Effective inclusion of refugees

Participatory approaches for practitioners at the local level

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

MPG
MIGRATION POLICY GROUP

1 | HANDBOOK

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1. FOREWORD

What happens at the local level matters to the effective integration and inclusion of refugees in the community.

That cities are incubators of innovation and good practices in support of refugee protection has been shown by their pledges to implement the Global Compact on Refugees. Indeed, where refugees move to and how they are included in host communities depend on the vision, collaboration and commitment by mayors, municipalities and local groups. Local authorities often show generous solidarity with refugees and migrants by 'wrapping' around them and recognizing their rich and diverse contributions. Local communities can also be compassionate in response to persecution, loss and cultural alienation of those displaced by conflict and violence.

This Handbook has been developed with the Migration Policy Group and aims to give practical guidance to local actors and to further inspire them to include refugees.

Our goal was to create a toolkit that builds on the practical experiences of municipal authorities and local actors in translating national policies into solutions such as appropriate housing, access to documentation and social and economic inclusion. These solutions work best when refugees are fully included in their design and development. Refugees bring a wealth of skills, and experience and a willingness to contribute to their new communities. We know that refugee participation in decision-making helps to build confidence in exercising basic rights and fostering a sense of belonging and trust in host communities. Participatory approaches lead to smarter policies and more impactful programmes. Yet managing the effective participation of diverse constituencies can be challenging, especially when meeting refugees' needs in project design. This tool is designed to help local authorities do exactly that.

The toolkit builds on decades of experience of UNHCR and our partners—and experimentation—with participatory approaches. But this toolkit is different. It speaks directly to the specific challenges of mayors, city administrators and local service providers in welcoming and including refugees and migrants. We have used accessible language and highlighted good practices to inspire innovation and creativity. We have also developed indicators to measure progress, assess impact, and to course correct when required.

This tool was created in collaboration with local authorities, service providers, civil society and refugee led organizations across Europe. It was field-tested in several countries and contexts and tweaked accordingly. We were encouraged by the enthusiasm and engagement with the tool, which we hope is useful to practitioners everywhere. We hope too that this will be a 'living' guide and encourage you to share good projects, experiences, and ideas for future iterations of the tool.

Gillian Triggs - UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection

2. INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of newly-arrived asylum-seekers, refugees, migrants and stateless people has emerged as a key priority for mayors, municipal authorities, local civil societies and service providers. While national policies establish a broad policy framework, it is local authorities who are faced with the often daunting task of translating them into action and finding practical solutions. The Global Compact on Refugees recognised integration and inclusion as a shared responsibility—and municipalities, the private sector, and local organisations have emerged as crucial agents of innovation and key partners of UNHCR. Success or failure to achieve effective inclusion or integration at the local level can influence future decision-making on asylum, resettlement and complementary pathways. It is imperative, therefore, that we get this right.

While the number of integration and inclusion initiatives have proliferated since the 2015/6 peak in arrivals, local actors and municipal authorities have little practical guidance about how their services and practices can be adapted to the specific situation and protection needs of asylum-seekers and refugees, migrants and stateless people. Participation is crucial to project design and identifying necessary course correction yet can be challenging to organise and sustain over time. Understanding the different needs of refugees[1] and migrants according to age, gender, culture, religion, disability or other factors and creating programs that adequately respond is a tall order—but well worth the effort. This Toolkit is designed to help local actors build participatory approaches in their respective towns, building upon decades of experience among humanitarian and development actors in creating programs that foster inclusion and integration in host communities.

The Toolkit is also designed to help practitioners understand the impact of their work, and what types of practices can be designated as good practice and replicated in different contexts. The notion of 'good practice' has become a pivotal concept in the development, funding, implementation, evaluation and (transnational) promotion of these practices. However, what constitutes a 'good practice' in integration and inclusion in practical terms is poorly understood, without clear criteria that could be applied in the design and implementation of a new project in order to maximise its potential impact.

1 For the purpose of this handbook, the term refugee may include refugees, subsidiary protection holders, asylum seekers and other persons in need of international protection eligible for the services described.

A community of researchers and a number of international studies have provided a robust overview on a macro level in terms of conducive integration standards and national policies, such as the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM) based on a UNHCR pilot and the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). On a micro level, however, integration practitioners and funding bodies lack practical Toolkits for reflecting on the proper course of action and evaluating their potential strengths and weaknesses for the specific protection and social needs of refugees and asylum seekers. This Toolkit seeks to address this gap.

It provides a **step-by-step practical Toolkit and communication materials** to be used by local stakeholders for the purpose of designing, monitoring, eliciting feedback from beneficiaries, and evaluating their integration and inclusion practices.

The Toolkit also looks at **key criteria** to facilitate the identification of **good practices** on integration and inclusion. In each chapter of this Handbook, good practices will be presented according to specific sets of criteria and success factors, as well as the potential to be transferred in whole or in part to other national and local contexts or inform integration policies.

3. TOOLKIT'S STRUCTURE

The integration Toolkit is based on the best available research and standards from across Europe, including from local governments, international organisations, NGOs, academia and individual practitioners. The Toolkit is composed of a printable **Handbook,** an **interactive online version** of the Handbook, a **scorecard**, an **animated explainer video** as well as a **1-minute promotional video**.

1

PRINTABLE HANDBOOK

The Handbook aims to cover the conceptual part of the Toolkit and includes readable and multimedia materials. It provides clear and precise guidelines for service providers and local authorities to adopt a comprehensive approach to refugees' integration structured along 6 key areas. The goal of the Handbook is to help practitioners to deliver successful services by giving them access to best practice activities and techniques for effective inclusion.

2

ONLINE INTERACTIVE HANDBOOK

The **interactive online version of the Handbook** not only provides practitioners with a more user-friendly version of the Handbook, but also offers the ability to complete self-assessment checklists and to make notes at the end of each chapter. These checklists and notes are then automatically summarised at the end of the Handbook, allowing practitioners to see their own customised summary.

3

SCORECARD

A **Scorecard** is available online to help practitioners in the identification of good integration practices by applying a user-friendly scoring system.

4

ANIMATED EXPLAINER VIDEO

The **animated explainer video** offers practitioners an additional medium through which they can familiarise themselves with the main concepts of the Handbook. It should be noted, however, that the explainer video is not a substitute for the Handbook, but instead aims to support the central themes identified in the chapters.

5

PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

The **1-minute promotional video** aims to raise awareness of the Toolkit, plus offers practitioners an initial conceptual awareness of its purpose and goals.

The Toolkit has been initially tested in seven pilot countries (**Bulgaria, Italy, Finland, Greece, Malta, Poland and Serbia**) and draws on the reflection and feedback of key integration stakeholders.[1] This process also intended to create stable networks of practitioners and organisations in each of the countries that fully understand and integrate the Toolkit into their programmes. The aim of this methodology is to ensure that the Toolkit, after an initial 'testing phase' in seven pilot countries, will be extensively applicable in the whole European region and also worldwide.

1 Bistra Ivanova (Multi Kulti Collective); Gaia Testore (researcher and consultant); Sari Vanhanen (Migration Institute of Finland); Jean-Pierre Gauci (People for Change Foundation); Renata Stefańska (Center for Migration Research, Warsaw University); Vladimir Petronijevic (Grupa 484); Konstantinos Vlachopoulos (Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy - ELIAMEP)

"Refugees must, above all, be listened to about their needs and expectations, about the design of measures for them and at the evaluation phase"

NATIONAL PARTNER OF UNHCR AND MPG

4. HOW DOES THIS TOOLKIT WORK?

In order to achieve a comprehensive approach to integration and inclusion, **refugee integration stakeholders are invited to use the entire Toolkit in the development, adaptation and evaluation of their practices.** Even if certain dimensions are not applicable to their projects and areas of work, they have the possibility to focus on those key dimensions of the Toolkit which are relevant and crucial to the provision of their services to refugees.

To this end, the Toolkit provides **practical checklists, good practices and step-by-step questions** that can be used when designing or evaluating new measures, linked to evidence of existing good practices on socio-economic inclusion, effective access to rights and cultural integration. Simultaneously, the Toolkit can serve as an engagement and dissemination instrument targeting local communities working on integration and inclusion.

The **checklists:**

- **Will provide practical guidance** on the integration and inclusion of refugees at the end of each chapter;
- **Will enable staff to recognise relevant needs** and capacities and better **interface with refugees** in their activities;
- **Will help adapt services to the needs and potential of refugees** and **implement** existing and new projects accordingly;
- **Will help assess whether the practice is on the 'right track';**
  - If the practice meets all the points of the checklist, it means that the organisation is fully embracing a comprehensive approach to integration and inclusion in the relevant key area;
  - If the practice fails to meet some points of the checklist, it means that the organisation still has to improve the way a service is designed or provided to refugees;
  - If the practice does not meet any of the points of the checklist, the organisation will be required to deeply reflect on its services and incorporate the Toolkit's guidance in the development and implementation of its services.

The **good practices** included in the Toolkit are identified following the key criteria in each chapter and five key general indicators (see the full list on page 68):

- **Inclusivity and participation;**
- **Relevance and complementary;**
- **Effectiveness;**
- **Sustainability;**
- **Partnerships and cooperation.**

Self-assessment checklists can be found in the online handbook for supporting service providers in the evaluation and monitoring of practices and**:**

- Will help practitioners evaluate their services;
- Will help identify gaps and rooms for improvement in the provision of services;

- Will give practitioners the opportunity to reflect on existing and new practices and keep monitoring them on a regular basis;
- Will support discussion and exchange with other stakeholders to strengthen integration and inclusion strategies.

The online **Scorecard** will offer local actors clear criteria for identifying good practices and an easily accessible tool for quickly assessing integration and inclusion's practices by means of a scoring system.

WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

This Toolkit is designed for:

- **Public authorities and services at a national and local level;**
- **Civil society organisations, including refugee-led organisations;**
- **Faith-based organisations;**
- **Educational institutions;**
- **Business actors.**

The Toolkit aims to connect and discuss integration challenges in a comprehensive way and strengthen communities of practice. It applies both at the level of organisations and practitioners providing services to refugees that should be able to commit and sign up to the Toolkit in order to assess and improve their organisational culture and structure.

WHAT IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

- **Self-evaluation**: refugee integration stakeholders can apply this Toolkit to better **analyse their practices** and then communicate and reflect on the main results internally (within the team) and externally (with their partners and stakeholders, including the refugees themselves).

  They are encouraged to apply and use this Toolkit **in all relevant services and practices** that they run (as service-providers) or fund (as funders/subcontractors). To do so, part of the Toolkit is a user-friendly guide – the Handbook – that explains each of these steps and gives examples of the use and impact of this approach.

- **Self-reflection and Self-improvement**: when using this Toolkit, local stakeholders can look at their practices with 'new eyes' to identify what is already working well and what can be improved in the provision of their services to refugees.

  They can also plan **new activities and develop project proposals** that envisage a comprehensive approach to integration and inclusion in the areas that are relevant for their organisation. To do so, within the Toolkit, there are examples of **good practices** that could inspire the future work and projects of refugee integration and inclusion stakeholders, along with **providing links** to additional resources to obtain further information on the topics and practices reported.

5. WHAT ARE THE KEY AREAS OF A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION?

The integration of refugees is a dynamic and complex two-way process that is specific to the needs and abilities of each individual and each local community.[2] It requires efforts by both host society, public and private institutions to welcome refugees and meet their needs and refugees themselves to adapt to the new environment without renouncing their own cultural identity. When refugees feel secure, confident and welcome, they are able to invest in their new country of residence and make valued contributions to society. Adequate support, motivation, familiarisation with the local culture and acceptance of the new social environment can yield great mutual benefits.

