



**SAMUEL CENTRE
FOR SOCIAL
CONNECTEDNESS**

Migrants with Intellectual Disabilities in Europe Easy-to-read version



By Amy Luce
Social Connectedness Fellow 2018
Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness
www.socialconnectedness.org
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Note from author:

This is the first report I have written in easy-to-read format. If you believe I can make my easy-to-read writing better, send me an email at amy.luce@mail.mcgill.ca to tell me how I can improve. I would like to write more easy-to-read documents in the future. I want to make sure I am writing easy-to-read in the best way possible!

All of the images in this report were from <https://pixabay.com/>

See the regular version of this report by clicking [here](#).

I hope that this report is informative for you. Thank you so much for reading!

Best wishes,

Amy

WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT?

This report will talk about migrants with intellectual disabilities (ID) in Europe. Migrants with all disabilities, not just ID, can be excluded and feel alone. We need to change this. Everyone deserves equal treatment. Everyone deserves to feel like they belong. This report will focus on migrant youth with ID in Europe.



The goals of this report are:

- 1) To show others the difficulties that migrants with ID face in Europe. This will help people understand migrants with ID. It will also give people ideas about how to best support migrants with ID.
- 2) To encourage organizations and governments to include migrants with ID in their programs. This will empower migrants with ID so they can do what makes them happy. They will feel like they belong.

WHAT IS GOING ON IN EUROPE?

Many people from North Africa and the Middle East are leaving their homes. Since 2015, almost 1.5 million have moved to Europe for a better life.



Their homes in North Africa and the Middle East are not safe now. There are groups in their countries who have killed many people. People are moving to Europe because they are scared. The journey they take to Europe is very hard and dangerous.



The people who have moved to Europe to escape the violence are called migrants.

The conditions for many migrants in Europe are bad. Migrants stay in camps before they are allowed to move to a new home in Europe. These camps have too many people in them. There are not enough resources to take care of everyone. Governments in Europe are not working together to best help the migrants.



DIFFICULTIES MIGRANTS WITH ID FACE

Migrants with ID may face 2 kinds of difficulties in Europe today: 1. Bad ideas that others may have about migrants with ID, and 2. Not being identified to have ID.

Bad ideas that others may have about migrants with ID

Bad ideas about ID can lead to the exclusion of migrants with ID in society. They will feel alone and sad because of these bad ideas that other people have about them.



Migrants with ID may be treated badly because they are migrants in Europe. Some Europeans do not want migrants in their country. Europeans feel afraid the migrants will bring violence to Europe. Migrants may be badly treated because some Europeans think they are dangerous. Some Europeans may be mean to migrants when they see them. Europeans may also be mean to migrants if they are Muslim. Europeans feel afraid that Muslims will bring violence to Europe too. However, these migrants are in search of a safer home in Europe.



Migrants with ID may be treated badly because they have ID. They are isolated even more than other migrants. This is because most people do not know enough about ID. They think people with ID can't do many things. They may have bad ideas about a person with ID.

In Europe, kids with disabilities may be put in different classrooms from kids without disabilities. This may make the kids with disabilities feel like they are alone or unwanted.



Doctors and nurses may not know how to provide care to a person with ID. They do not receive enough training in this area.

Migrant families may not tell others that their child has ID. This is because they are scared of the bad thoughts people could have about them. They may also hide their kid with ID inside the home. This makes it hard for the kid to make friends or find new activities.



However, this is wrong. People with ID are capable and powerful. We must show everyone that ID is not bad, and people with ID deserve to be treated as equals.

There are some activities in Europe that include migrants with ID. However, there are not a lot. We need to show others how to support migrants with ID. Here are 3 examples of organizations including migrants with ID:

Special Olympics



Special Olympics is an organization that supports people with ID. Special Olympics uses sports as a tool to change bad attitudes about ID. Special Olympics provides opportunities for people with and without ID to play together through Unified Sports. In Unified Sports, people become teammates and friends with people who are different from them. Special Olympics also provides health screenings and supports families. Special Olympics has used Unified Sports to reach out to migrants. In 2017, Special Olympics clubs in Malta and Cyprus invited migrants to play a floorball match with them.

Hevia Accem-Arbeyal Center



The Hevia Accem-Arbeyal center is in Spain. This center gives people with ID a place to live that may need extra support in their daily activities. They have rooms for migrants with ID. The center helps migrants with ID receive support that is made for people with ID. They have places for both local people with ID and migrants with ID in Spain.

El Grupo Envera



El Grupo Envera is a group in Spain. This group has a lot of different ways to support people with ID. El Grupo Envera supports people with ID with work and school. The group also supports people with ID through sports. In 2015, El Grupo Envera welcomed refugees to join them in Madrid. Now Europeans and migrants with ID come together during the activities from El Grupo Envera.

