

INTEGRATING CITIES

VALUES DIGITAL TOOLKIT



IMPORTANT NOTE

As agreed with the European Commission in an official message sent through the Tenders & Funding Portal, dated 25 February 2021, with subject 'Change of format for toolkits deliverable', the Integrating Cities toolkits produced under the VALUES project were developed as an e-brochure. This decision allowed the inclusion of digital material, produced during the project implementation, such as videos and pictures and in the toolkits.

This version of Toolkit – Theme C is only for reporting purposes. The final and complete version of this toolkit is available at the following link:

https://fr.zone-secure.net/187382/.Eurocities_VALUES_project_digital_toolkit/



Contents

Imprint

About the VALUES project and toolkit

Factors common to the four themes

Theme C: Cities and volunteers' cooperation in migrant integration at neighbourhood (or 'community') level

Case studies

Amsterdam

Dusseldorf

Oslo

Thessaloniki

Other good practices

Contextual factors



Imprint

Publisher: [Eurocities](#), Brussels – Belgium

Main authors: Rossella Nicoletti, Feyrouz Lajili-Djalai (Eurocities), Ceri Hutton, Bella Kosmala, Sue Lukes, Richard Williams (MigrationWork).

Co-authors:

Marlet Schreuder, Mijke Wassink (Amsterdam); Anne James, Liz Small (Bristol); Sofia Burioli (Cesena), Sara Bagnoli (ASP Valle Savio, Cesena); Dr. Markus Götz, Fanny Köhler, Larissa Orlovic (Dusseldorf); Belén Campillo López, Javier Sánchez García, Carmen Gutierrez Olondriz (Madrid); Mirjam Bernad (Nuremberg); Toralv Moe (Oslo); Khansa Ali (MIRA Centre Oslo); Anushik Matevosian, Arba Skuka (Ostend); Irina Vasiljeva (Riga); Colin Havard, Angela Greenwood (Sheffield); Sandra Astudillo Moreno, Laura Munje Morales (Terrassa); Efi Palpana (Thessaloniki); Chantal Daven, Marie Segu, Sergine Sudre, Myriam Lablegnie (Toulouse), Mauro Capella, Stefano Chicco (Turin); Hannele Lautiola (Vantaa); Christof Meier (Zurich), Irene Rodriguez (AOZ, Zurich); Gabriella Civico, Giulia Bordin ([Centre for European Volunteering](#)).

Editors:

Anthony Colclough (Eurocities), Mary McCauley

Layout:

WebPublication.fr Netinteractive Group

We would also like to extend our gratitude to the following cities that did not take part in the VALUES project but contributed with their best practices for this toolkit: Bilbao, Coventry, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Malmo, Milan, Munich, Utrecht, Stockholm.

Copyright:

© 2021 Eurocities asbl, Brussels, Belgium. If you would like to cite any part of this publication, please make reference to its title and authoring organisation.

Work to produce the thematic benchmarks in this publication and introduce all partners to the project methodology was led by VALUES partner [MigrationWork CIC](#), a not-for-profit consultancy that works on issues of migration and integration.

Disclaimer:

This publication received funding from VALUES, a project funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund under grant agreement no. 820885. Responsibility for the ideas and opinions expressed in this publication lies with the authors of the project. The Commission is not responsible for those ideas or opinions nor for any use that may be made of them. © EUROCITIES 2021.



About the VALUES project and this toolkit

VALUES – Volunteering Activities to Leverage Urban and European Social integration of migrants – enables cities to exchange know-how, expertise and best practices on how best to implement local actions. Led by Eurocities, it builds on the experience and success of past projects (CITIES GROW, MIXITIES, DIVE, INTI-Cities, ImpleMentoring) that together addressed the gaps in the implementation of the Integrating Cities Charter, which embodies the cities’ commitment to third-country nationals’ integration.

By connecting city authorities and volunteer organisations through communities of practices and staff exchange, VALUES aims to improve structural cooperation and build partnerships between cities and volunteer organisations in integrating third-country nationals, by building and developing four communities of practice or clusters on the following themes:

- A. Community building in cities to foster a welcoming culture
- B. Innovative voluntary activities in integration: engaging migrants¹ and refugees² in volunteering activities for integration activities
- C. Cities and volunteers’ cooperation in migrant integration at neighbourhood (or ‘community’) level
- D. Mobilising volunteers to engage the young migrant population in community life

In these communities of practice, city officials and volunteers from 16 cities learn from each other in targeted workshops, site visits, staff exchanges, on-the-ground training and action planning to identify and implement best practice in integration and overcome shared challenges. The work carried out by each community of practice has been collected in a toolkit, composed of four thematic benchmarks.

The VALUES project started in 2019, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. As of 2020, some of the activities (site visits, workshops and staff exchanges) of the project took place online, as a consequence of travel restrictions due to the pandemic.

Benchmarks

A Eurocities benchmark is an agreed standard of best practice for cities Europe-wide. Developed jointly by independent experts, city officials and practitioners in the field, it draws on a range of evidence and is tested in real-life situations. In the VALUES benchmarks, the contribution of civil society and volunteering organisations was crucial. A benchmark sets out key factors for success in the given thematic area.

To create a benchmark, each city has gathered evidence, including statistics, policies and project examples, to see how far it goes to meeting each key factor. They then use the benchmark as a diagnostic tool to assess their

¹ For the purpose of this publication, the term migrant is used to refer to a person born outside the country in question, who has moved to live there for at least 12 months (UN definition) or a resident of ‘migrant background’, including person born to migrant parents (according to definitions varying between Member States). Cities may wish to use other definitions, according to their practice.

² For the purpose of this publication, the term refugee is used to include all forms of international protection.



own strengths and weaknesses.

Format of the VALUES benchmarks

Each benchmark begins with a short description of the theme addressed in the toolkit — a headline summarising a standard for cities to aim for. It then lists key factors — critical issues which cities need to address if they want to reach this European standard. The following are provided for each key factor:

- a brief rationale, saying why this factor is key to success in achieving the standard
- guided questions to help users check whether the factor is present in their own city
- case studies to show how other cities in Europe have addressed the factor.

A case study including good practices for each of the four cities that were part of thematic cluster C is included to illustrate each key factor. In addition, this toolkit includes good practices from other cities that were not part of the VALUES project. These cities are members of the Eurocities Working Group migration and integration. These projects and initiatives provide further examples of the four thematic benchmarks identified at the beginning of this publication.

VALUES digital toolkit and the Integrating Cities Charter

This toolkit aims to guide cities in implementing the Eurocities Integrating Cities Charter. The Charter sets out the duties and responsibilities of European cities to embrace the diversity of their population and to provide equal opportunities in their roles as policymakers, service providers, employers and buyers of goods and services. Launched in 2010, to date it has been signed by 42 cities.

Testing itself against the benchmark developed in each theme, a city can see how near it is to the standards of the Charter. It can see what it needs to do to meet those standards. And it can find inspiration to match the best, most effective practice among European cities.