2 UNHCR Executive Committee, Conclusion on Local Integration No. 104: https://www.unhcr.org/excom/exconc/4357a91b2/conclusion-local-integration.html

According to a successful and comprehensive integration model, six key areas are essential to the success of services provided to refugees:

1. HAVE CLARITY ABOUT THE SUPPORT NEEDED BY THE REFUGEES

Assess needs continuously, be aware of access barriers and adapt services based on feedback and regular evaluation.

2. ENSURE SUPPORT CATERS TO THE NEEDS OF ALL

Mainstream your services so that diverse groups enjoy equal access and tailored support.

3. CREATE SERVICES FOR THE LONG RUN

Adopt a long-term inclusion perspective beyond the reception and early integration phase.

4. WORK NOT ONLY FOR PEOPLE, BUT WITH THEM

Involve refugees in planning, implementation and evaluation, value their feedback and keep them informed.

5. INVOLVE LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND SUPPORT VOLUNTEERISM

Mobilise the resources of the receiving society and foster trust and positive identification.

6. STRIVE FOR COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION SUPPORT

Connect and coordinate with other providers and fill the gaps in the system.

5.1. HAVE CLARITY ABOUT THE SUPPORT NEEDED BY THE REFUGEES

Assess needs continuously, be aware of access barriers and adapt services based on regular evaluation

Attention to refugees' skills, capacities and needs is crucial to effectively foster their integration into society. This is required from the earliest stages of conceptualisation and design of all operations and services to their final implementation and evaluation. Integration services should aim to strengthen refugees by equipping and preparing them to respond to the challenges they face, avoid risky behaviors to cope with stressful situations and to take advantage of opportunities leading to durable solutions.
Service providers and local authorities need to approach the design, implementation and further development of their support measures in an integrated way; and promote the ability of refugees to successfully participate and complete the programmes and services. Their ultimate goal is to empower refugees so they can become an active part of the social environment and access economic and social resources independently.

BENEFITS OF HAVING CLARITY ABOUT THE SUPPORT NEEDED

- Refugees' social and economic ability to independently meet their essential needs in a sustainable manner and with dignity fostered;
- More accurate understanding of refugees' integration needs, capacities, challenges and opportunities;
- Well-tailored services and strategies to the specific needs of refugees;
- Refugees' capacity to prevent, absorb and recover from challenges promoted;
- Refugees' vulnerability and reliance on humanitarian and external assistance reduced.

SUCCESS FACTORS: CRITERIA FOR ACHIEVING GOOD PRACTICES

Assess needs continuously: Base services on a regular and comprehensive assessment of needs and gaps; regularly review and adapt measures in light of changed circumstances;

Multisource needs assessment: Assess refugees' needs based on all relevant available data and multiple information sources;

Barriers-Free Services: Develop services free of language barriers and administrative burdensome requirements;

Easy-to-find and targeted information: Enable smooth access to your services and provide clear information on how to receive support;

Tailored support paving the way to long-term inclusion: Provide targeted integration services leading to regular access to education, labour market, housing, local life and communities.

CHECKLIST FOR HAVING CLARITY ABOUT THE SUPPORT NEEDED

The following checklist offers a detailed step-by-step process to help organisations schedule and identify all the necessary tasks to put in place for having clarity about the support needed by refugees.

- In order to plan your integration strategies and services to be provided, **analyse all relevant available information** on the particular situation of refugees, including through discussions with refugees (refer to key area 4 for more details); and assess the trends in integration outcomes for refugees;
- **Identify existing integration needs, but also new potential challenges** related to the implementation of your services. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused new problematic situations for both ordinary service providers and refugees (e.g. issues with distance learning in integration trainings due to lack of IT competences);
- **Adapt services, plans and strategies** in response to the identification of new integration needs and challenges. Seek the inputs of refugees; and foster an open atmosphere and good relations for being able to assess new and often invisible integration needs (refer to key area 4.4 for more details);
- **Inquire the causes of integration problems** and remove discrimination and obstacles to better operate in future. Issues may be due to local community practices, institutional biases or structural barriers;
- **Consider how to support the capacities of refugees to address their integration needs and access opportunities for socio-economic inclusion**. Refugees and their communities have skills and capacities to build upon. Having a good understanding of capacities will help understand how to best utilise and reinforce these;

- **Ensure possibilities of lodging complaints and providing feedback** about your activities by establishing independent feedback mechanisms (e.g. anonymous written feedback via easily accessible boxes at distribution points, offices, health centres, schools, etc.);
- Be aware of the **accessibility of your services** and the potential **obstacles** refugees might encounter to access them;
- **Accommodate religious diversity and address language and cultural barriers** that might obstruct access to your services; for instance, provide multilingual materials in different formats or interpretation services to support counselling and guidance services;
- **Remove burdensome documentation requirements** in order to access your services which result from rules and conditions that newcomers cannot meet;
- **Act as a bridge-builder and share information in a regular way**, so that refugees are not left alone without relevant knowledge concerning your service.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES FOR FACILITATING ACCESS TO SERVICE FOR REFUGEES

TAILORED SUPPORT PAVING THE WAY TO LONG-TERM INCLUSION

In Finland, 'passing over' meetings from special services to ordinary services are organised for newcomers in a receiving municipality. It means that, after a specific period of time (3 years) when refugees are supported with special services, there is a 'passing over' meeting where key information on refugees' situation (i.e. existence of specific needs etc.) are shared with the relevant authorities so that there is no need to collect or gather them again at this point. The aim is to avoid the continuation of 'special services' after an initial period of intensive or specialised work. The idea of this practice is to prepare and support refugees to become ordinary inhabitants of the municipality, like other Finnish citizens, by creating a safe and secure environment and a community that includes them so that they can have a normal life.

In Poland, the Family Assistance Centers in Lublin is one of the most successful local government institutions for the integration of refugees which regularly relies on EU funds. Refugees can rent 3 apartments owned by the City within a sheltered housing city scheme run by the Municipal Family Support Centre in Lublin for a total period of 24 months. Sheltered housing can help foreigners in particularly difficult situations and prepare them to build their independent life within the local community.

In Turkey, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) pursues a service provision approach which mainstreams refugee inclusion in various services including but not limited to social services, livelihoods, empowerment, and participation. The Women Empowerment Centre, neighbourhood houses, and Yuvamız Istanbul (Istanbul is Our Home) day-care centres provide services to refugee and host community members together. Similarly, refugees can benefit from the vocational training centres and employment offices of IMM. UNHCR further supported ISMEK (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Art and Vocational Training Courses) for digitalisation of the courses in the context of pandemic measures. The vocational training centre of ISMEK targets refugees through several offline training modules in Arabic including Turkish for foreigners, information technologies, and social cohesion. Also, under Istanbul City Council, a civil participation platform under IMM, is establishing a refugee working group for refugees to share their suggestions with and provide feedback to IMM.

ASSESS NEEDS CONTINUOUSLY

In Bulgaria, Humans in the Loop (HITL) is an award-winning social enterprise founded in 2017 with the vision to empower conflict-affected communities through training and jobs in the IT industry. HITL is very active in the area of assessing beneficiaries' needs and circumstances. HITL identifies potential needs and challenges through their continuous assessment process that takes place every quarter of the year. For example, HITL surveys the beneficiaries about working conditions and personal journeys and experience during the training/upskilling programs, as well as employment programmes. HITL uses surveys and simple questionnaires that help analyse feedback and implement change according to new needs and potential barriers faced by the beneficiaries at work or training. These surveys also include an additional feedback section where the beneficiaries can complain about

any personal challenges they are facing, without necessarily revealing their identity. These surveys are later analysed and reported by the Social Impact department, which discusses all issues arising from the beneficiaries with the responsible person or department.

In Greece, the Development Agency of Karditsa (ANKA) implements programmes and projects in the rural and urban areas of Karditsa district. To do so, it values the feedback of refugees. For instance, ANKA set up focus groups with representatives of refugee communities living in the City of Karditsa. The focus groups aim to collect feedback about ANKA's activities, tasks/projects, involve refugees and migrant communities in the decision making process and hear their views.

In Poland, the 'For the Earth' Association is a small grassroots organisation involved in the integration of refugees in one of the refugee centres in Poland. All their actions are consulted with the refugees and they also often carry out activities in response to refugees' requests, e.g. meetings with a dietician, learning how to ride a bike, raising money to buy eyeglasses or computers for children (needed for school during the Covid-19 pandemic).

EASY-TO-FIND AND TARGETED INFORMATION

In Bulgaria, the Sofia Development Association (SDA) is a municipal foundation which opened Sofia's first ever Bureau for Information and Services for third country nationals in Sept 2021. It is a physical space in the center of Sofia which aims at directly providing information and integration services to migrants and refugees who live in Sofia. The Bureau is a joint initiative between SDA, Sofia Municipality, UNHCR, Bulgarian Red Cross and 13 NGOs which are active in the area of refugee and migrant integration. One of the aims of the Bureau is to provide equal and easy access to the offered services to all diverse groups and support them on the local level. Easy-to-read leaflets in various languages such as English, Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, etc. are provided by all partners to refugees and migrants. In addition, a website will be available where the services of the Bureau will be listed publicly and relevant information will be regularly distributed through social media. The Bureau is run through an EU-funded project and the SDA has signed an additional 4-year partnership agreement with Sofia Municipality in order to guarantee the sustainability of the project beyond the current funding.

In Poland, thanks to the Crisis Infoline for immigrants, immigrants can quickly obtain information by phone or e-mail on how to access assistance services in Gdańsk. Information is available in several languages. The helpline was launched in response to a survey on the changes that took place on immigrants' lives in connection with the Covid-19 epidemic.

BARRIERS-FREE SERVICES

In Finland, the city of Hämeenlinna provides information on practices, policies and services for immigrants living in the city and around Finland on the website MyIntegration.fi. The website content is parallelly given in Finnish, English, Arabic, Somali and Russian. The content is also available in audio form and can be listened to via ReadSpeaker in Finnish, English, Arabic and Russian. The website content is prepared by immigrants themselves who can better foresee the needs of different groups and answer their needs. It also allows its readers to give feedback in different languages. Through the website blog, it is also possible to read the content produced by volunteers and immigrants, who want to share their integration experiences with others. The website administrators are in constant contact with local authorities and services in order to keep the content updated.

LEARN MORE: USEFUL MATERIALS, REFERENCES

OECD, Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees, (2018), OECD Publishing, Paris.

This report describes what it takes to formulate a place-based approach to integration through concerted efforts across levels of government as well as between state and non-state actors. It presents a 12-point checklist, a Toolkit that any city or region – in Europe, the OECD or beyond – can use to work across levels of government and with other local actors in their efforts to promote more effective integration of migrants.

PandPAS, Pre and post - Arrival schemes To facilitate inclusion and prevent xenophobia and radicalisation, Welcome!" Collection of good practices already existing for refugees' welcoming and first inclusion, 2018

This report provides a collection of good practices of refugee integration as part of the PandPAS project on 'Pre and Post Arrival Schemes to facilitate inclusion and prevent xenophobia and radicalisation'.

Piłat A. & Potkańska D., Local responses to the refugee crisis in Poland. Reception and integration, NIEM analyses, Institute of Public Affairs and Migration Policy Group, Warsaw/Brussels, 2017

This publication identifies and analyses current integration policies towards asylum seekers and refugees in Poland from a local perspective and describes reception, pre-integration and integration policies, programmes and activities implemented both by the public and non-governmental section.

UNHCR, Operational guidance on accountability to affected people (AAP), 2020

This report of UNHCR provides guidance on how to implement the principle of Accountability to Affected People (AAP), described as 'a commitment to the intentional and systematic inclusion of the expressed needs, concerns, capacities, and views of persons of concern in their diversity; and being answerable for our organisational decisions and staff actions, in all protection, assistance and solutions interventions and programmes'.

