

# SUKKOT HOLIDAY RESOURCE

**gishur**  
CONNECTING  
COMMUNITIES



**HIAS**  
Europe

**PAIDEIA**  
The European Institute  
for Jewish Studies in Sweden



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Gishur: Connecting Communities  
Sukkot Holiday Resource

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The content of this Sukkot Holiday Resource represents the views of the project consortium only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

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# ABOUT GISHUR AND ITS PARTNERS

Gishur offers capacity, community and coalition building to empower Jewish community leaders and activists to challenge xenophobia and to promote inclusion through dialogue with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

While immigration to Europe has increased in recent years, some in the Jewish community have expressed concerns of potential antisemitic attitudes among asylum seekers originating from Muslim-majority countries. Conversely, other Jews, often themselves descendants of refugees escaping persecution, identify with the plight of newcomers. Although European Jews and recent migrants and asylum seekers often share similar histories and experience various types and degrees of intolerance and discrimination, their relationship is often framed by mutual mistrust. Some Jews fear being exposed to antisemitism because of the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At the same time, anti-Muslim racism and xenophobia are on the rise and impact refugees and migrants.

Gishur creates spaces for improved dialogue and mutual understanding between Jewish and migrant communities and debunks harmful bias, myths and stereotypes. Through Gishur, community leaders, youth and activists can take an active and meaningful role in standing against hatred through shared values.

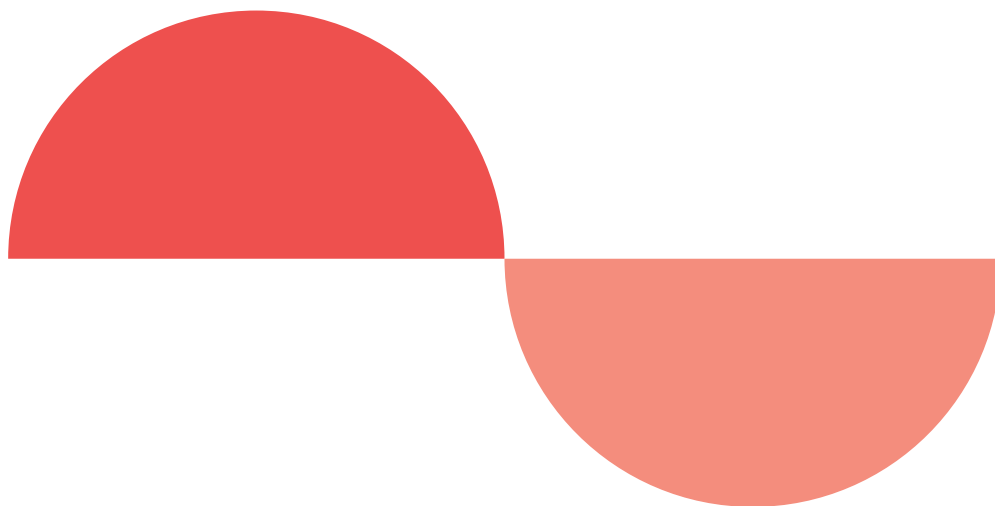
As part of this project, three Jewish holiday resources were developed that promote values associated with social inclusion. These resources are designed to be used by Jewish community leaders, rabbis, youth leaders and activists when organizing local interfaith holiday celebrations.

# GISHUR COORDINATOR AND PARTNERS

HIAS Europe, Gishur Coordinator, is the Brussels-based office of HIAS, providing humanitarian aid to forcibly displaced people around the world. HIAS Europe provides a Jewish perspective to European policymaking on forced migration and humanitarian relief and supports Jewish communities across Europe in their efforts to protect and integrate refugees.

CEJI - A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe stands with people of all backgrounds to promote a Europe of diversity and respect. A Jewish voice at the European level, CEJI's activities include delivering diversity education and enhancing interfaith and intercultural dialogue, while advocating in the EU against antisemitism and discrimination of all kinds.

Paideia - The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden is an academic and applied educational institute of excellence, with the mandate of working for the revitalization of Jewish life and culture in Europe and educating for active minority citizenship. The organization has a pan-European approach, every year offering educational opportunities to individuals from more than 15 different European countries.



# HOW TO USE THE GISHUR HOLIDAY RESOURCES

Gishur holiday resources are designed to be used at an event which enriches a Jewish holiday celebration through awareness raising activities and learning opportunities focused on promoting inclusive communities that are respectful of refugees and migrants of all faiths. Such an event uses the resources as the basis for the planning and execution of these activities with the intention of generating meaningful conversations and stimulating social action.

In the following section you will find practical support for facilitators who are using Gishur holiday resources to plan an event. This section offers advice on planning such an event as well as provides a detailed explanation of the structure of the resources and the best ways to use them.

Additional support is offered in the section titled 'Pedagogical Tools' (in the appendix). There you will find an array of pedagogical tools and techniques that can be helpful when facilitating activities from the Gishur holiday resources.

# THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESOURCES

## • A TOOLKIT

The resources are designed for facilitators and offer a toolkit of activities for a holiday themed event: Shabbat, Passover or Sukkot. The activities offered in the resources aim to create a space for a shared experience, communication and reflection. While you, the facilitator, may choose to use parts of the resource as a handout for your participants, the resources are primarily meant to be used for your planning of the event and its execution.

## • THEME AND KEY IDEA

Each activity has a theme and a key question/idea, and the aim of the activity is to address or answer this question or idea. As a facilitator, keep this theme and question in mind as you guide your participants in the activities and discussions.

## • DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

While some activities centre on the reading of texts, and others have more hands-on components, all activities include some texts and a series of discussion questions. The goal of these discussion questions is twofold: one, they are meant to encourage an open exchange of ideas and experiences among participants, and second, they are meant to guide participants toward thinking and reflecting about the key issue at hand. Ultimately, all the activities aim to work toward the goals of Gishur, namely, to advocate for inclusive communities which are respectful of refugees and migrants of all faiths.

## • TIPS AND VARIATIONS

The resources are designed to be used in diverse settings across Europe. For this reason, each activity offers tips and suggestions for variations that will help you, the facilitator, tailor the activity to the type of event you are hosting for your participants. For example, the activities will offer variations depending on whether you are organizing an interfaith event, that is, an event that brings Jewish and refugee communities together, or one where all participants are Jewish. However, keep in mind that as the person 'on the ground', you are in the best position to judge what activities need to be tweaked to best achieve the desired outcome. In other words, the activities are planned as a guideline to help you, but they should not be taken as a permanent script that must be followed.

## • CHOOSING ACTIVITIES

Each resource offers different types of activities: introductory, chavruta text-reading, food preparation, and artifact/craft preparation. It is up to you to mix and match these activities in a way that best fits the participants and event planned. However, it is highly recommended that each event begins with 'Activity #1: What Do We Carry With Us?' This is an introductory activity that although it does not have a distinctly Jewish content, has the important function of establishing an

open and safe space for sharing and communication. When choosing among the other activities, be sure to read through the whole activity first, before making your choice. Some activities may require special space or equipment, so it is important you are mindful of this before choosing what activities are best suited for your event.