Integrating Cities Charter

The Charter states that the signatory cities will

As policymakers:

- actively communicate their commitment to equal opportunities for everyone living in the city
- ensure equal access and non-discrimination across all our policies
- facilitate engagement with migrant communities in their policymaking processes and remove barriers to participation.

As service providers:

- support equal access for migrants to services to which they are entitled, particularly access to language learning, housing, employment, health, social care and education
- ensure that migrants' needs are understood and met by service providers.

As employers:

- take steps where required to reflect their city's diversity in the composition of their workforce across all staffing levels



- ensure that all staff, including staff with a migrant background, experience fair and equal treatment by their managers and colleagues
- ensure that staff understand and respect diversity and equality issues.

As buyers of goods and services:

- apply principles of equality and diversity in procurement and tendering
- promote principles of equality and diversity among their contractors
- promote the development of a diverse supplier base.

How do the Integrating Cities toolkits relate to the broader EU context?

VALUES uses an innovative combination of learning methods. The strength of this approach lies in the interaction between two levels:

Specific and local: It supports partner cities in carrying out concrete changes in local practice – where goals and standards are set by a benchmark based on EU-wide experience, and each city is mentored through the process of change by its colleagues in each community of practice. It also encourages interaction, and a shared perspective, between city staff and volunteer organisations for more effective and insightful policy decisions.

General and EU-wide: By applying its thematic benchmarks in these ‘real-life’ city actions, VALUES develops, tests and validates them so they can be delivered to European cities and the European Commission as tools for improving practice EU-wide in future years.

The VALUES digital toolkit and the four benchmarks on migrant integration follow the four toolkits already published as part of the Cities Grow project in 2018 and the four toolkits published in the framework of the ImpleMentoring project in 2014. All of these are still available at www.integratingcities.eu. They show the ongoing commitment of many public authorities and NGOs to learn from each other and assess and improve policies for the integration of migrants in Europe.



Factors common to the four themes

The following three factors have been identified as common to the four benchmarks. They do not refer specifically to any of the four themes identified above by the VALUES project but can apply equally to any of them.

1. Appropriate framework for volunteering

The city has a strategy or policy in place which promotes volunteering, supports it and incorporates it in the delivery of key city aims. The city supports volunteering with a legal framework and structure to enable grassroots projects to operate.

Rationale: Volunteering is a key resource for cities that:

- adds to the human resources available
- improves skills levels and enhances social networks
- offers meaningful activities for those who might otherwise be excluded
- provides citizens and residents with the chance to express social solidarity
- can build political support for initiatives and policies.

The policy or strategy may not be exclusive to volunteering but should ensure that volunteering is considered wherever appropriate.

Guided questions

In what way does the city recognise the importance of volunteering effort?

Is this written down anywhere in a volunteer strategy or as part of other strategies?

How is volunteering seen as contributing to the city's key aims?

Does the volunteer framework (or strategy or policy) cross-refer to migrant integration strategies in any way?

2. Monitoring, review, evaluation

The city and its partners have monitoring, review and evaluation systems in place that cover volunteers contributing to the welcome and integration of migrants. These ensure that new and creative ideas for involving citizens and residents in welcome and integration are encouraged.

All volunteer contribution and impact should be monitored, reviewed and evaluated as part of the city or partner's general processes. For volunteer activity it is particularly important to have a regular review of:

- the need for paid work instead of or alongside volunteering
- the need for volunteer development and/or support
- whether the project/work is still necessary.

An essential part of all such reviewing and evaluation is feedback from volunteers themselves, and this should be:



- easy to offer
- encouraged
- structured where possible
- where appropriate, used to elicit views on wider issues.

The city should ensure that there is a mechanism for residents to propose new ideas for volunteering, develop them, get them assessed and, where appropriate, resourced.

Data on migrant volunteering is reviewed to identify under-represented groups as part of the city and/or partners' general processes. Such monitoring needs to show:

- how migrants are recruited, how this may be different to other volunteers, and what works well
- the volunteer roles undertaken by migrants and whether these are at appropriate levels for their skills and experiences
- the use made by migrant volunteers of training and development opportunities
- the representation of more 'hard to reach' groups among migrant volunteers
- what migrant volunteers themselves think about the volunteering they are doing, what works and does not work and how it could be improved.

The city needs to understand the impact of supporting neighbourhood-based volunteering and how that impacts on neighbourhoods. Reviewing what it is supporting and how this is having an impact will be useful to understand:

- how migrants are involved in volunteering in neighbourhoods, and whether there are differences between different neighbourhoods
- how neighbourhood volunteers are giving feedback and whether this is influencing city decisions
- migrants' views on how they feel volunteering in their neighbourhood could be improved.

Involving migrants themselves in such reviews and evaluations is vital. In particular, the city monitors all provision along the three axes of volunteering, youth and migrant integration projects in order to assess the impact of volunteering on the life chances of young migrants, the involvement of young migrants, their appreciation of the success of their efforts work, and how volunteering with young migrants improves migrant integration as a whole.

Rationale: Volunteer-run projects form part of the services offered to welcome and integrate refugees and migrants. Regular reviews and evaluation as well as monitoring enable these projects to be assessed for effectiveness and relevance as any other resource would be. Some volunteer projects are, in effect, pilots to assess needs and it is important to have a process where this can then feed into further resource allocation including paid staff. And at the other end of the process, some volunteer-based projects may outlive the need for them and so need to be closed down. Volunteers themselves are members of communities and so may also offer chances to assess the impacts of measures designed, for example, to create behavioural change. Citizen and resident involvement in welcome and integration is the key to building effective solidarity. Ideas that come from residents themselves or from their communities are more likely to get support. Citizens encouraged to think creatively may produce new models and ideas.



Guided questions

How does the city know whether volunteering in migrant integration works well?

What arrangements are in place to review the need for existing projects? What options are there as a result of such reviews?

How can residents suggest new ideas for volunteering to improve migrant welcome and integration?

How does the city monitor and review neighbourhood programmes?

How does the city ensure migrant voices are heard when collecting feedback on neighbourhood-based volunteering strategies?

Are migrants involved in leading any processes of review and evaluation?

3. Formal and informal recognition of volunteers' role and contribution in integration strategies and activities

The city communicates that it values the role volunteers play in integration and promotes positive stories about volunteering. Where cities have existing recognition schemes for volunteer activity, volunteers for welcome and integration activities should be included and highlighted, and such schemes should be reviewed regularly to ensure that migrant volunteers are participating at appropriate levels. If there are none, then simple schemes for celebrating volunteers in this area should be instituted.

Rationale: Volunteering is a central strand of integration efforts, both when residents and citizens volunteer to welcome and support integration of migrants and when migrants and refugees engage in volunteering activities themselves. Such volunteering is both a symptom of citizen solidarity and an opportunity to encourage it. Recognising the contribution and impact of citizens who are volunteers – be they residents, migrants or refugees – provides role models and encouragement for others and shows all in the city how volunteering is an important and valued part of city life, and in particular how migrants contribute as well as receive. Publicising the contribution of volunteers offers a model of how we want our cities to be: inclusive, welcoming and happy. Simple awards ceremonies allow others to see the variety of people involved and to consider if they too could help. Recognition also contributes to retention of valuable volunteers and the recruitment of new ones, including migrants.

