

ARiVE

EU-wide Guidelines for policy-makers and practitioners supporting the integration of low-qualified humanitarian migrants



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Introduction

A recent OECD paper 'Making Integration Work' (2016) states that "the earlier humanitarian migrants (refugees, people with subsidiary protection or other protection status and resettled refugees) enter the labour market, the better their integration prospects in the long run". Labour market integration enables refugees and asylum seekers to become self-reliant, contribute to the labour market with their skills and knowledge, practice their language skills, build up social contacts and become aware of cultural norms and traditions in their host society. Labour market integration for refugees is not easy, especially in the short terms, with multiple barriers for many to overcome, however the International Monetary Fund confirms in its report from 2015 that "Investing one euro in welcoming refugees can yield nearly two euros in economic benefits within 5 years".

Arive is a KA2 Erasmus+ project aimed at supporting the social and economic integration of low-skilled humanitarian migrants, a high proportion of whom struggle in their attempts to build a life in their host country. The project, taking in to account some of their main barriers, has a focus on the development of quality learning opportunities to support these migrants to both assess and then to upskill their competences in order to enter the labour market as early as possible.

The specific objectives of the project are to:

- facilitate the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal knowledge, competences and skills of refugees/subsidiary protection holders/asylum seekers through the design and implementation of a toolkit for integration skills assessment to enable signposting to suitable support
- transfer new qualifying skills to refugees/subsidiary protection holders/asylum seekers through tailored courses that meet their specific learning needs and characteristics, in particular language and digital skills
- provide refugees/subsidiary protection holders/asylum seekers with hands-on experience through the creation and implementation of work-based laboratories



See <https://arive.projectlibrary.eu/>.

The Partners and their Stakeholders

The partnership for the project consists of 5 organisations from Sweden, United Kingdom, Italy and Greece who were chosen for a number of reasons including:

- expertise and access to local/regional best practices and know-how regarding assessment, upskilling training and job placement strategies with a focus on low-qualified migrants
- ongoing responsibilities connected to work with migrants/refugees in relation to social/labour market integration, education or career counselling
- broad networks and relevant stakeholder links, both of professionals, decision-makers and organisations, at local / regional and national levels. This includes local authorities, adult education providers, employers and their associations, NGOs and others – ensuring the necessary expertise in the project developmental phases and sustainability of the results
- the geographical distribution of the consortium to ensure a pan-European approach

The partners are as follows:

Folkuniversitetet (FU) is a national Adult Education Association which offers a wide range of VET and adult education training courses throughout Sweden and in several European countries. FU was registered in 1954 and is nowadays a leading organisation in Sweden in Adult Education and Lifelong learning.

With a long tradition of successfully introducing new teaching methods into adult education including the latest developments in ICT, FU-Uppsala offers both formal and non-formal education for public authorities, enterprises and individuals. The International department at FU has been working, through a variety of national and international projects, on the integration and inclusion of migrants (with a particular focus on different disadvantaged groups) into adult education in order to increase their chances within the labour market. This has included the development of a structured and holistic approach (igma) for the support of



various newly arrived groups, which has now been integrated into Uppsala county regional policy.

The university's training courses are organised in cooperation with a broad stakeholder network including local business enterprise, Public Employment Services and the municipalities in the Uppsala region, as well as with a wide range of refugee and migrant focused NGOs.

Swedish stakeholders involved in the Arive project include:

- EKFB - a consultant-supported emergency and family home care and outpatient organisation. EKFB works with children and young people aged 0-21 years from disadvantaged background (immigrants, refugees). They have linguistic and cultural understanding and have extensive experience of integration work.

At local policy level:

- Hamza Abdulla (Family-home consultant, responsible for support, consultation and training of individual migrants and refugees)
- Resa Jafari (Family-home consultant, responsible for support, consultation and training of individual migrants and refugees)
- Uppsala Kommun: The Municipality is responsible for childcare, schools and care of the elderly. They also have responsibility for teaching Swedish (Swedish for Immigrants, SFI, consists of basic education in the Swedish language and cultural understanding of Swedish society), health, broader education, work, housing and libraries and culture
- Emir Padovic (Development leader with special responsibility for quality and responsibility for adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds)

DIMITRA Education & Consulting is one of the largest Vocational Education & Training (VET) Organizations in Greece, with training centres in five cities with over 30 years experience. They have a strong emphasis on producing innovative and participative educational tools, methodologies and training courses related to the constantly changing world of work, with a

focus towards the promotion of social inclusion, educational, cultural, scientific and economic growth. Their employment and integration office offering assessments and careers guidance, enhances this offer.

