INTRO

How to guide: Creating strategic approaches to migrant integration

This guide is for anybody who is developing, or thinking about developing, a strategy to integrate migrants in their city, town or region. It should be helpful for those just starting to think about developing an integration strategy as well as those well along the path. Don't worry if you are a small city or area with limited funding or resources, or if you have a small or transient migrant population - everybody needs to start somewhere, and this guide is to help you do that.

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ABOUT

What is this topic about?

A strategic approach to migrant integration is a way of 'thinking and doing' that:

- Defines the **values** involved & any **constraints or limitations**
- Includes **all relevant areas** of the city's competencies
- Is agreed at the appropriate **political & officer levels**
- Looks to the **medium & long-term**
- **Defines actions & the resources** for their implementation
- Supports coordination between **different actors & stakeholders**
- Envisage & support **crisis responses**, as well as include mechanisms to learn from these to continually **improve the strategy**.

In the 1980s and 1990s integration strategies tended to be targeted at specific ethnic or national groups. Now **it is more common to have a more inclusive approach**. This acknowledges that integration is a two-way process, avoids parallel systems and can be balanced, when necessary, with specific measures for particular target groups (for example, extra support for new arrivals, or refugee children, or providing services & information in several languages)*.

*OECD Working together for local integration of migrants and refugees 2018 p.32

Some cities look to **incorporate migrants and their integration into other, already existing strategies** (for example, including a migrant dimension in the employment / economic strategy, or in the diversity strategy), whilst some write stand-alone strategies for migrant integration. Strategies can differ widely due to:

- **Different competencies & resources available to cities**
- **The political and social context**
- **Whether or not municipalities have a department focusing on migration and/or integration**
- **The existence of well-regarded strategies covering related areas (such as diversity or inclusion)**

Reasons why a city may want to explore developing a strategic approach

Promote **solidarity & anti-discrimination** by ensuring migrants are full participants in city life

Encourage **existing populations to stay & new people to arrive**

Update or amend existing strategies to take account of demographic and/or legislative changes, including arrivals due to a crisis or large scale reception of migrants

More migrants may be living in the city with visible signs that these groups do not have **equal access to support** (such as street homeless migrants)

Influence national policy - a local strategy can be a way to do this

Benefits of a strategic approach (as opposed to introducing isolated measures) to migrant integration

Ensures the city coordinates its approach, aligns migrant integration with other objectives and builds in resilience

Coordinates policies and measures on integration to maximise efficiency and work together towards the same goals and so is likely to provide better value for money

Improves communication between city departments and between the city and other service providers, facilitating coordinated action and information sharing

Enables proactive communication with citizens, both migrants and other populations

Sets up data collection to provide **metrics** to measure success & facilitates learning from & cooperation with other cities on the same path

Can support effective large scale reception of migrants

CHALLENGES

What happens if issues related to migrants' rights sit outside municipal competency?

- Cities have competences in relation to areas of provision such as housing, family support, culture and a strategic approach can ensure that these cover migrants and promote integration i.e. ensuring that migrants do not suffer discrimination in service delivery.
- Migrants are residents! Often the city will have some powers to act to promote resident well-being or similar, and the migrant integration strategy can sit within those.

Do the city's aims align with the government's? If not, how will the city manage this?

- Securing broad based political support for the integration approach may help with this, especially where the differences in aims relate to different political approaches
- Articulating and promoting the core values and principles on which the strategic approach is based reduces the space for problems to be created from these possible differences
- Keeping city residents on side and informed ensures that differences with central government do not open up local problems
- Cities often have duties or powers to combat discrimination, social disadvantage, hardship etc., and migrants excluded by national policies may be included in local measures.

GOOD PRACTICE

BARCELONA, SPAIN

Barcelona SAIER

→

How to get started?

The eight steps below suggest some starting points to work towards developing a more strategic approach to integration.

1

BEFORE YOU START

- **Articulate the values & principles underlying any strategy** at the outset: these can be used to identify where there are gaps or shortfalls
- **Secure support from political leadership**

A strategic approach to integration requires political will and a secure commitment to migration as a permanent feature of the city and its development. The political leadership or governance structure should agree on addressing the issue for the long term with sufficient resources and in spite of potential challenges, including those related to national politics or policies. This may mean assessing when it is best to start this process within the usual electoral cycle: migration is a “hot” topic and may be best tackled soon after an election rather than just before one!

CHALLENGE

Integration is not considered a priority (because of political caution, lack of interest or lack of legal obligation to engage)

Mitigate this risk by:

- Collecting data about migration to demonstrate to politicians and relevant departments about the needs & benefits of addressing migration.

- Sharing good practice from other contexts to show the benefits that a strategic approach to integration brings
- Quoting commitments to migrant integration on an international level, such as the EU action plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027
- Finding the right people in the relevant departments, for example the person with the migrants' children brief in the Education Department

CHALLENGE

Political shift in city leadership, for example the Mayor loses office, or abandons the core integration goals of the strategy and/or budgetary commitment

Mitigate this risk by:

- Secure cross-party support at the outset
- Robust scheme for **citizens' participation** from the outset

IDENTIFY RESOURCES TO CREATE THE STRATEGY

Especially where financial and other resources are limited, consider what networks you are part of, with other members who may also be able to offer help.

- Human resources: who will design the strategy, who will implement it, where will these people come from, and when are they available?
- Financial resources: to pay for developing the strategy and implementing it. These may be from city core funding, national government resources, EU funding (e.g. Connection!), using elements of relevant departmental budgets or external sources e.g. charitable foundations, local partners etc.

- Civil society organisations who may offer resources such as space, people and funding
- Regional and national **local government associations** who can offer valuable technical assistance and may be able to help with fundraising, for example jointly with other cities
- Local universities and educational or training bodies who can offer support with data collection, evaluation and training

3

GATHER INFORMATION TO UNDERSTAND CONTEXT & NEEDS

- **Data on migrant populations** is needed for both design and monitoring of the strategy, as well as building support.
- **Institutional mapping** is a useful tool in order to identify the key stakeholders and actors at different levels, the state, the region, the municipality
- **Identify civil society stakeholders** including, community and voluntary sector organisations NGOs, citizen groups (including informal groups), migrant community organisations, universities and educational institutions, faith communities
- **Distil lessons:** consider what can be learnt from your city's own experience and from other places with different experiences and strengths.
- **Who are your migrants?** There are many kinds of **migrants** and an inclusive strategy needs to take account of all of them.

CHALLENGE

Data on migrant populations is often unreliable or unavailable, because of:

Weakness in official data sets which may not provide local or regional level data

May fail to identify migrant categories; or key parameters for them; or both

Data accuracy may shift with changes in immigration policy and migrant populations

Data sets may be compromised by:

- fear of immigration controls leading to reluctance to respond to surveys;
- living conditions (e.g. multi-occupancy homes and hostels have low response rate);
- high rate of precarity in some migrant groups due to housing insecurity, short-term jobs

Existing data on migration will not be able to measure newly-arriving communities.

This challenge can be mitigated by having:

- Clear joint understanding of limitations of data, and commitment to addressing it where possible, especially in relation to newly arrived migrants
- Triangulation: seek multiple data sources
- Encourage all partners to share any possible sources of data that they may have
- So far as data permits, incorporate equalities criteria in all **indicator** design

An idea for more inclusive data collection

Barcelona encourages all migrants, including the undocumented to sign up to the “padron” (here p30). This is a nationally prescribed register of all those living in the city which ensures access to all municipal services, some health and other services. As a result of pressure from cities, this register is **firewalled** to restrict access by police and immigration services. This ensures migrants sign up to it and that it:

- Improves migrant access to services
- Increases trust
- Provides more accurate data
- Ensures the city has access to more resources since allocation is based on the number of residents

* Cities of rights: ensuring health carefor undocumented residents (2017) p. 20.

4

CONSIDER WHO TO ENGAGE AND INCLUDE

Whose support is needed? This may include local politicians but also others such as faith leaders, neighbourhood representatives, trade unions, tenants associations and civil society organisations.

Who has resources? Identifying those with resources such as civil society actors, but also possibly the social enterprise and private sector.

Who has community trust? Gaining support and involvement from community members, both new arrivals and settled communities

Who knows about the issues? Involving migrants is essential. Remember that formal 'engagement' mechanisms such as a migrant council may not represent or involve all migrants, so additional work to access views from women, young people, disabled people, minorities within communities may be needed.

5

CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Identify **migrant communities** to be involved in the process and carry out the needs assessment and pre-strategy consultation. The needs assessment should be objective, inclusive and focus on challenges, barriers and inequalities migrants face. It should take account of a migrant's lifetime, considering different legal phases (and their implications). It should also invite the involvement of migrants themselves.

6

RELEVANT INTER-AGENCY 'OVERSIGHT' MECHANISM

Identify partners and bring them together to decide:

- Who approves the strategy and who can amend or update it?
- How decision-makers will be involved in reviewing or developing the strategy?
- Who will write the strategy?
- Who will deliver the strategy over its duration?
- How will you get all relevant delivery agents (e.g. departments) engaged for the longer term?
- How are migrants involved and/or consulted in writing, approval and delivery?