Guided questions

How do volunteers in the city know their effort is appreciated and valued?

Do residents know how volunteers are involved in migrant welcome and integration? How?



Theme C: Cities and volunteers' cooperation in migrant integration at neighbourhood (or 'community') level

Values standard: The city recognises and supports volunteer activity at neighbourhood level as a central strand of its migrant integration strategy.

The lived experience of integration happens at neighbourhood level where refugees and migrants live. It is there that they orientate, find connections and learn how to interact and get on with their neighbours. Most cities know that locally based projects and initiatives exist to help, support and engage refugees and migrants at this level, and also that refugees and migrants will better integrate if they can get connected to or involved in such neighbourhood and community activities. Cities may, however, find it challenging to see their role: they may feel too remote from what is going on locally, for example. There are, however, a number of ways cities can support and encourage the development of volunteering – both for and with refugees and migrants – at the neighbourhood level, and this in turn will help build community cohesion where it matters most.

1. Migrant integration strategy includes clear rationale and focus on neighbourhoods and local communities

The city's migrant integration strategy³ takes account of the needs and strategies at neighbourhood level and for different communities in the city, the different types of migration in each and the involvement of community organisations in integration. This strategy should:

- be based on an agreed definition of the purpose of integration within the city
- define the terms 'community' and 'neighbourhood', noting the difference between the two. It is important to note that neighbourhoods are not necessarily the primary 'communities of belonging' for citizens (including migrants) and it is thus important not to treat these as equivalents.

Rationale: While the city develops policies and strategies at municipal level, residents actually experience migration and integration (or its failure) at local level. Mobilising communities both of interest/identity as well as communities of geography (neighbourhood) must therefore form an intrinsic part of any integration strategy. Indeed, failure to be neighbourhood **and** community sensitive will potentially result in citizens mobilising against a strategy which does not take them into account.

Guided questions

Which city strategy addresses the integration of both newly arrived and existing migrants?
Does the strategy differentiate between communities and neighbourhoods (for instance, that communities are based on a common attachment, belonging or identity,

³ ***IMPORTANT NOTE:** The strategy may not be called this: it might be inclusion, diversity, integration, cohesion or equality strategies (or any combination of these) for instance. The defining point is that it addresses why and how integration takes place, both for existing and newly arrived individuals in the city.



while neighbourhoods are locally defined groups)?

How does the strategy recognise and engage migrants within communities?

How does the strategy recognise and engage migrants within neighbourhoods?

How is volunteering connected to the strategy (for instance, is there a formal link with any volunteer framework)?

2. The city collects/commissions intelligence about migrant presence in neighbourhoods and volunteering activity in them

It is important for cities to collect or commission intelligence about migrant presence in neighbourhoods and volunteering activity in them. This intelligence may be commissioned or be the disaggregation and cross-referencing of existing data. This is then used to inform the development of the integration strategy at local levels.

Rationale: Developing the local focus for migrant integration efforts needs local information on which to base it. It is likely that this is collected but it may need further development to draw out its relevance for local-level activities.

Guided questions

How does the city know where migrant populations are and what is happening at neighbourhood level in terms of integration activities?

Does the city collect information on voluntary and grassroots activity happening at neighbourhood level?

Does the city collect data about community-based initiatives and needs (irrespective of neighbourhood or citywide focus), for example migrant initiatives, cultural associations?

Are migrants and migrant communities involved in the identification of their needs at neighbourhood level (including for example identifying gaps in the provision of services at neighbourhood level for migrants)?

3. The city has the capacity to commission neighbourhood-level activities that promote integration and involve volunteers

Once the city has set the relevant policies and collected the relevant data, this can then be used to inform the commissioning process for activities.

Rationale: Citywide integration strategies must be supported by a focus on the local level at which most residents experience migration and integration. Volunteering here strengthens communities and enables day-to-day integration, interaction and learning.

Guided questions

Is the city able to commission activities at neighbourhood level (for instance, through giving grants to community or neighbourhood organisations) which support volunteering?



Does the city commission or fund activities which support migrant voices to identify both needs and solutions within communities and neighbourhoods?

How does the city assess what it funds at community and neighbourhood level and how does it make sure this takes note of migrant voices?

4. The city supports resident-led planning and participatory activities (including budgeting) which allow communities to integrate by tackling both community- and neighbourhood-related issues

Supporting or developing, alongside other local initiatives, activities which bring residents together to discuss and plan how to tackle community- and place-based issues can support integration through shared problem-solving and delivery of a shared goal. The city can actively support such activities, for example through:

- promoting its concept of integration
- training and education on social justice, anti-racism and related topics
- providing information on funding opportunities
- providing opportunities for (political) participation as well as complaint mechanisms
- training on community organising and development.

Rationale: Activities which bring people together around a place-based challenge or issue or development need can be good ways of promoting ‘integration through doing’. Such approaches focus on growing local democracies and decision-making, and a city’s approach will therefore differ from ‘standard’ activity or service commissioning as the city is likely to need not only financial but also facilitative (community development) support.

Guided questions

Is the city committed to developing methods of neighbourhood planning and democracy?

Does the city have a clear strategy of why and how to interact with citizen initiatives/civil society initiatives?

How are these initiatives given genuine decision-making power?

How are migrants (both existing and newly arrived) involved in such schemes?

Is there money and commitment available to help such neighbourhood participatory and development schemes get off the ground?

5. City decision-making is able to be responsive to neighbourhood- and community-level issues and activities

The city needs a mechanism to collect intelligence on what is going on in neighbourhoods and communities on a regular basis, as issues and dynamics can change quickly. These might include employing city staff as community workers, annual consultations on agreed themes, meetings with those representing community-level initiatives, or structured enquiry processes that respond to particular needs or emerging issues.

Rationale: Knowing what is going on at neighbourhood and community level is essential in order to adjust and adapt municipal strategies and commissioning. In addition, a focus on local-level activities brings more options



for feedback, consultation and input into decision-making that can enrich a city's existing processes. Feedback and consultations need, however, to be 'followed through' as failure to do so may cause resentment and/or disillusion.

Guided questions

How does the city learn what is going on at neighbourhood/community level on a regular basis?

Can the city gather information about new issues or challenges quickly from the neighbourhoods/communities affected?

How does the city feed back on what it has done with the information it gets from neighbourhoods and communities?

6. The city recognises the contribution of volunteers to integration at neighbourhood level

The city reinforces the message about the importance of neighbourhood volunteering for integration by recognising the efforts of volunteers and community organisations at city level. This should include various methods demonstrating ongoing commitment and valuing of volunteers (e.g. consulting, collecting and using volunteer views and feeding back on how they are used) as well as, for example, annual or one-off events to express recognition and valuing of volunteer effort and contribution (e.g. awards, ceremonies, press releases).