UNHCR, The UNHCR Toolkit for Participatory Assessment in Operations, 2006

This UNHCR Toolkit outlines a series of steps to follow for conducting a participatory assessment with refugees or other persons of concern. Participatory assessment is described as 'a process of building partnerships with refugee women and men of all ages and backgrounds by promoting meaningful participation through structured dialogue'.

5.2 ENSURE SUPPORT CATERS TO THE NEEDS OF ALL

Mainstream your services so that diverse groups enjoy equal access and same level of and tailored support

Equal access to support for diverse and vulnerable groups is crucial in all phases of service provision. Vulnerable and diverse groups may include, for example, refugees and migrants, internally displaced and stateless persons, unaccompanied and separated children, victims of trafficking, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ persons, older people, homeless, women at risk, persons with mental and physical health conditions, people living in rural areas and minority groups. Structural inequalities and (intersectional) discrimination combined with other individual conditions may in practice undermine their capacity to access basic services and assistance.

The capacity to mainstream services and address diverse groups' specific needs requires additional resources and targeted assistance. To this end, integration and inclusion stakeholders will have to grant resources and expertise for the establishment of mechanisms for identification, screening and referral of those with specific needs to ensure appropriate and accessible processes and procedures.

BENEFITS OF ENSURING SUPPORT CATERS TO THE NEEDS OF ALL

- Integration of vulnerable individuals into different fields and integration services mainstreamed;
- Refugees at higher risk of exclusion have better access to the labour market, integration programmes, skills assessments and social life in host community;
- Services better adapted to the specific needs of vulnerable individuals;
- Multi-stakeholder response strategy and team created;
- Structural barriers, discrimination and stereotypes towards diverse groups of refugees overcome;
- Social exclusion and marginalisation of refugees avoided;
- Feeling of self-worth, confidence and empowerment of refugees regained;
- Networks among vulnerable individuals and with the host community and relevant institutions (e.g. local or national disability organisations) built up.

SUCCESS FACTORS: CRITERIA FOR ACHIEVING GOOD PRACTICES

Safety and Assistance: Effectively and timely address vulnerability and risk of harm throughout the entire integration process;

Accessibility: Make sure all your services and facilities are accessible and inclusive (attitudinal, flexible formats and communication barriers-free) and that stakeholders are trained on diversity;

Multi-disciplinary and qualified professionals: Make sure multi-disciplinary and qualified professionals work with different vulnerable groups of refugees;

Collaborative delivery of services: Provide services in synergy with local authorities, NGOs, health and social services to support vulnerable refugees with specialised services.

CHECKLIST FOR ENSURING SUPPORT CATERS TO THE NEEDS OF ALL

The following checklist offers a detailed step-by-step process to help organisations schedule and identify all the necessary tasks to put in place for ensuring support caters to the needs of all.

- **Consult people of diverse groups** and **encourage their participation in co-designing** your services;
- Make efforts to **identify, locate, consult and follow-up** with vulnerable groups;
- Make sure all women and men of all ages receive **precise, easy-to-read and accessible information** on how to access your services in different formats (radio, word of mouth, information booklets in 'easy to read' format, texts with symbols and images, audio-visual materials for refugee children with intellectual disabilities etc.);
- **Achieve balanced and equal representation** of diverse groups in the preparation of your services;
- **Incorporate the different needs, concerns and values** of all diverse groups of refugees in the design and implementation of your services;
- Establish **specific mechanisms, safe spaces and forums** to foster equal access and support of diverse groups; for instance informal settings might be established to provide woman and girls a safe space to vent and to get sound advice, speak freely about their experiences, challenges, and even trauma without judgment;
- **Design your services to maximise the use of skills and capacities of all**, including the most vulnerable categories of individuals;

- **Train partners, people working in health and social services** in prioritising the inclusion of vulnerable groups and **build their capacity** to implement it independently;
- **Ensure that trainings and workshops include representatives from the local community and networks** such as youth groups, women's, lgbtiq+ and disability organisations and other collectives;
- **Make sure service providers and potential partners provide specialised services** that are accessible by vulnerable groups; for instance by providing appropriate accommodation and assistive equipment necessary for the mobility of refugees with disabilities;
- Ensure the availability of **flexible services** when planning and delivering projects, as many refugees work outside of traditional office hours, and provide adapted and informal support for refugees (e.g. buddies/mentors, resources/spaces outside service hours);
- When assessing your services, **adopt specific questions about the needs of diverse groups** and use the data collected for interventions and adjusting your services according to the obstacles faced by vulnerable individuals;
- Make sure all women and men of all ages are given the **opportunity to comment** and give their input and feedback regarding the services provided;
- **Raise awareness** and **talk about** the specific needs of people belonging to vulnerable groups when discussing these issues with national and local government, law enforcement personnel, health-care providers, other humanitarian workers and media;
- **Adopt equality plans,** especially for public services and local authorities, defining concrete toolkits for preventing discrimination and enhancing equality.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES FOR ENSURING SUPPORT CATERS TO THE NEEDS OF ALL

ACCESSIBILITY

In Bulgaria, MigrantLife.bg is a self-help online platform which aims at empowering and supporting migrants and refugees residing in Bulgaria by providing them with comprehensive up-to-date reliable information. It features numerous categories such as Legal Aid, Employment, Education, Social Benefits, Marriage with a Bulgarian Citizen, Citizenship, Human Trafficking, Detention, Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration, among others. Currently, it is offered in 7 languages – Bulgarian, English, Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Pashto and Russian. The platform is offered in the 7 most common languages of refugees and migrants in Bulgaria so that language barriers are removed as much as possible. In addition, there is a module "Request Assistance" where users can pose their questions to be answered by the Foundation for Access to Rights (FAR) team via phone, zoom or email. In this way, refugees and migrants who reside outside of Sofia where specialised legal aid from specialists in the field and migration law is not always available, can benefit from professional legal advice. The items on the platform are easy to read and offer step-by-step guidance.

In Finland, the city of Hämeenlinna provides courses for immigrants who are not in formal education due to, for example, health status, life situation or maternity leave. The purpose of these courses is to promote Finnish language skills, improve reading and writing skills and provide interpreted information about Finnish society. Participants may also pursue their own personal goals, such as building a daily routine, meeting other people and having leisure activities. Given that many participants suffer from health problems, several breaks and different types of learning activities are implemented during the courses. Fewer weekly lessons take place than in formal education so that teaching does not become too tiring and overwhelming for the participants.

In Sweden, the municipality of Vänersborg has set up a specific refugee reception unit, open to the public twice a week, where refugees can easily obtain information of those benefits they can apply for. Refugees are assigned a contact person for advice and support in practical matters, for example enrolling in a Swedish language class, registering children at school, getting a bank account and a bank card or finding suitable furniture, or simply showing the person around town.

In Sweden, in Västra Götaland, social services have revised their written and spoken language to make it more accessible and less bureaucratic. By doing so, they have improved the beneficiaries ability to understand the grounds on which decisions have been granted or denied social support.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY AND QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS

In Serbia, Group 484 established cooperation with the Olympic Committee of Serbia in order to speed up the integration of migrant children included in the education system of the country. More specifically, in 2018, they designed a programme that would contribute to intense and dynamic socialisation among migrant children and local children, various teaching and extracurricular activities within the school itself, but also outside the school premises. The programme includes a seminar and a realisation of an Olympic Class. The aim of the seminar is to strengthen professional competencies for working with migrant children and to design extracurricular recreational activities for them. To do so, it introduces professionals and physical education teachers to the psycho-emotional state of migrant children, cultures of countries from which migrants come, allowing them to share experience on the approach and the methodology used in education, the form of didactic materials. This contributes to a more adequate inclusion of migrant children in primary education in Serbia but also encourages the spread of ideas of tolerance, understanding, as well as acceptance of different identities, cultural diversity and intercultural cooperation.

In Finland, the Adult Education Center of Turku regularly organises individual guidance discussions with students. In the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the 10 months integration course, all the students have individual guidance discussions with integration teachers. In these discussions, a student and a teacher discuss together in a confidential way different aspects of life, career and future plans. These discussions help students express their opinions and feelings regarding the integration process and find their own path to integrate in host society.

SAFETY AND ASSISTANCE

In Serbia, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) runs the integration house 'Pedro Arrupe' to shelter vulnerable groups of unaccompanied minors separated from their families up to 14 years of age. The facility can accommodate up to 20 people for a limited time. In addition to basic needs such as accommodation, food, clothing and medical care, joint activities are organised, as well as individual psychological support by staff and partner organisations. During their stay, beneficiaries who stay longer than a month are included in the education system, while non-formal education and creative workshops are used to strengthen and facilitate inclusion in the education system. The house cares for the most vulnerable groups of children: victims of physical, psychological and sexual violence, children who are at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking, various forms of exploitation and smuggling and for whom there is an identified need to remove them from large groups. Work with beneficiaries is organised in a way that takes into account identified vulnerabilities and provides information on house rules and support in the house in different languages.

In Poland, "My chance in Poland" is a project implemented by the Ocalenie Foundation seeking to improve basic skills of foreigners with the permit to perform work in the country. The support includes the diagnosis of their needs and the provision of trainings, counselling and psychological support. Educational support is ensured to all participants and takes the form of theoretical and practical training. Each participant is supported by a tutor, whose task is to work on the motivation of the participant. Their relationship is based on mentoring practice and includes coaching, development support and counselling. Beneficiaries are also entitled to free childcare during the trainings. Psychological support is also available for those participants who wish to receive it and it is offered in two forms – individual meetings with a psychologist and support groups. In Greece, the municipality of Athens launched a pilot programme for promoting young refugee integration that offers language classes, individual career and housing counselling and training on computer skills and audiovisual arts.

In Greece, the municipality of Athens launched a pilot programme for promoting young refugee integration that offers language classes, individual career and housing counselling and training on computer skills and audiovisual arts.

In Greece, the Therapy Center for Dependent Individuals (KETHEA) in Athens runs a programme aimed specifically at providing information, counselling, psychological support and relapse prevention services to immigrants and refugees with addictions.

In Greece, the Caritas of Athens has established the Day Centre for Refugee Families that represents a safe and welcoming place, designed like a normal home with a rest and children's area, TV, kitchen, family space, toilets and showers. Here, refugee women can eat, sleep, rest, breastfeed, take a hot shower, feed their children, get clean clothes and hygiene products, have access to the internet in order to communicate with their families and consult a social worker. The goal of this service is to make woman and children feel safe, welcomed, respected and "at home".

In Germany, the Ministry for Labour, Social and Family Affairs and Integration of the City of Hamburg supports and finances the 'EmpowerVan', a mobile information and advice service in a multi-van that regularly visits reception centres and accommodation facilities. The aim is to tackle the isolation of girls and women in reception and accommodation centres, where often there is no safe and private space for them. The van is used as a safe space to assist women – with everything from medical appointments to finding new accommodation if a woman has experienced abuse.

LEARN MORE: USEFUL MATERIALS, REFERENCES

Assembly of European Regions (AER), Tuning of AMiD Outcomes to European Local Authorities, 2019

This report offers insights on how to support an efficient management of the reception and integration of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants with disabilities in the EU.

Access to Services for Migrants with Disabilities (AMID) Gap Analysis and Need Assessment Report: Austria, Finland, Greece and Italy, 2018

This report identifies and analyses gaps and challenges in the existing disability sector and the services available to the migrants with disabilities in Austria, Greece, Finland and Italy. The findings from all national reports will contribute to the development of the Needs Assessment Toolkit which address to assess and identify the specific needs of the particular vulnerable group.

Handicap International, Disability Checklist for emergency response Adapted from Disability Task Force

This document includes a Disability Checklist for emergency response and includes General Guidelines for the protection and inclusion of injured persons and people with disabilities.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Integration of young refugees in the EU: good practices and challenges, 2018

FRA's report shows successful integration practices of young refugees (children and young people between the ages of 16 and 24) in the EU.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action, 2017

This Handbook offers a concise guide built upon lessons learned by the humanitarian community and reflects the main challenges faced in ensuring that gender is adequately integrated into humanitarian planning and programming.