## • INFORMATION SHEETS

There are two information sheets included in each resource, one with facts about refugees in the EU and the other containing key ideas or elements about the specific holiday. The refugee information sheet is probably best used as a reference for the facilitator. However, in some events it might work well to distribute the sheet to participants either as part of pre-event preparation or at the conclusion of the event. Keep in mind that for the refugee information sheet, it is advisable to confirm that the data is up to date as the statistics are always changing.

The information on the holiday might best be used as a handout during interfaith events for non-Jewish participants. But the facilitator may also use it for their own reference (and not as a handout) as a guide for key ideas that can be introduced during the event.

## • CHOOSING THE RESOURCE

Gishur offers three different holiday resources, Passover, Sukkot and Shabbat, which offer opportunities for planning a Gishur event nearly year-round. Please note that the Passover resource is not intended to replace a Haggadah nor necessarily to be used as a basis for a seder. Rather, it can be used at any point during the springtime, as a way to prepare for or educate about Passover, or to be inspired by the holiday's themes. Similarly, while Sukkot can be used during the week of Sukkot, under the canopy of a Sukkah, the resource can be used at any time during the fall for an event that is inspired by the themes of Sukkot. Finally, the resource on Shabbat can not only be used year-round but can be used on multiple occasions, even with the same participants



# WHEN PLANNING YOUR EVENT, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

## • SIZE OF EVENT

The number of participants may vary greatly depending on the event you are planning. An ideal number of participants for the activities offered here is 15-20 people. This number allows you to divide participants into smaller groups (3-5 people) for more individual engagement but also offers a larger group setting which is good for sharing perspectives and ideas across a wider spectrum of people. If, however, your event will have a higher number of participants, it is important to adjust the planning accordingly. For example, consider having more facilitators on hand, or calculating more time for discussions.

## • NUMBER OF FACILITATORS

It is always recommended to have two facilitators per event. It is also advisable that the two facilitators themselves embody diversity in terms of gender, cultural background or facilitation style. For an interfaith event, it might be particularly helpful if one of the facilitators speaks the language of the participants from the refugee community.

## • LENGTH OF EVENT

As a general guideline, the resources are planned for a two-hour event. However, it is assumed that you will choose only a selection of the activities. Roughly speaking the resources are designed for an event which incorporates 1-2 of the activities included, in addition to the introductory activity.

## • LOCATION

The activities can take place in a diversity of locations. For example, a community social hall, home environment or even outdoors. When an event is planned in a Jewish facility, be mindful that non-Jewish participants (and even Jewish ones) may not be accustomed to the heightened security routines that are often present at these institutions. It is a good idea to prepare your participants for this experience. As part of this preparation, you should be ready to address questions about not only the practicalities of these routines but also about the reasons they are in place.

## • PRIVACY

Any collection of data of participants should follow GDPR standards. Any photos or video recordings require authorization from participants. Public visibility, including sharing of images on social media, can impact the willingness of certain participants to be part of this project. Keep in mind that people may be subject to criticism from within their own community for participating in

]this type of event. At times, fear of public exposure could be a reason for certain people not to participate. Hence always be mindful of these issues before publicizing an event and be thoughtful about how you go about it.

## • CHOOSING YOUR PARTICIPANTS

Whether your event is planned to be an event within the Jewish community or an interfaith event, you may decide to focus your event on a particular type of participants. For example, you may choose to have participants be groups of families, student groups, or adult community members. The resources aim to provide activities that accommodate diverse configurations of participants but still maintain the overall aim of building bridges of understanding between Jewish and refugee and/or migrant communities.

## • JEWISH COMMUNITY EVENTS AND INTERFAITH EVENTS

The resources aim to accommodate both events within the Jewish community as well as interfaith events that bring together Jews with their non-Jewish neighbours, especially those from refugee communities. However, it is always important to keep in mind that an event in the Jewish community will need a different kind of planning and focus than an interfaith event that includes non-Jewish participants, and vice versa. The resources strive to help suggest ways to adjust each activity depending on the type of event you are hosting. But, as a facilitator, you may also find the need to introduce your own adjustments that are appropriate to the type of event you are having.

## • KNOW YOUR PARTICIPANTS

If your participants come from diverse backgrounds, do some research on the cultures of the people you are inviting to the event. Consider, for example, asking some participants to prepare some items in advance. For example, in a food activity, it can be an enriching experience to include some food items that are brought by the refugee community participants. Adjusting the activities to the specific participants you are hosting is key to making the event meaningful.

## • LANGUAGE

In an interfaith event, you may find that your participants do not speak the same language or do not speak with the same facility and fluency. Be sure to always speak slowly and clearly. As was mentioned before, you may also consider having a co-facilitator who speaks other languages, or, alternatively, have a translator on hand. (If using a translator, keep in mind that this will likely add time to your event so plan accordingly.)

# INTRODUCTION TO SUKKOT RESOURCE

The Sukkot Resource offers activities on traditional themes of Sukkot with a particular focus on the concepts of refuge and hospitality. While the sukkah itself is a natural location for holding a Sukkot event, the activities in this resource are generally designed for a spacious, and likely indoor, location. Similarly, though the resource has Sukkot as its starting point, the activities do not need to be restricted to the week of Sukkot and can be done at any time during the fall season. That being said, holding the activities during Sukkot and combining them with a visit to a sukkah can be a welcome enrichment to the holiday. In a Jewish context, doing so can bring a new focus to an already familiar practice. And, in an interfaith context, doing so can enrich participants' welcome and engagement with Jewish traditions. In an interfaith setting, the Sukkot Information Sheet can be particularly helpful.

## ACTIVITY 1:

# WHAT DO WE CARRY WITH US?

(25-30MIN)

Key idea:

**Every individual is an entire world**

## Introduction

All the activities in this resource will require your participants to interact with one another. They will be asked to discuss ideas together but also to share their individual opinions and experiences. It is important that participants feel that they are in a safe space where they can be open and honest without fear of being reprimanded, judged or verbally attacked. Therefore, this activity is designed with two goals in mind: one, to help your participants get to know each other -- like a classic 'ice breaker' activity. Second, the activity creates space for the participants to tell us something about themselves, in their own words, and on their own terms. In other words, it creates a space that allows individuals to speak for themselves rather than having others impose a narrative on them (this is particularly important in interfaith events). The activity aims to project an understanding that everyone's ideas, stories, and experiences

are valued and listened to.

In addition, you can also choose to sharpen the focus of this activity by highlighting participants' experiences of migration or sense of belonging or, more generally, the notion that we all share these in common.

## Activity Goals

- Help participants become acquainted with one another.
- Contribute to the construction of a respectful, safe and open space.
- Encourage the voices of refugees to be heard on their own terms (specific to events with refugee participants).
- Highlight shared experiences of journeys, migration, connection with roots, history, or sense of belonging.

## Activity Opening (5min)

Begin with a presentation of the purpose of this activity, namely, to know those in the room with us, find our connections and become aware that we come as full individuals enmeshed in stories, relationships and places. Give participants an overview of the activity by describing the steps participants will follow: choosing a personal item (such as keys, ring, book, etc.), sharing in small groups, and (possibly) sharing in the larger group. Begin by asking your participants to take an item from their pocket, bag or purse. Optional: ask participants to lay the item out for others to see.

