

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 A 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/#page=1



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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 A 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 A: Community building in cities to foster a welcoming culture

Values standard: The city ensures that volunteer residents and citizens are actively involved in welcoming migrants and helping them integrate effectively.

All cities have an interest in ensuring community cohesion, and this requires the effective integration of migrants. Welcome services are a vital element of integration and provide an important opportunity for existing city residents to play an active role in helping newly arrived migrants orientate themselves and ‘find their feet’. The benchmark focuses on how to mobilise volunteers (from all residents and citizens including migrants themselves) to deliver or support such welcome efforts. The benefits of doing this are many: volunteering adds to the human resources available, offers meaningful activities for those excluded, provides the chance for citizens and residents to express social solidarity with those arriving, and builds political support for policies and initiatives to integrate migrants. So this benchmark completes the circle of community cohesion, volunteering and migrant integration.

1. Political leadership

Key political leaders in the city support the welcome and integration of migrants and encourage citizens and residents to be involved wherever appropriate.

Rationale: The involvement of key political leaders sends a signal to all in the city that this is a shared effort. It reassures those who may be investing time and effort that it will be well used, get continuing support and possibly be recognised.

Guided questions

Has the mayor, leader or relevant deputy mayor made public statements of support for welcoming and integrating migrants in the city?

Have any key political leaders attended events focusing on welcoming and integrating migrants?

In light of the saying ‘culture eats strategy for breakfast’, how does the city’s culture support volunteering?

2. Welcome and integration activities in the city are coordinated

There is a structured relationship between the city, those providing services to refugees and migrants, and all key actors (social services, education and training, employment, housing, leisure) that enables coordination and planning of services.

Rationale: Volunteers need to be effectively deployed and to know what their role is within the many services involved. They need to be able to understand the common pathways for migrants and refugees from arrival to integration so they can explain them to those they are collaborating with.

Guided questions

How are reception and integration services planned in the city?



Who has overall responsibility for coordinating between the city, NGOs and migrant organisations?

Do migrants understand how they get from arrival to integration? Do people working with them?

3. The city ensures that welcome and integration services (including those provided by partners) offer a variety of options for volunteering at a range of skill and commitment levels and that there is a clear pathway for those who want to volunteer

Volunteering helps build inclusive communities when it includes as many as possible from those communities.

Volunteers can offer:

- simple orientation
- accompanying
- buddying
- a space in their home
- mentoring
- skills sharing
- practical help and skills
- help with governance and technical skills for migrant organisations
- and much more.

If cities cannot offer a single point of access for volunteers who want to contribute to welcoming and integrating migrants, they should ensure that volunteering opportunities are publicised and that there are clear referral pathways for volunteers. Volunteers can then be deployed to where they can be most effective.

Rationale: Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes! They have different motivations: solidarity, skills building, ending isolation, etc. If volunteering is to strengthen communities, then volunteers should be able to find a use for what they can offer. Migrant welcome and integration typically involves many actors: statutory and voluntary organisations, migrant associations, community groups, educational institutions, etc. Volunteers may find this confusing or demotivating, so cooperation is needed to develop clear offers.

Guided questions

How do prospective volunteers know where to go if they want to offer their services to migrant integration in the city?

What options are there for volunteering in migrant integration in the city?

Do all organisations involved in migrant integration know where volunteers are needed in their and other organisations, and what skills they need? How can they find this out easily?

4. Cities ensure that all those volunteering with migrants and refugees are appropriately trained and supported

All volunteers need training delivered at levels appropriate to the role, including via online resources, printed materials, face to face and in specific sessions. This should include training on:

- specific needs and potentials of migrants and migrant communities
- the role of volunteering



- the rights of volunteers
- how the organisation offering the volunteer placement works
- requirements for specific roles.

Support should include supervision, access to specialist support where appropriate and help to develop and set clear boundaries for the engagement.

Rationale: Volunteers are a precious human resource. If they are to contribute and engage effectively, they need the tools to do it, and that includes training and support.

Guided questions

Where do volunteers find out about migrants and migrant communities?

How do volunteers learn how to manage their work and set appropriate boundaries?

How do volunteers know when and where to go for help?



Case studies

This section includes good practices from the 4 city partners which worked in Cluster A 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.

Cesena

Councillor Carmelina Labruzzo describes Cesena as a welcoming community with a great sense of hospitality. Located in the Emilia-Romagna region in Italy, Cesena has several NGOs working closely with migrants and refugees, and the city is looking to strengthen ties with these groups to streamline inclusion efforts. Within the VALUES project, the city has started to map all the volunteering associations in its territory and has established a regular dialogue with them on the topics of migration and integration.