UNFPA, Women and Girls Safe Spaces Guidance, 2015

This guidance provides an overview of what safe spaces are, and what key principles should be followed when establishing such spaces in humanitarian and post-crisis contexts.

UNHCR-IDC, Vulnerability Screening Toolkit - Identifying and addressing vulnerability: a Toolkit for asylum and migration systems, 2016

This screening Toolkit on identifying and addressing situations of vulnerability is a UNHCR and IDC collaboration intended to help guide and inform frontline workers and decision-makers on the relevance of vulnerability factors to detention decisions, referrals to alternatives to detention, open reception facilities, community-based placement and support options, in the context of asylum and migration procedures and system.

UNHCR, Age, Gender and Diversity Policy, 2018

This Policy shows how UNHCR applies an age, gender, and diversity (AGD) approach to all aspects of their work aiming to ensure that persons of concern can enjoy their rights on an equal footing and participate meaningfully in the decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities.

UNHCR, A Framework for the Protection of Children, 2012

This Framework developed by UNHCR applies a child protection systems approach that includes actions for duty bearers at all levels – family, community, national and international – to mitigate and respond to the protection risks children are facing.

UNICEF, Guidance on Including Children with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2017)

This guidance developed by UNICEF helps make sure that children and adolescents with disabilities are included in all stages of humanitarian action from preparing for emergencies to recovering from them.

5.3 CREATE SERVICES FOR THE LONG RUN

Adopt a long-term inclusion perspective beyond the reception and early integration phase

Refugees' needs should be understood and met beyond the reception and early integration phase by service providers, local authorities and their staff (such as schools, employment services, social care, hospitals and other authorities). The lack of a long-term perspective risks otherwise exacerbating poverty and increasing socio-economic exclusion.

Integration services should include targeted measures responding to refugees' specific needs which support long-term settlement and social mobility (e.g. access to language courses on higher levels, skills assessment, recognition and upskilling, tertiary education support, etc). Integration measures should be coordinated and adapted across all relevant policy areas in order to respond to the challenges of contemporary immigration societies. Creating services for the long-run and opportunities for the socio-economic inclusion of refugees is crucial for realising a holistic approach to integration. This requires a shift from project-based initiatives limited in time, that are not interlinked and are dependent on one (external) donor, to a comprehensive multi-year integration strategy based on secured funding or diverse funding opportunities.

BENEFITS OF CREATING SERVICES FOR THE LONG-RUN

- Effective recognition of skills, qualifications and value of refugees;
- Prevention of socio-cultural segregation in neighborhoods, local institutions and host communities;
- Better and more regular access to education, housing, health and employment for refugees;
- Development of a multicultural and multilingual society that maintains social cohesion;
- Regular interaction between recently arrived and resident population;
- Positive integration outcomes narrowing socio-economic gaps between recently arrived and the resident population.

SUCCESS FACTORS: CRITERIA FOR ACHIEVING GOOD PRACTICES

Horizontal and multilevel coordination: Build strong horizontal policy coordination mechanisms among key actors including public local authorities and NGO/private service providers;

Diversity in public services: Reflect population diversity in the composition of the public service workforce across all staffing levels;

Continuous adaptation to needs of a diverse society: Mainstream diversity in the management of social services and infrastructures, such as schools, early education, social care, public housing and health services;

Long-term integration objectives: Adopt effective regional or local integration plans or strategies, underwritten by dedicated budgets and stakeholder involvement (civil society, local and regional levels, etc.);

Intercultural competence: Enhance intercultural and diversity sensitivity when providing your services, including the ability to inform and interact in foreign languages if needed.

CHECKLIST FOR CREATING SERVICES FOR THE LONG-RUN

The following checklist offers a detailed step-by-step process to help organisations schedule and identify all the necessary tasks to put in place for creating services for the long-run[3]

- ✓ **Provide a needs assessment** and accurate foresight of emerging bottlenecks and future demands of refugees in your area (see key area 1);
- ✓ **Coordinate and balance your investments** across different systems and policy areas (e.g. childcare, education, housing) on a given territory, ensuring complementarity; **prioritise social investments** and adequate **social infrastructures**;
- ✓ Provide **language courses** also after the initial integration period, at higher proficiency levels and needs-based, in support of refugees who have lived for several years or longer in a country;
- ✓ **Introduce targeted vocational training for refugees** and accompanying measures to regular training based on assessment and validation of skills or qualifications;
- ✓ **Systematically support refugee children in schools and their parents;** parents need to be involved in their children's learning process, as they play a crucial role not only in children's school performance but also in their long-term social adaptation;
- ✓ Facilitate and promote mentoring and buddying schemes to ease social inclusion (refer to key area 5 for more details);
- ✓ **Encourage initiatives to enroll refugees in higher education**;
- ✓ **Support access to health care**, especially mental health services and care of older people;

3 Note that some tasks are not applicable to NGOs and therefore should not be considered in their evaluation process.

- Assist refugees in transitioning from a reception facility for asylum seekers to an independent housing situation; **give refugees access** to available **housing subsidies or social housing;**
- **Provide necessary funds to local and small NGOs** that aim to support long-term integration of refugees;
- **Invest** public funds in (and redistribute to) **low-income neighbourhoods with a diverse population**;
- **Coordinate between social and spatial (urban) planning** both horizontally and vertically across different levels of government;
- Ensure that the capacity of public services is adequate to the needs of the population in your area;
- **Promote a new positive narrative on refugees** in areas of stagnating or decreasing social investments;
- **Identify new funding opportunities for long-term integration** and support service providers´ applications, as in the 2021-2027 period the EU will provide more overall funding for refugee and migrant a integration and easier access for local authorities, and in particular increased use of the European Social Fund, that is the EU's mainstream funding instrument for social inclusion and labour market integration for the purpose of fostering long-term integration;
- **Adapt your services to the specific needs of refugees** to ensure long-term inclusion and avoid dependence on external assistance for a long time;
- **Inform refugees of the long-term benefits of your services and prevent drop-outs;** for instance during the Covid-19 pandemic, new communications channels can be created to engage with refugees (meetings can be organised outdoors, regular use of social media, WhatsApp, etc.); Secure technical means for refugees to access your services (by providing them with laptops, tablets, internet, etc.).

LONG TERM INTEGRATION OBJECTIVES

In Italy, Tandem is a co-housing project, implemented by CIAC, Centro immigrazione asilo e cooperazione onlus, involving young Italians and young migrants holding an international protection status (aged between 19 and 30), aimed at encouraging intercultural relations, mutual support and autonomy. The Tandem project seeks to support refugees leaving the reception system, accessing decent housing solutions, acquiring information, and developing personal networks. To do so, a specific office provides accessible time schedules and economic support for paying utilities. Tandem beneficiaries are also involved in monthly collective and one-to-one meetings. Caseworkers are involved in the management of the apartment and their continuous presence helps improve relations with beneficiaries and detect potential obstacles. Tandem represents an innovative solution to address obstacles refugees encounter in finding housing solutions and building personal relations in the host country.

In Italy, SIforREF is an international project implemented by the Public Company for Services to Person (ASP) of the Municipality of Bologna, to contrast the risk of marginalisation of refugees after the reception phase. The project encourages the involvement of policymakers, stakeholders, local institutions and beneficiaries on refugee integration. Information about integration needs and local resources are collected through consultation activities (questionnaires, structured interviews, focus groups) involving refugees and migrant associations. ASP then organises multiple workshops and Community Labs on 4 topics (home, socialisation, job and empowerment of people) to improve refugees' personal networks and access to information. A dedicated WhatsApp number and e-mail address have been created to keep contact with people and to make activities more accessible. Refugees have the possibility to write messages and request information (e.g timing and locations of laboratory) in all languages. Time schedule of activities is made accessible to both refugees and natives.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

In Sweden, Botkyrka municipality has developed the UNESCO LUCS pilot project for intercultural refugee reception. The results derived from the pilot project show that intercultural reception is created in both the meeting with refugees and new arrivals and on a structural organisational level.

In Hungary, the Central European University created the Open Learning Initiative (OLIve) which takes place in several European countries in partnership with other universities and offers full- or part-time educational programmes designed to help refugees access higher education. OLIve not only aims to provide academic skills and subject matter competence, but promotes the development of language skills necessary for academic settings. In addition, OLIve helps refugee students develop advocacy and career skills to complement their academic preparation.

In Germany, the district of Heilbronn, Germany organises volunteer or paid parent mentors in schools to tackle the lack of dialogue and collaboration between schools and migrant parents. The district searches for people who speak German and another language and would be available to inform migrant parents about the school system. The mentors are then sent to schools and kindergartens that request their services and they are compensated for their expenses.

CONTINUOUS ADAPTATION TO NEEDS OF A DIVERSE SOCIETY

A pilot project in Poland, Welcome Home, tries to facilitate access to housing for refugees, given the unaffordable private market rents and long waiting lists for social housing. To do so, the organisation first signs long-term (2+ years) apartment leases with landlords at the market rate and then sublets the apartments at a below-market rate to refugee families who are at risk of homelessness. Moreover, while they live in these apartments, the families participate in a tailored integration programme that includes language learning, labour market support, intercultural mentoring, etc. As the families become more self-sufficient, the rent gradually increases until they can pay market rates.

In Poland, the Family Assistance Centres are responsible at county level for the payment of cash benefits as well as non-financial assistance to refugees. Some of the most active Family Assistance Centres have been conducting exceptional activities to provide refugees with a more tailor-made support. The 'Witek' programme implemented by the Warsaw Centre for Family Assistance for instance provides additional support to selected families after the completion of the one-year individual integration programme for refugees. Another interesting initiative, entitled "Integration for self-reliance", promoted free specialist consultations and assistance with searching for a job, a flat for rent and contact with education institutions, social welfare centres and healthcare institutions.

LEARN MORE: USEFUL MATERIALS, REFERENCES

Bamberg K.; Nicoletti R., Lajili-Djalai F., Ganzerla S., Cities and Migrants, Implementing the Integrating Cities Charter, EuroCities, 2020

This report outlines cities' integration measures, and identifies the key trends across all cities on integration of migrants.

Council of Europe, Policy Lab on Inclusive Integration Inclusive integration strategies: towards a shared model, 2019

This paper outlines the general principles which should underpin inclusive integration strategies and that stem from the standards and values Council of Europe member States abide by. It also indicates the logical framework which can ensure that an integration strategy is focused, evidence-based, and effective.

Council of Europe, The intercultural city step by step - Practical guide for applying the urban model of intercultural integration, 2014

This guide provides a brief outline of the concept of intercultural integration, advice on steps and measures which could help cities develop an intercultural strategy and illustrates the elements of such a strategy with analytical questions, suggestions and examples of practice in various cities from Europe and beyond.

EWSI Editorial Team, What measures are in place to ensure the long-term integration of migrants and refugees in Europe?, European web site on integration, 2020.

The EWSI Editorial Team researched a range of indicators of long-term integration in all EU Member States and the United Kingdom and looked at the existence or availability of specific policies or measures for refugees.

OECD, Financial education and the long-term integration of refugees and migrants Responses to the refugee crisis, 2016

This report looks at how financial education can contribute to longer term policies aiming at facilitating the integration of refugees in a post-crisis scenario.

UNHCR, Operational guidance on accountability to affected people (AAP), 2020

This report of UNHCR provides guidance on how to implement the principle of Accountability to Affected People (AAP), described as 'a commitment to the intentional and systematic inclusion of the expressed needs, concerns, capacities, and views of persons of concern in their diversity; and being answerable for our organisational decisions and staff actions, in all protection, assistance and solutions interventions and programmes'.

