

Tool Box

INTERREG CENTRAL EUROPE_ARRIVAL REGIONS

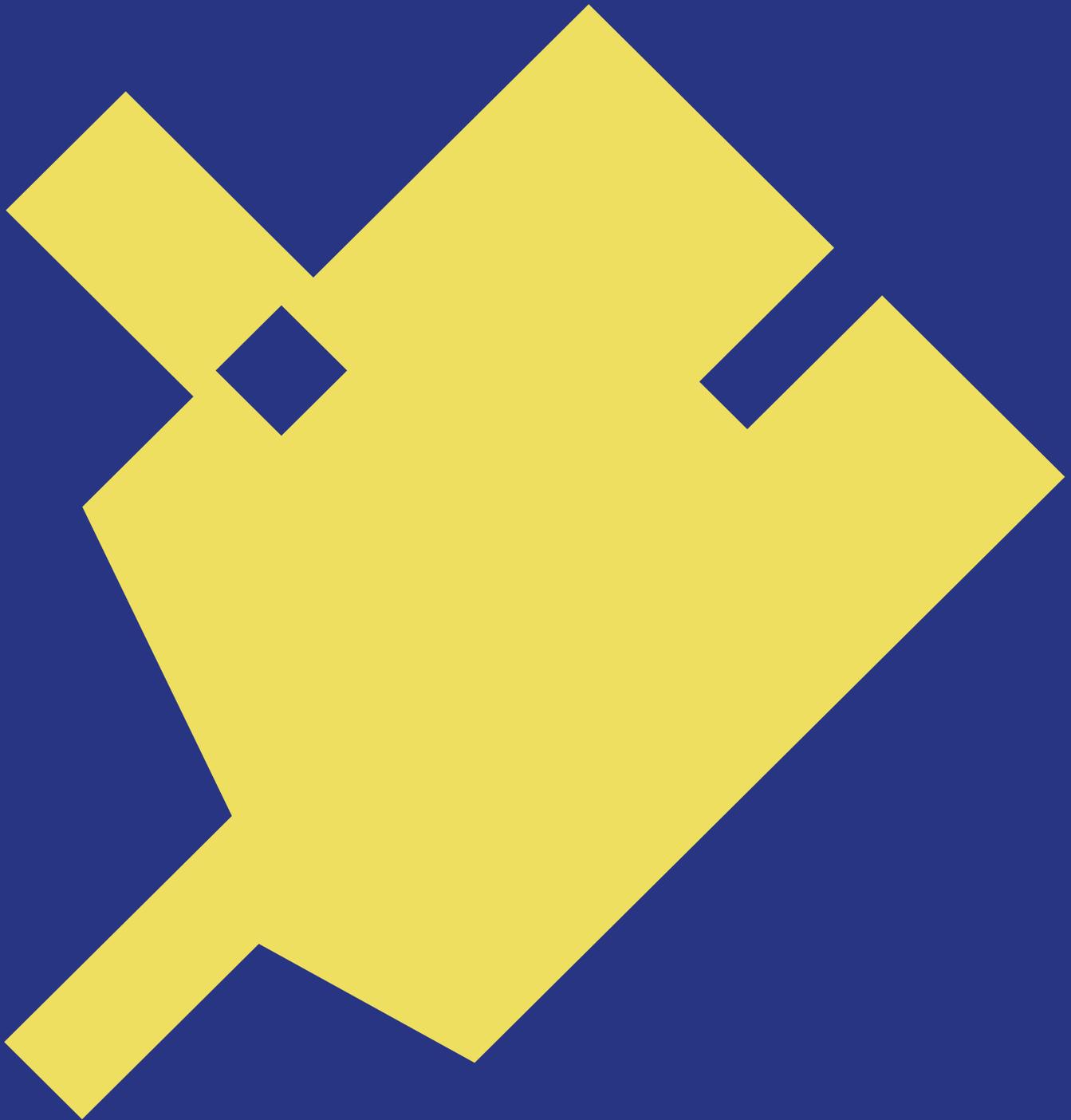


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Published by:

Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde e. V. - IfL
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Feedback from Stakeholders

Waldensian Valleys, IT

"For the administration of Torre Pellice municipality, participation in this project was extremely useful. Often the political will to welcome clashes with the administrative bureaucracies of individual countries. The comparison with other European countries that have joined the project and the training courses for our registry offices have made this desire technically operational and easier to achieve."

-Maurizia Alliso, MUNICIPAL COUNCILOR

Osijek, CR

"The Arrival Regions project has strengthened the foundations in our city for the integration and general acceptance of non-EU citizens in our society and set guidelines for the further work of all participants in the integration process."

-Julije Šoltić, COUNSELLOR FOR EMPLOYMENT OF VULNERABLE GROUPS, CROATIAN EMPLOYMENT SERVICE, OSIJEK

"The project has created some new opportunities in working with third-country nationals, connecting various stakeholders who have become more aware of how they can contribute to the integration of third-country nationals in their territories. Working with economic migrants has been and still is an excellent preparation for future activities with migrants that we can expect in our local community."

-Ivana Šibalić, YOUTH ASSOCIATION BREZA OSIJEK/CROATIA, PROJECT COORDINATOR

Ceva Mountain Union, IT

"Through the multidisciplinary path of ARRIVAL REGIONS project, we became able to deepen some dynamics of migration processes, starting from which to improve our training services for non-EU citizens. Thanks to the multilevel networking created by the Project, we have implemented the quality of our exchanges with both local and national institutions. The pilot action "Humanitarian Corridors meet public CAS" allows us to

inaugurate new job orientation formats for non-EU citizens, also focused on the ethnic-cultural assessment of each person. The pilot action "Humanitarian Corridors meet public CAS" represents an opportunity to update our skills as operators engaged in training and psychosocial support activities for non-EU citizens."

-Simonetta Bruno, CFP-CEMON

"Thanks to the ARRIVAL REGIONS Project we have been able to verify some management models of migratory flows, about which we had already gained a special experience, within our institutional activities. Through the exchanges created by the Project, we were able to initiate a fruitful dialogue with other local and national CSOs, involved in the migration field. The pilot action "Humanitarian Corridors meet public CAS" means for us the concrete possibility of realizing safe and local pathways of migration in a complex multi-stakeholder perspective."

-Claudio Zingarelli, REGIONE PIEMONTE

"The pilot action of the ARRIVAL REGIONS Project has allowed us to obtain socio-cultural skills, thanks to which we have created one humanitarian corridor for Afghan refugees in collaboration with local and national government."

-Mauro Rebuffo, COMUNE DI CASTELNUOVO DI CEVA

Pilsen Region, CZ

"We appreciate the activities of the Coordination Center for the Integration of Foreign Nationals in Bor, which is organized within the Arrival Regions project. These activities have helped foreign nationals in our region (e.g. manual laborers from Eastern European countries, businesspeople from the Middle East or students of Vietnamese origin at the local school) overcome linguistic, cultural and social barriers and allow them to more easily adapt to the new environment."

"These activities have also improved relations between them and the majority of society. That's why we're happy that such an activity

has been created in our town.

-Petr Pich, DEPUTY MAYOR, TOWN OF BOR

"We greatly appreciate the opportunity to engage in the activities of the Coordination Center for the Integration of Foreign Nationals in Bor and the pilot activity within the Arrival Regions project in cooperation with the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. Our employees encounter language barriers while dealing with common life situations, such as dealing with public offices, healthcare provision, searching for a way to spend leisure time, or becoming integrated into a region in which foreign nationals are not always viewed positively by the people around them. The Coordination Center aids them in all these areas. It's important for us to incorporate our employees into society and we're looking forward to further cooperation."

-Pavla Doxanská, HR SPECIALIST, ADIENT BOR

Piran, SL

"Elementary School Sečovlje joined the project Interreg Central Europe - Arrival Regions: Exploring approaches to social innovation for social and economic inclusion of citizens outside the EU, which operates under the auspices of the Sredisce Rotunda from Koper. The project encourages the strengthening of ties between different cultures, languages and beliefs. The fact that we have many immigrant children at school is our wealth, so with the help of this project we have found different ways to recognize this, share and create new opportunities for cooperation, coexistence. During the project, the idea came to us to involve these students in the creation of an audio book about Pippi Longstocking in several languages, including their mother tongue. So their language stood side by side with Slovene, English, Italian ... they read and narrated with pride. By joining the project, we all benefited, we also implemented multiculturalism within the team of professionals, we managed to attract all immigrant students and their parents to participate, some for the first time. All these

experiences will also help us to integrate new immigrant students and their families. The trainings and other virtual meetings organised by Sredisce Rotunda were also very valuable. ”
-Mirela Flego, PRINCIPAL OF SECOVLJE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“I would like to thank the Sredisce Rotunda from Koper for inviting us to participate in this project. Representatives from our Elementary schools and Kindergartens actively participated in the prepared workshops and together we managed to formulate some proposals. Of course, we are aware that the whole problem cannot be solved in one year, but it is important that we start looking for solutions that will be implemented in the future. ”

-Ester Nussdorfer, MUNICIPALITY OF PIRAN

“Thanks again for the invitation to the project Arrival Regions. It was really great to communicate with people who have the same goals and desires. ”Through participation in the project, new ties were created, creative ideas were born and a rich exchange of experiences took place. The realisation that there are many of us who care about quality coexistence gave us the impetus to continue our work and so we contribute to building a solid multicultural environment. ”

Vika Kustrin, CIRIL KOSMAČ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PIRAN

Postojna, SL

“The users of ŠENT programme, migrant women from Albania and Slovenian locals with mental health disorders, felt more accepted in Postojna local society through sport and social activities that Starting point Postojna organized for them and other migrants residing in Postojna. ”

-Jerneja, ŠENT SOCIETY

“The focus group that Starting point Postojna organised for Slovenian pupils from SGLŠ school and their peers from Asian and African countries, helped us to address some of the discriminatory behaviour in class and

encouraged intercultural competences and understanding among these young participants. This was further encouraged by several artistic, culinary and sports workshops that Starting point Postojna organised for all of us. ”

-Teacher, SGLŠ SCHOOL

“Our users, elderly people, were very pleased by the gesture of unaccompanied youngsters that prepared delicious cookies and made personalised New Year greeting cards for each of them. The youngsters told that they did this action, as they know how is to be alone, without your family. ”

-Social worker, TALITA KUM

“As a business incubator we are very pleased with Starting Point postojna action and to be part of the development and success of some migrants residing in Postojna with business ideas (for opening massage saloon /creating jewelry / opening distribution business / opening food truck). This was also a new experience for us. We cannot wait to see their growth. Not also that we helped them to start their own business, but it was also a start of a good business relationship and friendship.

