

# Report 3:

## **Sprogcafé or Learning the Danish Language Sprogcafe Sessions with Lessons on Interfaith**

*Sprogcafe* or Language Café is an offer to foreigners, immigrants, guest workers, refugees who want to learn the Danish language. *Sprog* is the Danish term for language. *Sprogcafé* is making language quicker to learn by taking up situations that students can relate to. Students come from different countries and carry with them a spectrum of different religious affiliations. Learning Danish is one of the keys to good integration. Those who learn the Danish language are much better to find a job in Denmark. Acquisition of the Danish language is a good key to better integration in the new country which foreigners or migrants have chosen to settle down or where refugees have landed after having fled from their own country of origin.

It is a program that takes place every Thursday. In three Thursdays in the month of February, we made the UN World InterFaith Harmony Week as the theme in the lessons. We use teaching materials that orientate students to the history of The United Nations and the historical background and intentions of The World InterFaith Harmony Week.

We also took up something which students know by heart, like for example, the flag of their own country, for them to tell about the image or colors or symbols in their flag. We tried also to explore the meaning of symbols in different religions. With simple guide questions, we led them to dialogue with one another or in big groups to answer the questions: How can I work for peace with others? Or what it is to live in harmony? What I can do to protect people and my environment? And this simple sharing by simple sentences led also to more personal questions and answers in simple dialogues.

Sprogcafe is a free service which entails no cost for students. Teachers are volunteers, some of them are retired Danish teachers, who simply would like to bring a difference in the life of others. They are teachers who claim that voluntary work for strangers enriches their life and gives them immense joy. Some of them walk a mile more by inviting these students into their home for coffee or for a meal. We have 15 teachers in Sprogcafé program.

The students avail Sprogcafe for different reasons. Some would like to improve their writing and reading skills. Others would like to concentrate on their speaking ability by being in contact with the local Danes, the teachers. There are also those who join in Sprogcafe to help them prepare for their language exams or help them with job application in Danish.

But here in Sprogcafe, they also experience acceptance and friendship. There is time for coffee and tea, cakes and fruits, allowing personal interactions around tables. There is time to be heard by all as each one gets the chance to introduce himself/herself by saying their name, country of origin and answering to a question from the day's topic. Then the class separates into smaller working groups – one student or two students or more to an assigned teacher for a more concentrated learning of the Danish language.

On these Thursdays in February, we also had time to sing songs, songs in Danish that speak of love and fellowship and care for fellow human beings: Songs like: *Et bånd af evighed*, a song of celebration on what binds or connects people, also sung while holding hands. The Danish version of *He's Got the Whole World* was also tried, and another song that welcomes everyone in different languages.

There was time to announce future activities in town or in church life where it is possible for them to participate and have more practice of their Danish language. Invitation to other some more events in relation to WIFHW was also extended. Sprogcafe event brings to the foreign students the awareness of the World InterFaith Harmony Week and the basic principles of Love of God, Love of Neighbor. Love of the Good and Love of Neighbor.

### **Reflection:**

One of the barriers between people of different religions and cultures is language. In an effort to help bring this barrier down, we offer people the possibility to learn the Danish language in caring and loving surroundings.

### **Submitted by the Working Team:**

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