UNHCR, The UNHCR Toolkit for Participatory Assessment in Operations, 2006

This UNCHR Toolkit outlines a series of steps to follow for conducting a participatory assessment with refugees or other persons of concern. Participatory assessment is described as 'a process of building partnerships with refugee women and men of all ages and backgrounds by promoting meaningful participation through structured dialogue'.

5.4 WORK NOT ONLY FOR PEOPLE, BUT WITH THEM

Involve beneficiaries in planning, implementation and evaluation, and value their feedback

The involvement of refugees in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of services provided to them represents a crucial element towards a holistic approach to integration. It ensures that their interests and perspectives, needs and capacities as primary stakeholders are systematically reflected and also enhances refugees' buy-in and ownership. Besides, it reinforces relations with relevant authorities and enhances stakeholders' credibility towards refugees who are encouraged to be an active part of the decision-making process, more than merely recipients of services. This process of consultation and participation needs to be extended beyond projects to the policy level, to make sure that refugees' needs are met.

To this end, different ways and procedures should be available to effectively address people with different duration of stay, social capital, residence status, and at different stages of language and citizenship acquisition.

BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH REFUGEES

- Better informed decisions building on insights, knowledge and skills of refugees;
- Structured partnerships with diverse refugee groups, allowing to address potential exclusion risks due to age, gender and diversity;
- Greater understanding of integration needs of refugees;
- Better understanding of integration obstacles faced by displaced people and host community, and their causes;
- More effective and efficient programmes and services;
- More accurate assessment of satisfaction level on performance of staff, local authorities' work and service delivery;
- Improved accountability and transparency of local authorities and service providers towards both refugees and donors;
- Increased self-esteem, self-confidence and sense of control for refugees;
- Boosted social involvement and solidarity among refugees.

SUCCESS FACTORS: CRITERIA FOR ACHIEVING GOOD PRACTICES

Representativeness: Involve and consult refugees from different genders, age groups, nationalities and other diversity factors (e.g. disabilities, educational levels) the formulation and design of integration services to ensure all perspectives are equally represented;

Continuity: Think and plan this process from a long-term perspective, not as a one-off exercise; foresee and communicate consultation as a regular exercise;

Ownership and commitment: Build trust and explain the benefits of participating in the consultation process, approach them as experts not as passive recipients of services;

Accessible communication: Conduct consultations in a language and format that refugees are comfortable with and allows for a representative participation;

Accessibility of process: Enable refugees to participate in the consultative process, by providing material and organisational frame conditions which allow them to take part.

CHECKLIST FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS TO WORK WITH REFUGEES

The following checklist offers a detailed step-by-step process to help organisations schedule and identify all the necessary tasks to put in place to work with refugees.

- ☑ Before starting the consultation process, **collect the available relevant information and data** related to the refugee population and their integration;
- ☑ **Map refugees' location and needs**, identify vulnerable and diverse social groups;
- ☑ **Analyse the data collected** throughout the entire project cycle;
- ☑ When developing the project budget, **discuss with funders and donors** the importance of fostering the participation of refugees and cultural mediators;
- ☑ **Include refugees in co-design and co-implementation** of the initiative;
- ☑ **Offer compensation or travel reimbursement** for refugees who want to access your services but encounter burdensome financial difficulties;
- ☑ During the time of consultations **provide childcare for refugees** (important especially in the case of women) who have families and therefore do not have time to engage in additional projects;
- ☑ **Adopt an accessible, easily understandable language** in language(s) and format(s) the refugees are comfortable with when communicating in projects and programmes for refugee and migrant communities;

- Once your service has been delivered**, ask for feedback from the former beneficiaries;** the feedback might concern e.g. The request to change the contact person in your organisation (social services, NGOs, etc.) Or to clarify the motivations of an unsatisfactory decision (local or regional authorities/bodies);
- **Share a survey** with refugees at least twice a year to gather feedback on your services;
- **Review the feedback and take actions** to gradually correct your operations according to the comments received;
- **Involve refugees in social research** as co-designers, advisors, co-researchers and interviewers;
- **Recognise the right of refugees to express their opinions** about the quality of your service and **promote safe places where feedback can be lodged**. For instance, refugees may ask for a meeting with the staff or the manager of a unit providing a specific service;
- Ensure feedback mechanisms to refugees, informing them systematically how their inputs have been used to design, correct, or enhance integration initiatives and how the final/reviewed services look like.

SPECIFIC CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO WORK WITH REFUGEES

Local authorities play a crucial role for the integration of refugees and require specific guidelines on how to involve them in their work and services. This checklist highlights fundamental points for local authorities to promote a more inclusive approach to administration and procurement.

- **Promote the representation of persons** with a migrant or refugee background in regional and local assemblies, parliaments, and other decision bodies that reflects their actual share among the population;
- **Involve refugees and migrants in participatory decision-making on local level** (citizen fora, consultative processes, neighbourhood development, etc.);
- **Create independent consultative bodies** at local levels to represent refugees' and migrants' needs and interests;
- **Include information on civic and political participation** in social orientation activities;
- When contracting external entities for the provision of services, **include a special clause for the social inclusion of refugees** as one of the conditions to supply those services.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES WORKING WITH REFUGEES

REPRESENTATIVENESS

The creation of venues and opportunities for consultation is the first step to effectively work with refugees. In Italy, the Municipality of Ravenna introduced an amendment to the municipality code for recognising the 'Intercultural Network on Immigration' as an official interlocutor. All citizens are invited to join the Intercultural Network on Immigration, and notably migrants and refugees.

Another strategy to involve refugees adopted by the Municipality of Ravenna has been the organisation of focus groups and world cafés. They adopt this instrument in order to collect information about the existence of potential barriers. In the organisation of a focus group, attention has to be paid to the common language: all participants have to speak the same language or at least they have to be fluent enough not only interact with the facilitators but also with each other. Specific moments after the discussion should also be organised to meet participants' demands and offer them individual psychological or technical support.

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

In Norway, the Vice-mayor of Oslo in charge of Diversity holds weekly digital meetings with minority-based NGOs to gain a better understanding of the situation, discuss needs, and agree on the actions to ensure that everyone complies the safety-measures and regulations on social distancing. Oslo has set up an online information page in different languages. The municipality has also supported NGOs working with vulnerable minority groups by providing them with specific information posters and social media campaigns. Info posters have been further displayed in shops, mosques and churches, and other facilities to ensure that up-to-date and correct information reaches all residents. Special measures were undertaken to ensure that information and support reach the Roma community and undocumented migrants.

OWNERSHIP AND COMMITMENT

In Finland the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) is a good illustration on engaging immigrants, refugees and ethnic minorities in the formal consultation process. It is a formal network of experts on integration, migrant and ethnic minority issues. It is composed of a national advisory board & seven regional boards selected every four years, along with 300 representatives from CSOs, migrant and multicultural associations, ethnic and religious minorities' associations, political parties, labor market organisations, ministries, regional authorities, municipalities.

In Malta, the Teatru Salesjan set up a system for feedback on their existing projects to gather experiences and feedback from women in the Capcapcaplaq project. It entails regular consultation activities with refugees to include their inputs and opinions about the quality of services throughout the programme cycle. Key performance data are also gathered systematically for monitoring and analysing the projects.

In Poland, the city of Gdańsk reported the appointment of Poland's first Immigrant Council to advise the Mayor and other local authorities on migrant and refugee integration related issues and policies. To represent the immigrant population in its variety, the selected volunteers have different backgrounds, education levels, and religious believes. Despite limited competences and lack of its own budget, it proved to be useful especially during the Covid-19 pandemic as a provider of first-hand information on the needs of foreigners and refugees.

The Gdansk Centre for Equal Treatment is a safe place where complaints can be made about discrimination on the basis of, inter alia, nationality, race or religion. The centre has seven points run by several different NGOs reflecting diversity.

In 2016, the City Hall of Warsaw elaborated the 'Active Inhabitant Guide', translated into English, Ukrainian and Vietnamese. It presented opportunities for foreigners, regardless of their legal status, to engage in the city's activities (e.g. participatory budget and local initiatives).

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES OF NGOS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS WORKING WITH REFUGEES

ACCESSIBILITY OF PROCESS

İn Turkey, the Family, Women Support and Disabled People Centre (AKDEM) of the Zeytinburnu municipality conducts various social protection, livelihoods, social cohesion and coordination programs for refugees in the district. AKDEM serves as a community center for the disadvantaged communities within the Municipality's body and adopts a holistic perspective towards persons with vulnerabilities, regardless of legal or citizenship status of persons. In line with AKDEM's area of work and inclusive approach, refugee women and children are included in social protection services and empowerment activities at the center as their mothers participate in the textile workshops and Turkish classes. The services are available in multiple languages as including refugees from Syria and Afghanistan, there are persons of concern from various backgrounds.

A questionnaire available at the Mazovian Voivodeship Office is addressed to foreigners who are legalising their stay in Poland. It contains questions concerning foreigners' satisfaction with the service in the Mazovian Voivodeship Office.

The Immigrant Rights Protection Point operates at the Immigrant and Immigrant Support Centre (Centrum Wsparcia Imigrantów i Imigrantek) in Gdańsk and provides help to immigrants who experienced unequal treatment because of their nationality in such areas as jobs, flats, security, school, official matters.

REPRESENTATIVENESS

In Poland, the 'For the Earth' Association is a small grassroots organisation involved in the integration of refugees in one of the refugee centres in Poland. All their actions are taken in consultation with refugees. In order to empower refugee women, the Women's Meeting Club has been set up, where they learn crafts from Polish women. In the future, they plan to create a social enterprise where the refugee women will create and sell their handicrafts, thus becoming financially independent.

The 'Foundation for Somalia' is a multicultural organisation open for all migrants regardless of nationality or religion, run and led by both migrants of different nationalities and Poles. They run different projects in close cooperation with refugees: 1) Nothing about us without us aims at consulting foreigners on their needs and proposing solutions to their problems; 2) Intercultural Incubator of Migrant Organisation supports foreigners in establishing and running their own organisations; 3) ABC of entrepreneurship is a comprehensive course on how to start and run a business. Upon completion of that course, foreigners receive further individual support.

LEARN MORE: USEFUL MATERIALS, REFERENCES

European Coalition of Cities against Racism, ECCAR 10 points Action Plan Toolkit for Equality City Policies Against Racism, 2017

The Toolkit for Equality is a manual to support cities in implementing local policies that successfully counteract racism and racial discrimination or in adjusting existing ones.

SHARE Network webinar, Participation & co-creation for refugee & migrant integration in the EU', 15 December 2020

The SHARE network highlights 10 core principles and considerations for implementing participatory and co-creation approaches with refugees and migrants.

Torfa M., Refugee-led organisations (RLOs) in Europe: policy contributions, opportunities and challenges, ECRE Working Paper, 2019

This paper assesses whether refugee-led organisations can positively contribute to finding policy and practical solutions to refugee issues and why they are not practically involved in the development, evaluation and discussion of asylum and integration policies/practices at the EU level.

UNHCR, Safer and Stronger: Experiences of Refugee Women Resettled to the UK, 2020

This report presents the findings of a Participatory Assessment on the protection and integration situation of refugee women who have been resettled to the United Kingdom (UK) under the UK Government's resettlement schemes.

UNHCR, Better Protecting Refugees in the EU and Globally: UNHCR's proposals to rebuild trust through better management, partnership and solidarity, 2016.

This paper sets a vision for achieving a comprehensive EU asylum and refugee policy of the future, both in its internal and external dimensions to facilitate the development, over the longer term, of coherent EU-wide arrangements to address and respond to movements effectively.

UNHCR, The UNHCR Toolkit for Participatory Assessment in Operations, 2006

This UNHCR Toolkit outlines a series of steps to follow for conducting a participatory assessment with refugees or other persons of concern. Participatory assessment is described as 'a process of building partnerships with refugee women and men of all ages and backgrounds by promoting meaningful participation through structured dialogue'.