Ana Širca, Business incubator, People’s university Postojna (LU Postojna)
 It is comforting when you find a group of people in a similar situation to your own and have the opportunity to learn and ask questions. It opens the doors for empowerment. ”

-Ožbej Račečič, TEACHER AND TUTOR OF SLOVENE LANGUAGE, PRIMARY SCHOOL POSTOJNA

West Pomerania, PL

“Building a community where different cultures, experiences, and religions come together is a difficult process. Thanks to Arrival Regions, we were able to better see immigrants, understand their needs and location, and build openness to other people. The youngest inhabitants of the Westpomeranian, elected Ambassadors of Multiculturalism, have a large role to play in

the future because they can show how friendly the inhabitants of Western Pomerania - Poles - Europeans are. I can say today that I am proud of them. ”

-Olgierd Geblewicz, MARSHAL OF THE WESTPOMERANIAN REGION

“More and more children from Ukraine are studying in West Pomeranian schools, but there are also children with the experience of refugees. Thanks to Arrival Regions, we were able to bring closer the culturally, socially, and economically diverse worlds of Polish and immigrant peers. Education in a multicultural class or group requires both systemic tools and an external impulse to change, which was the pilot action “EACH OF US IS UNIQUE AND IMPORTANT”.

-Anna Bańkowska, REPRESENTATIVE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, TEACHER, MEMBER OF THE REGIONAL BOARD OF THE WESTPOMERANIAN REGION

“The development of the immigrant integration process is related to the challenges and obligations of public and social entities, such as the Szczecin Incubator for Culture. Thanks to Arrival Regions, we have gained knowledge and experience useful to support the integration of foreigners with the use of elements of culture. ”

-Marta Wylegała, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE SZCZECIN INCUBATOR FOR CULTURE

“Thanks to the Arrival Regions project, I was able to understand the increasingly significant and noticeable topic of the role of culture in the process of integrating people from different traditions, ethnic groups, nations, and religions. I believe that I will be able to use this experience not only in my own artistic activity, but also pass it on to students of the Academy of Art in Szczecin, and thus make them sensitive to the issues of diversity and integration. ”

-Aleksandra Zaborska, AUTHOR OF THE CHILDREN’S BOOK “PRYVITI! ZNACZY CZEŚĆ”, LECTURER AT THE FACULTY OF GRAPHICS OF THE ACADEMY OF ART IN SZCZECIN.

“There is no doubt that it’s worth creating conditions for the most possible use of the

potential of young immigrants studying in West Pomerania. I am also pleased that the University of Szczecin could be part of this process. In the area of demographic challenges related to the outflow of young people from the region, it’s immigrants who are the hope for further development of the Westpomeranian Region.

Participation in the discussion of the jury of the “Ambassador of Multiculturalism” competition was inspiring for me due to the positive image of integration seen through the eyes of children who experienced cultural differences. I am glad that such activities teach openness and tolerance, and break mental patterns and stereotypes. They allow you to see the diversity in everyday life.”

-Edyta Rudawska, UNIVERSITY OF SZCZECIN

“Let us always try to approach people in a human way, not through the prism of political guidelines, especially those that discriminate other people. Let us teach children to respect people, because whoever respects other people walks boldly through life.

-Ewa Rutkowska, PSYCHOLOGIST AND EDUCATOR, AUTHOR OF PUBLICATIONS AND MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE TRAINER AS PART OF THE ARRIVAL REGIONS PILOT ACTION”

Burgenland District, DE

“Through the respective contents in the project, it can be ensured that the identification of refugees in rural areas is consolidated and migration in urban areas is counteracted. Through ARRIVAL REGIONS the person, as it were of his/her origin, feels comfortable in an environment in which he has arrived. The Pilot Action „EMI BLK” enables interaction with friends, peers, people who think alike, people with common interests and, above all, the feeling of belonging. The Pilot Action „EMI BLK” succeeded in making the rural area and its people more interesting for refugees. People from different backgrounds came into contact with each other and friendships developed, which helped them to feel that they had arrived in a foreign country. ”

-Steven Ehrlich, INTERNATIONALER BUND

“Through Arrival Regions mutual exchange of experience ensures social togetherness. The exchange of positive experiences leads the project to the acceptance of new challenges. Strengthening of one’s own personality in a foreign environment. This creates interest and access to the job market. Circle of friends is strengthened. Hobbies are established in the rural area.”

-**Rotraud Denecke**, KULTURVILLA KOLORIT

“The Arrival Regions project and its pilot action have succeeded in bringing young people from different countries together and making our region palatable to them as a permanent place to live. The photo exhibition on the project has also made a wider public aware of the project, but also of the needs and feelings of these young people.”

-**Christian Heyder**, FORUM EHRENAMT

Lodzkie, PL

“The Local Labour Office in Łask was a regional stakeholder in the Arrival Regions project. Thanks to the cooperation during the project’s implementation my employees participated in the language course and have learned the basics of the Ukrainian language. They can easily communicate with Ukrainian citizens. They don’t have a language barrier and can inform Ukrainians about current job offers or explain how to fill in basic forms required in the office.

We also promoted the action of free legal consultations among local employers and their employees, because we care about the integration of migrants in our region and about their better life here.”

-**Wioletta Okupińska-Janus**, DIRECTOR OF THE LOCAL LABOUR OFFICE IN ŁASK



Photo: Project Meeting Postojna

Introduction

Over the last decades, many rural regions of Central Europe have experienced negative effects of demographic change among which are aging, demographic and economic decline. However, the 2010s have become a turning point for many areas of Central Europe (including rural regions) bringing international migrants to places that have never been popular destinations for foreigners. In addition to already existing specifics of local economies, social norms and structures, many rural regions of Central Europe have not established effective support systems for newly arrived migrants to prevent them from leaving for urban areas. While immigration of non-EU nationals to rural regions is often treated as a 'hot-button issue', we believe that it can be an answer to many challenges brought by demographic change.

In order to turn the recent wave of migration of non-EU nationals to rural regions of Central Europe into a success story, these

regions need to search for some innovative custom-made approaches. This document presents nine applied tools that can help stakeholders in rural regions to support the social and economic integration of migrants on the one hand and create local welcoming cultures on the other.

All tools listed in the document are based on the findings of the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE project **"Arrival Regions - Exploring social innovation approaches for the social and economic integration of non-EU nationals"** (further mentioned as Arrival Regions). The main aim of the project is to implement and analyse nine pilot actions based on different social innovation approaches¹ supporting integration of non-EU nationals living in rural Central Europe. All pilot actions were set in **rural regions of Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland and Slovenia** that are interested in promoting the long-term integration of non-EU nationals as response to ongoing demographic and economic changes. The project is based on the ideas of collaboration and co-creation: Arrival Regions unites representatives of local administrations, scientific organisations, NGOs and other stakeholders and gives local stakeholders and

representatives of local migrant communities the opportunity to participate in the design and implementation of a pilot action. All pilot actions were testing various approaches aiming to support the integration of migrant youth, economically active migrants or the creation of local welcoming cultures (see Fig. 1). To reach these goals, Arrival Regions has used socially innovative approaches towards widely-used ways of integration support such as cultural mediation activities, educational tools, information services, language courses, legal consultations, consultations on self-employment and thematic activation events. In total, more than 900 non-EU-nationals have participated in actions organised by the project.

This Tool-Box is based on the lessons that we and our partners have learned throughout the Arrival Regions project. The goal of the Tool-Box is to guide you through your

¹ We use the term "social innovation" to describe any ideas, services and models that are new for a certain place and aim at better addressing social challenges and improving social services, ideally by including civil society and private actors.

process of improving the situation of non EU-migrants in your regions. **The benchmark of this Tool-Box is the approach that we endorse, namely that integration is a two-way process with no definite end.**

To this end, the tools are not only focused on the integration of non-EU nationals, but also on the integration of the resident society. As a result, both migrants and locals end up integrating with each other which leads to creating a sustainable, diverse and resilient society ready to face the challenges coming ahead. Moreover, the section on Policy Recommendations is concerned with steps that can be taken on a municipal or regional level in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives. The local governments might

not have direct influence on immigration legislation, but they play an important role in fostering a welcoming and open environment by developing a local integration strategy, setting legislative and planning frameworks and providing funding to support capacity building activities in receiving communities. By taking into consideration the tools and policy recommendations you can prevent social and economic marginalisation of the newly-arrived migrants and build a socially cohesive and harmonious society residing on mutual understanding and respect between the resident society and migrants.