All of these organizations bring together migrants and Europeans. They are either playing sports, living, or engaging in other activities together. Migrants and Europeans get to know each other in these situations. They learn more about each other when they interact. Now Europeans may not feel scared of migrants. These organizations also help raise awareness about ID in migrant communities. Now migrants may not think badly about ID. Migrants with ID will make friends and feel like they belong.

There are a lot of activities for migrants in general. These can connect migrants with other migrants. They can also connect migrants with Europeans. But not a lot of activities say they include migrants with ID. However, a migrant with ID could engage in these activities because they are migrants. This would create a space for migrants with ID to talk and play with other migrants. Migrants with ID could interact with Europeans too. Those without disabilities would learn more about ID when they interact with the migrant with ID. This may change bad ideas about ID in migrant and European communities. Here are some examples of these activities:

Child Friendly Centers (CFS)



CFS are places in areas that migrants stay in when they first arrive to Europe. At CFS children can play games, create art, learn, and make music. The children have fun in CFS.

Danish Refugee Council



This is an organization that does work in Greece. One time they gave cameras to migrant children. The migrant children took a lot of pictures. The Danish Refugee Council put these pictures in a museum for local people to see. This helped local people understand what life is like as a migrant. They were able to see that it is not easy. This created a space to change bad ideas Europeans may have about migrants.

Hope for Children



This is an organization that does work in Cyprus. Hope for Children has a summer camp. Migrants and local children play together at this summer camp. This helps the two communities get to know each other. Hope for Children creates a space to change bad ideas Europeans may have about migrants.

Dance lessons



In a place called “the Civic Museum of Bassano del Grappa” in Italy, migrants and Europeans take dance lessons together. In this space they get to interact with each other. They learn more about each other. This may change bad ideas Europeans had before the dance lessons about migrants.

Not being identified to have ID

It is very important for migrants with ID to be identified. Identification means that others are able to say “this person has ID.” Identification can happen when people talk to migrants with ID. This can happen at any time.



Identification is important because then people in Europe can 1) show migrants with ID where inclusive programs are and connect them with the inclusive programs (like the games from Special Olympics), and 2) support migrants with ID when they are “applying for asylum” (follow the arrow to learn about what applying for asylum is).

One of the times identification can happen is when migrants arrive to Europe. When they arrive, migrants must ask European governments if they can stay in Europe. The European governments also have to decide if the migrants can come into their country. People from the government could identify ID when they talk to migrants.

The migrants need to tell people from the government why they cannot go back to their home countries. They will then try to get approval to stay in Europe. This process is called “applying for asylum.” Asylum is for migrants that are scared to go back to their home countries. If they return they may be killed or badly hurt.

If migrants are approved for asylum, they can stay in Europe. The migrant needs to communicate to the government what their situation is. They must show governments that they cannot return to their home countries because it is too dangerous. After this their application will be approved.



An important part of applying for asylum is the interview. People from the government will ask the migrant questions. They will try to figure out why the migrant came to Europe. It is important for the migrant to explain this the best way they can. For example, the migrant may not be able to go home because there is a dangerous group in their country or a lot of violent fighting. They are scared they will be killed or hurt if they return to their home country.

However, ID may cause a migrant with ID to answer questions in a different way. They may say “yes” to questions where the real answer is “no,” choose the last option said to them in a question, or say an answer they think the person asking questions wants to hear. This causes a migrant with ID to give non-truthful answers. Their responses may make the person asking questions think they will not be killed or hurt if they return to their home country. The person asking questions will think it is safe for the migrant to go home. Or the person asking the questions will be confused because the answers from the migrant do not make sense. If this happens, the asylum application may be denied. Then the migrant will not be allowed to stay in Europe.



It is important for migrants with ID to be identified when they apply for asylum. If they are identified, people asking questions will be able to understand the impact of ID. They will be able to tell that the migrant's answers may not be 100% accurate because of ID. They will be able to ask questions in a way that brings out the truth. Then the application will fully represent the migrant's real situation. This makes the process fairer for migrants with ID.



Migrants with ID may also be identified by when they get medical care. This could be from people like doctors, nurses or volunteers. It is important for these people to understand ID and its impact on responses too. Migrants go through dangerous journeys to get to Europe. They may need medical care quickly. They could be hurt. Doctors, nurses, and volunteers need to know how to ask the right questions to figure out how to help the migrant.



Migrants with ID may not be identified because:

- ID is not always easy to see. People from governments have to talk to a lot of migrants. They may not have enough time or the right training to identify ID.
- The tools and guides in Europe to identify migrants with differences are not focused enough on ID. However, there are procedures to identify migrants with differences. This includes disabilities in general. But it is important for there to be a procedure that *only* focuses on ID.