### FACILITATOR TIPS:

- If a participant is not carrying an item, a piece of clothing they are wearing (shirt, shoes, etc.) can also be used as part of the activity.
- This activity is based on personal belongings as a stimulus for sharing and 'getting to know you'. But you can use any number of other stimuli as well. For example, you can ask your participants to share the last meal they ate, their name, an animal they connect to, childhood toy, etc. While the 'sharing prompts' (see below) would need to be adjusted somewhat, the stimulus should still serve as a springboard to get to know participants and give an opportunity to find similarities among participants.

## Group Sharing (15-20min)

Use the '**Sharing Prompts**' to help structure your participants' sharing. As a facilitator, you have several options for how participants will share with one another. Here are a few suggested models for sharing.

### **Sharing with the big group:**

Go around the room and ask each participant to share with everyone.

### **Sharing and presenting 'buddies':**

Pair participants up and ask them to share amongst themselves. Then, ask each to present the other person to the big group.

### **'Speed dating':**

Arrange your participants in two concentric circles, so that those in the inner circle face one person from the outer circle. Ask participants to share with the person sitting opposite them. Then, after about 4-6 minutes, ask everyone in the inner circle to move one place to the right. Now, each participant will be sitting across from a new person. Ask participants to share with the new person sitting facing them.

#### **FACILITATOR TIPS:**

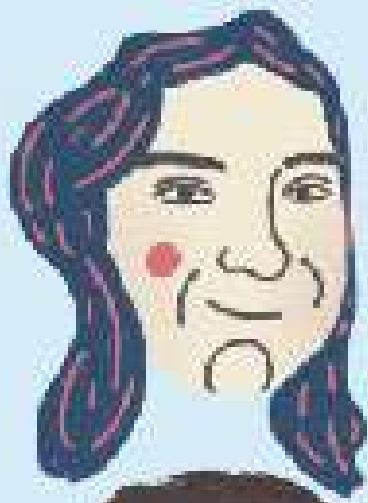
- Always be mindful that not everyone is ready to share or open up to people they do not know. Keep this activity 'light' and make space for 'non-participation' too.
- When sharing in big groups, be aware of your timekeeper responsibility. You will need to be assertive to give everyone the opportunity to speak.

## **Sharing Prompts**

- What is this object?
- Does it have special meaning to you?
- How did you come to have this item? Does it have a 'story'?
- What might the object tell us about you?
- When looking at or thinking about this item, what feeling does this item inspire in you?
- How does this item connect to your experience of, for example, migration or sense of belonging/home?

## **Conclusion (5min)**

Return to the key idea of the activity: Each of us comes to this event with our 'pockets already full'. We come to this space with our histories, our stories, and our ideas about the world and others. We are reminded of the Jewish idea that each individual is an entire world, just as "Adam was one person, from whom the population of an entire world came forth." (Mishnah Sanhedrin, 4:5) When joining together to build bridges, we are strengthened by the notion that each of us is an entire world, each carrying with us the richness of our lives' journeys and stories.



## ACTIVITY 2:

# REFUGE IN THE SUKKAH

(60 MIN)

Key idea:

**What are different interpretations of the sukkah as a place of refuge?**

## Introduction

In this activity, we will use the method of *chavruta*. In Hebrew, *chavruta* means 'with others' and it is essentially a learning session in small groups often revolving around a page with multiple texts on a theme. In this activity, participants will be presented with four texts that address the theme of sukkah as a place of refuge. Participants will explore the ways in which a sukkah can be seen as a symbol both of permanence and transience, an interplay of security and insecurity, and a source of reenactment and commemoration. The activity aims to highlight the different meanings we give to concepts such as displacement, refuge, and home.

## Activity Goals

- Explore the layered meanings of the sukkah as symbolizing both permanence and transience.
- Reflect on the experience of sitting in the sukkah as compared to the experience of displacement and vulnerability.
- Raise awareness, through a Jewish lens, of the experience of seeking refuge.
- Familiarize participants with the practices and meaning of Sukkot (specific to interfaith events).



## Activity Opening (5min)

Begin with the presentation of the activity's theme and key idea. Namely, the different interpretations of the sukkah as a place of refuge. Describe for the participants the method of *chavruta* that will be used in this activity. Tell participants that the various texts relate to the key idea of the activity, each providing a different perspective or approach. The texts should be read as a sort of 'textual collage' to help anchor the discussion. Finally, be sure to give an overview of the activity by describing the steps participants will follow: reading in small groups, discussion in small groups, discussion in larger group, and final conclusion.

## Chavruta (45min)

### Small-Group Discussion (25min)



In groups of 2-4 participants, use the following texts as the basis for a chavruta discussion. Advise participants to read the texts aloud in the group and use the following discussion questions as a guide for conversation. Tell participants that it is sometimes helpful to read the discussion questions *before* reading the texts, as a way to orient oneself through the reading.



(Text and discussion questions can be handed out to participants or displayed on a screen.)

### **FACILITATOR TIP:**

If the activity is part of an interfaith event, form chavruta groups so that each group has participants from a diversity of backgrounds.

## Discussion Questions

Questions particularly relevant in a Jewish community event are marked with .  
For an interfaith event, they are marked with .

- In Text 1, what reason is given for sitting in a sukkah during the holiday of Sukkot?
-  • Does the tradition of reenactment appear in your cultural or religious traditions? If so, what is being reenacted and how?
- What role does reenactment have in keeping and maintaining memories? What other ways do we have for keeping our family's memories?
- In what ways does sitting in a sukkah, a transient structure, make us feel vulnerable?
- Can you compare the experience of sitting in the sukkah with other experiences you have had?
- Why do you think it is important for people to remember their vulnerability?
- Text 3 describes sitting in the sukkah as either an act of reenactment or commemoration. What is the difference between these two interpretations of sitting in the sukkah? How does each interpretation affect our experience of sitting in the sukkah?
- Do you think the sukkah is an effective tool for reenacting displacement?
- The texts offer different views of what is meant by a sukkah being a refuge. What are the different interpretations of the meaning of 'refuge' in the texts? Which interpretation resonates best with you?
- In Text 4, what do you think the Iranian-Israeli immigrant means when he describes the sukkah as 'constant'? Does this view contradict the fact that a sukkah is a temporary structure?
-  • How does sitting in a sukkah connect you, as an individual, to the experiences of refugees in Europe today? How does the sukkah serve as a tool to increase empathy towards those who are displaced?

# Chavruta Texts

## Text 1:

In huts (sukkot) you shall dwell seven days. All natives in Israel shall dwell in huts, so that your generations will know that I made the Israelites dwell in huts when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

(Leviticus 23: 42-43)

## Text 2:

And we sit in a sukkah, the tabernacle itself, which is just a shed, a shack, open to the sky, with just a covering of leaves for a roof. It's our annual reminder of how vulnerable life is, how exposed to the elements. And yet we call Sukkot our festival of joy, because sitting there in the cold and the wind, we remember that above us and around us are the sheltering arms of the divine presence. If I were to summarise the message of Sukkot I'd say it's a tutorial in how to live with insecurity and still celebrate life.

(Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks, *A Sukkot thought*, October 1, 2001)

## Text 3:

In R. Eliezer's view the Israelites dwelled in real sukkot when they came forth from Egypt, and the annual ritual observance reenacts this dimension of the Exodus. For R. Akiba, the Israelites did not build and live in booths made of wood and vegetation. Rather they resided in booths formed of the supernatural 'clouds of glory,' and the ritual observance today commemorates, but does not reenact, this dimension of the Exodus. The sukkot we construct and inhabit symbolize the very different kind of sukkah that sheltered our ancestors in the desert.

(Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, 'The Sukkah and Its Symbolism', *TheTorah.com*, 2014)

## Text 4:

A Jewish resident of South Tel Aviv who emigrated from Iran to Israel in the 1950s and has lived there for decades told me that 'in the Talmud, it is written that the sukkah is a metaphor for what is eternal.' The dining room in which we were sitting at the time was the temporary structure, he explained, while the sukkah's fabric sheets that were waving in the wind on his terrace created the everlasting refuge. Uprooted from the land in which he was born, and then again from each stop along the journey to his current place of residence, he found security and faith in the spiritual home embodied by the sukkah's structure. The sukkah is a constant, recurring, unfailing place of homecoming.

(Gabrielle Anna Berlinger, *Framing Sukkot: Tradition and Transformation in Jewish Vernacular Architecture*, 2017)

## Larger-Group Sharing and Discussion (20min)

Ask each group to share some key elements of their conversation. You may choose to use the discussion questions as a tool for sharing with the group. For example, you may ask 'How did your group respond to this question?' You can further enrich the group contributions by asking questions such as 'Were there different perspectives on the issue within the group?' Finally, as the sharing progresses, you can develop the discussion by pointing out the links between observations made by different groups. For example, 'It is interesting to see that point X has come up in several groups.'

### **FACILITATOR TIP:**

You can add a step to the sharing process, by having smaller groups first share with each other, before sharing with the large group.

## Conclusion (5-10min)

Return to the key question of the activity: What are different interpretations of the sukkah as a place of refuge? You may ask participants for their reflections on the activity. For example, 'What have you learned?' or 'What has the activity made you think about?' Concluding remarks should highlight the apparent tension between thinking of a sukkah as an insecure place where we are vulnerable to nature, one that reminds us of the displacement, and of a sukkah as a place that is safe, as it provides shelter and refuge. Thinking of sukkah with this duality in mind creates an understanding of the experience of displacement as well as empathy towards the need for refuge. Thus, we are encouraged, through a Jewish framework, to value the importance of helping others make a home and find refuge.



## ACTIVITY 3:

# USHPIZIN: GUESTS IN THE SUKKAH

(1HR 45MIN-2HRS)

Key idea:

**What role does hospitality have in the celebration of Sukkot?**

## Introduction

One of the salient traditions of Sukkot is that of welcoming guests into the sukkah. The root of this tradition comes from the Kabbalistic ritual of *ushpizin*, the welcoming of ancestral figures into the sukkah. In this activity, we will bring together Sukkot's tradition of hospitality as well as the Jewish tradition of welcoming guests with a meal. Participants will reflect on the link between hospitality and food while also exploring the concept of 'spiritual guests' (*ushpizin*).

**Please note: This activity requires special equipment. Before choosing this activity, check the apple cake recipe for ingredients and utensils needed.**

## Activity Goals

- Develop a link between the tradition of *ushpizin* and the practice of welcoming and openness towards others.
- Reflect on the value of sharing with others to make celebrations, such as Sukkot, more valuable and meaningful.
- Raise awareness of the tradition of hospitality within the context of Sukkot.
- Familiarize participants with the practices and meaning of Sukkot (specific to interfaith events).

### **FACILITATOR TIP:**

You can do this activity in two variations. Either prepare the apple cake as part of the activity as described below. Or, if you would like to shorten the activity, offer ready-made food (any autumnal food is appropriate) and work through the texts and discussion questions as a chavruta activity (see Activity #2) while enjoying a meal together in the sukkah.

## **Activity Opening (5min)**

Begin with the presentation of the activity's theme and key idea: What role does hospitality have in the celebration of Sukkot? Explain that the activity is composed of steps that vary between text discussion and the preparation of apple cake. You may point out that an apple cake, while not uniquely associated with Sukkot, is a traditional Jewish cake fitting of the autumnal season. Explain further that the activity aims to highlight Sukkot's tradition of hospitality through guided discussion as well as hands-on preparation of a meal to be enjoyed together.

### **Structure of the activity:**

- **First discussion, on hospitality (15min)**
- **Cake preparation (20min)**
- **Second discussion, on shelter, refuge, and ushpizin (45-60min)**
- **Shared meal (apple cake) with concluding remarks and reflection (15min)**

**Note:** For the cake preparation, every 2 groups will contribute to the preparation of 1 pan of apple cake. It is estimated that 20 participants will prepare 2 pans.

### **FACILITATOR TIP:**

If the activity is part of an interfaith event, form groups so that each group has participants from a diversity of backgrounds.

## **First discussion - Hospitality (15min)**

In groups, use the following texts as the basis for discussion. Advise participants to read the texts aloud in the group and use the following discussion questions as a guide for conversation. Tell participants that it is sometimes helpful to read the discussion questions *before* reading the texts, as a way to orient oneself through the reading.

(Text and discussion questions can be handed out to participants or displayed on a screen.)

### **Text 1a:**

A festival of huts (sukkot) you are to observe for yourself, for seven days, at your ingathering, from your threshing-floor, from your vat. You are to rejoice on your festival, you, your son, and your daughter, your servant and your maid, the Levite, the sojourner, the orphan and the widow who are within your gates.

(Deuteronomy 16:13-14)

### **Text 1b:**

While eating and drinking, one must feed the stranger, the orphan, the widow, and other poor unfortunates. Anyone, however, who locks the doors of his courtyard and eats and drinks along with his wife and children, without giving anything to eat and drink to the poor and the desperate, does not observe a religious celebration but indulges in the celebration of his stomach.



(Maimonides, Mishne Torah)



# Discussion Questions

Questions particularly relevant in a Jewish community event are marked with .

For an interfaith event, they are marked with .

- What is a common theme in both texts?
- In Text 1a, who should be included in the festivities of Sukkot? Why do you think it is important to include those specified in the text?
- Why do you think Sukkot, as a harvest festival (first sentence in Text 1a), is linked to sharing with others?
- In Text 1b, how do you think sharing a meal with others changes a celebration of 'one's stomach' into a religious celebration?
- Why do you think sharing a meal is integral to hospitality?
-  • Are there traditions of hospitality and shared meals as part of your cultural or religious traditions?
-  • How does Sukkot bring together the Jewish tradition of hospitality to strangers with the custom of sharing a meal with others?

## Cake Preparation (20min)

We include here a recipe by Joan Nathan from *The Jewish Holiday Kitchen*. Nathan is an American author of several seminal Jewish cookbooks. However, you may use any other apple cake or apple dessert recipe. In fact, it can be special and meaningful to use a recipe by a local author or for a local specialty.

