How many of these people are Muslims? What about Islamic terrorism?

There are no exact figures available regarding how many Muslims are among the refugees, but the majority belong to the Muslim community. However, it is important to acknowledge the sizeable number of Christian refugees arriving, especially from Iran, and also Yazidis. In some places, churches have doubled in size because of refugees joining them.

Of course, there is the possibility that so called Islamic State (IS) or other extremist Muslim organisations will be smuggling terrorists to Europe. There is also some evidence of attempts to radicalise alienated refugees once they have reached Europe. The Würzburg train attack was carried out by a refugee, the Reutlingen attack by an asylum seeker.

On the other hand, IS does not have to take the risk and smuggle terrorists to Europe by making them risking the dangerous trip over the Mediterranean Sea: In our big cities in Europe radical movements are fishing for their clients among the deprived third generation Muslim community for a long time already; youth who are in search for identity and belonging. The Brussels, Paris, Nice & Rouen attacks were all carried out by Europeans or those who were already settled here.

Studies have shown that most violent Muslims, bent on holy war / Jihad, share a similar background. They are not devout believers, neither are they poor or brainwashed. Most are middle class, educated, married parents. Many are converts to Islam. The journey towards radicalisation begins with feeling humiliated and unwanted by society. A radical Muslim usually starts by feeling humiliated and angry that society would not accept him/her. The next stage of the journey is to find a group of likeminded friends who provide acceptance, security, meaning, a sense of family. The group meets in private and members feed each other's sense of bitterness towards wider society. Then indoctrination takes place where it becomes believed that to hit back violently at Western society / the "infidel" is a justifiable act of defence. At this stage, an individual may well cut themselves off from their family and other friends. And then finally, the group's leader will swiftly prepare the individual for their act of terrorism.

You can read more about political and radical Islam in Christine Schirrmacher's Political Islam - when faith turns out to be politics

When we consider these common background factors of Islamic terrorists, it becomes plain that wider society has a huge role to play to prevent radicalisation. The more we can help Muslims to feel accepted, while of course expecting them to make efforts to fit in, the less radicalisation there will be. The converse is also true. If we fail in our responsibilities and allow Muslim refugees to feel unwanted, then we should not be surprised if they find their way into radicalising groups.

It is our task to become bridge builders to the Muslim community so that, not only are they not alienated and vulnerable to radicalisation but also so that our societies are happy and healthy.

Could an individual refugee who comes to your project be dangerous? This is a tiny possibility so be sensible. A woman should never be alone with a man in the same room with the door closed (and the other way round). Never insult by implying you think all Muslims are dangerous. Nevertheless, if somebody is unwilling or gets angry if the subject of political Islam or radicalism comes up, and if he/he does not want to distance him-/herself from political Islam or radicalism, be concerned. This implies that the person just sees Islam and political Islam as one and the same thing.   If project workers ever feel threatened, uneasy or directly attacked (verbally or physically), look for professional help and security people. Never try to downplay or excuse such an event or solve it yourselves.