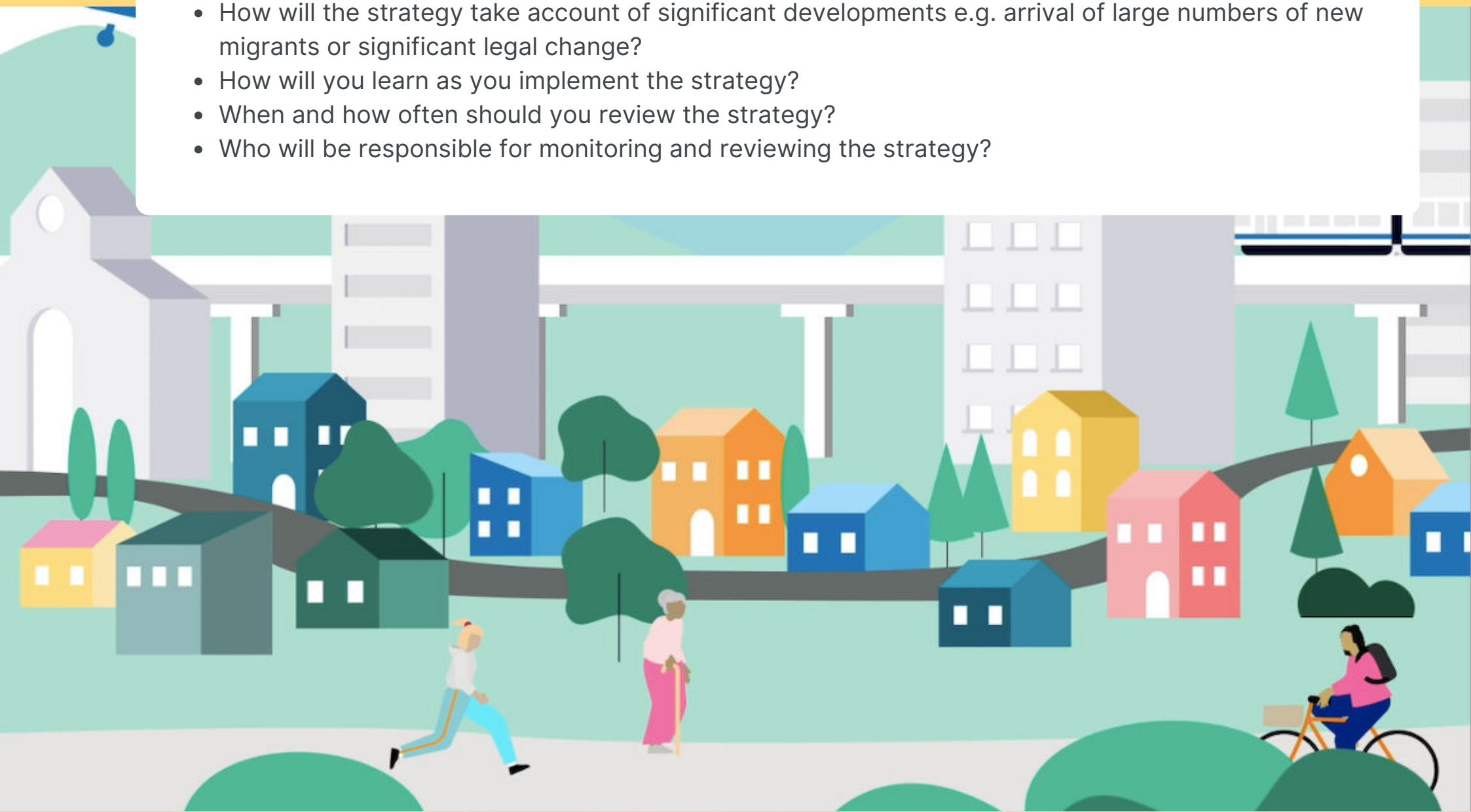
7

DRAFTING & CONSULTING ON A STRATEGY

- Include a timetable for consultation, decision making and implementation
- Make it clear it is a draft and how any changes suggested by the consultation will be made
- Have a plan for migrant consultation
- How will everyone involved in the consultation know when it has been finally approved?
- How will you communicate it?

IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW

- How will governance and review arrangements influence implementation? and who will take responsibility for it?
- How will the strategy take account of significant developments e.g. arrival of large numbers of new migrants or significant legal change?
- How will you learn as you implement the strategy?
- When and how often should you review the strategy?
- Who will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the strategy?



What works?

This section highlights some effective practice in different areas of a strategic approach as identified by many cities who have developed one. This is not a comprehensive list and there may be other factors you can think of to add to this.

1 - Political leadership and will

Use public events to demonstrate the political leadership's commitment and vision for integration in the city

EXAMPLE

City of Turin Anti-Racist Pact, 2021

In 2020 Turin became the first municipality in Italy **to declare that antiracist actions and practices are common citizens' assets.** This declaration clearly set out the vision for the pact in terms of the **identity of the city** - utilising a concept from Italian law 'bene comune' - meaning common good in Italian law that resonated with stakeholders and building support for the objectives. The municipality invited civil society actors to join a co-planning process to design a pact aiming to counter racism in all forms and ensure equal access to political, cultural, social and economic life. The municipality also seized the opportunity presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, as a moment in which they could reinvent the city and promote the value of integration.

- This strong commitment from the city unified actors who were not previously working together.
- The framing of the pact in terms of shared values helped to shift public debate on anti-racism.

GOOD PRACTICE

TURIN, ITALY

The Anti-Racist Pact →

EXAMPLE

The Mobilisation Plan of the Community of Paris for Refugees Reception, 2015

Paris' mayor, elected in 2014, has a strong political commitment to integration. In September 2015 the city organised a citizen conference gathering partners including NGOS, citizens, businesses and academics. This conference served as a symbolic moment for the Mayor to demonstrate the city's commitment to migrant integration and promote the plan and steps for implementation, to all the partners and citizens. In October 2015, the city council adopted the Mobilisation Plan of the Community of Paris for Refugee Reception.

- The commitment of political leadership is key to gain support from a wide range of actors, including the residents of the city
- Building on the strengths of this plan and the wide commitment to its vision, the city carried out consultation and developed a second plan in 2019 focusing on integration

GOOD PRACTICE

PARIS, FRANCE

City of Paris Migrant Integration Strategy →

2 - Be as inclusive as possible (and clear why you need to be!)

Where possible **all migrants** should be covered by the strategy because:

- Migrants move from one "category" to another so it makes little sense to exclude them at one life stage to then include them at another
- Many migrant families include people with different statuses
- When there is a crisis (pandemic, natural disaster) the city will need to deal with all residents regardless of immigration status
- A desire to focus only on some specific migrant groups (e.g. **refugees** only) should be interrogated and the effects of excluding other groups set out.
- Including undocumented or **irregular migrants** is often the most difficult step for cities but there are resources which can help, for instance: here and here.

Including all migrants “future proofs” the strategy

EXAMPLE

KEM, Thessaloniki, Greece

This Migrant Integration Centre (part of the municipal community centre) established in 2017 is open and promoted to *all* migrants ensuring that no migrants are left out in current provision and also “future proofs” the centre, making services accessible to groups of migrants that are either not yet present, or that the city is not currently aware of. It also enables learning across from one group of migrants to another.

3- Take a holistic approach to planning

Planning should consider how the agendas of each city department might be relevant to integration, ensuring issues can be addressed in a cross-cutting way. Note that:

- Migrants live their lives across many different policy and practice areas
- One area will affect another: e.g. housing affects decisions about employment and vice versa
- A strategic approach ensures that vulnerable people don’t “slip through the gaps”
- Impact should be measured across different sectors because actions in one may produce results in another
- Good holistic planning may take longer and this should be factored in

Build awareness and capacity across city departments

EXAMPLE

Zagreb Action Plan for the integration of asylum seekers and persons granted international protection (2022) includes provision to offer training to all relevant city departments (especially social and health services) on how to promote migrant integration. The training will be offered beyond city departments to primary and secondary school teachers and to employees of centres for social protection, health centres and hospitals owned by the City.

GOOD PRACTICE

ZAGREB, CROATIA

Action Plan for the Integration of refugees

EXAMPLE

City of Turin Guidelines for cultural diversity and participation (2018) has a focus on creating internal change in city administration. A Political Steering Committee and a Technical Working Group coordinate the city's services and offices (immigration office, foreign minors office, education services, services for youth etc). Both bodies provide a vehicle for transferring knowledge and practices, for raising the quality of intercultural actions and projects and for coordinating policies of different offices.

RISK

City-level partners fail to engage with implementation
This may mean that key departments do not engage in either strategy creation or delivery.

How to mitigate this risk:
Governance: set up an inter-agency board to steer drafting and implementation of strategy – to include city heads of each service agency, plus migrant community representatives, and chaired by mayor or other senior person

Seek **signature** of each agency (member of board) on the final strategy document

Allow the longest possible **time horizon**

Identify **practical benefit** to each service, of adopting changes mapped by strategy: greater efficiency in moving from crisis mode to long-term provision; more collaboration with communities in public health or policing; improved results in schools or employment, etc.

Encourage **reciprocal offer** between services on cross-cutting issues, e.g. training on immigration system; developing cultural awareness

Minimise **projected net cost** to each participating agency e.g. by showing likely efficiency gains

4 - Collaboration

A diverse range of stakeholders from across all sectors (political, private, civil society) need to be involved from planning through to the delivery and evaluation of the strategy. A shared understanding of what successful integration looks like should be agreed as early as possible, in order to ensure good coordination between partners throughout the process.

