

Communicating about Migration Health:  
Shaping the Public and Policy Discourse  
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**Point #1:**

**Pope Francis as a Communicator  
*par excellence* in the migration field**



**“Adam, where are you?  
Cain, where is your  
brother?”**



- Immigrants dying at sea, in boats which were vehicles of hope and became vehicles of death. That is how the headlines put it. When I first heard of this tragedy a few weeks ago, and realized that it happens all too frequently, it has constantly come back to me like a **painful thorn in my heart**. So I felt that I had to come here today, to pray and to offer a sign of my closeness, but also to **challenge our consciences lest this tragedy be repeated**. Please, let it not be repeated!
- The **culture of comfort**, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, **makes us live in soap bubbles** which, however lovely, are **insubstantial**; they offer a **fleeting and empty illusion** which results in **indifference to others**; indeed, it even leads to the **globalization of indifference**. **In this globalized world, we have fallen into globalized indifference. We have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn't affect me; it doesn't concern me; it's none of my business!**

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/homilies/2017/01/documents/hf\\_fr-20170108\\_homilia\\_01a.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/homilies/2017/01/documents/hf_fr-20170108_homilia_01a.html)



Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees – 2018: to welcome, protect, promote and integrate



- Pope Francis calls our attention to the “sad situation of so many migrants and refugees who flee wars, persecutions, natural disasters and poverty” and affirms that “undoubtedly this constitutes a ‘sign of the times.”
- In the message for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees the Pope calls members of the Catholic Church and “all people of good will” to **solidarity with all persons forced to leave their homelands in search of a better future.**
- This **solidarity**, he adds, “must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience – from departure through journey to arrival and return” and to do so “with **generosity, promptness, wisdom and foresight, each according to their own abilities.**”
- Pope Francis sums up this shared response in four verbs: **to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate**”.

**Toward the  
Global Compacts**




In view of the 2016 UN Summit on Mass Movements of Migrants and Refugees and the commitment of States to develop and approve, before the end of 2018, two Global Compacts, one focusing on refugees and the other focusing on migrants, Pope Francis reminds us that “the coming months represent a privileged opportunity”:

*Dear brothers and sisters, in light of these processes currently underway, the coming months offer a unique opportunity to advocate and support the concrete actions which I have described with four verbs. I invite you, therefore, to use every occasion to share this message with all political and social actors involved (or who seek to be involved) in the process which will lead to the approval of the two Global Compacts.*



**Point 2:**

**Some Principles that are foundational in communications  
by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)  
about its mission, mandate and the people with whom we  
partner and serve**

**a) Dignity**

Serving people may mislead us into seeing them as objects of our actions, passive *beneficiaries, recipients* of aid.

Our communications work needs to highlight the inherent, God-given dignity of all human beings, but particularly of those in need.

This has obvious consequences regarding our use of language and images, but also of storytelling...



**b) People-centered**

...the story we have to tell is not about us, our organization, our good work, but about the people on the move, the communities who host them.

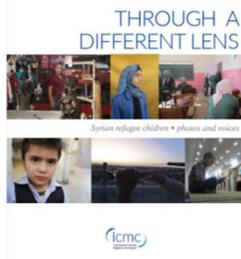
We, our organizations and programs, are mere "footnotes" — necessary as a means to an end, but not ends in themselves. The focus needs to be on migrating and refugee people themselves, their dignity and gifts, their potential to "enrich" those who welcome and serve them, on their courage and strength.



**c) Listening to the Other**

A people-centered approach to communications means that we need to listen to the voices of those we serve and contribute to make sure they are heard.

Sometimes those voices may challenge our assumptions. Our openness to the "other" can be measured by the level of 'disruption' we are able to accept.



**Point 3. Narrative shift**

In the current political and social climate, narratives of fear, rejection, intolerance, exclusivism tend to dominate the public discourse.

Working with the principles outlined above should help us bring into the public arena another narrative, that of compassion, recognition of the dignity and strengths of refugees and forced migrants, human solidarity and the mutual enrichment that takes place between welcoming host populations and those being welcomed and integrated in their new "home" environments

Hands of Mercy Campaign

[https://youtu.be/mk\\_Bksx6YyI](https://youtu.be/mk_Bksx6YyI)