Rationale: While volunteers are not motivated by money and normally do not seek recognition, recognising the contribution they make is important because it encourages others to do likewise. It also sends out a message from the city that such efforts and commitment are valued.

Guided questions

Does the city have a method of identifying significant contributions from volunteers to city life?

Can the city identify particular contributions to integration or good community relations and reward these?

How does the city ensure that feedback and ideas brought forward by volunteers are adopted and put into practice?



Case studies

This section includes good practices from the 4 city partners which worked in Cluster C in the VALUES project. The projects and initiatives described provide real life examples for the four benchmarks identified in this toolkit.

N.B: Please note that the VALUES project started before the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the information included in the case studies does not reflect the current state of play in cities. The pandemic affected many of the activities carried out in the cities and local authorities and civil society have, meanwhile, adapted their way of work with volunteers, citizens and migrants.

Amsterdam

Amsterdam recognises the importance of volunteering through a strategy which engages with voluntary organisations to support refugees and asylum seekers. The municipality has a strong network of voluntary sector partners it can commission to recruit volunteers and offer voluntary work within their organisation. Since 1989 the city also funds the [Volunteer Centre Amsterdam](#) (VCA). VCA works on behalf of the municipality to support and stimulate voluntary work which it does in a wide range of ways, including by hosting a large digital platform (online volunteer job database) where people can both seek and find volunteer opportunities, including specifically for migrant groups, and refugees. The centre developed a [specific website](#) for these target groups, identifying potential opportunities for refugees. Another [website](#) enables refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to improve their Dutch language skills by finding a volunteer language coach to practise their Dutch with. In addition to the online support, the centre's services can be found in three physical locations in the city where it is possible to search with a mediator for a suitable vacancy. The centre also organises speed-dates between volunteers and Amsterdam organisations. Training and advice are provided to the organisations on how to recruit volunteers.

There are seven city districts in Amsterdam, and each has about three to four community centres ([Huizen van de Wijk](#)), funded by the municipality through its [Social Basis subsidy scheme](#). This scheme aims to strengthen a wide and accessible range of activities and support neighbourhood people to be self-reliant, develop their talents and participate in city life. These community centres work as social hubs, offering residents and partners of welfare organisations or local NGOs a place to meet. The city ensures that at least 50% of the management of the centres are volunteers. Some community centres have extra facilities such as a library or a kitchen. Most have computer rooms and digital courses, language courses, a coffee corner and a variety of accessible courses often given by volunteers. By setting up community centres, combining different functions, the municipality of Amsterdam has chosen to reduce the fragmentation of the range of spaces/buildings and activities in the city. Organising spaces more effectively saves on real estate costs. And moreover, visitors of the community centres benefit by engaging with different activities and different local residents under one roof.

Amsterdam has set up various district teams throughout the city, mapping out the social and community services for each district, including those involving migrants and refugees. This is usually done by social partners who also manage the community centres throughout the city. Amsterdam has a network of 'social brokers.' All social brokers know their neighbourhoods and local partners well, they are close to the ground and help identify new issues arising at neighbourhood and community level. They organise meetings on themes decided at district level. Such meetings determine for instance what activities are prioritised and commissioned, which will in turn partly depend on local population demographics and needs.

Each district has a participation budget for the different neighbourhoods. Locals can make an annual appeal to



organise various inclusive activities for their own neighbourhood, often including migrants and refugees. The Warm Welcome project emerged from such an 'open call' for funding and has introduced new ideas and innovation into Amsterdam's integration strategy. Started in March 2017 as a small local initiative, the aim of the project is to help inform and orientate new residents in their neighbourhood 'Amsterdam North', by being a link between them, local residents and neighbourhood organisations. Warm Welcome organises 'Neighbourhood Safari's' which take participants to visit the most useful locations (e.g. library, financial support, community centres). Dare-to-ask nights are organised where participants can ask local organisations and residents any question, however small, to trigger contact. Migrants who have already settled in their new community take on the role of experience expert, connector and translator.

The city also strongly believes in neighbourhood integration through co-living, and thus has special housing projects where young refugees and Dutch people live together: [Startblok Riekerhaven](#) (where 270 refugees live) and the Startblok Elzenhagen in Amsterdam-Noord. The Council for Refugees has offices at both locations where consultants receive their clients and residents can go there for social support. At some locations, volunteers also have special consultation hours to assist the residents with administration and budgeting support among other things. The Amsterdam strategy for status holders is characterized by a personal approach and contact, wherever possible in the neighbourhood where people live. This includes for instance involving local residents in discussions about placing refugees in Amsterdam neighbourhoods and giving them information well in advance, in particular when refugees are to be accommodated in housing projects.

[OpenEmbassy](#), founded in 2015, with its [Welcome app](#), also aims to make newcomers feel at home in the Netherlands, focusing particularly on them getting to know their own neighbourhood. Feeling at home somewhere involves making new friendships, creating a network and finding your way in society. To this end, this user-friendly app connects newcomers and locals. It is a central platform where supply and demand meet, activities are offered, contacts are made and knowledge is shared.

For more information: Mijke Wassink, M.Wassink@amsterdam.nl

Dusseldorf

The city of Dusseldorf's work on integration is driven by the city's [Integration Concept](#), developed in 2017. In this strategy where integration is seen as a cross-sectorial issue, the municipality commits to improving participation and equal opportunities for people with a migration background and supporting intercultural opening. One of the key objectives of the concept is to promote participation and civic involvement while having a focus on district and community level. The city supports volunteering as a tool to achieve these objectives.

Indeed, Dusseldorf has recently been more involved in coordinating and promoting volunteer work, in part due to the [programme KOMM-AN](#), implemented by the [municipal integration centre \(KI\)](#). This centre covers three fields of activity: integration through education; social integration as a cross-sectional task; integration of refugees. One of the aims of the KI is to build networks between relevant stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of integration projects, the local administration, private bodies and migrant organisations. The KI supports for instance the [House of Cultures](#), established in Dusseldorf in 2019 by 55 non-profit local associations, with training, exchange and networking. The House of Cultures is an intercultural meeting place for all Dusseldorf citizens, regardless of their origin or social status, a place run by civil society for civil society: every Dusseldorf association recognised as a non-profit can become a full member and thus use and help shape the house's programme.



The KOMM-AN programme was set up in 2016 by the North Rhine Westphalia region, providing funds to municipal integration centres of the region to strengthen their work on integration of refugees, but also to support volunteer organisations working in this field. In this context, the KI organises a wide range of offers for advice and support activities to promote the qualification of volunteers and foster networks within the fields of refugee aid and integration work. Since 2018, the programme forwards state funding directly to organisations, projects and initiatives to support local work in refugee aid and integration of new immigrants and refugees. In 2021, more than 30 associations and their volunteers are being supported by the KI, through funding of different projects, such as volunteer intercultural and anti-racism training and workshops.