To get partners collaborating on the development of a strategy:

- Carry out institutional mapping to maximise coordination and reduce administrative obstacles and overlap. Include multi-level governance in this mapping.
- Continually assess how inclusive the process is
- Define clear roles and responsibilities for each actor
- Consider how you are going to manage this coordination, some examples are included below
- Promote joint discussion/action between migrant and non-migrant organisations so they begin to know and trust one another (‘get to know you’ sessions, for instance)

Obstacles to working with NGOs and Civil Society Partners on delivery:

- Lack of clear operating standards
- Lengthy selection or procurement processes (causing delays and sometimes undermining trust)
- Lack of information sharing
- Lack of transparency
- Overlap or lack of coordination
- Competition between organisations
- Aims and values not aligning (this can be a particular problem with faith-based organisations who may be committed to promoting a particular values-based agenda)

How to mitigate?

- Open and honest discussions at the outset that also cover values of all involved
- Clear and transparent commissioning processes
- Ensuring that the above possible areas of difficulty are covered in any joint working or commissioning

A coordination structure set up by the city demonstrates its commitment to collaboration and helps to maintain partners engagement

EXAMPLE

Paris Refugee platform, established in 2015

The City of Paris created a tool to coordinate the different actions in their integration strategy and to maintain partner engagement. Representatives of different sectors meet twice a year so they can be involved in collaborative workshops to plan new projects, such as 'la Maison des Réfugiés'*, and also to hear from refugees and volunteers to present the picture on the ground.

This model also engages the residents of Paris (not just organisations and institutions) with a €5 million fund under its 'participatory budget' which allows local people to vote for their 'city of refuge' project. This fund was completed by the creation of a budget dedicated to the funding of refugees' organisations. This budget has regularly increased between 2015 and today.

- Through the platform model the city invited and engaged with civil society and institutional actors from the start of the process
- This model is beneficial for the funders who could monitor unified action
- The meetings also serve as an ongoing consultation process with stakeholders

*Maison des Réfugiés is a centre aiming to bring locals and all newcomers (with or without residency permits) together through activities including sport, training and courses and culture

5 - Migrant involvement and consultation

Migrants are the 'target' of the strategic approach, not only as migrants but also as members of the community more widely. Offering diverse ways to be involved in the process will help to make the process more inclusive. The most successful strategies include migrant voices structurally from the beginning of the process. Consider assigning substantive roles to migrants in the various stages of the strategy development: needs assessment, consultation, governance, evaluation.

6 - Setting up consultation mechanisms

A consultation mechanism needs to be established early on and should meet regularly. Effective consultation will:

- Be clear as to what people are being consulted on, the stage of the strategy process, and how they can input and influence
- Ensure a range of **migrant communities** (glo/cohorts participate (for example, through different events such as those run by the community and voluntary sector).
- Aim to include marginalised communities as well as different equalities groups (women, young people, disabled people, LGBTQI+ migrants, ethnic and faith minorities within migrant groups)
- Use different methods to ensure as many voices are heard as possible e.g. events, online surveys.
- Plan resources for city officers to so city officers can meet and communicate regularly to migrant groups (including those with no formal association)
- Use consultation early on to recruit migrants to be strategy monitors

It is a good idea for the city to coordinate the consultations, rather than NGOs, as this sends a message that the city is listening and increases engagement. Follow up needs to be communicated to those who have been consulted and concerned groups otherwise the consultation structures risk losing credibility and can result in disengagement.

CHALLENGE

Securing the participation of migrants in strategy creation

Tips to get the balance right:

- Gather information about how migrants organise formally and informally and be clear about how the consultation methods chosen respond to this
- Seek help from academic institutions about how mixed methods can work best
- Not everything has to be a meeting! Consultation can happen during social events, or over a shared meal

7 - Working with community and faith groups

Migrants are also involved in local communities in many ways other than specific migrant organisations. They may be in neighbourhood associations, trade unions, faith communities, businesses and business associations. These may also be ways of reaching migrants who may not be involved in their own community organisations. Faith communities, in particular, may have a wide reach which city councils can utilise, while being clear about boundaries and in particular no use of public resources to proselytise.

8 - Working with NGOs

NGOs can reach migrants and communities that local governments might not be able to. Ideally, involvement should happen at all stages, design, implementation and review. These relationships can take various forms including providing funding. However, working with NGOs is no substitute for ensuring that migrants are consulted and involved: NGOs may help but should not speak for migrants.

It can be necessary to provide support to migrant-led and migrant community organisations to build capacity so they can participate.

- Oslo has supported migrant NGOs with total annual grants of around €500,000. The Office of Diversity and Integration also runs training on setting up and running organisations, democratic management rules and funding access (ImpleMentoring Toolkit on engagement of Migrant communities, p.6)
- Ensure other funding is accessible to migrant-led organisations and consider the additional barriers these groups may face
- Establish forums that support two-way communication between the city and migrant associations so that members feel listened to and remain engaged

EXAMPLE

Fuenlabrada, Mesa de la Convivencia – Table for the Coexistence

A platform of more than 30 associations, including migrant groups, which together represent Fuenlabrada's diversity, based on a commitment to intercultural approaches. There is a formal, two-way relationship between the Table and the municipality involving an annual project with programmed activities, a grant and regular communications, all to give visibility to the diversity in the city, educate youngsters about the value of diversity and provide feedback to policymakers on the needs of migrants and migrant descendants in the city.

One of the activities in the annual program is an annual 'laboratory' where all members of the platform meet with members of local government and experts in an open-dialogue format. The discussion and decisions are shared with the municipality as well as being published.

Successful outcomes of this two-way relationship include:

- The platform identified a need for a programme in schools to promote interculturality, tackle hate and celebrate diversity. The Mesa delivers these sessions.
- The table for the Coexistence also acts as a mediator should any clashes between migrants and other stakeholders in the city arise.

9 - Migrant councils

Some cities have migrant councils which can be a useful way to secure political participation and to cover the blind spots of elected councillors.

When setting up a migrant council, consider:

- Does the migrant council have the right to propose motions and shape things concretely?
- It is necessary to provide support to members of the migrant council for this to be an effective mechanism?
- How are members of the migrant council selected? Is there an election? Who votes? Who holds them to account? How are they removed?
- Consider how you will ensure the representation of different communities, such as women
- Think about how people *not* on the council are heard e.g. new migrants, young people etc

EXAMPLE

The City of Leipzig - The Migrants' Council

The Migrant Advisory Council is an advisory committee which brings specific views and suggestions of migrants into local political discussions and has an influence on the decisions of the city council that affect the interests of migrants. It is made up of 22 members (at least 16 have a migrant background and 6 are nominated by the political parties represented in the City Council). The Migrants' Council is **coordinated by dedicated officers and a budget from the Migration Department of the city**. It can table motions and proposals that the municipality has to vote upon. The membership of the Council is renewed every five years, the position is unpaid. Candidates must be first-generation and should have been living in the city for at least 3 months. There is no formal criteria for German language skills, but in practice a certain level of German is required to take part in the discussions and to be able to understand local politics. At the start of a new term, seminars and workshops are organised for the elected members to help them understand how local politics work. In 2021 the election process was revised to an **online election open to all migrants living in the city** (around 60,000 people are eligible to vote). Results are approved by the City Council. Leipzig has a **communications strategy to reach voters** (through channels including local newspapers, NGOs etc). Increasing awareness among migrants in the city is an ongoing challenge.

CHALLENGES

- You may encounter political opposition to having such a formal body in places where it is not mandated or common
- You need to ensure that the council is not only a place for interesting discussions, a meeting of people the city approves of, or an extension of wider city politics. Members will lose interest if the City does not follow up on suggestions or answer concerns

10 - Ensure that the integration strategy and emergency reception can work together

It is key that any emergency response to large-scale needs goes hand in hand with long term measures. An emergency can prove very challenging if the existing strategy does not include any provisions for dealing with it.

A strategic approach will consider that integration of migrants starts from day one, so longer-term strategic objectives should be defined as early as possible when planning reception and other emergency arrangements in the short term. This ensures that the decisions made and resources mobilised in the early stages will support rather than harm efforts as the city moves beyond the 'emergency' phase.

Furthermore cities need to be involved in shaping and even delivering the emergency response, not simply providing funding to NGOs or others to do it, and must pay special attention to what is being learned about the new arrivals, their demography, intentions and aspirations.

Strategic responses to the Ukraine refugee crisis 2022

- Having an adopted strategy, or even strategic objectives, in place helps cities to respond more rapidly and effectively to mass arrivals
- The need for a city to respond to a crisis can strengthen the case for a strategic approach to integration and mobilise resources (and support) for integration measures more broadly

Zagreb's Action Plan for the Integration of asylum seekers and persons granted international protection, adopted in January 2022, provided a coordination structure that was beneficial to both the city's emergency practical response to arrivals from Ukraine, as well as ensuring that integration was key to planning from an early stage. The 'temporary protection' status given to Ukrainians was incorporated into the original action plan (which focused exclusively on refugees and asylum seekers) so that several measures could be extended to this group. Furthermore an inclusive approach to integration is effective, as it can future proof a plan to any 'new' groups arriving which can be vital in moments of crisis where rapid response is necessary.

Prague has adopted the latest version of their general integration strategy for years 2022-2027 in January 2022. Even though the strategy did not include comprehensive measures to address the large-scale refugee crisis, measures and principles established in the Prague integration strategy could be promoted during the emergency reception to Ukrainian refugees and continued to be shaped and improved through the learning from this response. For example, **'mainstreaming'** integration and improving access to services have been crucial in the reception of Ukrainian arrivals for every municipal department, many of which have never previously worked with migrants. The number of new arrivals since the Ukraine crisis has exceeded the capacity of NGOs who usually provide reception support. This has strengthened the rationale that all city departments are in need of the competencies to work with refugees and other migrants in both the emergency and longer term. Prague has been able to build on their key strategic principles to develop a 'crisis action plan' as part of its wider integration plan.