Photo: Study trip to Nuevos Senderos Project, La Cerollera, Spain

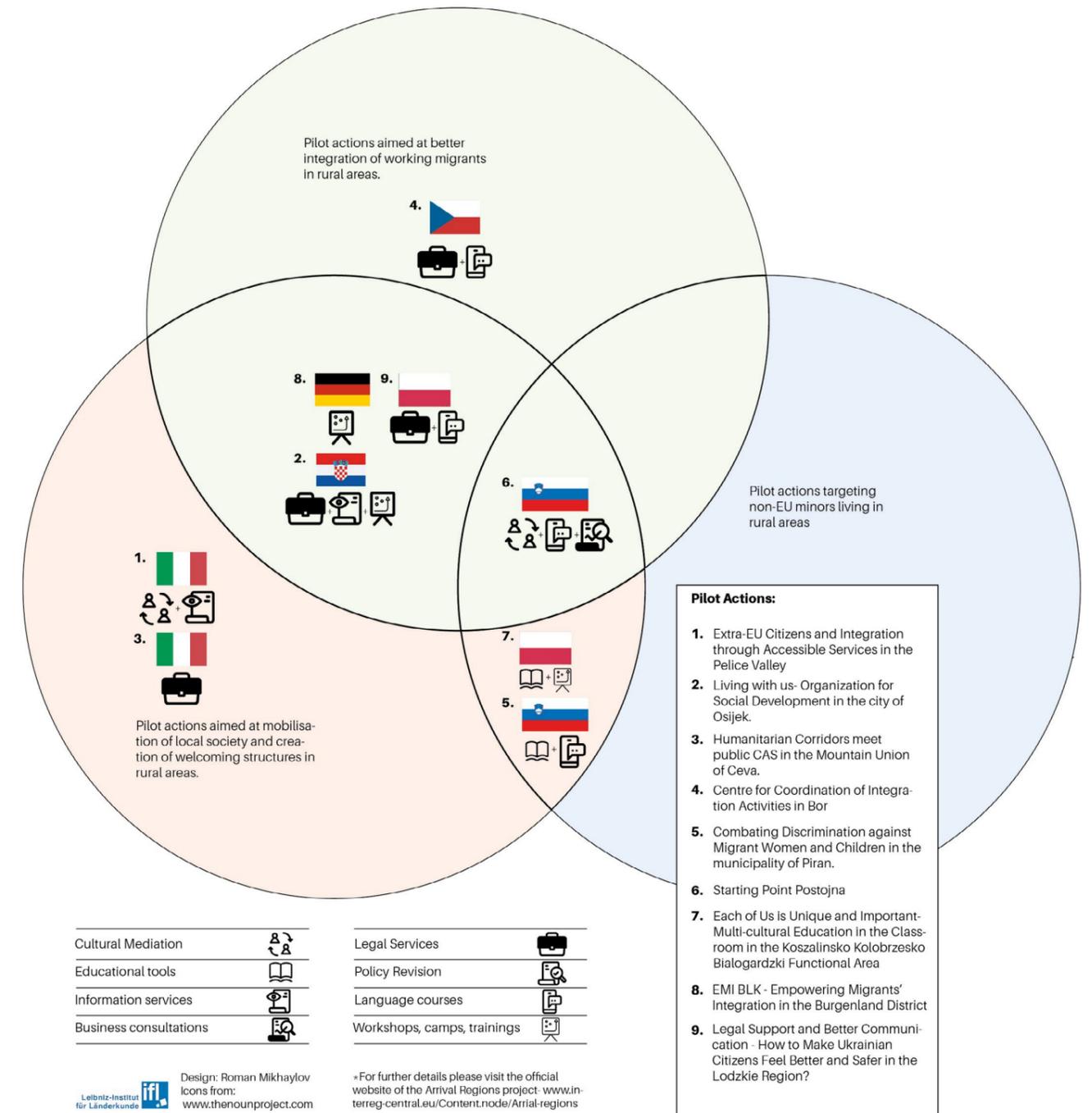
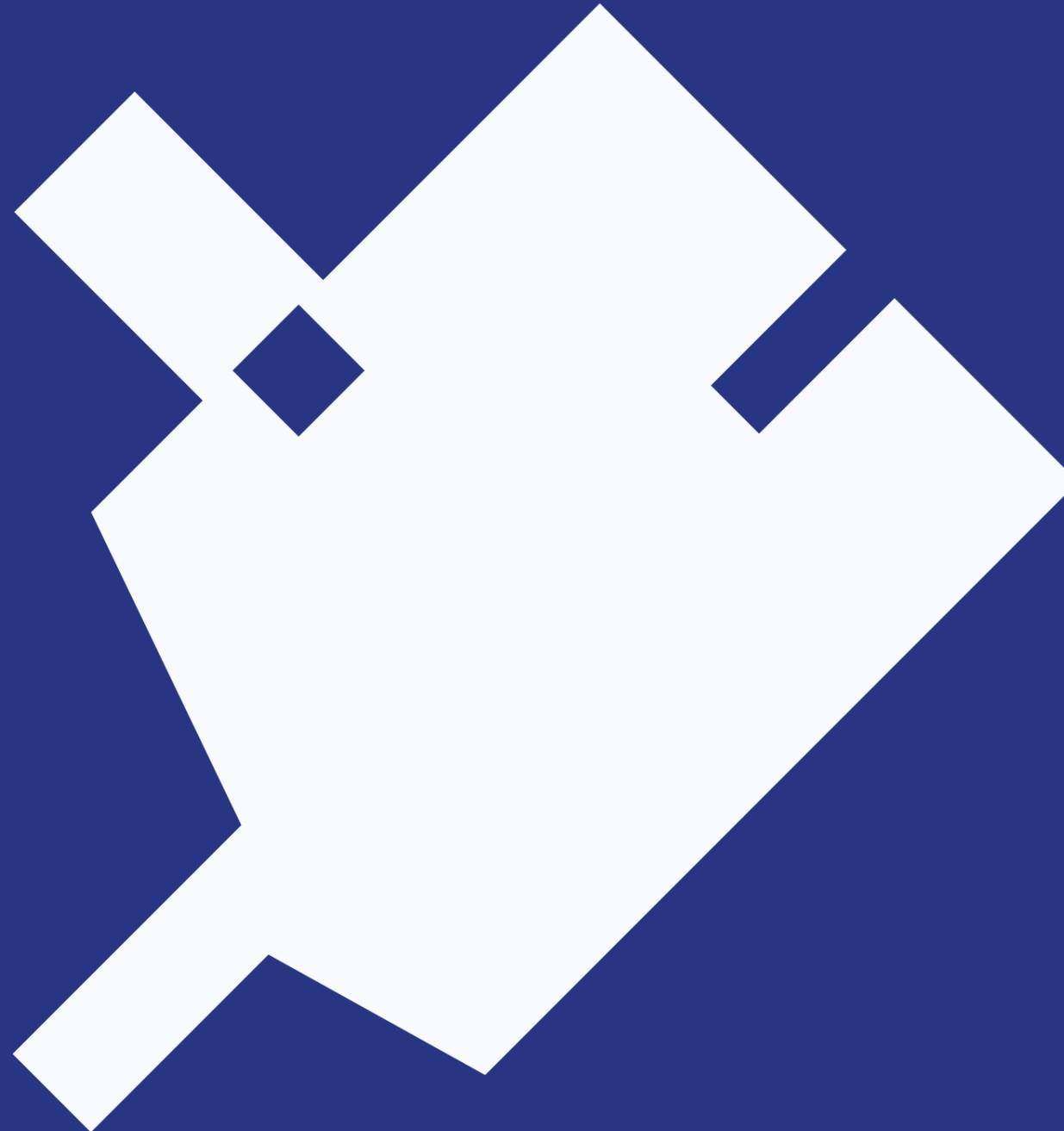
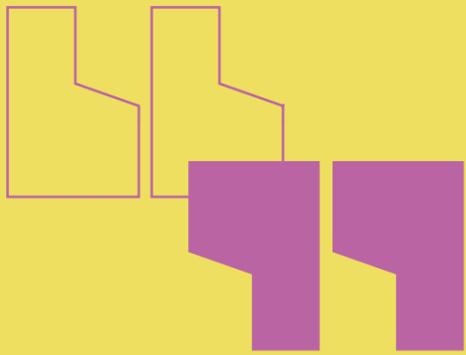


Fig 1. Pilot actions within Arrival Regions.

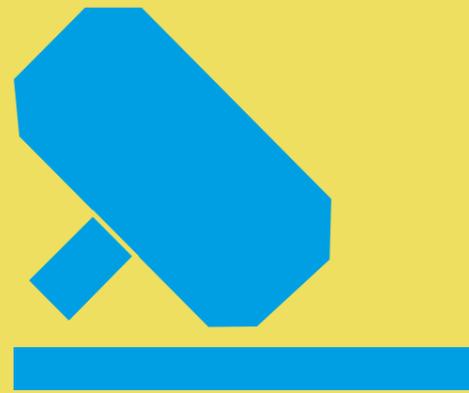
List of tools



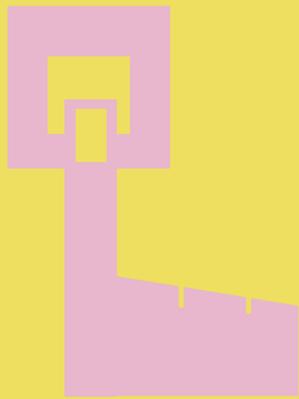
1. Language learning
2. Legal counselling
3. Contact points
4. Plan and organise arrival
5. Encouraging intergenerational learning
6. Navigating bureaucracy
7. Involvement of locals
8. Supporting personal development
9. Empowering locals