Until now, the city's work in the field of integration has been organised on a city-wide basis. In the future, the city wants to become active at district level and get involved with local initiatives and organisations in the neighbourhoods. A first point of contact with those local actors are the [Welcome Points](#). The Welcome Points are central contact points for refugees in the city districts. They offer counselling and assistance to refugees, coordinating all voluntary work in the district, while promoting community engagement and involvement as a way to foster social integration for people who are new in the neighbourhood. The Welcome Points are meeting places in the heart of the neighbourhood, promoting exchanges between the local population and the newcomers, and aiming to foster a shared sense of belonging in the district. Furthermore, the Welcome Points are used by the municipality as an interface to closely work with welfare organisations as well as with voluntary initiatives to gain an overview of the services and to determine local needs. Today, the city has 13 municipally funded Welcome Points in all 10 city districts of Dusseldorf, run by different partner welfare organisations. The Welcome Points' programme of work is provided by the municipality and updated in a cooperative process with these organisations. A fourteenth Welcome Point, led by the municipality, will be opened in 2021.

Inspired by the social brokers scheme – a network of municipal workers close to the neighbourhoods' needs, encountered in Amsterdam through the VALUES' exchanges – Dusseldorf wants to build connections with local communities, initiatives and people. The city plans to seek out established community members as allies, providing places to foster creativity and supporting local initiatives.

For more information: Fanny Köhler, fanny.koehler@duesseldorf.de

Oslo

There is no one-size-fits-all integration solution, but Oslo tends towards 'extra-large.' The municipal inclusion strategy 'Oslo Extra Large ([OXLO](#)), a city for all' is based on the vision of Oslo as an open city for all, and acts as an umbrella for all the city's activities aimed at creating an inclusive city. OXLO recognises diversity as a strength for the city, and equality of all its citizens as its core value. Everyone who lives in Oslo has access to municipal services of equal quality, tailored to the individual.

OXLO also serves as a guide for businesses and organisations for integration and support to vulnerable groups, including migrants, and offers funding and support for voluntary organisations.

Cities know that given the right support, migrants can be a great asset. The neighbourhood incubator [Toyen Unlimited](#) realises this potential by helping young people, including migrants, giving them space to develop their own entrepreneurial ideas for solving social challenges. Some truly incredible initiatives have sprung from Toyen Unlimited. Among these is [CaféB04](#), where young people can enjoy social activities, job search counselling and homework help. Conceived by Shad Ibrahim Hussein, the café began as a volunteer-run initiative, but has been so successful that it has upgraded its workers to paid employees.



There are also [T-Town Youth](#) and [Wide-Ink](#), both conceived by Wid Al-Saedy, a political refugee hailing from Iraq. Herself a long-time volunteer, Al-Saedy thought of creating organisations that would use a mix of volunteers and employees and would leverage volunteering as a way to gain work experience and integrate with the local community.

To support volunteer-run organisations, Oslo has a [volunteer centre](#) in each district, which provide a framework for volunteering. Thanks to their databases, potential volunteers can check volunteer opportunities online. Schools and libraries are also obliged to give space to any local association that requires it.

The city of Oslo is also very engaged in fighting gender discrimination, especially for migrant women. The city works in close cooperation with the [MiRA Centre](#) on this topic. This resource centre is a meeting place for committed and socially active women and girls with a minority background. Through this community, the users help to create, promote and make visible the resources and potential of minority women and girls. The centre is partly funded by the city of Oslo, and acts as a political advisory body to the municipality on gender and minorities issues. It offers a large variety of projects, often volunteer-led, aimed at empowering women and girls, giving them a voice and a place in Norwegian society, or raising awareness on violence against women, breaking taboos about sexuality etc. Migrant women and girls taking part in the activities offered by the centre can also take part in the planning and carrying out of the activities implemented by the centre.

Most of them also take part as a volunteer in some projects, such as the [Mothers Tutors](#) project: selected mothers are trained to become guides for other mothers with a minority background in their local communities, thus passing on the knowledge they have learnt during the courses. Mothers are trained on their rights and their children's rights, empowering them. They then guide other mothers and their families on different topics and refer them to the public services in their district. They contact women in mosques and schools, and organise events and activities with them, participate in collaborative projects and help schools to communicate with the parents. These women make an important contribution to society and to their neighbourhood; they have a high level of trust within their community, and act as a link between the social services and isolated women. This group of mothers were really helpful to the municipality in passing on information about Covid-19 to their communities. The mothers themselves are involved in proposing, developing and planning the activities, events and themes for the courses. This project, funded by the municipality since 2019, has 50 volunteer tutors, together speaking more than 25 different languages.

Many women who are involved as volunteers in the centre's activities go on to integrate in the labour market, where their experience as a volunteer is valued and recognised.

Thessaloniki

Recognising the added value volunteers can bring in integrating migrants, the city of Thessaloniki offers all citizens interested in providing volunteer services opportunities to get involved. They are encouraged to register as volunteers through an e-application available on the Department of Volunteering, Youth and Administrative Assistance's [website](#). Two application options are available: one to take part in the Network of Volunteers, created by the municipality to gather a pool of potential volunteers, and the other to volunteer at the Temporary Refugee Detention Centre [Diavata](#). It is mainly younger people who apply to work in the centre, and who then support the municipality in delivering services such as food distribution, assisting the Municipal Medical Clinics or giving homework aid. Before working with the refugees, all volunteers have to complete mandatory training on what is expected of them, as well as on properly managing people's behaviour and on the information they might have to deliver. The city wants to develop clear pathways for those who want to



volunteer. As an outcome of the VALUES project, the municipality is planning to create an interactive online platform to enable volunteer activity to be promoted and organised, thus centralising awareness of volunteering in the city. In addition, the city wants to increase municipal competence in building a volunteering support strategy, by implementing training for key stakeholders, including municipal staff, on the value of volunteering, its role in integration and on operational procedures and volunteer management.

The municipality of Thessaloniki is a leading partner of the project [REACT](#) – Refugee Assistance Collaboration Thessaloniki. Thessaloniki implements this project with two other Greek municipalities and several NGOs. The project aims to provide accommodation and financial assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. Some of the project partners work with their volunteers to offer non-accommodation services to refugees, such as recreation services for children, environmental protection workshops, legal counselling and language classes. Recently, a group of volunteers was set up to help beneficiaries fill in their tax statements. The refugees themselves are encouraged to take part as volunteers in these activities and to get engaged in their local communities. For International Refugee Day, for instance, the project brings together Greek cooks with refugee cooks to share their culture around food. In 2020, migrant women voluntarily took part in the effort to fight Covid-19 by participating in making and distributing face masks.

Be it through the REACT project or through other, longer-term collaborations, the city of Thessaloniki works closely with NGOs and associations to deliver better services to migrants and refugees. The city's long and inspiring collaboration with the powerful youth organisation [YMCA](#) is one of the most striking examples. Also a REACT project partner, the YMCA worked for more than a century in the city to empower youth. Several programmes were designed and implemented for the beneficiaries of the REACT project, including summer camps which YMCA volunteers have been organising since 2017 every summer for refugee teenagers and children. The municipality of Thessaloniki could also rely on their programme [React for Life](#) started by volunteers themselves in 2015 to respond to the urgent needs of refugees arriving on Greek shores at that time. Through this programme, YMCA offers training for volunteers, awareness campaigns for the local population, food distribution, child educational support, language classes and many more activities.