The current humanitarian crisis in Greece linked to the influx of refugees, has brought their issues to the fore. Dimitra have been active in the development and implementation of a number of programmes (including IGMA and EMKit) that focus on the integration and employability of refugees and migrants. They have a large and long-standing network of relevant stakeholders, that reinforces their strategic priorities and can bring together all the major actors involved - municipalities, regional/local authorities, public bodies, educational providers, employers, NGOs and others. As well as partner organisations, there are a great number of professionals who have attended their experiential training seminars on related issues.

Greek stakeholders involved in the Arive project include:

- the municipal enterprise of the Municipality of Larissa (DIKEL) which is responsible for the ESTIA project and servicing of the needs of new arrival refugees.
- the NGO APOSTOLI, one of the largest and most well-known NGOs in Greece. They offer training and integration courses for humanitarian migrants as well as housing services for unaccompanied minors.
- the project HELIOS (Hellenic Integration Support for Beneficiaries of International Protection) which runs training activities for integration in several cities in Greece.
- the Larissa Learning City Network, with over 270 member organisations (including VET providers and cultural integration organisations) and which is responsible for the People's University

ERIFO is a project management agency, a VET provider and careers guidance agency that also offers job brokerage services and business enterprise support. Within this remit it supports refugees and other migrants (who account for 50% of the service users) to access appropriate

employment and apprenticeships, as well as support their development of new business ideas.

Italian stakeholders involved in the Arive project include:

- teachers and trainers working within VET institutions, schools and adult education centres including Studio Saper Essere, Cesfor (who specialise in providing services to migrants), Speha Fesia and Humangest
- professionals working for NGOs and a reception centre belonging to the SIPROIMI system
- a number of career counsellors, tutors and labour market policy experts working at public and private employment centres and agencies (including Manpower, Umana and Orienta) located in different areas of Rome and a number of towns in the Lazio region, all of whom provide employment and counselling services to migrants
- a number of professionals working for humanitarian migrant focused NGOs offering orientation and integration services, including Arca di Noe, AISS, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
- Romina Papetti, an expert on migration and integration policies
- Giuseppe Maccauro, an expert in linguistic education and European linguistic policies, working at ADDRESS, an NGO providing information and orientation services, translation and intercultural mediation, legal support and other services in the fight against social marginalization
- The Reception Centre of Vitulano belonging to the SIPROIMI system providing reception and integration services to refugees and international protection holders

Rinova Ltd is a social enterprise that specialises in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of cultural, social and economic development programmes in London, the UK and Europe. Areas of specialism include lifelong learning and skills, employment and employability and enterprise and community development.



The company has led pioneering work in how creative learning, particularly that which takes place in non formal and informal setting, can foster a range of transversal skills (i.e. cultural awareness and expression, social and civic competences etc) for social inclusion and employability both in programmes in the UK and through collaborations across the EU

Rinova co-ordinates a Consortium (see www.rinova.co.uk/rinova-consortium) of London-based learning, skills and enterprise organisations (Further Education Colleges, Local Authorities, NGOs and non-profit organisations, independent and private providers, enterprise agencies) that are supporting young people and adults including disadvantaged people (e.g. migrants, refugees, long-term unemployed) into employment, education and new business creation.

Through close working links with community-based organizations and its provision of large-scale UK SFA programmes, delivered across London and targeted at disadvantaged groups in the labour market, Rinova is able to access individuals from many of the migrant and refugee communities represented in the capital.

Ashley Community Housing is a social enterprise in the West of England. They deliver specialist refugee resettlement and integration services in 3 cities within the UK as part of their #RethinkingRefugee programme. Since 2008 they have successfully resettled over 2,000 individuals from refugee backgrounds– developing their independence, promoting their positive contribution to the community and easing their integration into UK life. The programme is a fast track into the labour market based on a clear framework that includes economic, civic and social emphases.

