

Culture of Refugees

21 and 22 June 2025, Kulturfabrik (Kufa), Bamberg

Organised by Clever Minds of Refugees in collaboration with Farafina Institute

The "Culture of Refugees" program is grounded in the understanding that refugee identity is not only shaped by hardship but also by resilience, cultural expression, and the transformative journey of migration. The event's two-day structure thematically explores both the internal culture of refugee communities and the intercultural dynamics between refugees and their host city, Bamberg.

Draft Program

Day 1, June 21, 2025

Theme: "The Culture Within – Refugee Journeys, Identity, and Expression"

This day focuses on the personal and collective experiences of refugees—their migration journeys, the trauma endured, and how cultural identity persists and evolves. Through storytelling, music, visual art, and lived testimonies, the program emphasizes the internal resilience and creativity of refugees.

Aligned Objectives:

- Raise awareness about the human experiences and trauma of irregular migration.
- Promote artistic expression as a form of cultural resilience and healing.

Cultural Lens: Refugees are not passive recipients of aid but active carriers of history, memory, and culture. Day 1 honors their internal worlds and celebrates their voices as creators of culture.

11:00-11:10 Welcome and introduction of the event

11:10-11:20 Drama performance: "We are refugees and survivors", Destiny Nduka, Prince James and Abubakar Muzamil

11:20-11:30 Poem recitation: "Born & Rebirth", Destiny Nduka

11:30-11:40 Afro Dance presentation, Anje, tbc

11:40-12:20 Book reading from chapter; "Journey of Desperation", Destiny Nduka, songs: "Journey", "Condolence"

12:20-13:15 Panel Discussion 1

Title: *“Between Borders and Belonging: Humanizing the Refugee Journey”*

Objective: To illuminate the lived experiences of refugees, their journey, trauma, and cultural expressions as resilience tools.

Guiding Questions:

1. How do narratives of migration differ when told by refugees themselves versus institutions or media?
2. What emotional and psychological toll does the migration process take particularly through the Sahara and Mediterranean crossings?
3. How can culture and artistic expression serve as a tool for healing and empowerment in post-migration life?
4. How can we preserve individual dignity while discussing trauma in public spaces?

13:15-14:15 Lunch break

14:15-14:30 Music performance by Achim Waseem, (Artist and Activist), tbc

14:30-15:30 Roundtable Discussion 1

Title: *“Resilience and Representation: Refugees in Bamberg”*

Objective: Create a safe space for refugee voices to share experiences, challenges, and hopes.

Guiding Questions:

1. How would you describe your experience living in the Ankerzentrum?
2. In what ways do you feel included—or excluded—in Bamberg society?
3. What would make you feel more at home here?
4. What do you want the Bamberg community to understand about your journey?

15:30-15:40 Fredrick Odaigbovo, Dancehall and Reggae performance

15:40 – 16:00 Coffee break

16:00-16:30 Unveiling refugee life in Bamberg through pictures, presentation of Photovoice exhibition, THWS students

16:30-17:00 Reflections in groups

1. What new understanding have you gained today about the refugee experience?
2. What assumptions or stereotypes have you personally had to question or confront?
3. How can each of us contribute to making Bamberg more welcoming?

17:00-17:15 Summary of reflections, wrap up of the day

17:15-17:30 Music and exhibition

Day 2, June 22, 2025

Theme: *Belonging, Policy, and the Role of Host Communities*

This day addresses the external cultural dynamics between refugees and their host communities, particularly focusing on how policy, public perception, and institutions like the Ankerzentrum affect integration. It also highlights the cultural negotiations required in creating a shared space of belonging.

Aligned Objectives:

- Challenge and reshape negative perceptions of Bamberg related to the Ankerzentrum.
- Foster mutual understanding and cultural collaboration between refugees and host residents.

Cultural Lens: The ‘culture of refugees’ includes not only the traditions and practices they bring but also the *new cultural forms created through interaction* with host societies. Day 2 emphasizes shared responsibility and the co-creation of inclusive narratives.

11:30-11:35 Introduction of day two

11:35-11:45 Music video streaming

11:45-12:20 Book reading from chapter “Hope away from home” and “Life in camp”

12:20-13:15 Panel Discussion 2

Title: *“Perception and Policy: Bamberg, Ankerzentrum, and the Image of Refuge”*

Objective: To explore the political, social, and cultural implications of refugee reception in Bamberg, particularly in relation to the Ankerzentrum.

Guiding Questions:

1. How has the Ankerzentrum shaped external perceptions of Bamberg?
2. What role does local government play in mediating between federal migration policy and local integration efforts?
3. What policies or initiatives could better balance humanitarian concerns with administrative processes?
4. How can cultural programs like this event shift dominant narratives and improve Bamberg’s image?

13:15-14:15 Lunch break with live band

14:15-15:15 Roundtable Discussion 2

Title: *“Cohabiting Futures: Host Communities and Refugee Integration”*

Participants: Long-time Bamberg residents, Refugees, Youth, Civil Society and experts

Objective: Facilitate dialogue on coexistence, cultural exchange, and inclusion.

Guiding Questions:

1. How has the refugee presence changed life in your neighborhood?
2. What challenges have you faced in building connections across cultures?
3. What initiatives or actions would you propose to strengthen relationships between refugees and host communities?
4. What shared values or experiences have emerged in your interactions?

15:15-15:25 Afro Dance, Anje, tbc

15:25-16:00 Plenary discussion

Title: *“From Observers to Participants: The Role of the Public in Inclusion”*

Public Questions:

1. How do we move from passive sympathy to active solidarity with refugee communities?
2. What responsibilities do we have as individuals and communities to ensure successful integration?
3. What stories or voices stood out to you most this weekend? Why?

16:00-16:15 Coffee break

16:15-16:45 Individual interview questions and reflections by key persons, and organisers

16:45-17:00 Fotovoice project reflection

Title: *“Unveiling refugee life in Bamberg through pictures”: The Power of Visual Narratives in Refugee Advocacy”*

Objective: To discuss the process of visual storytelling, the role of photography in reshaping refugee narratives, and its impact on both the refugees and the wider community.

Guiding Questions:

1. What was the most challenging part of working on the Foto Voice project?
2. How did your perception of refugees and migration evolve during the project?
3. What did you learn about the power of photography as a tool for storytelling?
4. How do you think your work in Foto Voice can influence the way refugees are viewed in Bamberg and beyond?

5. What impact do you hope the exhibition will have on the audience, particularly in fostering empathy and understanding?

17:00-17:30 Conclusions and wrap up

17:30 Closing of event

After event interviews/Closure of Photovoice project