5.5 INVOLVE LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND SUPPORT VOLUNTEERISM

Mobilise the resources of the receiving society and foster trust and positive identification

The involvement of the local community is a crucial element of a comprehensive approach. Integration is a two-way process that requires the support and an active role of the receiving society. Integration practitioners should promote a role for – and stress the responsibilities of – native citizens and encourage civic initiatives. The overarching objective is to foster a welcoming social climate that is free of xenophobia and discrimination. One key avenue for local authorities and service providers towards this goal is to support volunteering initiatives for the integration of refugees.

Voluntary activities significantly contribute to integration by developing refugees' and migrants' skills and personal networks and by complementing (and in many places substituting) states' integration policies. Such initiatives help to strengthen social, economic and cultural integration through exposure to the local language and culture and individual support. They are important in the arrival and reception phase, where they can contribute to the provision of shelter and early orientation, as much as in the support of long-term inclusion.

BENEFITS OF SUPPORTING VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

- Often more accessible and innovative than established integration programmes;
- Easy to pilot and implement through the wider variety of practitioners involved in people-to-people activities;
- Volunteers' and locals' professional experience and knowledge of their area can benefit the whole community;
- Quick, flexible and collaborative 'start-up' structures allowing for bottom-up-initiatives and virtual participation;
- Solutions based on citizens' participation and crowdsourcing;
- Private social networks and new technology including apps and online platforms regularly used;
- Greater visibility and reach through greater focus on communication than many established integration programmes.

SUCCESS FACTORS: CRITERIA FOR ACHIEVING GOOD PRACTICES

Individualised and continuous support: Facilitate long-term social inclusion by means of continuous one-on-one/peer-to-peer mentoring that allow for trust-building of trust and long-lasting relationships;

Use of whole range of support models: Exploit and combine in a targeted way all forms of volunteering activities, including leisure, education, employment, family and 'bureaucratic' mentoring;

Fostering intercultural competence of all involved: Design activities as strengthening the intercultural skills and understanding of both the volunteers and beneficiaries;

Involvement of already settled immigrants: Mobilise refugees who arrived earlier and residents with a migrant background for volunteering as bridge-builder and source of intercultural competence;

Linking support with awareness-raising: Improve public opinion on integration and and nurture a 'Welcoming culture' by strengthening volunteering as civil society response and highlighting refugees' and migrants' participation in civic activities;

Precise matching of volunteers' contributions with refugees' concrete needs: Use online matching Toolkits and volunteering databases to systematically bring together disperse volunteering actors and support opportunities;

Time and place in line with needs: Create activities which take place in free time (weekends, evenings) and in the neighbourhoods or close to the reception centres where the beneficiaries live.

CHECKLIST FOR PROMOTING VOLUNTARY INITIATIVES

The following checklist offers a detailed step-by-step process to help organisations schedule and identify all the necessary tasks to put in place for promoting voluntary initiatives.

- ☑ **Train and coordinate volunteer mentors** and match them with refugees and migrants living in their local area and who have the same profession or interests;
- ☑ **Focus on learning-oriented initiatives** to foster language acquisition and access to professional and higher education, and seek to create offers that supplement language learning and social orientation through established integration policies;
- ☑ **Provide peer coaches** for education, especially for helping pupils with homework, exams and transitions within school and into work;
- ☑ **Promote mixed learning, cultural and leisure activities** based on volunteers' and refugees' and migrants' talents and interests, including e.g. cooking, sports, arts and crafts, to activate refugees' and migrants' social and cultural resources and foster intercultural learning;
- ☑ **Promote mentorship schemes for employment and self-employment**, by focusing on motivation, role models, professional contacts, 'soft skills' and specific needs of e.g. young adults and women;
- ☑ **Promote family mentorship schemes** to recreate family bonds for separated families and children living alone; offering emotional support and guidance to feel welcome, as well as legal representation for unaccompanied minors;

- **Promote activities to accompany newcomers through the bureaucratic process** of registration and settlement, with volunteers knowledgeable on how to navigate the relevant state and local services to address the individual needs and interests of newcomers;
- **Exploit the potential of online information**, orientation and translation Toolkits;
- **Express support, intervene in the public debate and attract further public and media attention**. Use public campaigns to bring together newcomers with their local neighbours, in order to counter rumours and build up acceptance, trust and a willingness to help.

GOOD PRACTICES ON SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERISM

INDIVIDUALISED AND CONTINUOUS SUPPORT

In Finland, Womento has provided peer coaches for educated migrant women since 2012. To do so, Womento officers find a mentor for an immigrant woman who discusses Finnish working culture or practices Finnish vocabulary related to their professional field, or work on writing applications and CVs. Each pair works in an individual way and the service is free of charge.

In Serbia, Refugees for Refugees (R4R) is a pilot project activity the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights has been implementing since April 2021 in an executive partnership with the UNHCR Office in Serbia. R4R involves the exchange of experiences between refugees who have already lived in the country for a long time and refugees and asylum seekers who need additional support in integrating into Serbian society. Refugee assistants can help people in a similar situation integrate and inform themselves about their rights and obligations in the most efficient way. They can empower other refugees by sharing their personal experiences and a variety of skills and knowledge that are essential to start a new life in Serbia.

USE OF WHOLE RANGE OF SUPPORT MODELS

In Finland, the Let's Read Together is a national Network that has since 2004 promoted literacy and knowledge in Finnish among immigrant women and girls in Finland and encourages them to integrate into the Finnish society. Learning groups meet once a week for two hours at a time. The network is also arranging seminars and workshops and publishes educational material.

LINKING SUPPORT WITH AWARENESS-RAISING

In Estonia, the Tolerant Estonia concerts were able to attract huge audiences and to be linked to public debates in partnership with major media. In order to give a human face to the refugee crisis and highlight the fate of individuals, the direct involvement and visibility of refugee musicians and performers has been a key element for many of the culture-led initiatives.

PRECISE MATCHING OF VOLUNTEERS' CONTRIBUTIONS WITH REFUGEES' CONCRETE NEEDS

In Finland, one-stop-shop multilingual app emerged as local initiative (e.g. Choose Your Future provides an easy and fast mobile service for migrants to discover their new home city, find interesting events, and meet people); the startup Funzi provides a 'learning package' app for asylum seekers and delivers reliable information to mobile phone users and facilitate their integration in Finland.

In Finland, the Startup Refugees has supported hundreds of immigrants and refugees to chase their dream of becoming an entrepreneur. Their programme is driven by well-known entrepreneurs involving a network of 300 business, public and NGO partners, and is supported by 300 volunteers mapping entrepreneurial skills in reception centres, matching mentors and initiating business incubators.

FOSTERING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF ALL INVOLVED

In Germany, Kiron University created an online learning platform for refugees worldwide and underserved communities in the Middle East. 1,500 prospective students have signed up for two-year-online study tracks in computer science, engineering, business & economics and social sciences. Students help each other through online and meet-up study groups and, if they pass the first online phase, benefit from spaces to study in 22 partner universities.

LEARN MORE: USEFUL MATERIALS, REFERENCES

EESC Brochure, How Civil Society Organisations Assist Refugees and Migrants in the EU: Successful experiences and promising practices from the 2016 EESC Civil Society Prize, 2017

This publication provides a general overview of civil society's initiatives to successfully integrate refugees and migrants in the EU.

EWSI Editorial Team, Comparative analysis: Voluntary and citizens' initiatives before and after 2015, European web site on integration, 2016

The European Web Site on Integration provides an analysis, including a country-by-country overview, of voluntary initiatives that have emerged in all EU Member States. New initiatives are mapped, compared to the few long-standing ones and analysed for their innovation, added value and potential impact on integration.

Sirius Network, Mentoring: What can support projects achieve that schools cannot? 2014

This brief explores the benefits of mentoring and the professionalisation of mentoring organisations, and how policymakers can design mentoring and other educational support projects to be an integral part of the educational landscape. It also highlights examples of successful mentoring experiences that focus on cultivating the hidden talents and potential of children of migrants.

UNHCR, A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations, 2008

This UNHCR manual is intended to support staff in implementing a community-based approach in operations to ensure that people of concern are placed at the centre of all decisions affecting their lives.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Terre des hommes organisation (Tdh), Sport for Protection Toolkit Programming with Young People in Forced Displacement Setting, 2018

This Sport for Protection Toolkit guides the work of the Olympic Refuge Foundation and can be used by a broad cross-section of organisations and stakeholders to better understand and implement effective Sport for Protection programming.

Wolffhardt, A., Conte, C. & Huddleston, T., The European Benchmark for Refugee Integration: A Comparative Analysis of the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism In 14 EU Countries, Warsaw/Brussels, 2019

This NIEM report presents a comparative, indicator-based assessment of the refugee integration frameworks in place in 14 EU countries. Analysis is focused on legal indicators, policy indicators and indicators which measure mainstreaming, policy coordination, as well as efforts aimed at participation and involvement of the receiving society.

5.6 STRIVE FOR COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION SUPPORT

Connect and coordinate with other providers and fill the gaps in the system

A comprehensive approach to the integration of refugees requires an all-of-government and all-of-society response. This entails sustained and partnership-based cooperation among all relevant actors, including national, regional and local authorities, public services, social partners and civil society. It also implies structural and long-term funding for integration as well as access to stable funding for the local level and civil society organisations. Collaboration and joint policy delivery hold the promise of better focused policies, more clearly responding to the needs and perspectives of refugees.

With greater legitimacy stemming from broader participation, and more civil society and local/regional actors assuming a role, policies can also become more sustainable and achieve a stronger impact. By receiving active support from public authorities for the assistance they provide, NGOs are enabled to contribute to the long-term inclusion of refugees into the receiving society.

BENEFITS OF PURSUING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

- Stable and long-term multi-stakeholder partnerships at various levels of governance which empower actors to contribute to the integration process of refugees;
- Integration and diversity management mainstreamed across all relevant fields, services and policy areas;
- Coordination strengthened between regional and local authorities for the integration of refugees;
- Better coordination between local authorities and employment, health, housing and education bodies/boards/service providers;
- Continuous provision of resources and support for local authorities, NGOs and non-profit support organisations foster long-term inclusion of refugees.

SUCCESS FACTORS: CRITERIA FOR ACHIEVING GOOD PRACTICES

Multi-stakeholders and multi-level strategy: Develop jointly a comprehensive integration strategy involving regional and local authorities, service providers and civil society;

Ownership and Participation: Support the regular involvement and consultation of refugees in civic activities, local community's social life and decision-making;

Involvement of receiving society: Recognise integration as a two-way process and support an active role of the receiving society to better implement public local policies;

Availability of structural funding: Ensure sustained, diversified and sufficient means for integration measures, allowing for continuity and upscaling. In many countries and contexts, this means access to EU funding for local authorities, civil society and refugee-led organisations.