### Ingredients

- 5 large apples (about 800gr-1kg), unpeeled
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 cups of sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup orange juice
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3 cups flour
- 3 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt

## Preparation

- Preheat oven to 175°C. • Core and slice apples in eighths, or thinner.
- Place apples in bowl and sprinkle with cinnamon and 5 tablespoons of sugar.
- Beat eggs and gradually add remaining sugar, oil, orange juice and vanilla.
- Mix in flour, baking powder, and salt.
- Grease loaf pans and dust with flour or line with parchment paper.
- Pour half the batter into the two pans. Layer with half the amount of apples on top (quarter amount of apples in each pan). Pour remaining batter over the apples, and finish with a layer of remaining apples on top.
- Bake for about 60 minutes, until a cake tester inserted into the centre comes out clean.
- Once cooled, you can serve from the pan.

## Second discussion - Shelter, refuge, and *ushpizin* (45-60min)

While the cakes are baking, move to the following discussion. Begin in small groups as you did for the first discussion, for about 20 minutes. Afterwards, move to larger-group sharing and discussion (see below) for about 25 minutes.

### Text 2:

Especially on Sukkot, when we experience more than at any other time of the year what it means to be vulnerable to the elements, we must push ourselves to share our bounty with those who are disenfranchised and those who have no food or no homes. For far too many people, home is always fragile, and vulnerability is a permanent state.

...The Zohar introduces the concept of *ushpizin*, spiritual guests who are the counterparts to the physical guests in our sukkah.

(Rabbi Ayelet Cohen, 'Ushpizin in the Sukkah', October 5, 2012, [Jewish Theological Seminary Torah Online](#))

### Text 3:

This beautiful tradition of hospitality is accompanied by the tradition of *Ushpizin* - 'guests' from the Jewish tradition. The prevalent custom involves decorating the sukkah with pictures of the traditional *Ushpizin*—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David—and 'inviting' one of them each night of the holiday. When the *Ushpizin* are guests in our sukkah, we are inspired by their values and teachings, and are also reminded to make sure our sukkah is open to all guests in need.

(Arie Hasit, 'On *Ushpizin* and *Ushpizot*: The Guests at My Sukkah', *Haaretz*, October 4, 2012)

# Discussion Questions

Questions particularly relevant in a Jewish community event are marked with .

For an interfaith event, they are marked with .

- What are *ushpizin* according to Text 2? How would you define 'spiritual guests'?
- Why do you think we invite both physical and spiritual guests?
- Who are the traditional *ushpizin* listed in Text 3?
- If you know a little about these historical figures (Text 3), can you draw a link between their stories and the experience of being a refugee?



- Are there historical figures in your culture or tradition who you think could be included in a list of *ushpizin*? Why would you choose these particular figures?
- Each spiritual guest can be said to be linked to a particular value we want to highlight. For example, Abraham is associated with kindness (*chesed*) due to the hospitality he and Sarah showed to the three men who came to his tent. If you were to add to the list of spiritual guests you would welcome into the sukkah, who would you add? Why?

For larger-group sharing and discussion (about 25 minutes), ask each group to share those guests they would add to the traditional list of *ushpizin*. You may ask participants to share why they chose this guest, what values do they associate with them, etc. Write the names of the additional guests and the values they are associated with on a board visible to all participants. Alternatively, ask each participant to write the names of their additional guests on a piece of paper, along with the values they are associated with, and hang these around the room.

## Conclusion (5-10min)

While enjoying eating together, conclude the activity by returning to the key idea of the activity: What role does hospitality have in the celebration of Sukkot? You may ask participants for their reflections on the activity as a whole. For example, 'What are you taking away from this activity?' 'How would you describe the experience of preparing and sharing a meal with others?' Highlight how the very structure of the sukkah lends itself not only to physical hospitality (including, for example, sharing a meal) but also to spiritual hospitality. By inviting spiritual guests, we become connected to individuals whose lives embody values we believe in, thus reinforcing our dedication to upholding these values. In addition, we can extend the concept of *ushpizin* in the sukkah to a wider hospitality in our community and our society, welcoming those who seek refuge in our (more broadly understood) home.



## ACTIVITY 4:

# NATURE AND OUR COMMUNITIES

(60MIN)


Key idea:

**How do elements from nature make Sukkot a holiday focused on community and bridge building?**

### Introduction

Originally a harvest festival, Sukkot brings with it traditions that are closely associated with and related to nature. In this activity, we will focus on the symbolism of the four species as well as on the meaning of 'harvest' in today's life -- given that for most of us our daily life is removed from an agricultural context. Using a traditional sukkah decoration (paper chains), the activity will invite a reflection on the idea of community and bridge-building which will be written down and then assembled to form a paper chain that carries our thoughts, stories and ideas on the topic.

### Activity Goals

- Engage with Sukkot's relationship to nature and how this relates to our communities.
- Reflect on the meaning of harvest, particularly in a non-agricultural context.
- Raise awareness of the value of diversity *and* togetherness as expressed in the 'bundling' of the four species.
-  • Familiarize participants with the practices and meaning of Sukkot, particularly those related to nature, such as the four species and the agricultural origin of Sukkot as a harvest festival (specific to interfaith events).

**Please note: This activity includes making a paper chain. To do so, materials and some preparations are needed prior to the event. Therefore, before planning for this activity, check what materials and preparation need to be in place.**

## Activity Opening (5min)

Begin with the presentation of the activity's theme and key idea. Explain that the activity uses different elements that are related to nature in the celebration of Sukkot, and that we will use these as a springboard for reflection and discussion about our communities and connection to others. The activity uses the traditional decoration of paper chains as a way for participants to write their ideas and then to link these together (literally and metaphorically) into a joint paper chain. Expand the introduction of the activity by referring to the texts below (texts can be handed out to participants or displayed on a screen).

### **FACILITATOR TIP:**

You may choose to show images of the four species or, if possible, have available an actual bundle of the four species.

After reading the texts, give an overview of the activity by describing the steps participants will follow.

#### Text 1:

And you shall take on the first day the fruit of a stately tree, fronds of palm trees, and a branch of a leafy tree and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.

(Leviticus 23:40)

#### Text 2:

A festival of huts (*Sukkot*) you shall make yourself seven days, when you gather in from your threshing floor and from your winepress.

(Deuteronomy 16:13)

# Discussion, Reflection and Making a Shared Paper Chain (50min)

This activity is designed as a carousel of topics. For each topic, participants receive a brief text and accompanying discussion questions. Following a group discussion, participants write their answers on strips of paper, and these are joined together into a chain. By the end of the activity, after participants have been part of a discussion on 3-4 topics, a long, shared paper chain is formed that contains participants' reflections and ideas that came through the different discussions. The finished paper chain can be used as decoration in a community sukkah or displayed in a shared social space.

Form groups of 3-5 participants. Determine whether your activity will cover 3 or 4 topics and arrange the room accordingly. The activity is designed so that each group discusses a different topic at any given time, rotating through all 3-4 topics by the end of the activity. However, if you have a larger number of participants and you have to form more than 3-4 groups, you can certainly have 2 (or 3) groups discussing the same topic at the same time.