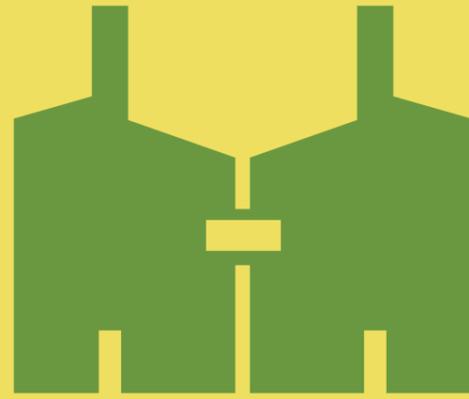
LANGUAGE LEARNING



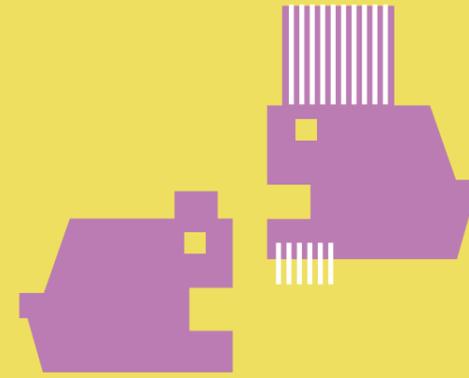
LEGAL COUNSELLING



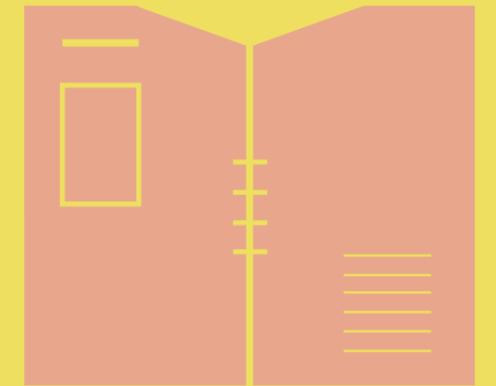
CONTACT POINTS



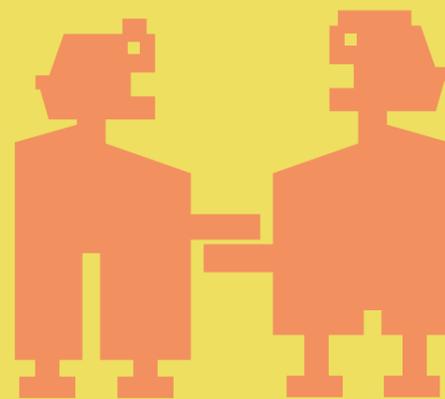
PLAN AND ORGANIZE ARRIVAL



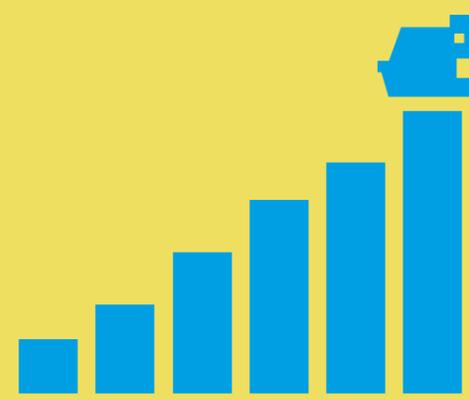
ENCOURAGING INTER-GENERATIONAL LEARNING



NAVIGATING BEAUROCRACY



INVOLVEMENT OF LOCALS

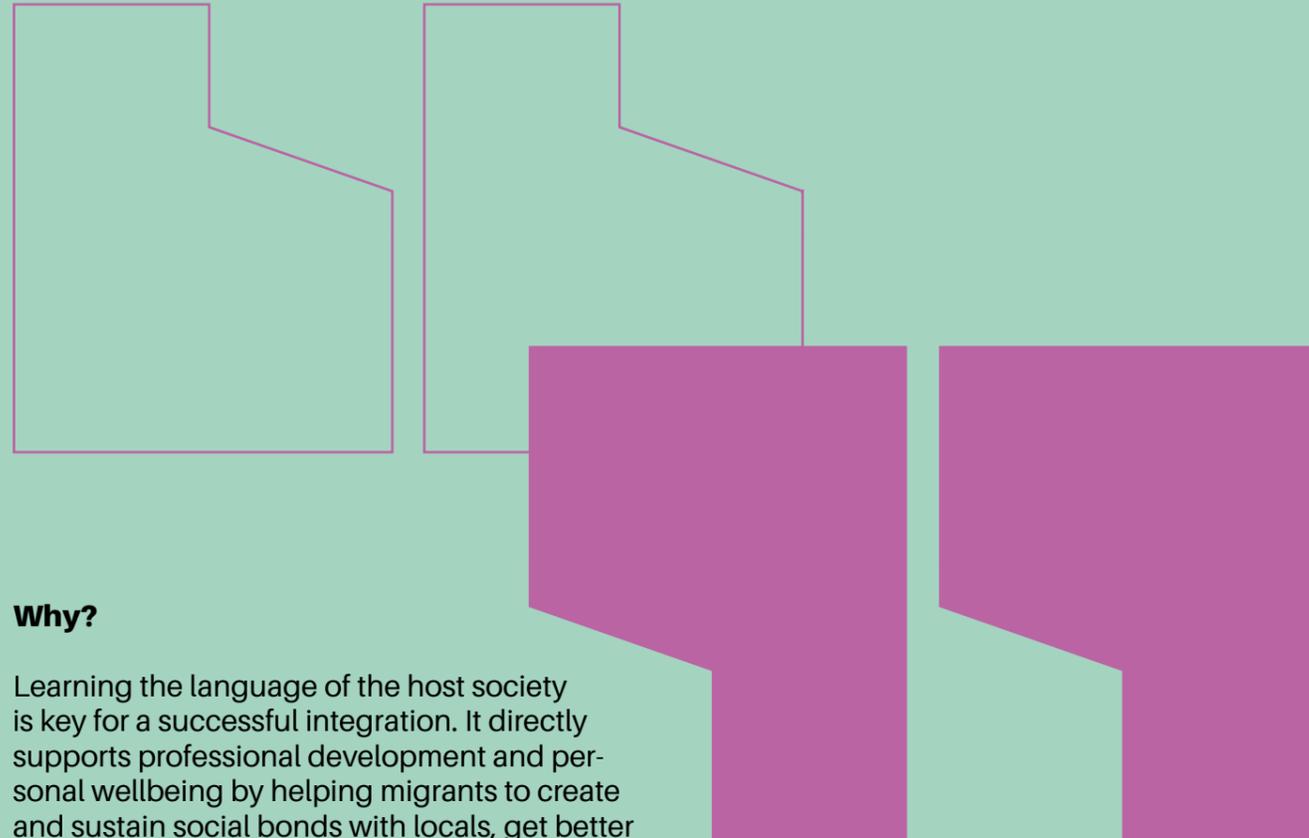


SUPPORTING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



EMPOWERING LOCALS

Language Learning



Why?

Learning the language of the host society is key for a successful integration. It directly supports professional development and personal wellbeing by helping migrants to create and sustain social bonds with locals, get better career opportunities, participate in local social life and consequently develop a feeling of belonging. Language learning is already part of current integration practices; nevertheless, its key deficiency is that the majority of language courses rarely prepare migrants for the challenges they have to face on a daily basis.

How?

1. Make sure that the courses are accessible to the target group and promote them across migrant communities.

- Both digital and analogue means should be used for promotion.

- While promoting a language course, it is crucial to communicate the clear benefits of language learning.
- Service providers should encourage the inclusion of the most underprivileged groups in migrant communities (e.g. female migrants with small children, elderly migrants).
- Adjust your services according to the needs of the target by offering online and offline courses. While offline courses stimulate interpersonal communication, an online format a good solution for more remote regions.

2. Language courses should be tailor-made in order to meet the needs of the target group.

- Courses should focus on vocabulary necessary in everyday situations (e.g. doctor's visit, doing groceries, leisure activities, work-related vocabulary).
- The timetable of the courses should be adjusted to the participants' work schedule. For instance, lessons should be offered in the morning and in the afternoon.

3. Participants should be encouraged to further work on their language skills outside and beyond the classes.

- Language tandems between migrants and locals will not only allow them to learn and practice a new language, but also get to know each other's cultures and potentially form new friendships.

4. In case a region has an ethnically homogeneous migrant population, language courses of migrants' mother tongue can be offered to staff working in the local administration who have regular contact to migrants.

- Basic knowledge of migrants' mother tongue will not only create trust and sympathy, but will also reduce the chances for miscommunication and misunderstandings.

Recommendations:

- 1.** Involve teachers who have the knowledge and experience of working in a multicultural setting.
- 2.** If possible, teachers should have a similar cultural and/or linguistic background, as it fosters trust between teachers and participants.
- 3.** In order to develop tailor-made teaching, training materials and curricula, language course providers should thoroughly analyse specific needs of the target group.
- 4.** Work together with stakeholders in direct contact with migrants, such as employers or NGOs, in order to reach out to potential participants that are difficult to reach.

5. Companies with a high number of employees with a migration background can offer language courses on-site and incorporate them into their schedule. In order to offer on-site courses, language course providers should stimulate cooperation with local businesses employing representatives of the target group.

6. If possible, participants should be divided into groups based on their mother tongue or language group. It has proven to be of advantage since migrants from similar cultural backgrounds learn faster languages from the same family (e.g. Ukrainian migrants learn Czech faster since both languages belong to the Slavic language group).

7. In order to sustain the language courses in the long-term, providers should seek stable and diverse funding sources.

8. Language course providers can use the support of volunteers in order to reach the target groups, administrate the course, etc.

The Centre for Coordination of Integration Activities in Bor was created in order to support migrants living in the Tachov District in the Western part of Czech Republic. While analysing the most prominent challenges that international migrants face in rural Czech Republic, the coordinators of the Centre have realised that migrants living in rural areas have barely any support in learning the Czech language: the existing language courses were offered only in urban centres (e.g. Pilsen) at hours that do not fit the working schedule of migrants. In order to improve migrants' quality of life, the Centre for Coordination of Integration Activities has cooperated with key employers of migrant workers in the region and offered courses of Czech language directly at the premises of the companies. In contrast to standard language courses, this course was primarily focusing on migrants' communication skills and provided them with vocabulary useful at the workplace and in their everyday life. Furthermore, the courses were set-up around the working schedule of migrants. The provided language course has received very positive feedback from its participants, who state that they feel empowered since starting the course.



Legal Counselling



Why?

Migrants often end up in precarious situations due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of their rights and duties. This not only increases their vulnerability but equally makes them subject to exploitation. It can be a result of insufficient support structures but also the spread of misinformation across migrant communities, which has an impact on migrants' trust towards authorities. In order to empower migrants, foster their independence and hence enable their participation in the local society, it is crucial that they make informed decisions and know what measures to take or who to refer to if their rights are violated.

How?

1. It is important that potential clients are aware of the services provided and can easily access them.

- Develop channels of communication with legal counsellors through digital

platforms in order to reach a wider audience.

- Expectations of both sides should be made transparent in order to avoid disappointment.

2. Services should be easily accessible to those living in rural areas.

- Opening hours should be adapted to the availability of the target group because many migrants living in rural areas require services outside of their regular working hours.

3. Services should be provided in several languages, ideally including the languages of the major target groups.

- This not only improves understanding but also builds trust between the service providers and lawyers.
- Offer services in regional lingua franca (English, Spanish, Arabic, French, and Russian).
- Involve interpreters and inter-cultural mediators in order to manage conflicts and misunderstandings that could arise due to differing cultural practices.
- Establish a first contact point that will later refer migrants to specialised lawyers if needed.

4. Consultations should be anonymous.

- This is particularly important in order to reduce power imbalances, develop trust and protect both sides, especially if migrants are in precarious working conditions or under threat.

5. In order to reduce the risk of misinformation services should be provided by professionals or volunteers with relevant training in the field.

6. Consultations should be independent.

- Migrants often develop a lack of trust towards authorities due to negative experiences and myths carried across migrant communities.

7. Services should be free of charge in order to make them more accessible.

- This is particularly important for undocumented migrants who often cannot afford a lawyer, but also other migrants with lesser resources.

8. Disseminate knowledge by producing printed or online documents outlining frequently asked questions.

- In terms of printed documents, place them across frequently visited places by migrants (waiting rooms, local administration offices, companies where migrants work).

- In terms of digital information, one can produce videos with short explanations of certain legal matters and spread it across communication channels used by migrants.
- It increases the reach of counselling beyond the border of the region.
- It is an efficient way to spread important information and frequently asked questions without having to visit a councillor.
- The materials should be produced in the local language, as well as the languages of the major migrant groups.
- Work together with stakeholders in direct contact with migrants, such as employers, NGOs, teachers and local administrators in order to reach out to potential participants that are difficult to reach.