11 - Communication

The strategy itself should also cover communications and especially the role of the city administration in creating, shaping and supporting the positive attitudes that make good community relations possible. The foundation of this is the vision of the city as a place proud of itself and so welcoming to others. So the strategy needs to determine the core messages that will support it, and outline how these will be transmitted.

An active communications strategy and strong political leadership (where the mayor and other political leaders actively express their firm support for the strategy) can help to counter negative public perceptions that might pose a risk to the strategy - for example due to negative media coverage of an event involving a migrant.

City communications staff also need to be involved in delivering the strategy, and consider how they can best support it. For example:

- Present the strategic aims as aligned with the city and community's overall aims
- Include attitudinal change on migration in the aims of any communications work,
- Include migrants in positive communications (as e.g. providers of services, local businesses, "local heroes")
- Spotlight local people's actions in solidarity with migrants
- Develop style guides about appropriate language and terminology in cooperation with migrants themselves. Some examples and further information are in further resources.
- Set out a programme of key messages and imaginative ways to deliver them (competitions for local schools to design posters, help to do personally delivered video clips for social media, work with cultural producers)
- Develop a plan for dealing with specific events or emergencies with messages ready to share and appropriate messengers for them
- Work with political, community and faith leaders to support the delivery of the strategy, and work with them on how they can deliver the key messages
- Work with local media to encourage them to act responsibly (e.g. not report on migration related issues in a sensationalist manner) at a minimum and, even better, to promote the aims of the strategy with positive coverage

12 - Use opportunities and events to highlight support

The processes of developing the strategy can provide key moments for highlighting the city's commitment. For instance, sharing the outcomes of any community consultation processes with the media will broaden awareness of the role diversity plays in good decision-making and its benefits to the whole community. Events might present opportunities to underline the city's positive stance on migration and integration.

Examples of using events to highlight a city's commitment to integration

- Thessaloniki was European City of culture in 2012 and used that to reflect on the fact that the city has always been multicultural: in 1812 Greeks were the third largest ethnic group out of 10 in the city. Historically, Thessaloniki contained a large number of ethnicities (at least 11), and a large number of distinct cultures to go with those ethnicities. Greek culture is essentially a melting pot of different customs and traditions glued together by a sense of common history, language, and religion. Genoa and Riga have done similar work, emphasising the openness of their port cities as a key component of their culture.
- 2023 is the centenary of the arrival of the Greeks from Turkey after the "catastrophe " (the Turkish genocide of Greek and other populations) which increased the Greek population by 25%: one million people. The opportunity to use the fact that every family in Greece has some connection to those who arrived as refugees then is also being used in schools to draw parallels with current refugees
- Many religious festivals have a focus on migration (Christmas and the flight into Egypt and the Cabalgata de Reyes, Passover, role of Hijrah)
- The Ukraine refugee crisis 2022 has presented opportunities to shift public opinion and change perception of refugees. For example, Warsaw's strategy is evolving quickly in the light of a large influx of Ukrainian refugees and in Italy, the city of Cuneo adopted a communication strategy, around the search for migrant housing, to demonstrate that Nigerian mother and child are the same as Ukrainian mother and child, with the aim of encouraging and channelling awareness and solidarity for displaced persons more broadly.

CHALLENGE

How do public events reach beyond people who already support migration into the wider communities in the city?

Ways to mitigate this risk

1. Organise events in places people go anyway, such as public parks
2. Introduce migrants to new spaces (with support from other communities as needed)
3. Work in partnership with (local) organisations e.g. women in business network
4. Leave time for informal interaction
5. Provide shared space, time and food

13. Appoint a migrant integration champion

Migrant Champions can be appointed within each council to be the focus for ensuring that migrant residents are treated fairly and equally by the council, have a voice in how local services are provided, and can rely on a council that defends their rights. The role may be assigned to a senior officer or a politician within the city who will then ensure that migrant integration is always considered in city decisions, and acts as a point of contact for local migrant organisations and all colleagues needing advice or help with issues involved in migrant integration.

EXAMPLE

In the UK the relatively new migrant champions are local councillors chosen from within the ruling council group.

- London Borough of Islington Council, London, UK – UK's first migrants champion 2018
- Oxford City Council 2019

UK council Migrant Champions seek to:

- Be a point of contact for migrants, community groups and organisations so they can raise concerns about how the council is operating
- Review how all council services are operating to make sure they are really open and available to migrants who need them (this includes ensuring that migrant voices are listened to in all scrutiny processes)
- Ensure that the council is not sharing any information about migrants in the area with national immigration office, unless it is specifically legally required to
- Make sure that the needs of vulnerable migrants, especially children, are met by council services
- Make sure that all migrants entitled to vote are asked to register and helped if they need it, and that the information provided by relevant officers is accurate and appropriate
- Make the authority a welcoming place for new migrants and refugees
- Get the council to tell the government to respect migrants' rights and support campaigns to improve these

14. Evaluate strategic approaches to migrant integration

Any strategy or set of strategic approaches should be evaluated, with a view to improving it and incorporating any learning into future approaches. The city may already have an established system for evaluation, that simply needs to incorporate migrant integration into it. If not, then the strategy must include how it will be evaluated. To be most effective, such an evaluation should be formative, i.e. work alongside the strategy as it is unfolding and include arrangements for the learning from it to be fed back into the operation of the strategy.

A city's real life journey: Zagreb

When Zagreb adopted their Action Plan in January 2022 it was the only local strategy on integration in Croatia. The Croatian government set up a working group to update the national strategy for 2021-2023, and Zagreb was involved. Croatian cities are not required to have a local plan for integration, but Zagreb decided to develop one to focus on local-level implementation of the national plan. When the national strategy process incurred several delays, Zagreb proceeded with developing a local strategy. Some key drivers include:

- The national strategy provided a springboard for starting the design
- Strong commitment to integration by the political leadership in the city (elected in May 2021)
- Context issues such as labour shortages improving the chance to secure cross -party support
- Being part of a transnational learning exchange project – Connection, including the receipt of an implementation grant

The city's leadership successfully secured cross-party political support in the council for this strategy against a backdrop of a restrictive and contested national immigration policy context: Violent push backs taking place both at and inside the Croatian border prevent people from either entering or staying in the country but also undermine integration efforts.

CHECK OUT ZAGREB'S GOOD PRACTICE ⟶

Developing the Action Plan

Zagreb city conducted a public consultation on the draft action plan, which received 102 comments and suggestions from 3 national institutions and 9 NGOs. A key amendment which came out of the consultation process was to include asylum seekers in as many measures as possible which significantly extends the scope of the local plan beyond the national integration framework. This amendment was well received by the NGOs who had advocated for a more inclusive plan. The plan contains 45 measures spanning different city departments, but focuses on policy areas the city is responsible for, excluding those such as housing which are legislated by the national government. Its objectives range from improving access to services and information, including measures focusing on women, to increasing public awareness about migration and the benefits of an inclusive society, through events and media campaigns.

Collaboration is at the heart of Zagreb's approach, both within the municipality: improving communication, information sharing and coordination of action between then 3 city offices who will deliver the plan, and with key partners in civil society. NGOs are active participants in the design, delivery and evaluation of the strategy: from involvement in the consultation and membership of the Committee for the Development and Monitoring of the Action Plan to specific delivery partnerships agreements.

Zagreb's collaborative and strategic approach proved effective just weeks after it was adopted. With thousands of refugees arriving in Croatia from Ukraine following the Russian invasion in February 2022, the Croatian state implemented various measures, in line with other EU countries. On a local level, the city was able to extend key measures of their recently adopted Plan to include Ukrainians granted 'Temporary Protection'. Having a strategic approach in place, including coordination structures with unprecedented levels of cooperation between the departments of the city and NGOs has enabled a faster more effective response to support these new arrivals. The political response to the crisis on the national level has also made it easier for Zagreb to mobilise resources for their local integration agenda. The City of Zagreb also seized this opportunity to advocate that all measures applied to Ukrainians should be applied to all refugees.

Next steps

Zagreb's vision for migrant integration continues to evolve as the city and partners learn through the plan's implementation and identify areas to tackle in the next phase of the plan. The welcome of Ukrainians demonstrates the benefits of a future-proof approach, to be able to incorporate new and unpredictable groups of arrivals and immigration statuses. This principle will be tested again as the city hopes, in the next phase, to extend the plan to include measures to support the integration of significant numbers of third country nationals working in Croatia, who are currently at risk of exploitation.

Many of the NGOs working closely with the city focus on increasing involvement of people with lived experience of migration in decision making processes for integration and immigration policy. The new two-way communication channels between the city and NGOs open many more opportunities for migrant participation in future planning. Mid 2022, a public call for interest was published to select 4 external stakeholders – NGO's, representatives of **migrant communities** - to join the "City Coordination for Integration" working group.

The municipality and other key stakeholders are optimistic about the impact of the plan, both encouraging other Croatian cities to develop their own local level plans and using Zagreb's experience to influence national policy.

GOOD PRACTICES
on creating strategic approaches to migrant integration

Paris Migrant Integration Strategy

Lead Agency

City of Paris Council which is both a municipal & departmental authority

Context & rationale

Numbers of asylum seekers in Paris are increasing (in line with France as a whole and the Ile de France region especially) and latest data show that 20% of the 2,19 million population of the City are foreign-born (2016) and 14.4% are non-nationals (2016). The strategy targets not only all migrants (including the undocumented) but also the whole population of Paris, especially those who show some solidarity with migrants. It hopes to improve the global situation of refugees living in Paris and to enable them to be fully integrated.