## **FACILITATOR TIP:**

You can do this activity in two variations:

### **Variation 1:**

Each group remains in one place and receives a new topic and accompanying discussion questions at set time intervals.

**Variation 2:** Form different groups for each topic that is discussed. For this variation, be sure to calculate that 're-shuffling' and moving to new places will take a few extra minutes. The advantage of this variation is that it facilitates a broader network of interaction among participants.

## Materials

- Coloured paper – Choose relatively light colours so that writing on the paper is easily visible.
- Scissors, about 2-3 per group.
- Tape dispensers, at least 3.
- Writing utensils: pencils, pens, or markers.
- Printouts of topics and accompanying discussion questions (see below).

## Prepare paper strips (7-8min)

Begin the activity with a simple preparation of the paper strips. Cut paper into strips of about 21 cm x 3 cm. Distribute cut paper strips among the groups.

Note: While the facilitator can prepare paper strips in advance, the shared activity of cutting together is helpful as a way for participants to interact in a more casual way and do something together that is both simple and cooperative.

## Topics and discussion (10-12min each)

Each group is given their topic and discussion questions. Participants are given about 10-12 minutes per topic for discussion. Be sure to give about a 3-minute warning, and then a 1-minute warning, before the end of the time, so that each participant has time to write their answers on the strips of paper (alternatively, the group assigns someone to write down the group's shared answers). Participants can use as many paper strips as they choose for their answers. Before moving on to the next topic, participants should join their paper strips into a paper chain.

### **Topic 1: Me, my history, my community**

Participants share their names with others in the group and write their names on one of the strips of paper.

Use these discussion questions to share with other participants stories or context of your name (you don't need to answer all these questions; they are meant only as a starting point for sharing).

- Do you know why this name was chosen for you?
- Does it have a meaning or significance in your culture?
- Do you know of other individuals in your family, or community, who have the same name?
- How do you think names link us to other individuals? Can they serve as a way to build bridges across generations or between communities?



## Topic 2: Four species and values in our community

One interpretation of the four species likens each one to different parts of a person and, in turn, to different values.

The citrus fruit, *etrog*, refers to the heart, the place of understanding and wisdom.

Palm, *lulav*, refers to the backbone, uprightness.

Myrtle, *hadas*, corresponds to the eyes, enlightenment.

Willow, *arava*, represents the lips, the service of the lips (prayer).

- What connection do you see between the shape of the species, the part of the person it represents, and the value associated with it?
- What role does each value have in a community? How does it make the community stronger?
- How can each value help build bridges between Jewish and refugee communities?
- Given your discussion, what do you think is the significance of the tradition of binding all four species together in one bundle?

## Topic 3: Harvest and our lives' journeys

On the one hand, Sukkot faces the new year and the winter that brings blessings and abundance from heaven; and on the other hand, it is the Harvest Festival - the holiday that refers to the past year. In agriculture, Sukkot is when the farmer finishes putting last year's yield into storage after a long year of working in the fields, planting and plowing and harvesting. At this moment, he expresses his joy and feelings of gratitude to God for the harvest. Reflect on the year that has passed.'

(Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, '*Sukkot: a time of joy and unity*', Jerusalem Post, October 1, 2020)

- What have you worked hard for over the last year? What have you struggled to achieve?
- What journeys (physical or emotional) have you taken this year?
- What is the value of reflecting on our own journeys or the journeys others have gone through? How can it help build bridges between individuals or communities?
- Thinking metaphorically, what is your harvest from this past year?
- How would you extend the concept of harvest to your community or society? What is your community's or society's harvest from this past year?

#### **Topic 4 (optional): Four species and nature**

In his book *Horeb* (1838), Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that the four species represent the different parts of the natural world:

The willow, *arava*, does not have a special scent or taste, and as such it represents those items in nature that are merely raw materials, and human effort is needed to transform them into something useful.

The palm branch, *lulav*, represents food without smell. It represents items in nature that have inherent benefit to man, yet he must expend some effort to release that benefit.

The myrtle, *hadas*, has a beautiful smell but has no taste, while the citron fruit, *etrog*, has both sustenance and aroma. For this reason, both represent the parts of nature that are perfectly suited for human consumption even without any human effort.

- For each of the species, what other elements in nature would fit in each category?
- Why do you think we reflect on the natural world during Sukkot?
- How do the four species help us to reflect on our relationship to the natural world? Why do you think this reflection is part of Sukkot?
- What role does nature have in the experience of displacement and/or seeking refuge?
- Given your discussion, what do you think is the significance of the tradition of binding all four species together in one bundle?

## **Connect paper chains (5-7min)**

Connect all paper chains from all groups together to form one long shared paper chain. If possible, hang the paper chain so it is on display for the remainder of the event.

## Conclusion (5-10min)

Return to the key idea of the activity: How do elements from nature make Sukkot a holiday focused on community and bridge building? You may ask participants for their reflections on the activity as a whole. For example, 'What have you learned from the discussion you had with other participants?' or 'How do you see the connection of Sukkot to nature, after this activity?' Concluding remarks should remind participants again of the myriad of ways that Sukkot's proximity to nature (both literally and metaphorically) provides rich ground for connection and bridging between communities. Highlight, for instance, the importance of bundling together the four species, pointing out that although there are many interpretations of the symbolism of each species, all of them share a fundamental value to being bundled together, thus illustrating a shared community -- expressed by the paper chain prepared in this activity. You may continue to also discuss the ways in which Sukkot's agricultural roots remain relevant today by considering, for example, the concept of 'harvest' in the context of individual, as well as communal, journeys and accomplishments.



# APPENDICES

# PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS

Migration and asylum can be controversial issues and you may face prejudices among your participants that may lead to comments or attitudes expressing xenophobia, racism and disinformation. In facilitating discussions about these topics, it is therefore important to generate respect between participants of your event, for example by listening fully to those who speak up. This way we come to understand why they feel the way they do and can follow up accordingly. We should always challenge ourselves to see things from the perspective of the person with whom we are speaking. As a facilitator, you have the opportunity to provide an environment where one can listen to another person's perspective, have basic facts about refugees in Europe at hand, address hate speech, and talk about migration and asylum issues in a Jewish context.

## ASSUMPTIONS<sup>1</sup>

You will be helped along the way if you keep the following assumptions in mind:

- We all have stereotypes.
- With stereotypes often comes prejudice. Prejudice is learned and it can be unlearned. The learning of prejudice is often unconscious, but the process of unlearning can be conscious.
- Conflict might arise, but always assume good will.
- We all have baggage, and our opinions have a cultural and experiential context.
- We always have something to learn from each other.
- Leading or attending one event cannot change attitudes in a drastic or total manner. But small steps such as these contribute to the much larger goal of creating inclusive communities.
- While we may come from different backgrounds and contexts, we all share our humanity.

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<sup>1</sup>CEJI: Facilitation Skills: Religious diversity & anti-discrimination

## LEADING A DISCUSSION

Facilitating discussions, particularly about sensitive issues, requires skill. Here are some tools you can use when leading a discussion with your participants:

### COMMUNICATION

- Be focused and listen attentively.
- Choose a pace and speed of words that allow participants to keep up with you. This is particularly true if your participants have different levels of proficiency in the language used at the event.
- Try to avoid talking while participants are reading or writing. Be sure to give instructions for the activity when you have your participants' full attention.