Recommendations

- 1.** It is of advantage if the lawyers and counsellors are of migration background in order to foster trust and understanding between both sides.
- 2.** Develop a strategy in order to reach your target group.
- 3.** Combine legal counselling with other activities such as contact points (see: Tool 3).
- 4.** Legal counselling is only a first step. Develop a network of interculturally sensitive lawyers with different specialisations (e.g., family law, labour law) to whom the migrants can be referred after the first consultations.

Legal support and better communication

is a project located in the Lodzkie Region, in particular the city of Łódź. It was created to support Ukrainian migrants who are working in industrial factories, logistics, warehouses and agriculture in the region, as well as employees of public bodies in the Lodzkie Region. The activities of the pilot action consist of offering legal advice to Ukrainian migrants through consultations with lawyers. The lawyer offering regular consultations is bilingual and has a migration background. The most common topics discussed are residence permits, parental benefits, the issuing of documents, and setting up one's own business. As a secondary aspect, there is also a business development institution offering assistance regarding employment issues and consultations for local entrepreneurs. In addition, the project developed an easy-to-use guide for foreigners, as well as a FAQ handbook documenting the legal advice activities. All of these activities take place in smaller urban centres across the region that are missing the support offered in urban centres.



Contact points

Why?

Helping migrants navigate existing support structures is crucial for their independence and empowerment. Since new migration destinations have so far little experience with managing migration, it is necessary to create official support structures that go beyond ethnic support networks. Developing a “one-stop-shop” approach helps us to understand migrants’ needs, develop a network of stakeholders dealing with integration and coordinate their work. The creation of a physical space will also serve as a tool for developing intercultural contacts with the resident society. Ensuring that migrants know where to gain access to resources they require for their integration and participation in the host society is necessary for their integration.

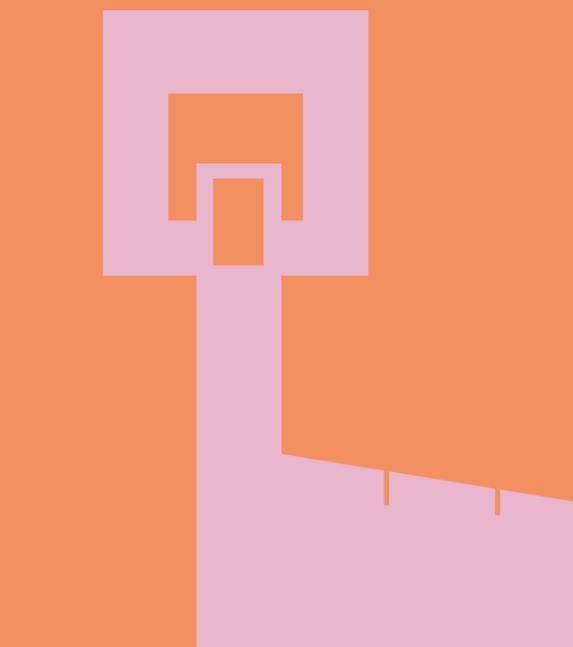
How?

1. Provide a space for the offices of the contact point.

- Services should be easily accessible for those living in rural areas.
- Opening hours should be adapted to the availability and needs of the target group because many migrants living in rural areas require services outside of regular working hours.

2. It is important that potential clients are aware of the services provided and can easily access them.

- Develop different channels of communication through both digital and analogue platforms in order to reach a



wider audience.

- Expectations of both sides should be made transparent in order to avoid disappointment.

3. Services should be provided in several languages, ideally including the languages of the major target groups

- This not only improves understanding but also builds trust.
- It is not always possible to offer services in the native languages of the major target groups. English and/or other widely spoken lingua francas (e.g., Spanish, Arabic, French, or Russian) could be alternatives.
- Involve interpreters and inter-cultural mediators in order to manage conflicts and misunderstandings that could arise due to differing cultural practices.

4. The staff working there should be employed full-time and have received specific training.

- This is particularly important in order to

reduce the risk of misinformation.

- Volunteers who act as a bridge to the local community could provide additional support under professional supervision.

5. It is of advantage if the contact point adapts an integrated approach and is open to all marginalised groups.

- An integrated approach in effect means recognising that both locals and migrants have similar needs that can be tackled collectively.
- Such an approach helps to gain wider support from the resident population and possible funding agencies.

6. Compile a list of specific services based on the real needs of the target groups.

- Get in touch with representatives of the target group in order to identify their real needs.
- Create a list of the local stakeholders who can provide information on these needs.
- Share the list with anyone who needs it.

7. Stay in contact with stakeholders and target groups.

- It is crucial in order to stay on top of the needs of both sides and be aware of new developments.
- It equally helps to develop trust between the stakeholders and the target group.

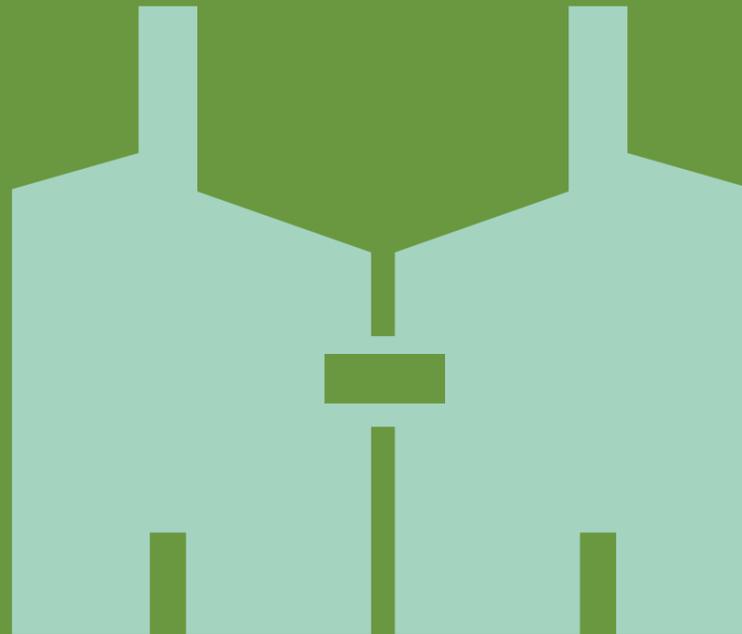
Recommendations

- 1.** The staff should be locally bounded and know the local network of stakeholders.
- 2.** It is of benefit if the staff has a migration background.
- 3.** The location should be barrier-free, easily accessible, central, and open on a regular basis.
- 4.** Create a sustainable network of relevant stakeholders that could outlive the pilot action.

“Living with us” is a pilot action set up to support Nepalese and Pakistani migrants employed in the local recycling and construction companies in the city of Osijek (Croatia). The group of migrants was living and working at the same place, which made them even more excluded from local life and therefore difficult to reach. Due to a lack of comprehensive local integration services, the pilot action aimed to establish a Centre for Inclusion and Integration located in the centre of the city. An info-tool about the key services in the local community (social services, health, culture, police, NGOs) was developed and language courses and intercultural workshops were organised for the migrants. The centre also offers free legal aid and counselling services in cooperation with the Centre for Peace, nonviolence and human rights in Osijek and the Youth Association Breza. It equally aims to empower the local community and prepare them for the arrival of migrants through volunteer programs and works as a space for interaction through cultural events such as the successful festival of Nepalese culture. It also facilitates networking and coordination with relevant local stakeholders. For instance, exchange meetings were held with the local company Drava International, where the migrants work. The pilot action currently plans to establish a Civil Society Association for Nepalese Culture.



Plan and organize arrival



Why?

New migration destinations often do not have well-established migrant support networks and structures. It is therefore an even greater challenge for them to plan and organise the arrival of migrants. We believe that rural regions of Central Europe should plan and secure resources for the arrival of newcomers in order to avoid overwhelming the local structures and evade an anti-immigration backlash. Active support of local opinion leaders (e.g., mayors, priests, chairpersons of local associations, well-respected citizens) is essential for the success in this process as they are the best mediators between the local population and the newly arrived migrants. As integration occurs on the local level, communities must also be prepared to welcome and support migrants. Therefore, sensitising the resident population about migration issues and the challenges migrants have to face even before migrants arrive helps to avoid re-traumatisation of migrants and anti-immigration sentiment.

How?

1. Analyse the existing support structures, arrival infrastructures and material support and establish cooperation and synergies with relevant stakeholders.

- This is crucial in order to manage expectations of locals and migrants.
- This helps to prevent leaving vulnerable groups without any support at the initial stages of their arrival, which could have long-term negative consequences for migrants.
- Foster cooperation with experienced institutions in order to avoid double work and benefit from their experience.

2. Local opinion leaders should set an example for the local community.

- Due to the high degree of respect

they have in the local community, their support facilitates the creation of a local welcoming culture.

- Public support of immigration by local opinion leaders may help to create more positive and welcoming attitudes towards migrants among locals.

3. Share duties and opportunities among all stakeholders partaking.

- Integration is a very complex process and it requires the support of various local stakeholders.
- Organising an arrival is a time and energy-consuming activity, everyone partaking should carry some responsibility in order to share the workload.
- Involve migrants with a similar experience of arrival into integration activities who can act as mentors for the newly arrived migrants and can possibly guide them through the process of arrival and integration.
- This develops trust and fosters cooperation.
- It helps the newly arrived migrants see that it is possible to be an active member of the local society and partake on its development.

4. Involve volunteers from the local community.

- Volunteers are a bridge to the local society since they can act as good examples for the locals and have the power to positively influence their perspectives on migration.

5. Get to know the background, needs and future plans of the migrants arriving.

- This helps to manage their expectations and avoid disappointment.

6. Introduce migrants to the resident society.

- Create a platform where the newly arrived migrants get to meet the locals.
- This helps to reduce the distance between the migrants and the local population.

7. Stimulate the arrival of migrants with the necessary knowledge and skills that are currently missing in the area.

- New migration destinations are to a great degree affected by demographic change and brain drain. Against this backdrop, immigration of non-EU nationals can be a solution to this problem.