Description

A Mobilization Plan of the Community of Paris for Refugee Reception adopted by the City Council was developed in response to the “crisis” in 2015, built on the strong political commitment of the Mayor, involving 13 of the deputy mayors, and multilevel participation, including a citizen conference involving NGOs and citizens.

After consultation, a second plan was developed in 2019, focusing on integration: access to rights, access to housing, labour market integration, integration through culture and sports, French classes etc.

The Centre for Social Action of Paris also developed its own plan, to empower its services in the reception and social support of users with a migratory background, and especially newcomers.

Resources Needed

Four key places in Paris

T**he bubble:** first level reception centre in place from November 2016 to March 2018 to put a stop to the camps in the streets of Paris. The structure was meant to be moved to another location but never did due to the national government's opposition. The bubble was created with the city's own funds even though the matter is a national competence.

The Refugee House/"Maison des réfugiés": It is a highly symbolic place, funded entirely by the city open to all migrants with or without a right to stay in France. It is not a place for the refugees only, but a place about refugees, where everyone – including Parisians - can come.

The "Halte Humanitaire": a day-care centre dedicated to refugees opened in 2019 by the City of Paris and run by an NGO. The Halte Humanitaire gives a shelter for the day to refugees who are homeless and provide them support in accessing their rights, language classes and many activities. In 2020, the Halte Humanitaire moved from the suburb to the very centre of Paris.

The "Fabrique de la solidarité": Created in 2020, this platform is a citizen movement that gathers all Parisians who want to take part in the fight against exclusion. The city then wondered how to work with them, and to support them, how can these citizens be featured into the integration strategy.

The city also developed a Refugee Platform (Plateforme Refugiés) in order to coordinate the different actions in the strategy. This model reflects the commitment of the municipality with civil society and institutional actors from the start of the process. This was also beneficial for the funders who could monitor unified action.

The city created a financial line dedicated to refugee's reception and integration, allowing the funding of many organizations and facilities. In 2022, this financial line is about 5 million €

Results

The strategies produced a big change, providing new services and support to refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Paris, even migrants who have not asked for asylum yet or rejected asylum applicants. Even if the national government is in charge of asylum seekers and is supposed to take care of them, a lot of them found themselves with no housing, struggle to access their most fundamental rights and experience precariousness.

The strategies also benefitted Parisians willing to show solidarity to migrants as many new opportunities for volunteering emerged.

In terms of evaluation, the City of Paris evaluate the actions of the organizations it finances and the places it opens.

Success Factors

- ✓ Strategy prompted by a crisis
- ✓ Strong support from the mayor
- ✓ Physical spaces identified where strategy can manifest
- ✓ Fabrique de la solidarite and the Maison de Refugies are success stories

Risks & Challenges

Challenges

- Each year the number of refugees in Paris increases despite the government policy to relocate refugees outside Paris
- Presence of significant numbers of undocumented migrants (65% of asylum seekers have been rejected) and asylum seekers who are in a 'Dublin' procedure.
- A great number of homeless refugees due to difficulties to be accommodated in Paris
- Securing refugee and migrant participation: there is no formal and systematic consultation of migrants organised in the city. Migrants and migrant communities are consulted but in an informal way. How can we best take into account their experience to shape and evaluate current policies and activities?

Risks

- Opposition by national government, and hostile national politics
- To substitute the State on its prerogatives

Core principles of the plan

- ✓ Any obstacle to first reception is detrimental to later integration.
- ✓ Answering to basic needs of migrants is just the first step towards a better integration
- ✓ By integration, we mean helping migrants to feel part of the City, being involved as a member of the community
- ✓ Integration needs time and adaptation
- ✓ No hierarchy between homeless people should be made (regardless of their status)
- ✓ Paris' mobilisation is Parisians' mobilisation: involve all residents and mobilise them
- ✓ Answering emergency needs goes hand in hand with long-term measures

Cecile Miné & Anna Leysens, refugees' projects managers

Top recommendations

- ✓ Find your interlocutors at all levels, the State, the Region, the Land, the province..., civil societies (including those that are not organised in associations, such as citizens group, neighbourhood) but also migrant communities themselves. These are important forces to confront and to gather around tables in order to design in a most participatory way.
- ✓ Go beyond short-term planning: what will this person itinerary in one or two years in the city be? What about their children in ten years?
- ✓ Integration should be a transverse matter in the way cities organize. It should not be a dedicated department working on that question but rather a reflection at all levels in the city.

Connection videos on Paris strategy: here and here
OECD, Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Paris, 2018

Turin Anti-Racist Pact

Lead Agency

City of Turin

Context & rationale

The Turin Anti-racist Pact objectives:
1. to prevent and counter all forms of racism: individual, institutional, structural and historical;
2. to guarantee equal access to political, cultural, social and economic life of the city to all its citizens.

The aim was to bring together many people and organisations that rarely inter exchange and cooperate with one another, such as experts who study discrimination and racism and the actual victims of racism. The City of Turin asked the participants to express their opinions on what they thought the City should be doing in order to fight racism at a local level.

Description

On the 17th of March 2020, just a few days before the symbolic date of March 21st, International Day for the elimination of racial discrimination, Turin became the first Municipality in Italy to officially declare the heritage of antiracist actions and practices implemented by the City and all the local civil society organisations as a common asset belonging to the City's identity and to all its inhabitants. The City launched a public call to receive contributions and expressions of interest from the civil society so as to start a participatory process for co-planning and co-designing antiracist policies.

The co-planning / co-designing process took almost a year, between March 2020 and March 2021, and involved 60 subjects (organisations / individuals) split in 10 subgroups that worked, online (due to the Covid19 pandemics' restrictions) and offline, on 4 main areas of intervention. At least 50 meetings between online group sessions and plenary assemblies in presence -when the pandemics' restrictions allowed it-, were held during a co-planning process that ended with the co-drafting of a document, the Pact of Collaboration for an Anti-racist Turin.

The Pact of Collaboration for an Anti-racist Turin was co-signed the 17th of June 2021 by the City itself and fifty-eight civic subjects who had shared the co-planning and co-drafting process, such as trade unions, second-level networks, neighbourhood centres, youth centres, religious institutions, migrant communities, informal groups and cultural institutions/associations.

The Pact is based on core values: reciprocity, respect, recognition, listening, anti-fascism, self-determination, awareness, free pursuit of one's own happiness, equality, equity, justice and dignity, humanity, empathy, solidarity.

The Pact's bodies are: the President, who is, by law, the City of Turin Deputy Mayor for Human Rights; the two Vice-Presidents, who are elected among the civic subjects that signed the Pact; the General Assembly, the decision-making body, participated by all the Pact's partners; the five Working Groups, each of which is represented by two coordinators; the Steering Committee, joined by the President, the two Vice Presidents and the ten coordinators of the five Working groups; the Secretariat that is run by the personnel of the City of Turin's Human Rights Office.

The Pact's partners have identified five areas of intervention for activities, each of them to be implemented by a specific Working Groups (WG):

1. Events and Initiatives;
2. Public Spaces
3. Empowerment
4. Access to Services
5. Education and Culture

Each of the five WG supports the Steering Committee to draft the Pact's Annual Plan of Actions by planning a project for the upcoming year in a specific area. The Annual Plan is therefore approved by the Pact's General Assembly and, after that, officially endorsed by the City of Turin by means of a resolution of the City's Board of Government. Events and initiatives focused on access to services, especially health and registry services, access to spaces, better information, mutual training of the City's civil servants and residents, coordination and codesign.

Resources Needed

The whole building process was not financially funded as it was entirely carried out by the City of Turin's municipal offices supported by the voluntary work of participants from civil society organisations.
The building process for the drafting of the Pact involved:

- two Departments and three offices from the Municipal Administration
- Several civic subjects: 1 trade union, representatives of 3 religious institutions, 2 informal groups, 4 second-level networks, 2 centres for youth leadership, social cooperatives, voluntary associations and associations for social promotion.

Results

The Annual Plan is a unique example in Italy of a document containing actions, projects, mutual commitments that guarantees the implementation and evaluation of policies, by pioneering a unified and strategic approach directly involving communities and people from different backgrounds and origins in the developing stage. Who benefited and how? The Pact started its first activities only one year ago, too short a time to draw a thorough evaluation on the categories that most benefited from its actions. It is, none the less, possible to mention that as for the year 2022, all Turin's inhabitants benefited from the rich calendar of events that were held in the city on the occasion of the celebration of the 21st of March, International Day for the elimination of racial discrimination.

What concrete change did it produce for its target group?

A significant change brought by the Pact's was to foster mutual knowledge and exchange among local public services, institutions, associations and individuals coming from very different backgrounds.

Each of the joining subjects shared its own knowledge, culture and experience and this entailed an ongoing process of mutual empowerment for all the participants.

In addition, since 2022 the connection with other projects (namely the EU-funded SUPER, on hate crimes and racism) allowed for a better understanding and new strand of work dealing with discriminatory barriers and risk of racism in local public services.

Success Factors

The Pact has made an innovative use of the concept of the 'Common Goods"' that is foreseen by the Italian law as an inventive way of reframing the cultural debate.

What needs to be in place in order for this to be taken forward (pre-conditions for success)?
The Turin Anti-racist Pact can benefit from a historic local context rich of institutions/bodies/civil society organisations sharing strong anti-fascist and anti-racist values and willing to get involved for protecting these values.