### ENHANCING THE LEARNING PROCESS

- Repeat questions from the group to ensure that everyone has heard the question.
- Return to the key question and theme throughout the activity to remind participants of the focus of the activity.
- Give a warning signal when time is almost up for completing a task of the activity.
- At the end of the activity, review the main question or idea to highlight the learning process.

### AFFIRMING PARTICIPANTS

- Try to 'connect' with participants before the event begins by, for example, having casual chats as participants enter the room. This will allow participants to feel 'seen' from the outset.
- Call people by name - use name tags, if necessary.
- Listening attentively will encourage people to talk.
- Be open to all participants and ideas, even those difficult for you to hear.

# PROBLEM-SOLVING

In any given activity or discussion, you may encounter some tricky moments. Here are strategies for some of those 'what if...' moments:

## WHAT IF ONE PERSON WANTS TO DO ALL THE TALKING?

- Establish goals at the beginning of the event. State that one of the goals of the event is to provide an opportunity for everyone to talk and listen.
- You may have to interrupt. You can say, 'Thank you, I am going to stop here so we can listen to other responses.'

## WHAT IF PEOPLE AREN'T PARTICIPATING IN A DISCUSSION?

- Share in pairs or small groups of 3 or 4. Small groups can be less intimidating than the whole group and give participants the opportunity to interact more closely with one another. In addition, sharing in a small group warms participants up for large-group discussion.
- Model responses. Sometimes it helps people to share if they hear an example from you.
- Give people time to think. As a facilitator, you will feel a silence to be much longer than it actually is.
- Create a 'safe' environment. Participants may not want to share if they feel their ideas or opinions will be judged or even attacked. Be respectful of everyone and establish the ground rule that only one person talks at a time.
- Remember that not everyone is comfortable participating in discussions nor is everyone willing and ready to share and open up to a new group. Allow space for not sharing, as much as for sharing.

## WHAT IF ONLY ONE POINT OF VIEW IS BROUGHT OUT?

- Ask, 'Does everyone agree with that statement?' Then ask others who seem to be disagreeing with the point of view what they think.
- You can provide other information by saying 'Let me introduce a different point of view; what would you think if...?'



## WHAT IF MISINFORMATION IS PRESENTED?

- Ask, 'Does anyone think differently?' or 'Does everyone agree with that statement?' If no one from the group contributes another opinion, it is up to you to present another view. Don't let misinformation stand; it implies you agree with it. If you don't know the facts, say so, and try to find out the correct information.
- Ask the participant 'Where did you get your information?' Do so non-judgmentally and non-critically. Preserve the dignity of the person who provided that misinformation.
- You may choose to use the Information Sheet on Refugees. You can have it on hand for possible distribution at the end of an event.

## WHAT IF CONFLICT OCCURS?

- Conflict may arise and if so, be prepared for it. Though the activities are designed to build understanding and empathy, at times participants will have gut-level responses.
- Prepare by using the 'be ready to answer tough questions' section below.
- It is the facilitator's job to 'manage the traffic'. Sometimes 'freezing' the moment, literally stopping all conversation, helps people to step back and look at what's happening. If the conflict is between two people, it offers an opportunity to return the focus to the whole group.

## WHAT IF IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON TO ANOTHER PART OF THE ACTIVITY AND PEOPLE SEEM ENGAGED IN A LIVELY DISCUSSION?

- Try to be flexible about time. If something good is happening, assess the value of leaving that discussion or activity in favour of completing your established plan.
- Give a 'two-minute warning' or say 'just two more comments' in preparation for wrapping up.
- Acknowledge at the beginning of the session that time will be a factor, and that some people might not want to leave unfinished business. Then you can use this as a point of reference for closing a discussion. (You can say, 'Remember when I said it might be hard to stop a discussion, this is what I meant; however, in order to...')
- Acknowledge the difficulty of leaving a good discussion or experience and suggest it as a reason for participating in similar events in the future.

## BE READY TO ANSWER TOUGH QUESTIONS

Be prepared to be asked difficult questions or confronted with certain comments. The type of questions or comments will vary depending on the participants' personal and communal backgrounds and journeys. Among non-Jewish participants, you may be confronted with antisemitic, anti-Israeli, or anti-Judaic attitudes, while in an event within the Jewish community you might find xenophobic or anti-Muslim prejudice. In an event within the Jewish community, you can help correct misunderstandings about refugees with the below answers to some of those 'sticky' points that may arise during discussions about asylum and migration. While you do not need to share this list with participants, do think about how to approach these issues and questions if/when they come up. Please note that these answers provide guidance only, and responses need to be adjusted to the particular local context and target audience. Keep in mind too that sometimes these discussions can lead to introspection regarding issues of diversity within the Jewish community itself.

Note: A similar list of answers for questions that may arise among non-Jewish participants is not provided since the diversity of backgrounds among non-Jewish refugees, migrants, and displaced people is too wide for such a task.

### WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THIS AS A JEW?

The Jewish people have been a refugee people since biblical times. In Europe, Jewish people have been forced to flee repeatedly, and the experience of being a refugee is one most European Jews know well. Furthermore, the value of welcoming, protecting, and loving the stranger appears in the Torah 36 times according to the Talmud - more than any other value. See the following HIAS resources for specific examples: [What is Our Obligation to the Stranger?](#) and the section entitled 'Jewish Values' in [Content Resources for National Day of Jewish Action for Refugees](#).

### WHY DO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES NEED TO WELCOME REFUGEES? CAN'T OTHER COUNTRIES DO IT?

Millions of refugees first flee to and make a life in the countries closest to them, and we can see that in the numbers: 86% of the world's refugees currently live in developing countries, and 73% are hosted in a country that neighbours their country of origin. For example, Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey have all taken in millions of Syrian refugees. Countries with higher income and resources can and should do more to welcome refugees since we have the capacity to successfully integrate refugees and support them in rebuilding their lives in dignity and safety.

## AREN'T REFUGEES A DRAIN ON OUR ECONOMY? WHO IS GOING TO PAY FOR HELPING THEM?

Refugees pay taxes, get jobs, and start businesses; they contribute much more to our economy than they take from it. A report by the European Commission in 2016 found that the majority of refugees entering Europe are of working age (70%), and if integrated well, they can contribute to greater flexibility in the labour market, help address demographic challenges, and improve fiscal sustainability. During the pandemic, many of the frontline workers across Europe were refugees and asylum seekers. We could not have made it through this period of time without their vital contributions.

## AREN'T MANY OF THE REFUGEES ANTISEMITIC?

Many refugees arriving in Europe have never met Jews before. The welcome and support they receive from Jewish organizations, individuals, and congregations combats antisemitism that may exist, breaks down their assumptions, and helps them integrate more quickly into European society.

## MY GRANDPARENTS CAME TO THIS COUNTRY LEGALLY. SHOULDN'T ASYLUM SEEKERS WAIT THEIR TURN IN LINE?

Asylum seekers are following the law, as many of our parents and grandparents did - it is legal to seek asylum. This right is guaranteed in international law under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocols, and the International Declaration of Human Rights; it is also guaranteed in Article 18 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. It is also important to acknowledge that the history of Jewish migration is incredibly complex, and sometimes desperate measures were taken even if they were not always legal.

