

promoting understanding for migrants.

Aside from the issue brief and the key contributions of DISC (see section below), the page also promotes the UN-led [Verified Campaign](#) to tackle misinformation and promote facts-based and life-saving narratives on COVID-19.

Global pilot study reveals films counter xenophobia and misinformation about migrants

The DISC Initiative, in collaboration with the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), recently conducted a global evaluation of how films and public film screenings of the 2019 Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF) influence public perceptions towards migrants and their understanding of migration.

Based on the data from over 4,000 respondents in over 40 countries/IOM missions, the study finds that participation in an event during GMFF positively influences attendees' perception of migrants, positively change their attitudes towards diversity and can bring different communities together.

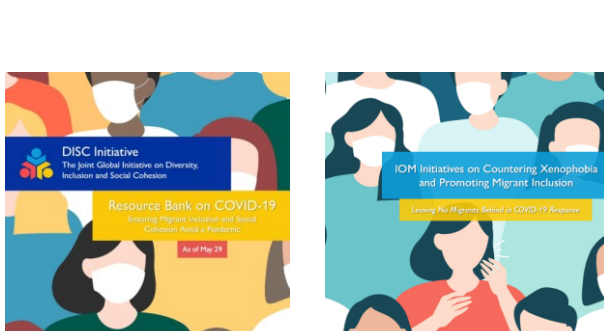
While the pilot study is only an initial step, it suggests that films and film screenings are a powerful advocacy tool. It can bring attention to social issues, counter prejudice and create a platform for meaningful interactions, and as such, they could be fit for the purpose of combatting COVID-19 related hate speech and xenophobia.



The Effect of the Global Migration Film Festival on Social Cohesion - A pilot study

Interactive Online Report | News Article | Study Brief

DISC Resources on Promoting Migrant Inclusion and Social Cohesion amidst COVID-19



Click the images to download

Given the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the IOM programming and strategies have and will need to be adjusted and reformulated to respond to the crisis. The DISC Initiative, with the support of several IOM HQ divisions, units and field missions, has developed various tools and resources, shedding light on crosscutting issues and vulnerabilities that various migrant groups face.

These provide useful guidance and inspiration for developing a more differentiated, appropriate, migrant-inclusive and whole-of-society response to the pandemic.

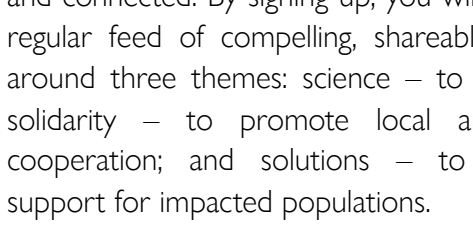
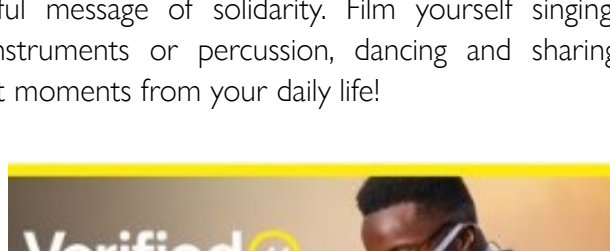
- [Resource Bank on COVID-19 on Migrant Inclusion and Social Cohesion](#)
- [IOM Initiatives on Xenophobia and Migrant Inclusion](#)
- [IOM Experts' Voice on Inclusive COVID-19 Response for Migrants in Vulnerable Situations](#) and [Video Podcasts](#)
- [DISC Digest: No 'Social' Exclusion in Social Distancing](#)

How can you be involved?



Take your part in the creation of a [global music video](#) by sending your own film to celebrate the strength and resilience of refugees and migrants. IOM UK, in partnership with Together Productions, joins this mission to unite people from different backgrounds combat xenophobia and send a powerful message of solidarity. Film yourself singing, playing instruments or percussion, dancing and sharing important moments from your daily life!

Sign up as digital volunteer of the [UN Verified Campaign](#) to share facts and science-based content to keep families and communities safe and connected. By signing up, you will receive a regular feed of compelling, shareable content around three themes: science – to save lives; solidarity – to promote local and global cooperation; and solutions – to advocate support for impacted populations.



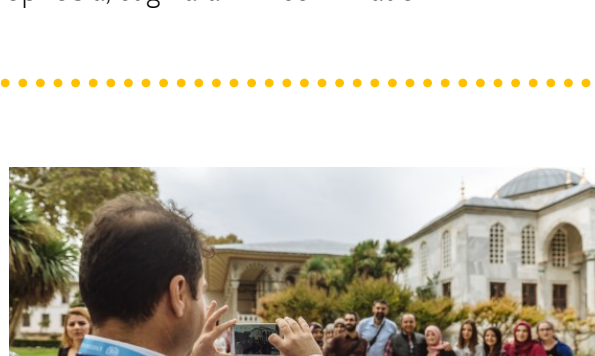
Be part the global diaspora coalition and discussions of [iDIASPORA](#) by signing up through their website and sharing the [Joint Statement of Solidarity](#) to raise awareness on this growing international concern, promote solidarity and safeguard diaspora communities from xenophobia, stigma and discrimination.

About the DISC Initiative

The **DISC Initiative** is a flexible, demand-led and multi-phase initiative, which IOM elevates IOM's capacity and programming to support IOM offices and missions, 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 these areas.

For more info, download the [DISC Infosheet](#) and the [DISC Digest 1st and 2nd Editions](#).

Email: disc@iom.int | SharePoint: [DISC Collaboration Space](#) | IOM Website: iom.int/migrant-training-and-integration



Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).