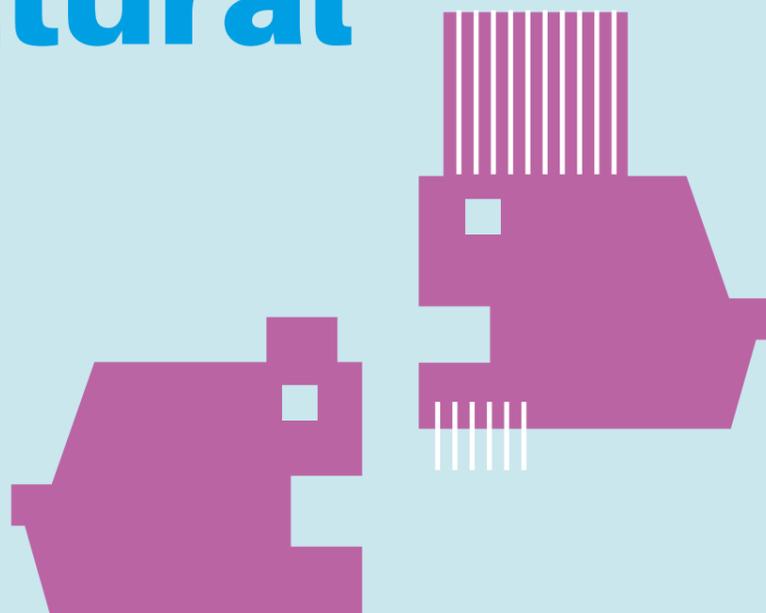
Recommendation

Find individuals or groups ready to host migrants and become their “godparents”, supporting them throughout the integration process.

The pilot action located in the Unione Montana di Ceva aimed to create a direct link between **Humanitarian Corridors and public Special Assistance Centres** (CAS - Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria) in order to prepare the local society for the arrival of migrants and make the process of integration easier. The current system makes migrants stay for too long in reception centres and hence stops them from fully participating in the local society. The majority of migrants that arrive are hosted in private reception centres focused more on profit than integration and those who arrived illegally find themselves in a state of uncertainty if they can apply for asylum or not. Through Humanitarian Corridors the arrivals are based on direct legal access to the Italian territory meaning that refugees can easily proceed with asylum applications and get a greater chance to obtain a residency permit in a relatively short time. The pilot action is based on a private - public partnership and networking among different institutions: religious bodies, public institutions, enterprises and NGOs. As for now, the process is embedded in a memorandum with religious bodies that manage Humanitarian Corridors, the public institutions and the CAS. This should be followed by the welcoming of non-EU migrants and the implementation of an integration path through public CAS.



Encourage intergenerational multicultural learning



Why?

Personal values and behavioural norms are being formed from a very young age. In order to create a sustainable welcoming culture and inclusive societies, it is very important to teach local children about the importance of multiculturalism, diversity and inclusivity. One of the most straightforward ways of doing this is by incorporating learning about different cultures and cultural diversity into school curricula. We believe that children are good facilitators and can spread the ideas of inclusivity to older generations. Moreover, schools are able to directly approach and involve parents, who would otherwise be reluctant towards new knowledge on cultural and ethnic diversity. In addition, such a change of mindset is also beneficial for migrant children attending schools in rural Central Europe, as it will make them feel more welcome, accepted and integrated.

How?

1. Introduce learning about other cultures to school curricula.

- We believe that it is possible to develop a sustainable welcoming culture through children's education.
- By introducing the topic of multiculturalism to school curricula one does not only teach new generations to be more open and respectful towards diversity, but also multiply positive effects on older generations, who due to existing prejudices and fears tend to be more reluctant towards welcoming migrants.
- As the topic of cultural diversity receives little to no attention in learning curricula across Central European schools, there is a need to introduce this topic.
- In case of countries with centralised schooling systems where it is difficult to introduce bottom-up changes in school

curricula, the topic of multiculturalism should be promoted via various extracurricular activities (e.g. workshops, games, festivals, etc.).

2. Provide training for teachers and educators.

- This is necessary since many teachers working in rural Central Europe did not receive proper training on the topics of diversity and multicultural learning during their studies.
- Teachers should know how to prevent and mediate potential conflicts based on cultural discrimination.

3. Develop learning materials for schools introducing the topic.

- Teachers should receive standardised guidance on the introduction of the topic of multiculturalism to the educational process.
- Learning materials can be easily spread beyond the pilot regions and thus cause a systemic change in the long-term.

4. Establish intergenerational extra-curricular activities.

- In order to create a welcoming culture, schools should include both children and their parents in various activities dedicated to the topics of multiculturalism and diversity (e.g. festivals, competitions, workshops, etc.).
- Parents should be included in the

extra-curricular activities not only as participants, but also as co-organizers of these activities.

5. Support peer-to-peer learning and mentoring.

- In order to fight with already existing prejudices, schools should facilitate communication and cooperation between children of different social and ethnic backgrounds.
- Schools should encourage the involvement of local students in helping migrant children learn the local language, make friends and in general face every-day challenges.

Recommendations

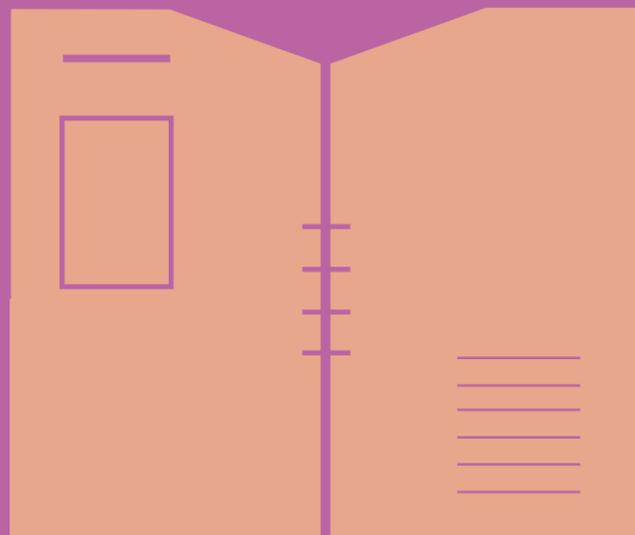
- 1.** Get to know the nuances of your educational system so that you can understand how to promote multiculturalism in your local schools.
- 2.** Include educational institutions in local networks supporting the integration of non-EU nationals.
- 3.** Develop a network of stakeholders who will actively support the ideas of multiculturalism beyond schools.
- 4.** Get support from important local stakeholders who can promote elaborated lessons plans on a national and international level.

In the recent past, Poland could be characterised as one of the most ethnically homogenous countries in Europe. Nevertheless, this has changed during the last decade when Poland became one of the most popular immigration destinations especially among people from Eastern Europe. Despite this development, standard school curricula in Poland do not convey any knowledge on ethnic and cultural diversity. Therefore, the Marshal Office of the West Pomeranian Region has launched the **'Each of us is unique and important'** project. Within this project, many teachers working in non-metropolitan parts of the region have received special training on multicultural education in the classroom. In addition to this, the project has involved almost 400 primary school students in workshops dedicated to the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity. Finally, the 'Each of us is unique and important' project has produced a series of lesson plans for classes on multiculturalism for Polish primary and secondary schools. Both teachers and children very well received these actions. Some other regions in Poland have already raised their interest in this project and are willing to use the produced lesson plans in their schools.



"No matter that we speak and look different.
We all feel and think the same."

Navigating bureaucracy



Why?

Filling out forms is something that we encounter on an everyday basis, but it can still be a very stressful experience. Legal language and the logic of bureaucracy are difficult to understand even for native speakers, yet still we all have to master it to some extent since bureaucratic mistakes can have serious consequences on different aspects of our lives. Navigating bureaucracy not only increases migrants' civil participation and sensitivity for official obligations but also equally gives them a sense of agency for managing their daily lives.

How?

1. Provide additional training and language courses for existing service providers.

- By simply building on the existing set of skills and knowledge of local service providers one can avoid double work.
- Learning a few phrases in the language of the target group can help migrants feel more welcome and develop trust.

- Developing cultural sensitivity helps the local service providers to understand the challenges migrants have to face on an everyday basis and plan their support accordingly.

2. In case the language level does not suffice, involve interpreters and cultural mediators.

- Sometimes small linguistic or cultural misunderstandings can have far-reaching consequences and trigger avoidable conflicts.
- Interpreters and cultural mediators are experienced in dealing with difficult situations and can help to create a friendlier atmosphere.

3. Produce informative materials in different languages.

- This enables the dissemination of the project and increases its transferability.
- It helps migrants to gain access to information faster and distribute it across their communities.
- It equally decreases the risk of misinformation.

Recommendations

1. Get to know your national bureaucratic system in order to adequately help migrants navigate it.

2. Cooperate with NGOs and cultural mediators.

3. Develop an integrated approach by opening up your services to other marginalised groups.

4. It is of benefit if the staff has a migration background or is otherwise sensitised to the specific needs and concerns of migrants.

The pilot action **'Home'** is located in the Pelice Valley that is home to migrants coming from Romania, Morocco, and Albania but also China, Nigeria, and Peru. In the region migrants make up over 5% of the population, nevertheless there is very little support for them. After contacting key players of migrant reception in the region the pilot action identified the following challenges, namely, the difficulty in accessing support regarding matters of fiscal bureaucracy, household management (bills, service contracts, rent, etc.), and labour documents (contracts, payslips, etc.). Following these reflections, GALL EVV developed a strategy in order to improve migrants' access to the host society. Instead of employing new staff, the local service providers (help-desk operators) already working in the area were equipped with all the necessary skills and knowledge to interact with migrants and address their needs with the support of cultural mediators. For instance, thanks to simultaneous translation, marriage ceremonies were carried out for non-EU nationals who did not speak Italian. In order to improve access to institutions during the pandemic a special set of digital tools was developed. As a result, the autonomy of migrants in accessing services was improved.