Many volunteering associations are housed at the Centre for Peace Loris Romagnoli. The centre was set up in 2005 by the city of Cesena and Province of Forli-Cesena to promote and spread a culture of peace and human rights. It coordinates between the volunteering associations in Cesena and is a meeting place for them and all informal groups and individual citizens, with an emphasis on promoting and cultivating young people's desires to know, participate and engage. It organises educational projects, training courses, meetings, debates, and cultural and recreational events to spread the values of solidarity, justice and conviviality that are the basis of peace in the world. Some of the associations housed at the Centre for Peace founded Comunità Accogliente (Welcoming Community), a network of nine associations and other entities. Started in 2019, the association's main aim was to open a co-housing space for migrants and asylum seekers and develop personalised job placement paths. Comunità Accogliente is made up of pensioners' associations, cultural youth associations, Catholic associations and trade unions which for the first time came together to build an urban agenda with the aim of promoting 'from reception to integration' projects in Cesena.

Key political leaders in the city support the welcoming and integration of migrants and encourage citizens and residents to be involved wherever appropriate. In December 2020, Cesena City Council officially signed the Integrating Cities Charter and, as a new signatory, attended the Integrating Cities Conference organised by Eurocities on 2 and 3 December 2020. The Mayor, Enzo Lattuca, in a recorded video message highlighted the importance of volunteering for Cesena's integration strategy and confirmed Cesena's commitment to the principles of the Charter.

Volunteering helps build inclusive communities when it includes as many as possible from those communities. Cesena offers a variety of options for volunteering at a range of skill and commitment levels. For example, Urban Horizons/Orizzonti Urbani is inspired by Refugee Voices Tours, an organisation active in some large European cities, such as Berlin and Copenhagen. The project promotes city walks designed and led by young migrants, asylum seekers or refugees who experienced, in Cesena, inclusion and integration paths in a new community. City walks provide them with the opportunity to reflect on their own path and to raise awareness among the local community on contemporary migration issues. Meanwhile, local users of the city walks can



look at their own city through the eyes and stories of their new fellow citizens, discovering other meanings and ways of living in the public space. The project is run by a group of young volunteers with the association Centre for Peace Cesena and social workers from the public body Azienda Pubblica di Servizi alla Persona (ASP) Cesena Valle Savio. Furthermore, about 100 local students are involved in a programme of non-formal activities which culminates in their using the city walks.

All volunteers need to be trained and supported. In Cesena the [La Via delle Stelle](#) project works with homeless people, most of whom are refugees and migrants facing difficulties. The team involves social workers and volunteers offering support. The volunteers are regularly trained on how to manage their activities, and regular team meetings are also organised to update practice and share feelings, ideas and reflections on the relationships developed. La Via delle Stelle's volunteers are accompanied step by step. Their experience has fed into the city's action plan on volunteering and migrant integration, which also tackles potential problems of burnout and failures in referrals.

In its action plan, developed within the VALUES project, Cesena has included a proposal to create a system for the recognition of volunteers and holds an annual Volunteer's Day with all organisations and volunteers, involving local councillors, civil society and the media. The event is an opportunity to present awards and prizes to the most active volunteers and to share successful stories of volunteering, including those of migrants and refugees.

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Madrid

Volunteering has a special place in Madrid. The city has a department dedicated entirely to volunteering, within the Family, Equality and Social Wellbeing department of the municipality. Voluntarios por Madrid (Volunteers for Madrid) is the municipal programme and resource hub for all volunteering in the city and is run by the city council. It recruits, screens and places volunteers in over 40 active projects citywide and works with NGOs and associations to promote and develop opportunities for volunteering. The group has more than 15,000 volunteers, some of whom get involved in once-off or temporary projects, while others make longer-term commitments.

Voluntarios por Madrid is open to all residents living in the city, including newcomers. The staff at Voluntarios por Madrid engage with each volunteer as an individual, meeting with them and offering them opportunities that match their skills and interests. Migrants and locals volunteer together, fuelling integration while fortifying the city with a host of projects from working in animal shelters, to helping people with cognitive impairments, to giving guided tours on local history. During these activities, where many volunteers are migrants, integration happens naturally as friendships between migrants and locals bloom.

Voluntarios por Madrid also supports associations by lending them volunteers to implement their own activities. One of these organisations is the [Valiente Bangla](#) migrant-run association principally for those of Bangladeshi origin. Volunteers identified and supported by Voluntarios por Madrid work with migrants in Valiente Bangla workshops to teach Spanish and other activities which help integration in the city. The programme has been particularly useful for women because it offers much more flexibility than more formal language-learning options.