ACH provides support to its 750 tenants to enable them to successfully move on with their own lives, whether into employment or further education. In the community they work with an ecosystem of referral agencies and partner organisations to provide support to asylum seekers and refugees to maintain and develop personal skills. In both cases this is achieved through the delivery of a co designed curriculum of soft skills, language skills, social and civic



orientation, employability, enterprise and personal resilience training. ACH advocates for refugee and migrant integration at both a local and national level.

UK stakeholders involved in the Arive project include:

- academic institutions including the University of the West of England and the University of Oxford
- representatives from local authorities and linked organisations such as Voscur and Bridges Outcomes Partnerships
- local community organisations and groups such as Easton Community Trust, Up our Street (a community magazine), Heart of BS13, The Osmani Trust, LTEN and others, that support integration and well-being of different community groups
- NGOs that focus on humanitarian migrants, community building, employability and other related activities including Groundworks, Refugee Rights, British Red Cross
- via a wide range of stakeholder networks including related steering groups and conferences such as the Bristol Refugee Forum and the Social Outcomes Conference hosted by the University of Oxford.
- Organisations involved with the Talent Match London programme where over 70% of the target group are from ethnic minority and migrant communities.
- Organisations that are involved in other current Rinova projects, such as BASE, WeCan, SEESI and EmKit, that are specifically linked to migrants and refugees. These include NGOs and community-based organisations such as The Light Project, KMEWO, The PHOEBE Centre and the YMCA

Although not a partner in the project Revalento’s director Roger Van de Winkel has been working as a consultant to the project. **Revalento** is a consultancy which offers services related to training, education and the labour market. Their focus is often on the support of specific disadvantaged target groups – often with a long distance to the labour market - including unemployed migrants and the newly arrived and more specifically unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers and women refugees.



With many years' experience, Revalento networks with a large variety of organisations in the Netherlands (sector organisations, VET businesses, local authorities, labour offices, NGOs and community organisations amongst others).

Stakeholders from The Netherlands involved in the Arive project include:

- Municipality of Tilburg (a major city in the South of the Netherlands, responsible for the organisation of integration activities in the municipality including housing, language learning, labour market support etc)
- The co-ordinator of the Tilburg Welcome Programme which supports new arrivals in the first 6 months of their integration programme
- Municipality of Hilvarenbeek: (a small community in the South of the Netherlands, responsible for the organisation of integration activities in the municipality including housing, language learning, labour market support etc)
- Within the municipalities, stakeholders have included those at all levels including those at policy level such as senior strategic advisors and also at programme and practice level such as co-ordinators and case workers
- (Vluchtelingenwerk Zuid Nederland) who are responsible for guidance and coaching of newly arrived migrants during the first year after their arrival. They operate in all major cities and municipalities throughout the country
- a coordinator of volunteers who work as personal coaches for the newly arrived offering support in all important aspects of integration (language, housing, health, tax, income, citizenship)
- The coordinator and trainer of Z-route: a language and integration course for the very low educated newly arrived.



The Methodology

The final output of the project is the production of EU-wide guidelines for policy-makers and practitioners, with recommendations and best practices that respond to the capacities and needs of these refugees and focuses on their successful integration.

Background information for these guidelines come from a number of sources:

- External materials including academic research and current practice documents related to European integration policy, good practice in refugee integration, specific needs of low-skilled migrants and other related areas of interest (see bibliography)

- Internal sources including:
 - IO1 national reports “Who is integrated in Europe? Social and labour market integration of the low-qualified humanitarian migrants in Europe” . Information for this IO was collected through desk research and interviews with the variety of stakeholder organisations and professionals

 - Feedback from the partners and their stakeholders on the project outputs. These were tested in pilot activities in all partner countries during the project lifetime, both in order to integrate those deliverables into the services of the stakeholder organisations, as well as to review and modify the tools. Partner and external stakeholder evaluation from these piloting activities was collected via a questionnaire (see Appendix A)

The outputs are:

-IO2 Refugees Integration Assessment Toolkit: INTEGRASS

-IO3: Migrant Service Provider Curriculum Handbook with focus on upskilling and work-based laboratories

-IO4: Toolkit for the Validation and Quality Assurance of the Curriculum

- Stakeholder discussions with partners linked to adding relevant tools from the project into their current toolkit
- review of the first draft of the guidelines by a number of stakeholders from each partner country, as to its usefulness, readability, accuracy in their experience and also to identify any gaps. (Due to the covid 19 pandemic, much of this feedback had to be obtained either online via zoom etc or by e mail)

The guidelines are structured with some initial background information, followed by a map of good practice for each country, divided into national, local and practitioner levels of influence.