Un servizio gratuito e personalizzato
indirizzabile a tutte le domande riguardanti
la cultura degli itinerari e
l'offerta di servizi (info) e le attività
della tua zona

CHI?
Un servizio gestito da un'associazione
di operatori della regione

PERCHÉ?
Per creare e sostenere
la cultura degli itinerari
e la promozione
del territorio

COME?
Accompagnamento
in barca o in elicottero
linguistico-culturale
e gastronomico

QUANDO?
Nella stagione della visita favorevole, a seconda
dei servizi offerti (esclusi i servizi presenti sul territorio)

IN PIÙ
Numerosi di territorio, con
il gruppo di lavoro "Interreg"

PER MAGGIORI INFORMAZIONI E PER RICHIEDERE INFORMAZIONI, CONTATTATE
FOUNDAZIONE ERICA AL QUOTIDIANO DI LAVORO
Lorenzo Bollardi - +39 344 0441995 | erica@regione.liguria.it

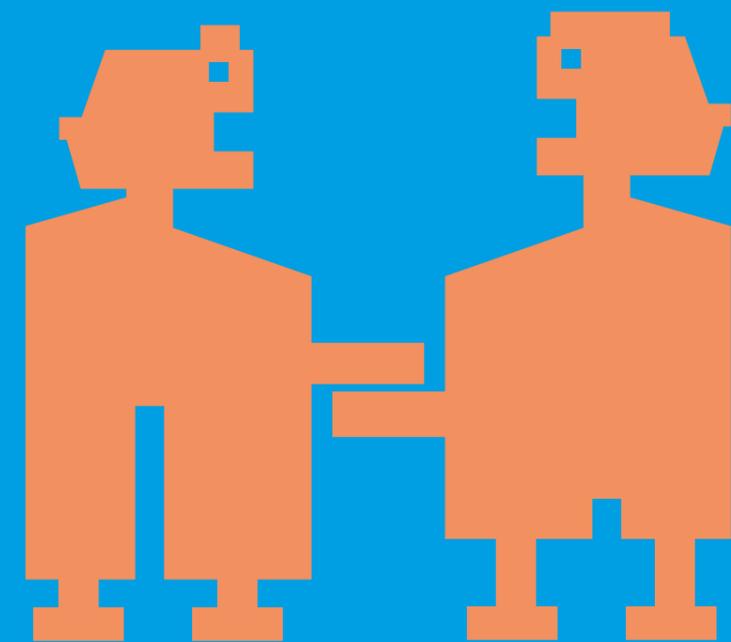
Involvement of locals in the integration process

Why?

Integration is a continuous two-sided process with no definite end. Lacking participation of locals makes migrants' efforts to integrate ineffective and may lead to unfavourable effects such as formation of parallel societies and social fractures. This endangers the level of social cohesion and makes it impossible to realise the economic and demographic potential of migration. In order to achieve positive long-term transformations in attitudes and behaviours, it is necessary to increase locals' awareness about welcoming and their participation in the integration process. Personal contact is helpful to remove stereotypes and encourage intercultural exchange. Such an exchange helps to identify local needs and will inevitably lead to the raised quality of life for both sides.

How?

1. Provide additional training and language courses. Organise joint and easily accessible activities for migrants and locals (e. g. camps, trainings, workshops, language courses, kitchen table conversations, volunteering).



- Provide a physical space for joint activities that is permanently available. This boosts the interaction between the host society and migrants.
- In case you are not able to provide such a space, approach local stakeholders for support.
- Advertise the offered services and activities across communication channels used by migrants to make sure that the target group is aware of the activities.
- Activities should be adjusted to the working schedule of the participants and take place in locations attractive to a wider audience.

2. Capitalise on the curiosity of locals through cultural festivals and other informal activities.

- Informal thematic activities are helpful to combat the everyday routine and

deliver new knowledge, while attracting locals with help of food, music, etc.

- Bringing locals into informal contact with migrants serves as a first experience and sensitises their attitude towards migrants.

- Familiarise locals with the lives of migrants in order to establish relations with them and grow mutual understanding. One can use local media, exhibitions or thematic activities in order to fulfil this task.

- This enables members of the host society to humanise, understand migrants, and establish emotional linkage between them.

3. Demystify stereotypes about migrants.

- We believe that constant interaction between locals and migrants will allow both groups to think outside of existing stereotypes.
- Use open-minded locals and migrants with successful intercultural experience to serve as 'door openers' for both groups.

4. Get to know the needs of local inhabitants.

- Orientate the activities towards the specific common needs of groups of migrants and locals in order to find common points of interest.
- In order to simplify the analysis of groups' needs, get the support of local stakeholders who actively coordinate with various groups of locals.

Recommendations

- 1.** Involve locals in the process of designing the pilot action.
- 2.** Develop a tailor-made strategy to involve the locals based on local needs and structures.
- 3.** Involve institutions that help you reach the locals (schools, local associations, employers, NGOs, churches, sports clubs).
- 4.** Directly address locally bounded community leaders with a close connection to various groups of the local community.
- 5.** Develop activities and integrate them into sustainable networks that outlive the project.
- 6.** Develop a good media strategy.

During the analysis of local challenges in Burgenland District (Germany), it became clear that migrants lack platforms where they can build contacts with the host society. Even working non-EU nationals could feel alienated, since their employment represents only an imaginary evidence of their integration. For this reason, the main goal of the **'EMI BLK'** project was to bring both migrant and German youth together at weekend activity camps. During these camps, participants were involved in various team-building and sport activities, as well as excursions that allowed them to discover their region. In order to make the camps self-sufficient, the most active participants were invited to an online team leader training where they could improve their leadership skills and management capacities. This pilot action contributed to the establishment of connections between non-EU migrants and members of the host society and showed a good example of participants' motivation. It also raised intercultural competences of both locals and migrants and led to the appearance of active 'door-openers' between two groups. The project was very well received by local authorities and was granted additional budget to prolong its activities in the future. Moreover, the used social innovation approach has already received attention from several rural regions in Germany and Poland who are interested in its transfer.



Supporting personal development



Why?

Personal development and growth are crucial for the independence and self-fulfilment of individuals. Measures aiming to support one's personal development are an important prerequisite for a successful endogenous development of a region. Considering this, rural regions should support personal development and growth of the newly arrived migrants. In addition to providing them with new skills and knowledge, rural regions should boost migrant's confidence to use their already existing one. It reduces the load on local institutions and contributes to the circulation of new ideas, which stimulates local rural development. We believe that migrants can create ties to rural regions and their population only if their goals and wishes are satisfied. Sometimes, it may help individuals to grow to the level of community leaders, successfully representing the needs of their communities and taking an active part in the improvement of the local development as well as integration process.

How?

Organise activities that foster the process of learning new skills (e.g. coaching, training

and workshops etc).

- Identify the key needs and interests of the target group and develop tailor-made and easily accessible activities.
- Choose the most suitable and effective format depending on the socio-demographic profile of the target group (e.g. online competition for students, on spot training for an older audience, etc.).
- Use the capacities and knowledge of local stakeholders to conceptualise and organise these activities.

1. Develop a strategy of reaching particularly vulnerable groups that often suffer even greater social exclusion (e.g. migrant women who often suffer double discrimination based on gender and their migration background).

- Avoid the exclusion of any group from the scope of proposed services.
- Use internal contacts and specifics of migrant communities to approach excluded groups.

2. Develop leadership and ambassador programmes (role models).

- Such programs foster the formation of opinion leaders, which can represent the needs of migrants.
- Ensure fair and transparent participation requirements.
- Equip migrants with the knowledge and skills necessary to become active members of civil society.

3. Foster self-confidence, independence and agency.

- Enable all diverse possibilities and options of self-realisation.
- Instead of constantly helping migrants to solve their problems, teach them how to be self-sufficient and solve their issues on their own.

4. Provide adequate psychosocial support.

- Pay attention to the psychosocial state of migrants and provide fast, anonymous and effective support in their native language.

Recommendations

1. Activities should be targeted at those who have expressed interest.

2. A two-stage participant selection process should be introduced for some workshops and trainings: find out who is interested, work more intensively with those who want to take it further. This will allow you to dedicate more time to people who can really profit from these activities.

3. Involve staff with relevant experience of working with migrants and a high sensitivity to their needs and problems.

Besides the establishment of comprehensive, legal and social support for non-EU nationals in the Primorsko-Notranjska region (Slovenia), **'Starting Point Postojna'** encouraged their participation in several events and workshops. With the help of these activities, locals and migrants were able to learn more about each other's culture and practice their skills in intercultural communication. Besides that, the project team organised support in drawing up business plans for potential entrepreneurs free of charge. Several migrants have successfully used this opportunity and realised their business plans. Others gained new knowledge on professional and business vocabulary in Slovenian, which could be used in practice. Due to this, the pilot action managed to attract more than 180 non-EU migrants and 70 local residents, which helped to provide a necessary space for dialogue and exchange of ideas and fostered the inclusion of migrants in the local community.



Empowerment of local stakeholders and networks

Why?

Initiatives and actions aimed at improving migrants' living conditions and life satisfaction in rural areas answer to permanent needs and challenges non-EU nationals face. Permanent needs require sustainable, reliable, and long-lasting solutions. Public authorities cannot always make sure that permanent funding and staff resources are available. Empowering local stakeholders and networks of stakeholders who already work with non-EU nationals, migrants or marginalised groups is the key to ensuring that the action is sustainable and long-lastingly successful. Local associations, churches, or NGOs can act as gatekeepers for and bridges to non-EU nationals, foster mutual understanding, generate synergies with their day-to-day work, and create a sense of responsibility and ownership of the action. However, local stakeholders often require sustained material, institutional, and sometimes financial and ideational support.

How?

1. Offer workshops, language courses, and trainings for local stakeholders.
 - Learning more about other cultures helps reduce prejudice and promotes



interaction on an equal footing.

- Local stakeholders, especially volunteers, can benefit from training and workshops on topics such as discrimination or everyday racism. This also allows the volunteers to better put themselves in the migrants' shoes and better understand their concerns and problems.
- Basic knowledge of the languages spoken by local migrants facilitates communication and makes non-EU citizens feel accepted.

2. Local stakeholders should play an important part in designing and implementing actions, projects and initiatives.

- Co-ownership increases both the identification with and motivation for establishing and sustaining local integration efforts and project working with migrants.
- Co-development with local stakeholders - including the target groups - makes sure that the local circumstances and challenges are adequately addressed.
- Involving local stakeholders from an early stage is an important precondition for a successful "handing over" of temporary projects and actions.

3. Participant acquisition is important for sustained success. It is important to reach out to and involve "key" stakeholders.

- It increases support when respected persons (e.g. mayors, preachers, chairpersons of associations) publicly embrace and endorse the project and/or become part of the project team themselves.

4. Providing additional knowledge is another key success factor.

- Civil society in rural areas often lacks knowledge about and experience with migration and migrants. Mutual learning with external, more experienced stakeholders can help to tackle this challenge.
- Expanding networks beyond the local level and making connections to stakeholders in other parts of the country or internationally provides inspiration and exchange of experiences.

5. Producing information materials helps to sustain the work and money invested and to secure the results achieved.

- Producing information material makes the design and implementation of similar actions, projects, and initiatives in other regions easier.
- Information materials increase visibility (both locally and (inter-)nationally), attract

attention, and facilitate networking.

- Information materials also increase the benefit of actions, projects, and initiatives.