Madrid implements ideas that come from residents themselves or from local communities as these are more likely to get support. One example was a ground-breaking project called [Peinando Vidas](#) (Styling Lives). This was



initiated by hairstylists in Madrid who wanted to help with the support and integration of transgender women migrants in the city. The project was a partnership between them, the Madrid LGBTQI+ association, Transexualia (a trans association) and the Wella Foundation. Ten women attended workshops in participating salons on Sundays, offered by volunteer hairstylists from several salons, to learn the skills they need to become hairstylist assistants. Most were then offered work in salons.

Madrid celebrates its volunteers constantly, including those contributing to migrant welcome and integration. In addition to simple award ceremonies, the city offers its volunteers gilets, baseball caps, wristbands and umbrellas, which as well as being useful and identifying them as volunteers are also a way of expressing gratitude.

Migrants can and do develop skills during volunteering that could improve their chances of employment. This can be fostered by providing more volunteer opportunities that ready migrants for sectors seeking new employees and providing official recognition of skills gained through volunteering. The Madrid Agency for Employment joined the VALUES project to learn how to promote volunteering opportunities for unemployed migrants and refugees that use the agency's service. In October 2019, the agency signed a collaboration agreement with [Quiero Trabajo Foundation](#) to provide job mentoring and empower 75 unemployed women at risk of exclusion to successfully pass a job interview. Volunteers from the foundation, with experience in human resources (HR) or working for HR departments in large companies, in cooperation with the employment agency's advisors, help unemployed women, mostly migrants, to enter the Spanish labour market.

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Riga

In Latvian, the word 'volunteer' means 'free will' or 'free mind'. The Latvian state recognises the immense value that volunteers present to the city in a ceremony which awards the most committed volunteers of the year. This tradition of honouring the volunteers in Latvia started in 2014 when Riga was European Capital of Culture, and the volunteers played a very important role in this huge event. The city and the state offer financial support to local NGOs through projects and competitions. Many of these NGOs and associations are involved in integration activities. In Riga, the number of foreign nationals gradually increases. On the other hand, asylum-seekers who arrive in Riga are hoping to go on to other EU countries like Germany or may already have been sent back to Riga from these destinations, which is not an ideal context for integration to occur. For those who stay in the city, Riga has developed a City Integration Strategy.

Riga's City Integration programme covers 2019–2024 and coordinates some aspects of the city's actions on migrant integration. The programme defines society integration as a dynamic two-way process, encompassing diverse areas of public life (cultural, educational, civic and social), with the active and responsible participation of diverse groups of citizens, mutually enhancing their quality of life, reinforcing a sense of belonging to Riga and creating the image of a modern and inclusive city. The main principles of integration policy are respect, participation, tolerance, civic responsibility, open ownership of the city and cooperation. Riga has also developed an action plan which runs from 2019 to 2021 and aims to foster integration, and includes voluntary work among many other activities such as:

- project-based support for NGOs and subordinate institutions of Riga City Council (schools, kindergartens, hobby centres, community centres) for activities related to migration and voluntary work



- the creation of a unified volunteering system in the institutions of Riga City Council
- the promotion of an annual award 'Volunteer of the Year' in cooperation with the project ['Brivpratigie.lv'](#).

The movement [I Want to Help Refugees](#) started in 2015 when the founder decided to create a Facebook group whose name expressed a desire: 'I want to help refugees.' Today that group is 3000-people strong and an active organisation on Riga's integration scene. The organisation is working closely with civil society organisations to ensure the best possible support to anyone who has sought protection in Latvia and carries out advocacy work to ensure that the State and municipality institutions are familiar with the challenges and hardships that refugees face in the country. *I Want to Help Refugees* offers mentor services and other project-based activities to refugees and beneficiaries of international protection, as well as material and financial support, language exchanges and assistance with administrative tasks, not to mention friendship and emotional support.

Shelter 'Safe House' provides an information centre for newcomers to Riga. The organisation organises cultural events, sport and music activities, language classes, business incubators classes and workshops where newcomers can share their skills and learn new ones. It also supports newcomers with understanding contracts, rental or employment agreements and provides free legal aid. This organisation has one of the most diverse groups of volunteers, who come from Turkey, India, Iran, Russia, Lithuania and central Asia. Their motivations for participating include a desire to learn the language and fight the narratives of prejudice. One of the tools the organisation uses for this latter goal is a podcast in which it airs an interview with a different newcomer in each episode.

Trepes is a creative youth association for youth activities and intercultural education, a mission which includes raising awareness about discrimination, tolerance and peace. This association is largely powered by volunteers in its mission to work with newcomers to Riga integrating into Latvian society. Examples include volunteers who practise and study Arabic with migrants in exchange for helping them learn about local culture. Volunteers also include young migrants who create social networks while helping vulnerable groups such as the elderly. The organisation's name means 'steps', at once symbolising the step-by-step nature of social integration. Trepes is volunteer powered, but it is also supported by Riga's local administration through calls for projects in Trepes' area of expertise.