CHECKLIST FOR CONNECTING AND COORDINATING WITH OTHER PROVIDERS AND FILLING GAPS IN THE SYSTEM

The following checklist offers a detailed step-by-step process to help organisations schedule and identify all the necessary tasks to put in place for connecting and coordinating with other provides

- ✓ **Set up strategies** which expect or oblige the **receiving society** to be actively involved and accommodate beneficiaries;
- ✓ **Set up strategies** involving **regional, local authorities and service providers** to foster the integration of refugees and provide means for the implementation of these strategies;
- ✓ **Set up a multi-stakeholder mechanism** to jointly develop comprehensive strategies for integration and inclusion and review operations, practices, services and integration outcomes in coordination with relevant partners (local authorities, NGOs, social partners, research, institutions, etc.);
- ✓ **Build regional partnerships** to ensure inclusion and integration of refugees and migrants in rural areas who might be in a more vulnerable situation because of remoteness, isolation and limited access to targeted services;
- ✓ **Encourage voluntary initiatives** to complement public policies by funding the coordination of such initiatives at all levels, making them part of standard integration offers for refugees (more information: 5.5 Involve local communities and support volunteerism);
- ✓ **Support the involvement of refugees** in civic activities through both targeted information on the rights and possibilities of refugees to join such activities, as well as by offering means to organisations for reaching out to refugees;
- ✓ **Set up a body to consult with refugees** on issues concerning their integration and inclusion, involving associations of refugees or elected representative as permanent member and provide means to establish permanent consultation bodies;

- **Regularly run and fund campaigns** to sensitise the receiving society about the situation of refugees, fight discrimination and target prejudices and misperceptions;
- **Provide**, as public authority that manages or disburses EU funds, **access to EU funding** for civil society organisations and local authorities. Inform these actors about the funding opportunities and involve them as partners in the national programming process of relevant funds;
- **Make strategic use of EU or other international funding** to fill gaps in the support system, pilot and test new initiatives and learn from existing models and experiences. Fully exploit all available instruments, including among others the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES FOR A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

MULTI-STAKEHOLDERS AND MULTI-LEVEL STRATEGY

In Serbia, Local Action Plans (LAP) aim to improve the living and socio-economic standards of targeted categories of forcibly displaced and migrants. It intends to solve problems of these categories in a planned and long-term manner, creating measures and actions fully adapted to their real needs. This enables more cost-effective use of the existing resources (material, technical, human, and institutional) through networking of relevant local institutions and other local partners. The LAP presents available data on the age, gender, and educational needs for each of the different categories of forcibly displaced migrants and identifies priority groups or most vulnerable subgroups. The local government accurately records the problems and needs of this population and plans or proposes solutions accordingly. For each of the identified different categories of forcibly displaced migrants', specific objectives are set. For example, in the LAP of the municipality of Bačka Topola, in the period from 2020 to 2024, one goal is the creation of conditions for strengthening tolerance and understanding of the needs of asylum seekers and migrants in need by improving the quality of life in the local community, equipping space for health, educational, cultural and other services, children's and sports playgrounds. Local plans are prepared in cooperation with relevant institutions in each municipality and are implemented in partnership with different stakeholders.

In Poland, the Council for the Model of Migrants' Integration in the Mazowieckie Province brought together different entities involved in the integration of foreigners: the Mazovian Voivodeship Office, the Board of Education, the Social Assistance Centre, the Warsaw Labour Office, Caritas Poland, the Polish Migration Forum Foundation, the Foundation for Somalia, the Linguae Mundi Foreign Language Learning Foundation, the Association for Legal Intervention, and the Foundation for Dialogue and Tolerance. The aim of the Council was to diagnose the situation and needs of foreigners in various areas of integration and to develop recommendations. The conclusions from the consultations within the Council were used in the publication 'Foreigners in Poland. A handbook for people working with migrants'. Additionally, a document entitled 'Assumptions for the strategy for integration of migrants in the Mazowieckie voivodeship' was developed. These documents will support integration activities in the Mazowieckie province and it will be used in the creation of a nationwide strategy for the integration of immigrants.

In Sweden, the Skane Partnership, has a very strong emphasis on long-term work for participation and knowledge of newly arrived migrants. This partnership is a regional (count level) practice engaging a significant number of municipalities. In Partnership Skåne, organisations that are responsible for the reception and establishment of newcomers in Skåne, have come together to jointly develop methods and secure conditions for addressing prioritised needs where regional cooperation and coordination of resources is necessary.

In Bulgaria, the Oboriste district of Sofia Municipality is one of Bulgaria's first and only local

authorities that implement the national policy on refugee integration. By doing so, Oboriste welcomes a large number of refugee families who wish to settle in Sofia and offers them initial integration support according to the district's competences for up to 6 months. These services include housing, support with school enrollment in the local public schools as well as municipal social support where applicable. Oboriste's effort on refugee integration started in 2020 with the resettlement of 2 large families who were seeking asylum in Bulgaria (15 members in total). In 2021 Oboriste welcomed 5 families (27 members in total) in the framework of an AMIF funded project called "Together for Integration". The project is based on a multistakeholder approach and is led by the Bulgarian Red Cross and other two partners: Vitosha district of Sofia Municipality and Foundation Center Nadya. The Bulgarian Red Cross participates with social workers and interpreters and Center Nadya – with psychologists. This project will run until December 2022 and to secure sustainability, the team has already applied for 2 new projects with European and international funding.

In Finland, the Finnish Red Cross coordinates and develops the Network for Non-Governmental Associations. The network meets 4 times a year and discusses relevant topics within the themes of reception and integration. There are also some ministries present in the network meetings, so it supports the information flow from the third sector to the authorities and vice versa. One of the Toolkits the network has helped in creating is an Integration platform for organisations (kotoutumistarjotin). This Toolkit helps to understand what kind of activities the third sector actors are providing in the local area, which helps the newcomers in the integration process. The platform helps to understand the division of activities between the third sector actors and the authorities e.g. at the municipality level.

In Lithuania, the 2018-2020 Action Plan on the Integration of Foreigners into Lithuanian Society requires regular cooperation and coordination among NGOs, the Association of Local Authorities, education, social and health care services to ensure successful integration of refugees into society. The Action Plan demands education authorities and bodies at regional and local levels to provide trainings for education workers to improve intercultural skills, reduce stereotypes and promote the values of respect for diversity and equality. Education events are also foreseen for employers to inform them about refugees' integration needs and diversity in terms of gender, age, country of origin and family status. The Plan aims to monitor integration processes and policies by collecting quantitative and qualitative data and register them at the state authorities.

INVOLVEMENT OF RECEIVING SOCIETY

In Italy, the project ''Diffondere diversita' rafforzare comunita" aims at creating job opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers in the agricultural sector and supporting the local development in a rural area. The project involves two local municipalities (Municipality of Losine and Municipality of Cerveno) and the Bio Distretto of Valcamonica, an organic farming network composed of 40 small enterprises. The project promotes a simple but effective form of job-sharing in which two or more enterprises pool their resources and labour force. In practice, agricultural workers are hired under regular conditions by a group of employers that share the services of the worker throughout the year. This arrangement reduces labour costs, creates new job opportunities, and supports the promotion of agricultural job placements under fair working conditions. Additionally, agricultural enterprises become part of a network, which can provide advantages to the participating enterprises. It also foresees an active role of receiving society in its implementation by directly involving a voluntary association of small agricultural enterprises that cooperate to support each other and young farmers and their families that actively support migrants in their integration process.

In Italy, Emilia-Romagna Region systematically promotes second language learning and intercultural mediation for the inclusion of migrants and refugees in the society and responding to exponential increase of flows in the last years. To do so, the Region works together with public schools, non-profit sector, municipalities, other public bodies and the local communities. Collaboration with civil society and cooperative is built via a multi-level and structured partnership.

In Belgium, the Brussels Capital adopted the Action Plan Against Racism and Discrimination 2018-2020 to raise awareness and engage each Ministers and Secretary of State on the fight against racism and discrimination. The Plan is based on 23 concrete policy measures to create a society where tolerance and solidarity between populations occupy a central place. A consultative platform has been established to interact with any Brussels civil society organisations willing to collaborate and work under this plan.

In Finland, the 'Föreningsliv för alla' project aims to support migrants' social participation by fostering their involvement in Finnish associations. This project gives to migrants the opportunity to train a new language outside of the school environment, build their own informal networks and new meaningful contacts. As a result of the project, the Jakobstad region adopts a 'two-way' integration model through the involvement of the third sector and associations.

In Turkey, the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, Department of Women, Family, Education and Social Services established the Ensar Community Centre in 2014. The Centre was developed as a safe space for members from both, the Turkish host communities and refugees, to come and interact with each other and learn new skills. IOM started supporting the Ensar Community Center in 2017 by refurbishing and rehabilitating it and by conducting social inclusion activities as well as extra-curricular activities. The centre is accessible by all age, gender and nationalities. The provided activities and services have a positive impact on the community by improving the communication between refugees and the host community and foster better connections and interaction through social activities.

OWNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

In Sweden, a good practice of social entrepreneurship is represented by Yalla Trappan, a work integration social enterprise and women's cooperative run by a non-profit association in Malmö. It provides work trainings in three areas: Café and Catering Services, Sewing Studio, Cleaning and Conference Services. Yalla Trappan adopts a model of 'learning by doing' to promote financial independence for immigrant women who are at high risk of exclusion from the labour market.

In Finland, the Finnish Refugee Council organises a 'Civic Orientation' course targeted to recently arrived adult migrants in Finland. The course provides comprehensive information on residing, living and working in Finland. It delivers civic skills needed in the country and familiarises migrants with the story of the Finnish nation. The objective of this course is to enhance refugees and newcomers' understanding of the Finnish society and clarify their own rights and responsibilities in the country. Each course is taught by a trainer who speaks the same language as course participants. The course's concepts, teaching methods and textbooks are available for unrestricted use in municipalities and learning institutions. In the development phase of this project, key stakeholders have been involved, including the Helsinki region municipalities and the Ministry of Employment and Economy.

In Turkey, Yıldırım Municipality has been providing support to refugees in terms of protection, livelihoods, and social cohesion since the beginning of the Syrian refugee situation in Turkey. The municipality established a Social Cohesion Centre in the district, which is one of the first initiatives to target refugee inclusion in service provision by a municipality in Turkey. The centre brings refugee and host community members together via structured activities, such as game therapy, to facilitate bonding and bridging as well as strengthening problem solving skills. Also, they organise awareness raising and information dissemination activities on access to services. Additionally, the centre provides support to women cooperatives, involving refugee members, with a view to provide women with empowerment and self-reliance opportunities.

LEARN MORE: USEFUL MATERIALS, REFERENCES

Assembly of European Regions (AER), Tuning of AMiD Outcomes to European Local Authorities, Access to Services for Migrants with Disabilities (AMID), 2019

This report offers insights on how to support an efficient management of the reception and integration of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants with disabilities in the EU.

EU Commission, Toolkit on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background, 2018

This Toolkit aims to assist national and regional funding authorities in implementing integration policies targeting people with a migrant background through the use of EU funds in the 2014-2020 programming period.

Huddleston, T., Bilgili, O., Joki, A. & Vankova, Z., MIPEX Migrant Integration Policy Index, Barcelona/Brussels, 2015

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a unique long-term project which evaluates and compares what governments are doing to promote the integration of migrants in all EU Member States and several non-EU countries.

EWSI Editorial Team., What measures are in place to ensure the long-term integration of migrants and refugees in Europe? European Web Site on Integration, 2020

The EWSI Editorial Team researched a range of indicators of long-term integration in all EU Member States and the United Kingdom and looked at the existence or availability of specific policies or measures for refugees.

Natale, F., Kalantaryan, S., Scipioni, M., Alessandrini, A. and Pasa, A., Migration in EU Rural Areas, Science for Policy report by the Joint Research Centre (JRC), Luxembourg, 2019

This report provides a quantitative overview of migration in rural areas for the entire EU and contributes to raising awareness of the poorly studied phenomenon of migration in rural areas.

Wolffhardt A., Operationalising a comprehensive approach to migrant integration, RESOMA Discussion Policy Brief, 2019

This ReSOMA policy brief explains the notion of a comprehensive approach to integration and elaborates on the specific potentials – but also constraints – of the local level in migrant integration. It presents ten possible, concrete and fundable focal points of implementing a comprehensive and long term approach in practice.