What worked best/ what was most successful?
The process of elaboration of the core concepts enshrined in the Pact was a successful work as it enabled all different actors to gradually deepen their knowledge and awareness on the antiracist topics and co-create a shared common language among the partners. Another successful factor was the building of a cooperative procedure that gathered around the same table different entities that do not usually confront and share with each other. In this procedure, the local municipality is on an equal term as the other subscribers of the pact and discussions and decisions are guided by mutual trust.

Evaluation
The monitoring and evaluation process of the Pact's activities are foreseen by article 9. The Steering Committee is responsible for monitoring the activities carried out by the WG and expressing its concerns on critical issues. In addition, the General Assembly must approve an Evaluation Report of the Activities implemented by the Working Groups the preceding year. This document is drafted by the Steering Committee on the basis of the Working Groups' individual reports on their own carried out activities.

Risks & Challenges

In the participatory process resulting from the creation of the pact, it is necessary to overcome potential fragmentation, unbalanced resource heterogeneity (in terms of knowledge, volunteers). Moreover, the lack of specific resources or grants affected the active participation of the smallest associations and informal groups.

These challenging factors did not prevent the signature of the pact by fifty-eight partners, almost all of the initial participants. This fact already represents a good starting goal that has been reached thanks to a great theoretical and operational work managed by the elected officials and supported by the personnel of the Municipality's offices. The future activities of the Pact itself, or new projects developed by Pact's members, will allow for further considerations on strategies to overcome initial challenges.

Among the biggest risks involved is the fact that without the right support and commitment from all partners and the Municipality, the Pact might become a mere declaration of good intentions to which no actions and outcomes for citizens' lives would follow.

Pre-conditions for success

- Political commitment of local Authorities, both political and administrative
- Active civil society organisations, with track records of work with local authorities

Do's

1. To widen as much as possible the participation to different subjects/institutions/organisations in order to enrich the internal debating and mutual empowerment.
2. To carefully evaluate the pros and cons of the legal form that will be chosen for the Pact and its position in the framework of national law and local regulations.

Top Recommendations

1. Promoting and supporting diversity and plurality of thoughts and opinions among the civil society organisations active in the local context;
2. Keeping the collective interest as a goal;
3. Taking into account that considerable time is needed in participatory processes aiming at involving all subjects in a proactive way.

Head of Human Rights Office: Marilena Parisi
Human Rights Office: Nicoletta Giovanelli

Further Information here

Policy of the City of Prague for the Integration of Migrants 2022-27 & development of Action Plan 2022-23

Prague,Czech Republic

Lead Agency

City of Prague

Context & rationale

Target population

Migrants, majority societies and professionals

Aims:

- Development of comprehensive & feasible strategic documents for the integration of foreigners (Policy and Action Plan) reflecting the current situation in Prague and focusing more thoroughly on new key areas and challenges
- mainstreaming, participation of migrants and systematic cooperation with the city, systematic monitoring and evaluation of Prague's strategic documents for the integration of foreigners.

Challenge being addressed

- Update of Prague's strategic document (City policy) for the integration of foreigners, taking into account the need to expand the mainstreaming of work with foreigners within relevant city agencies and administrative bodies and organisations. The previous policy included measures in the field of health and social services which could not be effectively implemented within the integration policy. The aim was therefore to set up the new policy in such a way as to promote mainstreaming as a means of adapting other relevant urban strategies (both new and existing).
- Another challenge in the formulation of the new policy was the effort to develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Policy and Action Plans, because the previous evaluation of the implementation of the strategies was carried out only superficially and through verbal comments on the implementation of measures within the given priorities.
- Another significant challenge was the development of systematic involvement of migrants in the processes of implementation, evaluation and development of the city's integration policy, as well as efforts to reflect on other relevant areas of life in Prague from the perspective of migrants.

Description

When did the practice start?
The process of updating the Policy has been underway since January 2019, when a Process Audit Working Group reviewed previous processes and procedures for updating strategic documents, planned the anticipated schedule of work, and established the responsibilities of working group members.

What was in place / preconditions for success
Established expert advisory platforms - mainly the Regional Advisory Platform, the Platform of the Education Departments of the City Districts and the Prague City Hall on the education and inclusion of foreign children and pupils, the Advisory Platform of the Prague City Hall and the City Districts on the integration of foreigners.

Ongoing project School as an Integration Partner (2019-2021). The project focused on one of the most important areas in terms of integration within the Education priority - the situation of pupils with a different mother tongue in primary schools. Specifically, the project focused on the following objectives:

- to map the integration of children with a different mother tongue in Prague schools,
- to collect examples of good practice,
- identify problematic areas on the part of schools, parents and pupils,
- design and test a tool for monitoring the education of children with a different mother tongue

Finalising project Cities and Inclusive Strategies (2017-2019) - Recommendations for the further development of Prague's integration policy, including the reflection of support for migrants through donation programmes, establishment of the Process Audit Working Group

Main activities:

- SWOT analysis based on the priorities of the outgoing Policy
- Establishment of the working groups for actual priorities and revision of the SWOT analysis findings for newly defined priorities.
- Ongoing operation of the Process Audit Working Group to coordinate the ongoing work on updating the Policy and Action Plan.
- Round tables for the five priorities in the updated Policy with experts from relevant fields and organizations (representatives of the Commission of the Prague City Council for Integration of Foreigners, NGOs, employers, academia, governmental ministries, city districts and other public institutions).
- Final presentation and discussion on the Policy in the broad meeting of the Regional Advisory Platform.
- Comment procedure and approval of the Policy by the Prague City Council and subsequently by the City Council.

Who is delivering this? Main agencies and partners involved?

- Department of national minorities and foreigners
- Process Audit Working Group – a group composed of experts in the field of integration - heads of Policy priorities with expertise in individual areas, the working group includes representative of the City of Prague, the non-profit sector, City District, Integration centre Prague
- Integration Centre Prague – NGO founded by the City of Prague as a key partner in integration of migrants in Prague.

Resources Needed

Staff

- Department of national minorities and foreigners (specialist and the head of the department)
- Department of education and youth (department offices partially dedicated to integration issues)
- representatives of the Commission of the Prague City Council for Integration of Foreigners
- 7 members of the Process Audit Working Group

Funding

financing activities directly related to the updating of strategic documents for the integration of foreigners – approximately 350.000 CZK (cca 14209 EUR); this does not include the costs of activities that were implemented within the framework of third-party projects in cooperation with Prague (without direct financial costs from the city), which by their focus and results also contributed to the evaluation of the previous policy and the setting of new priorities and measures in the policy for the period 2022-2027 (e.g. the project School as an Integration Partner, the project Cities and Inclusive Strategies)

Partners

Integration Centre Prague; Commission of the Prague City Council for Integration of Foreigners; Regional advisory Platform (actors from public, non-profit and commercial sector, academia); Advisory Platform for Representatives of Education Departments on Education of Children and Pupils with a Different Mother Tongue; Advisory Platform for Representatives of Districts of Prague and Prague City Hall on Integration of Foreigners; Sociology Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences (academic institution implementing the project School as an Integration Partner); Association for Integration and Migration (NGO implementing the project Cities and Inclusive Strategies).

Results

So far – in the field of migrants' participation, Prague has started to cooperate with an NGO (InBáze) on project focusing on migrant's participation in civic life. Prague declared support for this project that is an opportunity to build a stable platform or body for active representatives of the migrant community or organizations in Prague. It is a 2-year project that started in early 2022.

How do you plan to monitor the strategy?
In terms of the systematic monitoring and evaluation of Prague's strategic documents there is a goal to have some classification recommendations for various types of measures and activities set by the Policy and Action plan – this recommendations should help to find better mechanisms on how to work with indicators related to those different types of measures and activities and bring us to what is needed to be followed and done with respect to monitor or assess their implementation and effectiveness. These recommendations are not finished yet.

Success Factors

- Analytical & monitoring projects focused on specific areas that have not been sufficiently described (e.g. the extent and focus of support for foreigners under other subsidy programmes of the City of Prague beyond the one focused on the integration of foreigners) or are perceived as the most challenging in terms of integration of foreigners in the city (e.g. inclusion and education of children with different mother tongue at basic schools).
- Long term networking with NGOs active in the field of integration, academic institutions and actors from municipal level with special importance for situation of migrants (e.g. municipal education departments).

Why?
1. Analytical and monitoring projects brought us concrete pictures of some important areas and enabled us to react on them in the development of Prague integration strategies).
2. Stable connections with actors from the non-profit, academic and local level of the city districts provide opportunities for

- easier cooperation in the process of creating a new or updating the existing strategy
- cooperation on projects that require the active cooperation of third parties
- not only implementing the strategy itself, but also implementing projects or activities to evaluate or monitor the implementation of strategic documents.

Challenges

- Coordinating the city districts of Prague, who are not required to implement integration measures. In order to address this, Prague encourages peer to peer learning among districts already active in the field of integration and those just starting through the Advisory Platform for Representatives of Districts of Prague and Prague City Hall on Integration of Foreigners. However, the activation of many districts is still difficult because of the lack of a stable anchor for integration within the administration of the districts and, more generally, the lack of interest of political actors in this issue and its active solution.
- Ensuring systematic participation from migrants in the development of the strategy. This challenge was partly overcome by the active participation of migrant organisations/active migrants through the Regional Consultative Platform.

Mass reception during development of plan – Ukraine crisis
Having principles such as 'mainstreaming' defined through the strategy development process, supported Prague's response to this crisis. The government's strategy for addressing the refugee crisis has identified valid areas to follow at the regional level. As part of the completion of the Action Plan 2022-2023, a document setting out a recommended course of action for medium- and long-term work with Ukrainian refugees on their integration into Czech society should now be annexed to this plan.