Background

Over the past few decades, most EU member states have experienced increasing migration. In 2017, the EU was home to 21.6 million third-country nationals, 4.2% of the total population. Almost half of these people have lived in their host country for 10 years or longer (European Commission, 2018). However, 2 million of them had crossed the EU borders in the year leading up to January 2017 and among these were a significant number potentially in need of international protection (Donner and Molinari, 2018).

Immigration has a valuable role to play in strengthening the EU's competitiveness, bringing great opportunity and potential to individual countries and addressing current and future demographic challenges and filling labour shortages. The key to realising this potential and maximising the benefits of immigration is the successful integration of migrants into their host societies, for which is needed clear and comprehensive strategy and practice. Integration can be defined as 'the process by which immigrants and their children come to feel and become participants in the life of their country of destination, and in its schools, workplaces, and communities.' (<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/topics/integration-policy>). Studies have clearly shown that better integration of migrants leads to higher long term



economic and social gains for the country where they settle. (Kancs and Lecca, 2017)(European Court of Auditors, 2018).

However, the gap between the outcomes of migrants and EU citizens in the areas of employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship clearly demonstrates the need for greater effective integration policies (European Court of Auditors, 2018). And refugees are often among the most vulnerable migrant groups, facing the steepest barriers to economic and civic integration, statically proven to be more likely to be unemployed or employed in a job they are overqualified for than both host country nationals and other migrants. Integration practices are needing to be constantly revised and updated in an attempt to eliminate these discrepancies (European Commission 2011a).

Individual European countries have the primary responsibility for integrating new arrivals into their country. However, in the last 20 years the EU has played a large role in supporting this. Although the movements of persons into, out of, and within each EU state vary, the societies share similar migration opportunities and challenges. Using a multi-stakeholder approach, comprehensive and coherent strategies and frameworks linked to integration and anti-discrimination and financial resources at an EU level are essential to encourage good practice, facilitating co-operation and mutual support between member states and solidarity between EU and non-EU countries. Policy making at the EU level has supplemented national policymaking. It has also sometimes challenged it, as when possible national legislation is at odds with EU law (for example, trying to restrict the rights of third-country nationals) .

Though no formal definition of integration exists at EU level, generally there is evidence over the last 2 decades of a convergence of integration and migration polices within countries in Europe. (stringer). Co-operation has developed since the Tampere Programme on the creation of an area of freedom, security and justice was adopted in 1999. In 2004 the Council developed eleven Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration policy. These principles defined integration as 'a dynamic, long-term, and continuous two-way process of mutual accommodation', i.e. a social process that involves both migrants and the receiving society. (Council of the European Union, 2004)(European Court of Auditors, 2018).

Efforts to develop a common approach are continually revised, and in 2011 the European Agenda for the integration of third-country nationals was devised, when member States



‘confirmed their commitment to further developing the core idea of integration as a driver for economic development and social cohesion, in order to better enhance migrants’ contribution to economic growth and cultural richness’ (Council of European Union, 2010).

The Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals was adopted by the European Commission in 2016. This provided a framework of 52 measures to be undertaken at EU level, and to provide structural support for countries to develop and strengthen their own policies. It included concrete policy, operational and financial measures that the Commission implemented, and targeted all third country nationals in the EU, with additional actions to address the specific challenges faced by refugees. It also encouraged member states to include a focus on particular issues within their national strategies, however these were not monitored by the Commission. (European Court of Auditors, 2018).