## WHY DO YOU ADVOCATE FOR OPEN BORDERS? AREN'T THERE DANGEROUS PEOPLE COMING IN?

We do not advocate for open borders. We believe in the importance of maintaining secure borders, as is the responsibility of all nation states. We firmly believe that the EU can maintain secure borders while simultaneously respecting our own domestic laws that mandate that people who approach our borders, whether at ports of entry or between ports of entry, have the right to seek protection in Europe. A secure border and humane asylum policies are not mutually exclusive.

## HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO STORIES OF CRIMES COMMITTED BY INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE WHO MAY HAPPEN TO BE REFUGEES?

Surveys indicate that host societies favour restrictive measures because they are concerned about what they perceive as an impingement on their security with each new wave of arrivals. Whether there is any truth to such perceptions, however, remains a mystery for the case of most countries since causal evidence is fairly limited. There is virtually no evidence to suggest links between migration and violent crime. In some countries, during certain periods of time, asylum seekers and refugees have been overrepresented in property crime rates, especially in contexts when access to legal labour market opportunities, as alternatives to illegal activities, are restricted or absent. What is clear is that the vast majority of asylum seekers and refugees do not commit any crimes, and that direct contact and communication between host communities and asylum seekers and refugees often helps overcome fear and negative perceptions of 'strangers'.

# INFORMATION SHEET SUKKOT

## HARVEST FESTIVAL

Sukkot is a seven-day Jewish holiday with agricultural roots, rich with rituals and traditions connected to nature. It has its origin as a harvest festival when the Israelites brought their summer crops, fruits and vegetables to Jerusalem as part of the yearly pilgrimage. It is celebrated during the autumn, shortly after the Jewish New Year.

## SUKKAH

One of the prominent features of Sukkot is the construction of a *sukkah*, a temporary hut, in which one dwells throughout the holiday (or, at least, eats one's meal there). The sukkah serves as a reminder that 'the Israelites lived in booths when [God] brought them out of the land of Egypt.' (Leviticus 23: 42-43)

The sukkah is often decorated pleasantly with autumnal themes, such as hanging fruit, decorative lights and paper chains. The roof of the sukkah is covered with greenery allowing one to see the night stars through it. During the week of Sukkot, the sukkah becomes a centre of social gatherings, with festive meals and guests welcomed in it.



## FOUR SPECIES

Sukkot's agricultural roots are also evident in the inclusion of four plant species in the holiday rituals. These are traditionally bundled together to form a pretty bouquet. The four species are rich in symbolism and there are several different interpretations as to their meaning and significance.

### **ETROG - 'THE PRODUCT OF *HADAR* TREES'**

A citron, resembling a large lemon, is distinctive for its pleasant and long-lasting smell.

### **LULAV - 'BRANCHES OF PALM TREES'**

A palm branch holds the central position in the four species bundle. It has a distinctive sound when shaken, resembling that of falling rain.

### **HADAS - 'BOUGHS OF LEAFY TREES'**

Myrtle leaves have a delicate, sweet smell. Like the other three species, the myrtle plant is associated with water, often growing on slopes of streams in hilly terrain.

### **ARAVA - 'WILLOWS OF THE BROOK'**

Willow branches are particularly associated with an abundance of water and rain, as the willow plant typically thrives along riverbanks.



# REFUGEE INFORMATION SHEET

## WHY DO PEOPLE LEAVE THEIR COUNTRIES?

There are many reasons why it might be too difficult or dangerous for people to stay in their own countries. People may be escaping violence, war, hunger, extreme poverty, the consequences of climate change or other natural disasters, or may leave because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. People who leave their countries are not always fleeing danger. They might believe they have a better chance of finding work or educational opportunities in another country, or they may be joining relatives or friends who are already living abroad.

The terms 'refugee', 'asylum-seeker' and 'migrant' are often used interchangeably to describe people who have left their countries and crossed borders, but it is important to understand the difference.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REFUGEE, AN ASYLUM SEEKER, AND A MIGRANT?

**Refugee** - The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as 'someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion'<sup>2</sup>. Refugees have a right to international protection.

**Asylum Seeker** - A person who has sought international protection and whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined. Seeking asylum is legal. This means everyone should be allowed to enter another country to seek asylum<sup>3</sup>.

**Migrant** - A person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>UNHCR (2020). Available at: [www.unhcr.org/uk/what-is-a-refugee.html](http://www.unhcr.org/uk/what-is-a-refugee.html)

<sup>3</sup>Amnesty International (2016). Available at: [www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants](http://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants)

<sup>4</sup>IOM (2019). Available at: [www.iom.int/who-is-a-migrant](http://www.iom.int/who-is-a-migrant)

# FACTS ABOUT REFUGEES IN THE WORLD TODAY<sup>5</sup>

- At least **82.4 million people** around the world have been forced to flee their homes. Among them more than 26 million are refugees.
- Of those **26 million refugees, 67% come from 5 countries:** Syria (6.7 million), Venezuela (4 million), Afghanistan (2.6 million), South Sudan (2.2 million), Myanmar (1.1 million).
- 39% of all refugees are hosted in five countries: Turkey (3.7 million), Colombia (1.7 million), Pakistan (1.4 million), Uganda (1.4 million), Germany (1.2 million). Overall, 86% of all refugees are hosted in developing countries.
- **40% of the world's forcibly displaced are children.** In some crises, e.g., Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burkina Faso, children account for 60% of the displaced population<sup>6</sup>.

# FACTS ABOUT REFUGEES IN THE EU<sup>7</sup>

- Around **280,000** people were granted some sort of protection in the EU in 2020.
- The majority of asylum applications came from Syria (15.2%), Afghanistan (10.6%), Venezuela (7.3%) and Colombia (7%).
- The EU countries that received the most first-time applications were Germany (102,500), Spain (86,400), France (81,800), Greece (37,900), and Italy (21,200).
- **141,000 applicants for asylum were under 18 years old** and 13,500 were unaccompanied minors.
- By the end of 2019, **10% of the world's refugees lived in the EU.** This makes up roughly 0.6% of the total EU population.

## REFUGEES IN YOUR COUNTRY AND LOCAL COMMUNITY

The number of refugees living in each EU country varies. And, even within each country, different regions will have substantial differences in refugee communities. It is helpful to know the facts about your own country. We encourage you to find current, reliable information that pertains to the refugee communities in your area. A good source for country-specific data is [UNHCR - Refugee Data Finder](#).

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<sup>5</sup> UNHCR (2020). Available at: [www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics](http://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics)

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR (2020). Available at: [www.unhcr.org/flagship-reports/globaltrends](http://www.unhcr.org/flagship-reports/globaltrends). Data periodically updated

<sup>7</sup> European Commission (2000). Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum\\_statistics#Number\\_of\\_asylum\\_applicants:\\_decrease\\_in\\_2020](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_statistics#Number_of_asylum_applicants:_decrease_in_2020).