Risks

Lack of preparedness for crisis management of a situation such as the refugee crisis - lack of a crisis plan and a longer-term plan for responding to the migration of large numbers of people

Insufficient staff and strategic coverage of migrant integration at municipal and regional level.

Absence of mainstreaming on the level of local and regional administration and the level of other local service providers – now many public bodies and service providers that did not build their capacities for working with migrants and focused solely or mainly on majority society have problems in dealing with large numbers of refugees needing help in various areas and live situations (especially in social services, healthcare).

Do's

- Use existing or establish stable (not just ad hoc) expert platforms of key actors focused on specific fields relevant for migrant integration (i.e. in Prague – education and inclusion of migrants in basic schools and nurseries; integration in city districts; regional advisory platform for a wide range of actors).
- Implement specific analytical and monitoring projects to discover the situation in specific fields of integration (e.g. situation of specific migrant groups; specific policies relevant for migrants).
- Because of the cross-cutting nature of integration, try to raise political interest and support to prevent integration remaining a narrowly focused agenda that does not have the necessary overlap with other relevant areas and policies of the city. Inform relevant politicians about ongoing processes and try to engage them in development of the strategy, stress the importance of migrant integration for other public policies represented by these politicians.

Dont's

Don’t underestimate the time and resources needed. When creating/updating strategic documents for the integration of foreigners (in the case of the threshold - Policy for 6 years + 2-year action plan), ensure adequate management and coordination capacities for experts responsible for coordination and processing outputs from activities that take place during the development of the strategic documents. The accumulation of tasks related with the whole process especially when there are two strategies in place can seriously undermine the scheduled timetable of the development and finalising the strategic documents.

Top Recommendations

- Ensure that staff primarily responsible for developing the content of strategic documents have sufficient time and capacity to carry out the tasks associated with the development of the document and the coordination of other actors involved in the process.

- Actively involve politicians in the process of updating or developing new strategies for the integration of foreigners and, when developing a strategy, create a simplified summary document informing about the principles, priorities and objectives of the strategy to help explain the content and focus of the strategies. Try to make strategy documents graphically attractive by including infographics with diagrams of actors, competences, processes, etc., as this makes an otherwise technical document more readable and attractive to other actors less informed about integration.

- Focus on implementation of specific analytical and monitoring projects designed for specific important field or target group of integration policy - broad and generalised analyses can be useful to provide an overall picture of the situation, but in relation to the needs of certain sub and specific target groups, general analyses may not be very helpful because they do not provide sufficient detail and the necessary information that is relevant for differentiated groups of migrants or the professionals working with them.

Migrants Integration Specialist: Jan Janoušek

Prague For All | Policy of the City of Prague for the Integration of Migrants 2022-2027 | Facebook | Regional advisory platform | Special Prague website for Ukrainian refugees

Thessaloniki - REACT programme – Rental accommodation scheme programme

Thessaloniki, Greece

Lead Agency

REACT (ESTIA II) is implemented by municipality of Thessaloniki, as leader partner, and is the only one in Greece that is implemented by a collective scheme with the participation of several actors, municipalities, NGOs, Developmental Agencies.

Context & rationale

The programme was developed in response to dealing with the refugee crisis, the majority of whom wanted to transit to another country, but were likely to find this impossible, and the need to provide urban accommodation along with the refugee camps.

The purpose of the project is to ensure an adequate living standard for applicants for international protection, through the provision of housing, as well as the provision of support services, according to their needs and guided by the integrated provision of material reception conditions within the framework of EU law.

The project target group is refugee populations and vulnerable asylum seekers who have applied, or will apply, for asylum in Greece and are eligible for relocation and/or family reunification. Most of these are from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and some from Lebanon, Congo, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali, Somalia etc.

The most vulnerable asylum seekers such as people with severe health issues, pregnant women, etc. that entered the React project, can be hosted in ‘Filoxenio’: Shelter for Families of Asylum Seekers’.

Description

The programme launched in 2016 to provide accommodation (more than 900 places) in private apartments, that spread out to the region to avoid concentration and ghettoization.

In the beginning the Municipality set up a working group of 5-6 persons. They had to persuade 130 administrative officers to overcome the officialism, to find and rent 150 apartments to accommodate 950 refugees and persuade them to leave the Aristoteles square (a major centric square of the city). She described in detail the cooperation with NGOs, having previous experience in migration problem, and the use of their knowledge on street work, something that municipal officers could use for quick results. It was a key point to turn all their volunteer experience they have got in places like Eidomeni (a village on the border with Northern Macedonia that almost 1 million refugees crossed in 2015-2016) into professional work as part of a municipal project.

Main Activities

The programme provides temporary accommodation for asylum seekers; it mainly operates as a reception programme, but also provides support to facilitate smooth inclusion into the local community i.e. facilitates medical appointments and school enrolments, offers psychological support and accompaniment services, conducts referrals to other actors; a set of support and protection services (including legal and financial assistance, interpretation, transport, and accompaniment services, as well as health management services, special psychosocial support for children, etc.).

The programme covers the rent, all home utilities and provides financial assistance (from 150 EUR to 490 EUR, based on the size of household or special needs) as well as social integration support.

Although REACT is a reception program, where a municipality is involved, it becomes /acquires integration characteristics e.g school enrolment, communications with neighbours, job training and coaching.

Resources Needed

The programme ‘ESTIA: Rental accommodation scheme for asylum seekers’ is funded by the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund of European Union and has been implemented in Greece since 2016, initially under the coordination of the UNHCR.

Since 2021 under the coordination of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum funded by the European Union and the Public Investment Program of Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

Except the LP, the project’s partnership is composed by local authorities/municipalities (Thessalonikis, Kalamarias, Neapolis-Sykeon), developmental agencies (ANATOLIKI S.A., Mitropolitiki Anaptixiaki) and NGOs (ARSIS, PRAKSIS, YMCA).

It coordinates with other voluntary and statutory organisations for creating a strong supportive local network and with potential employers, for example in agriculture where appropriate.

Results

Since July 2016, REACT was helpful for 2.953 people, of which 2.513 recognised as refugees and left to other European countries for family reunification /relocation.

Beneficiaries can settle in Greek type of accommodation and start the integration process, including insertion into the labour market where possible.

Needs, such as special needs care, domestic violence, abuse, torture, were recorded, evaluated, coped with/ resolved.

Community level work has improved relations between residents and newcomers. Raise awareness campaigns (e.g. Paint contest, Career4all, Historical Walk: Together we discover the history of our neighborhood and our common routes), videos, flyers, posters held by all partners sensitised the locals.

In a study held on July 2019, showed that the great majority of refugees and asylum seekers in the accommodation scheme and in the camp of Diavata had been in Thessaloniki less than one year. Accessing employment and speaking the Greek language as a key condition for local integration and staying in Greece were also highlighted. Link

No formal evaluation has been carried out, but beneficiaries leaving the programme stated that they were satisfied with the services provided to them and the immediate response of the programme staff to regular or emergency needs arising during their stay in the programme apartments

Success Factors

Pre-conditions for success

Set up Standard Operating Procedures to ensure high quality and effective delivery, meaning that REACT workers can

Constantly Staff Training in React's services

Psychosocial support and reception programmes should be holistic, promote self-reliance and have stability in person and in services, especially in highly vulnerable groups

The carefully planned distribution of the refugee population in city areas that are not overly populated by refugees but are strategically located in areas with easy access to services and facilities.

Access to Greek language courses provided from the outset and both to asylum seekers and refugees with intention to stay in Greece.

Success factors

Set up by Municipality a cooperation scheme between public and private local bodies and NGOs so there is a clear link between what happens at community level and the programme

Strong involvement by municipality = bolstering accountability, secure financial management & quality assurance

Technical expertise and flexibility of the partnership model

Promote activities that bring refugees and local community together to help them establish personal relationships e.g. interactions between the refugee population and the local community at least once per week with their neighbours or local shop owners.

The procedure of interpretation in accompaniment services such as hospitals, parents-teachers' meetings, Municipal Community centres, tax office, registry etc.

The collective scheme of the React partnership that was cross-referenced and could cover most needs of the beneficiaries.

Risks & Challenges

- Varying and changing needs of target group – highly diverse and vulnerable- how to respond to changing needs?
- Complaints from neighbours – dealt with by a 3-person committee to manage conflict/ complaints. Also, preventative measures such as prior consultations & post-arrival meetings with neighbourhood.
- Coordinating different services involved so they can be independent/ semi-independent from funding cycles
- It is the responsibility of the municipalities to design social policy, not only to implement decisions of the central administration.
- It is challenging for the municipalities to have some space to plan how to become the leader of a large and diverse consortium.
- The main obstacles in social and labor integration are the lack of employment opportunities and recognition of academic qualifications or professional skills in Greece coupled with inability to communicate in Greek at an adequate level.
- Few asylum seekers are attending Greek language courses

Recommendations

- Different housing markets would require adapted approaches, but all need a clear view on the likely pathway out of the accommodation for the families involved
- Do have a mechanism for preparing neighbours and resolving potential conflicts at the earliest possible stage
- Vulnerable families need quite a lot of social work support
- Fast and easy adaptability to upcoming needs
- An enlarged partnership responding to the diverse needs of refugees plus a very good networking and cooperation between the actors involved
- Creating a support network for basic daily needs as financial assistance is often not enough

Top 3 recommendations

- Very good coordination and planning-enlarge ana targeting in different needs consortium
- Organization of awareness-raising and information dissemination actions Development of partnerships
- Well and continuously trained staff

Virginia Politi, coordinator of the Department for refugees & immigrants, municipality of Thessaloniki

PREACT website REACT Facebook page
Eurocities article URBACT website

Zagreb's Action Plan for the integration of asylum seekers and persons granted international protection

Lead Agency

City of Zagreb

Context & rationale

In Croatia there was a National Action Plan for Integration of Persons Granted International Protection implemented between 2017-2019. Zagreb was invited to join the working group to develop the new national plan for 2021-2023. While there is no legal obligation for Croatian cities to adopt their own plan for integration, Zagreb wanted to develop a plan for the implementation of the National Plan. The National plan was delayed and so Zagreb decided to proceed with their own local strategy.