However, the most innovative volunteering project the city of Thessaloniki has implemented is hands down the FM100.6 radio station. In 2011 the Municipal Broadcast Media Corp of the city of Thessaloniki ([DEPTHE](#)) was all but compelled to cancel the functioning of one of its two radio frequencies. Instead, it took the initiative of transforming FM100.6 into a voluntary radio station, offering radio programmes by the citizens and for the citizens of Thessaloniki. Multifaceted groups of volunteers responded to the mayor's call for participation in the new project. Primary and secondary school pupils, university students, artistic groups, NGOs, unions and cultural institutions make up this unique mosaic of more than 50 different radio programmes per week. One hour on-air for each participant each week is enough to give them the opportunity to express themselves and present the diversity of what each does. Every year there is a public invitation for local actors to participate in the voluntary radio station and submit a proposal for a one-hour radio programme. All the proposals are evaluated by a committee to determine and finalise the weekly radio schedule. Some organisations have weekly hour-long broadcasts, while others have daily 15-minute ones, but all have an opportunity to present their show and bring their information to the public.

In addition to that, the main radio station [FM100](#) also has a weekly show called *From the refugees for the refugees* staffed by refugee volunteers from the local Centre for Integration of Migrants. This offers a great opportunity for integration to refugees all over the metropolitan area of the city. Asylum seekers volunteer to bring their music, stories and journalistic skills to bear on a programme aimed at both migrant populations and



the local host community. Countering the notion that migrants form a single homogenous group, the station is presented in Greek, Arabic, Urdu, Turkish and Kurdish. Bringing refugee voices to the radio is just one of many techniques used to smooth integration in local communities. By spreading the word about social, recreational and cultural events, the station creates encounters between refugees and local people. It also broadcasts information on the social maps of the city, investigating local landmarks with an emphasis on common features with the cultures of refugee origin.



Other good practices

This section includes good practices from other cities that were not part of the VALUES project. These cities are members of the Eurocities working group migration and integration. These projects and initiatives provide further examples of the four thematic benchmarks identified at the beginning of this publication.

Bilbao

Bilbao's Anti-Rumour Strategy (Estrategia AntiRUMORES del Ayuntamiento de Bilbao) aims to fight the negative stereotypes and rumours spread against foreigners that hinder interaction and peaceful coexistence in the city. The main objective is to create and consolidate a network of people and entities, including migrants and refugees, committed to the values of interculturality, social cohesion and fight against discrimination. The anti-rumour agents are people who voluntarily commit to their immediate environment, their neighbourhoods and the city, who want to improve Bilbao and contribute to the change of attitudes by raising awareness, providing information and inviting to the deconstruction of the collective imaginary in relation to people of foreign origin.

Bilbao City Council started the project in 2013 with several lines of intervention:

- **Intervention in the districts:** consolidation and maintenance of the Citizens' Anti-Rumour Network in the districts. Activation, dynamisation, training, development of awareness actions and annual meeting of the Anti-Rumour Network. Currently, more than 300 people, individually or representing entities linked to the social, cultural, neighbourhood, commercial, educational, etc. fields, make up the Bilbao Anti-Rumour Network. The anti-rumour agents have autonomy in designing and implementing awareness-raising actions at district level.
- **Intervention with young people:** provision of training and awareness activities in schools.
- **Anti-Rumour Creative Writing workshops and Anti-Rumour Short Story Contest:** yearly more than 100 works are submitted to the contest and 10 are selected for publication.
- **Development and implementation of communication tools:** anti-rumour storyline, guide for anti-rumour agents, keys to anti-rumour's communication, anti-rumour [quiz](#), audio-visual materials, etc. Within this initiative, the city produces a barometer of perceptions, values and attitudes of the Bilbao population towards immigration.

There are anti-rumour networks at European, national (Red de Ciudades Interculturales) and regional level ([Red AntiRumores de Euskadi](#)). For more information: Asociación de Mediación de Euskadi. Community intervention team, amekadi@gmail.com

Coventry

Coventry has a history of welcoming people and is a designated City of Peace and Reconciliation. As an official dispersal city providing sanctuary to people seeking asylum and one of the first three cities in the UK to voluntarily participate in the Syrian Vulnerable People's Resettlement Scheme and the Resettling Vulnerable Children's Scheme, Coventry has become one of the leading cities in the UK for the resettlement of refugees.

To enable effective integration of newly arriving communities as well as change the narrative on migrants, the city has developed the [Building Bridges project](#). The objective of this two-year initiative is to bring all communities together by supporting, participating and investing in the skills, assets and cultural background of



each individual. The project focuses on three aspects, among which developing and improving skills by providing intensive language classes for employability and creating volunteering opportunities. First aimed at refugees arriving through resettlement schemes, this programme of activities has been integrated into the Building Bridges project since March 2018 and is now accessible for any refugee or migrant living in Coventry. Through this practice, newly arrived refugees and migrants living in the city are offered an accredited employability course embedded with English classes. The programme offers participants the opportunity not only to learn about the UK workforce within a classroom environment but also to develop practical skills within the UK workforce via an appropriate voluntary work placement.

With a vibrant and active voluntary sector in the city, the municipality works closely with different organisations to design and deliver this programme. This 10-week programme delivered 4 times a year, consists of 6 hours a week of classroom-based learning and a voluntary placement of up to 10 hours a week. The programme is tailored specifically to participants' level of English and is accessible for participants ranging from the lowest level of English to the highest. Participants are supported in finding a voluntary placement appropriate to their level and linked to a realistic career aspiration. Along with obtaining an accredited employability qualification and practical experience in the local labour market, the programme has also a great impact on the confidence, motivation and realistic expectations of the participants, which all contribute towards integrating them within the wider community of Coventry. A creche and childcare facilities have been introduced collocated with the language classes in order to engage migrant women and allow them to take part in the programme.

Building Bridges also focuses on youth integration: 'School Aid Hubs' provide intensive support for newly arrived young migrants and help them to adapt to their new school environment, while the 'Community Aids Hubs' bring together young volunteer host and migrant communities while also developing their interpersonal and vocational skills and promoting community cohesion and integration of newly arrived young people.

Finally, the third aspect of Building Bridges focuses on giving back to the communities, by creating new volunteer programmes and building a network for long-term volunteer placements.