Recommendations

1. It is important to demonstrate the benefits of participating for local stakeholders to ensure their willingness to participate and increase their motivation to invest their time and resources.
2. Building a strong network of relevant actors working with migrants and/or marginalised groups is the most important success factor. The network should also include other institutions, which are important for promoting integration and increasing the well-being of migrants, e.g. schools.
3. A thorough stakeholder mapping is necessary. It is by no means unusual for various initiatives and stakeholders to be active in a region that know nothing about each other.
4. Continued efforts to sustain the network are also needed. This includes regular meetings and exchanges of ideas, as well as contact points for new initiatives and stakeholders.
5. Involving cultural mediators is helpful in order to identify and ideally resolve conflicts at an early stage.
6. Service providers are sometimes in competition with each other for financial resources, and conflicts at the personal level can jeopardise the cohesion of the network. Especially in rural areas, where only a few players are active, it is important that the network functions smoothly.
7. It is recommended to use a personal approach to contact and motivate potential stakeholders, especially in regions without already existing organisations and initiatives dealing with migration and integration.
8. Networking and the development and implementation of local actions and initiatives requires both soft and hard skills, e.g. communication skills and the

competences needed to apply for project funds. It is advisable to provide support materials (e.g. brochures), and/or to make stakeholders in the network aware of external information opportunities (e.g. webinars).

9. Different places have different constellations of opportunities and challenges, different networks of stakeholders, target groups with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This means that to be successful, approaches and actions need to be developed locally and adjusted to the specific local conditions.

10. It is always advisable to diversify sources of funding and to always keep track of the potentially available funding schemes at the regional, national, and European levels.

Combating Discrimination Against Migrant Children and Women is a pilot action located in the municipality of Piran. The main target group were migrant mothers and their children, as well as school and kindergarten teachers. One of the key aims of the pilot action is to raise awareness about migration in schools and kindergartens in order to tackle discrimination against migrants. Through education and greater awareness in schools, the project aims to create a more inclusive environment and empower migrant mothers and their children in the process of learning the Slovenian language in order to break the linguistic and social barriers. This was done through common online and offline activities and games that encourage language learning and conversation such as thematic games, singing, handicrafts, thematic discussions and culinary workshops. Teachers also organised regular meetings with parents (mainly mothers) and they got a chance to participate in the project by helping with the preparation of presentations of their children. Due to the pandemic, parents got information about activities from

posters and videos prepared by the teachers. Moreover, the pilot action aims to establish a network of stakeholders who have the capacity to recognise migrants' needs and guide them through institutional procedures in the local community. The host partner already got in touch with high schools and governmental institutions in order to discuss future cooperation.



Policy Recommendations

In order to support integration of non-EU nationals as well as to create local welcoming culture, stakeholders in rural regions need to think outside the box and search for social innovation approaches that can work in rural areas. These recommendations represent nine important steps that local, regional and national authorities should take in order to successfully introduce, run and sustain social innovative approaches that supports integration of migrants.

1. Rural regions should support the process of networking between local stakeholders.

- In order to create a sustainable integration strategy fostering socio-economic development in rural areas, it is necessary to develop networks that outlive the pilot actions and can continue supporting the process of integration of migrants in the future.
- Create platforms and develop spaces where stakeholders can interact and connect.
- Play an active part in bringing stakeholders together in case activities in the region are on stand-by.

2. Rural regions should encourage cross-regional rural cooperation and networking.

- This process encourages mutual learning, since the challenges rural regions face are often similar.
- Through cross-regional cooperation, knowledge and experiences can be transferred and double work avoided.
- Positive examples on a regional level can in a long-run impact national politics and encourage an overall more sustainable integration policy.

3. Rural regions should support the development of an integrated approach.

- An integrated approach means linking the needs of the newly arrived migrants and locals in order to avoid playing out both groups against each other.
- It should take the specific conditions in rural regions into consideration (e.g. infrastructural deficits, low densities of stakeholders, lack of places to meet and network, etc.)
- The creation of an arrival infrastructure should go beyond policies directed towards migrants only.
- This can be done by supporting policies increasing accessibility to the residential market, labour market, education, providing barrier-free services, among others.

4. Rural regions should support “soft arrival infrastructures”.

- The welcoming nature of rural regions is dependent on the clear support the realization of activities promoting and supporting integration by local opinion leaders.
- Create platforms for an informal exchange between different social groups, in order to address their needs and concerns.
- Develop programs such as ‘ambassadors of integration’.

5. Rural regions should encourage participation, representation and engagement of migrant groups in local councils, administrations, initiatives, etc.

- In order to develop a sustainable integration strategy in the long-term it is necessary give representatives of migrant communities the opportunity to bring forward their concerns, fears and opportunities for their communities in local councils (e.g. in the form of migrant councils like in Germany).

6. Rural regions should involve the civil society into integration activities in order to address local narratives and create a common vision of the region as an arrival space.

- The civil society is a bridge to the resident population and therefore a decisive actor in the integration process.
- It is important to make the advantages of international migration obvious and visible to the resident society in order to gain their support.

7. Rural regions should introduce the concept of multiculturalism in local narratives.

- Due to ongoing migration processes, rural regions become more ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse.
- By introducing and using the concept of multiculturalism, rural regions prepare local inhabitants to upcoming change

of norms and practices of homogenous society.

- In order to achieve this, make people curious and open towards other cultures.
- This will help locals to get a better understanding of challenges migrants need to deal with.

8. Rural regions should foster cooperation and networking on a national and international level.

- This is necessary in order to acquire continuous funding for integration activities in rural regions.
- It entails using existing and creating new channels of communication with institutions working with migrants on a higher level.
- This encourages sharing of experiences and mutual learning.

9. Rural regions should include international migration into long-term development plans and strategies in the region.

- The challenges of demographic change, economy and migration are different sides of the same coin and therefore should be addressed mutually.
- Rural regions should officially recognise the benefits of international migration and incorporate it into development plans and strategies in their regions.
- Rural regions should develop tools that will help them sustain positive developments in the creation of a welcoming arrival region in the form of strategies, agreements and memoranda.

Conclusion

The arrival of migrants to rural regions can be seen as a great challenge, but it can also trigger positive social and economic changes, transform civic culture and local institutions, and promote social cohesion, if handled accordingly. With the help of socially innovative approaches tailor-made for each specific region, it can help to create an environment that promotes solidarity, diversity and openness. The aim of this toolbox is to help other local and regional public authorities to use social innovation for better integration of non-EU nationals.

Here is a brief overview of the most important aspects of each tool. It is important to note that some tools overlap, because they can be applied in different areas.

1. The first tool that we designed focuses on what many consider to be the first step in the integration process, namely **improving migrants' language competencies** that is integral in raising migrant's quality of life. Key

features of this tool have been accessibility and widespread promotion of the services offered across migrant communities. Language courses should be tailor-made in order to address the specific needs of the target group. If this is the case, it becomes much easier to encourage participants to further work on their language skills outside and beyond the classes. In order to incorporate our approach of integration, as a two-way process, in the case of a region with an ethnically homogeneous

migrant population, language courses of migrant's mother tongue can be offered to locals who have contact with migrants on a regular basis (e.g. administration staff).

2. In order to empower migrants and offer them support in case their rights are violated, **legal counselling** services can help them via first contact points and if necessary through the help of specialised lawyers. It is important to ensure the accessibility of such services, in terms of opening hours and the languages the services are provided in. Similarly, it is important that the services are promoted across migrant communities. Moreover, consultations should be anonymous, independent and free of charge. Frequently asked questions could be disseminated through print but also online documents.

3. Contact points should be established in order to help migrants navigate existing bureaucratic services and empower them to act independently. The offices of the contact point should be easily accessible and the services offered should be well promoted across migrant communities. For this reason, it is necessary to provide the services in several languages and in case necessary, involve interpreters and cultural mediators. It is of advantage if the contact point adapts an integrated approach and is open to all marginalised groups. The contact point serves as a coordinator of all the stakeholders working with migrants and is in constant contact with them, but also keeps track of all the services based on the real needs of the target group.

4. As integration occurs at the local level, communities must also be prepared to welcome and support migrants. It is therefore necessary to **plan and organise the arrival of migrants**. Before migrants arrive existing support structures, arrival infrastructures and material support should be analysed. With the help of local opinion leaders and volunteers, positive attitudes towards migrants across the local community can be promoted by setting a good example. It is necessary to share the duties and opportunities among all stakeholders partaking. In order to manage expectations, if possible, it is good to get to know the background, needs and future

plans of the migrants arriving and introduce them to the resident society. Provide local stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills to stimulate the arrival of migrants with the necessary knowledge and skills that are currently missing in the area.

5. In order to develop welcoming and inclusive societies, **multicultural learning should be introduced** into school curricula. This process not only promotes more openness, but also equally encourages intergenerational learning. Teachers and educators should be equipped with all the necessary skills in order to teach children about multiculturalism and establish inter-generational extra-curricular activities involving children's parents. This can be supported with the help of learning materials and peer-to-peer learning and mentoring activities.

6. Being able to independently **navigate bureaucracy** is essential in supporting migrant's agency and increasing their civil participation. This can be done by providing additional training and language courses to already existing service providers who are frequently in contact with migrants. In case necessary, involve interpreters and cultural mediators. In order to disseminate information more effectively, produce informative materials in different languages.

7. In order to maintain a sustainable long-term integration process, **the involvement of the resident population** is necessary. In order to bring both sides together, joint activities should be organised that profit from the curiosity of locals, such as festivals, volunteering programmes and workshops. This not only helps to demystify stereotypes about migrants, but also get to know the needs of the target group.

8. Supporting migrants' personal growth and development is an essential element of integration. Activities should be organised that foster the process of learning new skills and becoming active members of civil society. Leadership and ambassador programmes can help to improve migrant agency and foster self-confidence and independence. In this process, particular attention should be given to

vulnerable groups that often suffer from even greater exclusion, such as migrant women. Psychosocial anonymous support needs to be provided to migrants in case they need help to deal with past trauma.

9. Local stakeholders and networks are the key players providing support to migrants; nevertheless, they often lack sustained material, institutional, and sometimes financial and ideational support. It is therefore necessary to **cherish their work and**

empower them. This can be done by offering workshops, language courses, and training for local stakeholders in order to encourage networking and mutual learning. In order to gain access to certain stakeholders, it is necessary to actively reach out to them and incorporate them in the process of designing and implementing planned projects. Providing additional knowledge is another key success factor. Producing information materials helps to sustain the work and money invested and to secure the results achieved.

"Everyone deserves respect"





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