The city of Riga contributes to an annual award for 'Volunteer of the Year' in cooperation with state institutions, focusing on the promotion of voluntary work through a project called 'Brivpratigie.lv' (volunteers) led by the State Employment Agency. The aim of this project is to develop volunteering opportunities, to ensure and coordinate the exchange of information between people wishing to volunteer and the associations providing volunteering opportunities.

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Vantaa

Located at the hub of a large railway and highway route and hosting the biggest Finnish international airport, Vantaa is the most multicultural city in Finland and its population has been steadily growing since the 1990s. Its population's growth is mostly due to migration (people moving from other parts of Finland and from abroad) and in early 2019, 11.9% of its residents were born abroad. Some 20% of its residents speak a language other



than Finnish or Swedish, the main ones being Estonian, Russian, Arabic and Somali.

Vantaa has a four-year multicultural plan as part of its well-being programme. This is led by deputy mayors, supported and advised by a committee of political representatives. The [Advisory Committee for Multicultural Issues](#) monitors and reports on the living conditions of ethnic minorities and the effects of national migration policies in Vantaa. It also works on promoting good relations with migrant communities, by making proposals to improve issues related to migration and integration, and by engaging with organisations and groups representing migrants and minorities. The members of the advisory committee consist of trustees, experts and officials.

The Multicultural Plan covers all aspects of the city's well-being policies. It emphasises that integration is a two-way process and cannot be imposed by the local authorities only. Civil society and migrants themselves play an important role in fostering a welcoming culture in the city. Vantaa has also an action plan to strengthen cooperation with civil society, including migrant-led organisations. Ritva Viljanen, Mayor of Vantaa, is very committed on the topic of integration and has promoted successful cooperation programmes with civil society and business to develop inclusive policies at local level. On 3 December 2020, Mayor Viljanen participated in the Integrated Cities conference and reiterated Vantaa's commitment to make integration a regular part of everyday life.

Libraries are involved in integration activities in Vantaa. All metropolitan areas have a library, with a total of 70 libraries in the city. Many projects to support migrants and refugees take place or started in a city library. The [Let's Read Together project](#) started in Vantaa and became so successful that it was replicated in several other Finnish cities. Let's Read Together is now a national network that aims to improve migrants' Finnish language skills and integration. The network is composed of volunteers, mainly retired teachers, who offer Finnish, Swedish and literacy teaching to migrants, especially women. Libraries provide the Let's Read Together groups with meeting facilities and support them with marketing activities. The free language classes are designed in particular for hard-to-reach migrant groups, such as older adults and stay-at-home parents, and provide information also on Finnish society and culture to promote the well-being of students and their families.

Vantaa's libraries have developed an app called [Lango](#) for learning several languages, including Finnish, Swedish and Arabic. This app helps users to find a buddy to practise a language with, as languages are easier to learn through interaction with native speakers. Lango was initially used to teach newcomers the national language; however, it is now also used by locals to learn new languages. Once a user registers through their Facebook profile, the Lango app suggests suitable language buddies based on language choices. Users can exchange messages and then decide to meet up in person or online. Lango has been developed in a project funded by the Regional State Administrative Agency and the City of Vantaa in cooperation with Helmet Libraries, Oulu City Library, Hakunila International Association and Nicehearts. Lango is managed by Vantaa City Library and Vantaa Information Management. Launched in 2018, the app has now more than 1,500 registered users.

Vantaa cooperates with several civil society organisations, such as [Nicehearts](#), an NGO based in Finland that aims to support community self-reliance, equality and promotion of activities for girls and women. Founded in 2001, Nicehearts aims to create long-term networks and promote a place of daily encounter between girls and women of different cultures and ages. Its mission is to enable women's active participation in society, promote gender equality and improve girls' and women's lives and living conditions in Finland. One of the main projects



carried out by Nicehearts is called Neighbourhood Mothers. Neighbourhood Mothers is targeted at women who are active or want to be more active in society, currently unemployed or outside of working life (i.e. due to childcare or family reasons). The Neighbourhood Mothers project started in Germany and was then replicated in Denmark and in many Finnish cities. Women from ethnic minority backgrounds, many of them adult immigrants themselves who have now 'found a foothold', volunteer to support vulnerable, isolated women who are new to Finland. These 'mothers' can establish trust with migrant women as they live locally, are able to communicate with them in their native language and have experienced being new themselves.

For more information: Hannele Lautiola, Hannele.lautiola@vantaa.fi



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

Malmo

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 Malmo. 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@malmo.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 Kallo, 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



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