For more information: Mahmood Bismillah, mahmood.bismillah@coventry.gov.uk

Frankfurt

[AmkA.Info](#) (AmkA) is short for Amt für multikulturelle Angelegenheiten: City Office for Multicultural Affairs) provides access to information on free consulting services for citizens provided by city offices, NGOs, volunteering organisations, non-profit organisations, information on interesting free cultural events or activity groups, and projects aimed at integration and building civil society. It also provides a platform for initiatives/projects which aim to bring people from different backgrounds together (and thereby strengthening civil society) by having AmkA act as an amplifier. The office also feeds back information to the city administration about special needs and relevant topics among citizen groups. The office provides services to all citizens of Frankfurt, with a special focus on those usually confronted with barriers such as language deficits, lacking knowledge of the German bureaucratic and social system, marginalised and socially isolated groups, citizens new to Frankfurt (and Germany) but also to people who would like to become more active in civil society, engage in volunteering or start an initiative themselves.

AmkA.Info has an information desk where its staff provide information. A large flyer display gives visitors an



opportunity to browse for information themselves and there is an open seating area with desks, comfortable sofas and armchairs, inviting people to work, meet, talk and relax. Free coffee and tea are provided by

AmkA.Info staff for guests using this open room. In addition, partner organisations are present at regular time slots during opening hours to provide specialised information or counselling on specific topics. The AmkA.Info staff are also available to answer citizens' requests by phone and email.

AmkA.Info also organised informal information events with partner organisations and specialised speakers on important topics relating to everyday life. These events created an opportunity for target groups to visit AmkA.Info's premises (stadtRAUMfrankfurt) and experience its facilities. AmkA.Info service as a subdivision of the City Office for Multicultural Affairs is part of the city administration and fully funded by the City of Frankfurt. It is a voluntary service of the city, the legal basis of which rests on laws issued by the municipal administration (Magistrat). It has been implemented as a permanent service. For more information: Patricia Baumjohann (team leader AmkA.Info), patricia.baumjohann@stadt-frankfurt.de

The Office for Multicultural Affairs is responsible for two projects: Vereinscoaching and Projektförderung. The objectives of Vereinscoaching are to support migrant organisations, to build relationships with and among migrant communities to understand their needs and to foster networks among migrant communities and organisations. The target groups are clubs and societies acting towards integration, migration and diversity, as well as migrants and descendants of migrants. The aim of Projektförderung is to support local associations and initiatives in implementing their projects, especially through financial contributions. In particular it supports projects that build bridges between people of different cultural backgrounds and thus contribute to exchange within the city's community.

For more information: Coaching for Clubs and Societies: Atila Yergoek, atila.yergoek@stadt-frankfurt.de

Leipzig

'Arriving at Leipzig. Mentorship for Refugees' ([Ankommen in Leipzig. Paten für Flüchtlinge](#)) is a mentorship programme aimed at all Leipzig residents who would like to support refugees in their successful integration into their new home through practical help. This voluntary activity can cover all areas of everyday life and is designed individually according to needs and possibilities. Families and couples as well as individuals can be sponsors or become temporarily involved in the programme. The mentorship programme's team takes care of the mediation and support for mentors and mentees. The programme has been sponsored by the City of Leipzig since 2014 and by the Johanniter Academy since August 2017. The responsible department within the city administration is the Social Welfare Office of the City of Leipzig. The programme has been very successful, especially in training the sponsors and in providing information about professional structures on integration to the point that the recruitment of volunteers has become quite challenging due to a very high number of volunteers who want to be part of the programme.

For more information: Marius Plambeck, Marius.Plambeck@leipzig.de

Malmö

The overall objective of the projects Framtidens Hus, House for the Future and Jämlik Hälsa, [Health Equity](#) is to strengthen the local community in Lindängen, a residential area in the southern part of Malmö. The population is multicultural, and a significant number of inhabitants have a migrant background. Municipal agencies, NGOs,



networks within the community, congregations, academia and landowners cooperate to tackle socioeconomical and health-related challenges present in the neighbourhood through participatory and co-creative actions, trustful relations between involved agencies and residents, community building and strategies

to promote health literacy and resilience. The main beneficiaries are the residents of Lindängen. The House for the Future (Framtidens Hus) is a platform for collaborative work between municipal social services, NGOs (among others the Red Cross and Save the Children), academia and local networks. In this context the core practice of the city is twofold: to coordinate the cross-sector work in the community, and case management for households in need of economic support. Collaboration with other local branches of municipal services – library, schools, local reuse facility, the House for All-Activities – is essential. The Framtidens Hus started in 2012. Today the main department with responsibility is Arbetsmarknads- och socialförvaltningen (Municipal Department for Employment and Social Services).

The initial challenge was building trustful relations between the residents and agencies involved, and between said agencies. The solutions found included building local presence, collaborative efforts to facilitate empowerment, and working together across sectors and with residents in concrete, visible action. Notably, a large portion of this work has focused on re-establishing the common public spaces in the community centre, as a friendly, welcoming place for residents of all categories to meet and co-create inclusive activities.

For more information: Jörgen Andersson, Jorgen.andersson@malmö.se

Milan

Through the Beautiful Milan (Bella Milano) initiative, asylum seekers living in Milan's reception centres volunteer, together with local people, in taking care of public spaces in the city (cleaning green spaces, emptying the bins, maintenance of street furniture, extraordinary street cleaning in the case of snow etc.) to gain a sense of belonging and respect for the host community. The project is also open to people with vulnerabilities such as the homeless, former detainees, unemployed people, etc. All projects' activities are supported by AMSA, the municipal waste collection company. The idea is to create nine teams operating in nine municipal districts. The vocational activities aim to foster the culture of integration, convey a different perception of asylum seekers to the community, and give the newcomers the chance to experience life outside the centres, practise their Italian and establish a positive relationship with the neighbourhood they live in.

The asylum seekers taking part in the project received a reward for their efforts, a symbolic coin that could be used in some shops in the neighbourhood where they contributed with their team. The City of Milan paid for the products bought by the asylum seekers using the coins, but the mechanism generated positive effects on improving relationships between the asylum seekers and their neighbourhood and on the local economy.

The first phase of the project ran from April 2018 to May 2019 and was entirely financed through municipal funds. A second phase has recently started, supported by the municipality and EU funds. The Centre for Job Orientation and Placement – Rights, Inclusion and Projects area of the municipality is the unit in charge of the project.

For more information: Ornella Villella, ornella.villella@comune.milano.it

Munich



Bellevue di Monaco's goal is to facilitate the arrival of asylum seekers in Munich. Bellevue combines a living space in the city centre, counselling on asylum, work and migration issues, and a cultural centre, to connect people of different backgrounds. Bellevue di Monaco is leasing 15 flats in two buildings owned by the city of Munich to over 40 people from more than 10 different countries. One of the buildings consists of shared flats for young adults between 18 and 27 years old. Social workers offer them support and help with their daily lives. The other building provides flats for families with special care needs (e.g. single parents, traumatised parents and children). With language courses, homework and study groups, language exchange pairings, apprenticeship-buddies and workshops in sports, arts and empowerment, Bellevue di Monaco connects people who were born and raised in Germany, with people who are newly arrived in Munich. The programmes – partly conducted by volunteers, partly by professionals (e.g. social workers, artists) – help create networks and sow the seeds for people interacting with each other. Bellevue di Monaco provides a place for different agents in the field of migration and asylum to meet and connect and establish a network of welfare associations, city authorities, NGOs, activists and refugees and migrants' organisations.