Recent migration context: In 2015 people displaced from war affected areas in the Middle East and Africa were arriving in Croatia, via the 'Balkan route', mostly transiting to other European countries. When the borders closed in 2016 some of those seeking international protection stayed in Croatia and its capital. Many of the civic initiatives that had sprung up in 2015 to respond to humanitarian need in transit camps also started to provide integration support for people claiming asylum in Croatia. Zagreb municipality had not been able to build a clear picture of migration and integration in the city because these policy areas were managed by the state. In 2019 the city was for the first time invited to participate in the development of the national integration plan. The City wanted to develop a strategic approach to integration and better understand migration on the city level in order to encourage people to stay in Zagreb.

Target groups: The action plan, following the national plan, aims to support the integration of those granted international protection, but beyond the national framework also includes asylum seekers in several measures.

Aims

Inform persons granted IP (+ asylum seekers and persons granted temporary protection) about rights and available services provided by the City and to provide support in the access and exercise their rights (interpretation and mediation).

Provide integration support: language learning, learning about culture and tradition, adult education and employment support, extra-curricular and social activities, including those specifically provided for women

Raise awareness about migration and integration and promote inclusion in the local community

Strengthen competencies of city officials and employees of services run by the city in integration field.

Description

The development of the action plan began in 2020. The plan was adopted by the City Assembly in January 2022.

What was in place:

- Zagreb could build on the measures in the National Acton Plan (the 2017-2019 plan and the draft of the plan 2021-23 plan not yet adopted) but could also go beyond this framework.
- Political Will: Change in leadership in the City Assembly in May 2021 to Green Left Coalition who have a commitment to integration and developing better policies.
- Involvement in Connection Project: Access to transnational learning and grant.

Main activities

- Creation of a website [integracija.zagreb.hr] and printing of leaflets providing information in Croatian, English, Arabic and Farsi, Ukrainian, to persons granted IP (or Temporary Protection) on rights and services.
- Creating a register of interpreters
- Provision of support so that persons granted IP can exercise rights
- Distribution of food and hygiene supplies
- Organising workshops and sessions to learn Croatian language and culture
- Organising artistic and IT workshops for migrant women
- Organising public events and thematic forums to raise awareness about integration and build inclusive and welcoming culture
- Organise training on integration for employees of the city who provide social and health services
- Develop programmes for adult education and access to employment for persons granted IP
-
- These activities are delivered by the relevant City departments (City Office for Culture, International Relations and Civil Society, City Office for Education, Sport and Youth, City Office for Social Protection, Health, War Veterans and People with Disabilities) and partner NGOs.
- tegration and developing better policies.
- Involvement in Connection Project: Access to transnational learning and grant.

Resources Needed

Employees of the City of Zagreb

The Committee for the Development and monitoring of the Action Plan was set up, made up of city offices and one NGO (Jesuit Refugee Service).

8 civil society organisations have signed partnership agreements with the city to fulfil the implementation of the plan

€50,000 implementation grant from Connection Project for the implementation of measures of the Action Plan.

Co-financing of legal aid through an agreement between the city of Zagreb and the Law Faculty of the University of Zagreb.

There is also scope for NGOs to apply for tenders to provide services and projects financed through the City of Zagreb Budget 2022 (on themes such as integration, equality and anti-discrimination)

Results

In less than 6 months since being adopted there are already positive outcomes:

A public call for expression of interest for NGOs to participate in the implementation of the Connection project has resulted in partnership agreements with 8 organisations who are implementing activities.

The action plan has been extended to persons granted temporary protection due to the Ukrainian crisis

World Refugee Day 2022 event in Ribnjak Park organised by the City of Zagreb in cooperation with Center for youth Ribnjak. 5 NGOs participated in the all day programme with various activities like workshops for children and adults, musical workshops, exposition of ceramics and glass, sport activities, storytelling and traditional delicacies. Media was present through all programme.

Successful Factors

Pre-conditions for success

Carrying out a public consultation both improved the draft action plan, for eg. an amendment to include asylum seekers in as many measures as possible and increased commitment and cooperation from NGOs and the migrant communities they work with.

What has worked well

- The Action Plan has initiated strong communication and cooperation between city departments and with NGOs.
- Integration has been more present in public communication and the media with the help of web site, leaflets and celebration of the World Refugee Day.

Risks & Challenges

Working within a restrictive national immigration policy context: focusing the plan on areas where city has control, such as social protection, healthcare and employment, not on areas such as housing which is a national competency.

Addressing areas that are not in the jurisdiction of the City:

- Employment: to work around this the City is providing information and add in the access to employment.
- Housing: housing is under the jurisdiction of the state, and the City is currently not able to provide housing to migrants: The city is looking at scope to improve housing for migrants in the next city action plan.

Other challenges where the city would like to address in the future: scholarships for pupils and students granted international protection

Risks

- Losing political support for the plan within the city assembly.
- Change in national policy

Top Recomendations

- ✓ Focus on implementing existing and specific measures well and widen the scope of activities if possible
- ✓ Cooperate with other city offices who didn't so far deal with integration activities
- ✓ involve religious communities into integration and inclusion because of their strong impact on their communities

Do's

Carry out a public consultation, specifically consulting migrant communities and the organisations that work closely with these groups

Do involve people with migration experience in the coordination of the [action plan?] ideally those with different immigration statuses.

Make the plan as future-proof as possible, for example, making it possible to extend measures to include other groups of migrants, such as Ukrainian's with Temporary Protection or third country nationals coming to work in Croatia (a group which Zagreb is considering how to incorporate in the next phrase of their plan).

Review the expertise and resources already existing in the city – expertise among NGOs, participation in national and international networks, institutions such as Universities.

Consider possible crises (Pandemics, war in neighbouring countries, earthquakes or other disasters that may require resources etc) in the development of the plan – build in flexibility

Precondition for success

The Municipality must support a strategic approach to integration

Good cooperation between the city offices and NGOs

Dont's

Don't depend on the national strategic documents

Don't exclude the organisation of certain activities just because the City itself does not have the experience with their implementation

Jana Radić, Head of the municipal Department for the Promotion of Human Rights and Civil Society in the City office for Culture, International Relations & Civil Society

Zagreb's Webpage on integration developed as part of the Action Plan

Further resources

Eurocities, the Integrating Cities toolkits , in particular the Implementoring project on

- Engaging migrant communities in local policy making and political participation
- Enhancing public perception of migration and diversity
- Making participation effective in diverse neighbourhoods
- Managing diversity and promoting equality in cities' administration and service provision

EU resources on integration practices

Indicators (for evaluation): EU Zaragoza Indicators

OECD resources:

- Local inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, 2020
- Working together for local integration of migrants and refugees, 2018

Includes a 12 objectives checklist tool for any city or region can use to work across levels of government and with other local actors in their efforts to promote more effective integration of migrants.

- 'Settling In' Indicators, 2018

Publications on developing strong and effective communications
Human Rights Watch Guidelines for Describing Migrants
PICUM Why words matter
IMIX: range of resources and toolkits to help cities and other stakeholders develop key messages

Glossary

General note on use of ‘migrants’ across all How-to Guides: The term ‘migrants’ is used to speak about all people who have moved from one country to another, including refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants and migrants of any other immigration status, unless otherwise specified

Competency
Competency refers to the power which a local authority (government) has to take decisions and take action

Firewall
A security device that monitors and filters incoming and outgoing traffic to protect an individual or organisation from harm. This may be literal (e.g. digital firewalls) or metaphorical (e.g. social firewalls).

Indicator
An indicator is a term used in evaluation and defines how an outcome will be measured – it ‘indicates’ a result by virtue of being achieved. There may be several indicators for one outcome.

Irregular migrants
People who do not (yet) have the required papers permitting their stay in a country. These may be workers, family migrants or people needing protection. Some may have no current residence permit in the country, some may simply not have the documentation to prove their rights. Some may hope to regularise their status and need help to do that, some may prefer to remain “in the shadows” for example because they want to move on and settle in another country. NOTE: the phrases undocumented or irregular migrants are used to describe the same status however the phrase ‘illegal migrants’, which is sometimes mistakenly used for the same category of people, has been condemned by UNHCR and many other institutions as harmful and discriminatory.

Local government associations
Membership-based Government professional associations and organisations serving the interests of professionals in a given occupation

Mainstream
Incorporating a particular practice or activity which is delivered separately for certain target groups (for instance, refugees or people with learning activities) into general provision so that it becomes a normal offer

Migrants
The term ‘migrants’ is used to speak about all people who have moved from one country to another, including refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants and migrants of any other immigration status, unless otherwise specified.

Migrant Communities
Communities of people not born in the host country who share a common characteristic, often of nationality but also of faith, culture and tribes.

Refugees
People who may arrive as asylum seekers, via a resettlement programme, or as workers, students or visitors who then apply for asylum. Refugees may become workers, students, settled migrants and citizens.

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