Wolffhardt, A., Conte, C. & Huddleston, T., The European Benchmark for Refugee Integration: A Comparative Analysis of the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism In 14 EU Countries, Warsaw/Brussels, 2019

This NIEM report presents a comparative, indicator-based assessment of the refugee integration frameworks in place in 14 EU countries. Analysis is focused on legal indicators, policy indicators and indicators which measure mainstreaming, policy coordination, as well as efforts aimed at participation and involvement of the receiving society.

Wolffhardt, A., Conte, C. & Huddleston, T., The European Benchmark for Refugee Integration: A comparative analysis of the national integration evaluation mechanism in 14 EU countries, Evaluation 1: Comprehensive Report, 2020

This NIEM report presents key data and developments on refugee integration in the 2017 to 2019 period as they are reflected in the scored outcome of research conducted in the 14 participating countries.

6. OVERARCHING CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION INITIATIVE:

- [ ] Identify on a regular basis the needs and potential of refugees;
- [ ] Address and remove language and administrative barriers to access your services;
- [ ] Adapt your plans and strategies according to refugees' needs, capacities and feedback;
- [ ] Provide services for fostering the socio-economic inclusion of refugees beyond the initial reception phase;
- [ ] Diversify funding opportunities for long-term integration;
- [ ] Involve refugees in assessments, planning, implementation, monitoring, adaptation and evaluation of your services;
- [ ] Make sure that vulnerable groups are included in the co-designing of your services;
- [ ] Ensure that vulnerable individuals enjoy equal access and same level of support as other refugees;
- [ ] Ask for feedback from refugees once your service has been delivered and keep them informed regularly;
- [ ] Promote voluntary activities and involve local community to encourage social, economic and cultural integration of refugees;
- [ ] Support local initiatives for refugees, such as leisure, education, employment, family and 'bureaucratic' mentoring;
- [ ] Create genuine partnership-based cooperation and involve all relevant integration actors, including national, regional and local authorities, public services, social partners and civil society;
- [ ] Review your operations, practices, services and integration outcomes in coordination with relevant partners.

7. INDICATORS FOR ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF INTEGRATION PRACTICES

Most good practices in the Toolkit have been selected as being exemplary and after assessing them according to the following list of criteria and indicators:

1. DIMENSION: INCLUSIVITY & PARTICIPATION

Indicators

Does the practice ensure that its services are accessible to diverse groups?

- Secures equal opportunities to its target groups (women and men of all ages, LGBTIQ+ depending on the specific target group, persons with disabilities and specific needs);
- Adopts a participatory, gender mainstreaming, diversity and age sensitive inclusive approach;
- Ensures that equality and diversity are an essential part of how services are delivered, taking into consideration the different needs and capacities;
- Provides relevant information on the initiative in diverse languages and formats and communication channels, appropriate for the age, gender and diversity of the intended audience;
- Makes reasonable adjustments in the way it delivers services to take into account the particular needs of the target group (e.g. providing childcare for (single) parents, specific adjustments for disabled persons, providing flexible services at flexible hours, adapted and informal support for refugees.

Does the practice involve active participation of the receiving society?

- Considers integration as a two-way process and aims at changes also on the side of the receiving society (behaviour, norms, institutions);
- Foresees an active role of the receiving society in its implementation (e.g. volunteers);
- Involves actions to support exchanges with the receiving society.

Does the practice consult its beneficiaries and involve them in the assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the action?

- Organises regular consultation activities with refugees to ensure their inputs throughout the programme cycle, from the assessment to the evaluation;
- Provides beneficiaries with some compensation to facilitate the consultations;
- Provides appropriate feedback mechanisms for beneficiaries to safely express their opinions about the quality of services.

2. DIMENSION: RELEVANCE & COMPLEMENTARITY

Indicators

Are the objectives of the practice relevant to the needs of the target groups?

- Identifies and analyses the needs of the target group (interviews/focus groups with target group, desk research, surveys).

Does the practice fill a gap in integration support?

- Identifies and analyses existing gaps in integration support and designs actions to fill these gaps;
- Complements existing measures by building upon and coordinating with these;
- Works with beneficiaries from the onset to develop a long-term integration plan and to facilitate the transition to mainstream social protection, integration and inclusion programmes.

Does the practice build upon available policies, guidance, Toolkits and good practices at the national and international/EU level?

- Employs/refers to relevant guidance and Toolkits at national and EU/international level.

Does the practice lead to a systemic improvement, addressing the needs of a majority of the target group in the target area?

- Contributes to the strengthening of the capacities of refugees/their communities;
- Contributes to the strengthening of the capacities of relevant institutions to support integration (e.g. policy or strategy change; legislative reform; institutional reforms; governance reforms; increased accountability for public expenditures; or improved processes for public consultations);
- Addresses discrimination and information gaps as obstacles to long-term integration;
- The practice is scalable and includes concrete plans for expansion.

3. DIMENSION: EFFECTIVENESS

Indicators

To what extent are/were the objectives of the practice realistic, monitored, evaluated and achieved?

- Achieves its intended results with concrete outputs and outcomes;
- Has a clear results framework that facilitates measuring outcomes and impact, with smart indicators;
- Potential risks have been factored into programme design;
- Systematically gathers key performance data for regular monitoring and analysis;
- Assesses and reviews what progress the practice has made towards achieving its objectives;
- Analyses if its interventions contribute to the long-term sustainable changes in integration.

4. DIMENSION: SUSTAINABILITY

Indicators

Has the practice utilised its benefits after the completion of the action?

- Prepares and applies a well-defined phase-out plan to ensure sustainable positive changes and use of the products/results of the action.

Does the practice attract structural funding, support from new sponsors or generate its own resources?

- Establishes partnerships and relations with relevant stakeholders as integral part of the action to ensure strong support to continue after the primary funding terminates;
- Diversifies funding sources and identifies new eu and national funding opportunities for long-term integration (e.g shifting or planning to shift from project-based initiatives that are limited in time, dependent on one (external) donor, to a comprehensive multi-year integration strategy based on secured funding or diverse funding opportunities);
- Makes sure that the human resources, expertise and infrastructure are in place to sustain the services at the end of the action.

5. DIMENSION: PARTNERSHIP & COOPERATION

Indicators

Does the practice have any strategy to establish communication and coordination with other relevant actors to foster the integration of migrants? (e.g civil society, public authorities, private sector)

- Ensures the involvement and participation of key stakeholders in its development phase;
- Has developed and implements a strategy to involve them in the action.

Does the practice contribute to discussions on improvement of integration support policies?

- Contributes to the development of comprehensive integration strategies involving national/regional/local authorities, service providers and civil society;
- Makes sure to work in coordination with relevant partners (local authorities, NGOs, social partners, research, institutions, etc.) to jointly review operations, practices, services and integration outcomes.

This self-assessment tool has been adapted from MPG's evaluation grid for the Sustainable Practices of Integration (SPRING) initiative which allows you to showcase your criteria-tested good practices on a European platform (www.integrationpractices.eu).

8.GLOSSARY

Asylum-Seeker: An asylum-seeker is an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualised procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognised as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum-seeker.

Beneficiaries of international protection: Individuals who have already been granted refugee status or other complementary forms of protection. This Handbook uses the word refugees to cover both categories.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection: According to EU law, they are individuals who do not qualify as refugees but who would face a real risk of suffering serious harm if returned to their country of origin, and who are unable to obtain the protection of that country.

Complementary pathways: Safe and regulated avenues that complement refugee resettlement and by which refugees may be admitted in a country and have their international protection needs met while they are able to support themselves to potentially reach a sustainable and lasting solution.

Durable solutions: The means by which the situation of refugees can be satisfactorily and permanently resolved through ensuring national protection for their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

Focus Group Discussion: A method to collect qualitative data/information from a group of persons pre-selected according to specific criteria.

Foreigner: This category generally includes all those persons who moved away from their original place of residence, temporarily or permanently and for a range of different reasons.

Good Practice: An innovative, interesting and inspiring practice that has the potential to be transferred in whole or in part to other national contexts. The good practices included in the Toolkit are identified following the key criteria in each chapter and five key general indicators: inclusivity and participation; relevance and complementary; effectiveness; sustainability; partnerships and cooperation.

Inclusion: The process of fostering and improving refugees' participation to society, by granting them the same rights as citizens, forging ties and friendships, being able to apply for local jobs or go to local schools, and having access to different services like housing or healthcare. The Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 of the EU Commission states that "inclusion for all is about ensuring that all policies are accessible to and work for everyone, including migrants and EU citizens with migrant background. This means adapting and transforming mainstream policies to the needs of a diverse society, taking into account the specific challenges and needs of different groups. Actions to help migrants integrate need not, and should not, be at the expense of measures to benefit other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups or minorities. On the contrary, they contribute to make policies more inclusive overall".

Integration: Local integration in the refugee context is a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process, which requires efforts by all parties concerned, including a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and to meet the needs of a diverse population (UNHCR Executive Committee, Conclusion on Local Integration No. 104 (LVI) – 2005).

Migrants: People who have decided to move across international borders, not because of a direct threat of persecution, serious harm, or death, but exclusively for other reasons, such as to improve their conditions by pursuing work or education opportunities, or to reunite with family.

Minors: Persons who are below the legal age of majority and are therefore not legally independent. This term includes adolescents. Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a "child" is a person who is below the age of eighteen, unless the applicable law sets a lower age. The CRC equates "child" with "minor".

Participatory Approach: An approach to development and/or government in which key stakeholders (and especially the proposed beneficiaries) of a policy or intervention are closely involved in the process of identifying problems and priorities and have considerable control over analysis and the planning, implementation and monitoring of solutions.

Persons of concern: All persons for whom UNHCR is mandated to provide protection, solutions and assistance. This includes refugees, asylum-seekers, refugee returnees, stateless persons, and, in many situations, internally displaced persons (IDPs) including those who may also receive protection and assistance from State and other partners.

Protection: A concept that encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. Protection involves creating an environment conducive to respect for human beings, preventing and/or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse, and restoring dignified conditions of life through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation.

Refugee: A person who meets the eligibility criteria under the applicable refugee definition, as provided for in international or regional refugee instruments, under UNHCR's mandate, and/or in national legislation.

Resettlement: The transfer of refugees from the country in which they have sought refuge to another State that has agreed to admit them. The refugees will usually be granted asylum or some other form of long-term resident rights and, in many cases, will have the opportunity to become naturalised citizens. For this reason, resettlement is a durable solution as well as a Toolkit for the protection of refugees. It is also a practical example of international burden- and responsibility sharing.

UNHCR Mandate: The role and functions of UNHCR as set forth in the UNHCR Statute and as elaborated in resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. UNHCR's mandate as declared in its Statute is to provide international protection and seek permanent solutions for refugees. UNHCR has an additional mandate concerning issues of statelessness, as it is given a designated role under Article 11 of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Office has also been requested by the General Assembly to promote the 1954 and 1961 statelessness Conventions, and to help prevent statelessness by providing to States technical and advisory services on nationality legislation and practice.

Vulnerable: Physically, mentally or socially disadvantaged persons who may be unable to meet their basic needs and may therefore require specific assistance.

9.TESTIMONIALS

'This handbook is a useful tool to guide local authorities in the planning, implementation and assessment of their integration practices and offers many practical ideas on how to directly involve beneficiaries in the process'

Katharina Bamberg, Policy Advisor Migration & Integration at EUROCITIES

'This toolkit offers useful guidance for integration and inclusion practitioners, based on the principles of empowerment, co-design, maximising the potential of diversity and intercultural interaction. Recommended reading for Intercultural Cities' professionals and volunteers worldwide.'

Irena Guidikova, Head of Inclusion and Antidiscrimination Programmes, Council of Europe

'Local and regional authorities are instrumental in delivering successful integration policies on the ground, but they are all too often left to their own devices when it comes to implementing such policies. The UNHCR Integration Handbook is an invaluable tool in this respect.'

Antje Grotheer, rapporteur of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum and Vice-President of Germany's Bremen City Parliament

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