The project was started in 2014 by a group of activists protesting vacant city-owned buildings. In a very polarised social and political climate, with right-wing supporters who were against providing housing to refugees, the idea was to finance a refugees' housing project right in the centre of Munich, combining living, counselling, cultural activities and a meeting space to bring integration matters into the heart of the city and to encourage participation of as many citizens as possible. Starting with only one part-time employee and over 100 volunteers, Bellevue was mainly a voluntary project. It grew to become a small non-profit company with almost 20 employees (full and part time) and over 500 volunteers participating in different projects to support and interact with refugees. Bellevue is mainly organised by volunteers. The management board consists of three members, representing the fields of arts and culture, migration and youth welfare services. Bellevue also has a supervisory board of 11 members to date. They are elected by the members of the social cooperative.

At Bellevue di Monaco, refugees get counselling, engage in leisure time activities and language courses, and some even find housing, but all of them get a chance to become an active part of society. Most of the activities are organised with partners, such as counselling on employment issues, organised by the City of Munich, or migration counselling, which is run by hpkj e.V. (Youth Welfare Organisation) or the international women's café, organised by JUNO, an association for refugee women.

For more information: Agnes Fuchsloch, a.fuchsloch@bellevuedimonaco.de; City of Munich: Stefan Kreiner, stefan.kreiner@muenchen.de

Utrecht

[Plan Einstein](#) formally known as Utrecht Refugee Launchpad is an urban initiative aiming to include the reception of asylum seekers (state responsibility in the Netherlands) in a neighbourhood environment. During its first phase, the project focused on 40 young people from the deprived suburban neighbourhood of Overvecht living as a group of neighbours next to an emergency shelter for 400 asylum seekers, living, learning and socialising together. The main objective was to provide housing for the local youth as well as free English and entrepreneurship classes for both asylum seekers and the whole neighbourhood, alongside a multitude of social activities organised thanks to the support of many volunteers. When the project started in 2016, the Overvecht residents were violently opposed to the asylum seekers centre in their neighbourhood that had, in their opinion, already enough to worry about. By acknowledging their concerns and by building a nice community centre along with the asylum seekers centre, tensions at first reduced to a tacit status quo, then



the residents started to discover all the activities offered for free and started to get to know the asylum seekers too. Both residents and asylum seekers protested against the temporary closure of the centre in 2018.

As of early 2019, the concept was transferred to an asylum centre for 600 asylum seekers in a mostly wealthy neighbourhood in the centre of the city, with mainly elderly people. Plan Einstein community centres offered a wide range of activities, open to all residents and asylum seekers. For more information: Jan Braat, j.braat@utrecht.nl

[Welkom in Utrecht](#) is a youth volunteering organisation that started in the beginning of the large influx of asylum seekers in 2015. Its main objective is to create inclusive voluntary opportunities for both asylum seekers and refugees on one hand and local people on the other. Welkom in Utrecht runs language cafés on a weekly basis and organises different leisure activities such as visiting museums, contribute in the city's vegetable gardens, sport, culture, art. It also matches migrant families with local families, helps with homework, cooking clubs as well as sewing workshops. The municipality funds most of the initiatives organised by this association that can count on a team of four dedicated staff and many volunteers.

For more information: Rebecca de Kuijer, rebecca@welkominutrecht.nu

Stockholm

After the high number of arrivals of refugees in 2015, all sorts of organisations wanted to contribute in different ways to the newcomers' social inclusion. The project [VIDA](#) – 'Choose inclusion, participation, activity' – was born in this particular context out of the realisation that civil society and the public sector needed a more structured way of collaborating to effectively promote a more welcoming city. VIDA brought together civil society and the public sector to match newcomers with different civil society activities – social, sport or cultural – based on the person's own interests. The aim is to create more opportunities to practise language skills, expand social networks and/or promote physical and mental health, which in turn increase the individual's opportunities for integration and employment. The actual matching is done by two actors: a coordinator that works with civil society ('organisation coordinator') on the one hand and the Swedish Public Employment Service or the municipality which meets newcomers in the context of its work on the other hand. All organisations are welcome to join the project, as long as they meet several [quality standards](#), such as being a democratically grounded organisation and appointing a person responsible for liaising with the organisation coordinator. VIDA activities promoting language learning, networking and/or mental or physical health have to fulfil certain criteria to be considered as such and register to the project through a [dedicated form](#). Organisations that welcome VIDA participants receive a one-time payment of 1500 kr/€145 per participant.

As it is based on the newcomer's personal interests, the project generates a win-win situation. The organisation knows that whoever is matched with them has actively chosen the activities it organises. This creates the opportunity for people with common interests to meet and have discussion, and for the organisation to gain a new member.

The project was initially funded by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (12 million kr/€1.1 million) and was implemented from August 2016 to February 2019 by several municipalities in the Stockholm County and the Public Employment Service, under the County Administrative Board's responsibility. After the end of the project, given its success VIDA has been continued by the municipality of Stockholm, with two staff members working on its coordination. For more information: Arja Kallio, arja.kallo@stockholm.se



Contextual factors

The following is a list of factors that can affect the ability of your city to meet the four benchmarks included in this toolkit. You can refer to these when using the toolkit to explain a particular context in which your city operates.

Context factor	Examples of what this factor may involve
National legislation and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division of competences between central, or regional, and city administrations, limiting or increasing the city's power to act • Rules on the city's power to provide services to migrants and refugees or ways of delivering them (e.g. immigration rules) • Whether legislation (e.g. on equalities) allows the city authority to lead local action
Data availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits on official sources of quantitative data – or qualitative information where relevant – making it hard to plan or monitor integration-related work
Demography and migrant population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradual or dramatic change in the city's population over the past decades • History of inward migration, including recent changes • Make-up of current migrant population (e.g. language requirements, educational background, diversity of national origin, how far migrants retain links with previous country)
Labour market and other economic conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall economic conditions and rates of unemployment city-wide • Change in skills requirements of local employers as the city's economic structure alters • Opportunities for self-employment
City resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in budget (e.g. because of cuts in central government grant or fall in local tax revenues) • Availability of financial resources for actions on integration and inclusion
Political situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political control within the city administration • City policies on migration and integration and how far they are backed by cross-party consensus • Electoral outlook for the city • Political climate nationally, including national media, and national debate on immigration
Civil society in the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far civil society has developed in the city – both migrant-run organisations and others



EU and international funding availability

- Extent of mutual support among civil society organisations
- Whether there is significant funding potential from EU or other international funding institutions

Significant institutional/ corporate presence and influence

- Whether there is a significant company, university, school or other major institution that affects the local context significantly

Public perception (of host community towards migrant communities)

- A particular prevailing narrative about migrants among the host community
- How far the media is hostile towards migrants and what their main messages are
- Difficulty in reaching and influencing the public



Twitter:

@IntegratingCTs

www.integratingcities.eu

www.eurocities.eu