There are two tools or guides from the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) that help with identifying migrants with differences. These could possibly help to identify migrants with ID:

1. **Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN):** This tool shows people how to identify if the migrant has special needs. Special needs can include people with disabilities, people who have been treated badly by others, women who are pregnant, and people that are very young. There are other examples of special needs too. The tool does talk about ID. When a person thinks a migrant has a disability, they can go to this tool. They can click on the “Disabled people” option. Then they click in the “Support” box the situation they are in with the migrant, like “First contact.” The IPSN will create a report. This report will show the user how to best support migrants with ID. It has advice like using simple language or giving migrants with ID more time to get ready for their interview. Anyone can use this tool online.

A screenshot of the IPSN (Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs) web interface. The top section is titled 'Special needs' and contains a list of categories with checkboxes: Accompanied minors, Unaccompanied minors, Disabled people (circled in red), Elderly people, Pregnant women, Single parents with minor children, Victims of human trafficking, Persons with serious illnesses, Persons with mental disorders, Persons who have been subjected to torture, Persons who have been subjected to rape, Persons who have been subjected to other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, LGBTI, and People with gender-related special needs. Below this is a 'Support' section with a list of stages: First contact - making an application, Reception support, Lodging the application, Personal interview, and End of the first instance asylum procedure. At the bottom are buttons for 'View results' and 'Print/Save', and a 'Clear' button.

2. **Interviewing vulnerable persons module:** This is a training program. It shows people how to interview migrants with differences that could impact the way they respond to questions. This focuses on mental and physical differences, which could include ID. Research for this report could not find if the training actually has a part on ID or not. However, it is good that this program is offered. It shows that EASO and other people in Europe are aware that migrants have differences. It also shows that people in Europe want to support them.

MORE PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT MIGRANTS WITH ID

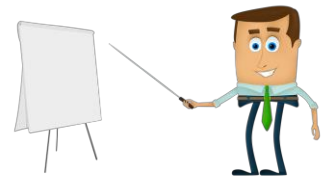
More and more people are talking about migrants with ID. Some organizations are saying that people in Europe need to support migrants with ID. The organizations are telling governments to make sure migrants with ID are identified. They are also telling governments to support people with ID during their interviews. However, not everyone is talking about migrants with ID. They may only talk about disabilities in general, or they may not talk about disabilities at all. We need to teach more people about migrants with ID and other disabilities. Understanding the issues they face may lead to positive change.



WHAT PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONS, AND GOVERNMENTS SHOULD DO

There are a few ways that we can make the situation better for migrants with ID in Europe. Below are my ideas about what people, organizations, and governments should do:

- Make a **training program**. This would include information about how to identify, support and talk to migrants with ID. People that interact with migrants should participate in this training program. It is important that this program is only focused on ID. This way people who participate in the program will learn as much as possible about ID. A lot of people could participate in this, like people from the government who interview migrants, doctors, nurses, volunteers, and people from organizations that support migrants.
- Make **easy-to-read versions of all documents** that migrants could have. Migrants may be given documents about their rights and services they can use in Europe. They are also given documents during their asylum application to fill out. However, no examples of these documents in easy-to-read could be found during research for this report. If these documents had an easy-to-read version, migrants with ID may better understand their situation and their rights in Europe.
- Make a **card for migrants with disabilities**. When a migrant is identified to have ID, or any other difference like mental health, they should be given this card. The card will have information about their difference and how people can support them. This way other people will know that the migrant has a difference right away when they look at the card. They will not need to guess or take time to figure it out. They can begin supporting migrants with ID faster when they are identified faster.
- Help **local organizations** that already support migrants develop programs that support migrants with ID and disabilities in general too. Then the organizations can help migrants with disabilities feel like they belong in their new homes. They will be happier and make more friends. They will also be able to participate in more activities.



- Do **more research** about migrants with ID in Europe. This will help everyone learn more about their situation. Then really good programs can be created that support migrants with ID in the best ways possible.



FINAL IDEAS AND THOUGHTS

It is not fair that people with ID can be left out. It is also not fair that people look at ID badly. People with ID deserve respect and equal treatment. They are strong and capable people. They have a voice that needs to be heard. They have a lot of great things to contribute to society.

All migrants are facing difficulties in Europe. But migrants with ID may be facing more difficulties because of negative ideas people have about them. Also, not a lot of people know about ID. Many do not know how to interact with and support migrants with ID.

We need to raise awareness about migrants with ID. We need to communicate with others that it is important to be inclusive. If everyone works together to make a system that includes migrants with ID, we can create positive change for these people in Europe today.