The plan covered 5 distinct areas; pre-departure and pre-arrival measures, education, employment and vocational training, access to basic services such as housing and healthcare and active participation and social inclusion. It also presented tools to strengthen co-ordination between the different actors working on integration at national, regional and local levels. These areas link closely to the 4 indicators adopted by EU member states in 2010 to monitor integration, namely: employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship. (European Commission, 2018). Although noted separately, these indicators are closely related and have a major impact on each other. For example, when choosing locations for refugees they need to offer ‘sufficient infrastructure support to prevent isolation, segregation and diminished access to socio-cultural support.’ (Mattern et al., 2016, p.4). Language allows daily interactions within the wider community but also increases the possibilities around the labour market (Kiagia, Kriona and Georgaca, 2010, pp. 40-41).

Although there are directives on migration and frameworks around integration, as already mentioned, individual countries have scope to choose how they translate these into national law. Consequently, states have differing rules related to asylum and migration. This can lead to people moving between countries once they have arrived in Europe, which often delays the start of the integration process, which makes it less likely to be successful. Another delaying factor is the waiting period for applications to be processed, which is common when a country has a sudden, unexpected influx of migrants, often looking for asylum. The EU Commission has a 'hotspot' approach, which focuses on areas at the EU’s boundary borders



which face the greatest pressure. In the European Court of Auditors report on this theme, it was concluded that ‘the procedures that followed the arrival and registration of migrants at that time, were often slow and subject to several delays’ (European Court of Auditors, 2018). Most European countries have integration policies in place, sometimes within other policy frameworks. At the end of 2017, 25 Member States had a national/regional or local integration policy in place targeting migrants. However, these policies vary with apparently differing ideas of what integration means and consequently not all factors being tackled, as well as countries not always addressing the heterogeneous nature of migrants and addressing their various needs. For example, at the end of 2017 26 of 30 states surveyed did not have a policy specifically relating to migrant women (European Court of Auditors, 2018).

Added to this many countries appear weak in their data collection and monitoring linked to migration and integration. This leads to a lack of clarity about the national situation and consequently less ability to develop relevant, meaningful strategy. (European Court of Auditors, 2018).

In 2014 1.8 million refugees lived in the EU which represented 7% of all non-EU born migrant groups. In 2015/16 there was a sudden influx of arrivals, with a different demographic to previous groups, coming from new war-torn countries and many suffering the effects of long and dangerous journeys, having complex healthcare needs (both mental and physical) and having lower educational levels and skills that had been atrophied through prolonged displacement. The lack of preparedness for these sudden arrivals meant that a lack of centralised co-ordination, capacity and expertise (as well as sometimes political will) in individual countries left those on the frontline – cities, regional bodies, NGOs and others – with a lack of support at a national level (Donner and Molinari, 2018).

Up until this point, previous numbers of asylum seekers in most member states were relatively low and consequently had not been seen to warrant continuous, large scale interventions. Since 2017 the numbers of people arriving in Europe seeking asylum has fallen and over all refugees still represent less than .5% of the EU population (Donner and Molinari, 2018).

Since the 1990s when some EU member states restricted asylum seekers’ access to their countries, there has been a political understanding of the need for a joint approach to



refugees within Europe. Despite limits to its legislative competence, and the continuance of national interests being played out, the EU has a key role in shaping refugee integration policy, including through a strategic approach to EU funding. Since 2008 the European Refugee Fund (till 2013) has supported the finance of national integration programmes, as well as some transnational actions in the field of asylum policy. The Integration Fund (till 2013) at the same time aimed to grant comparable rights, responsibilities and opportunities to all. The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (till 2020) promotes the efficient management of migration flows and the implementation and development of a common union approach to asylum and immigration. The 2016 EU action plan also allocated a number of pots of money to specific aspects of integration.

Integration into a new country is a complex and gradual process, involving many stages and aspects of life, comprising distinct but inter-related economic, social and cultural dimensions including from arrival to finding secure housing and some sort of economic stability, to joining the labour market and having an active participation in the host country. Statistics show that joining the labour market is a major factor in supporting integration and a OECD paper 'Making Integration Work' (2016) states that "the earlier humanitarian migrants (refugees, people with subsidiary protection or other protection status and resettled refugees) enter the labour market, the better their integration prospects in the long run". Successful labour market integration often goes hand in hand with social integration of an individual.

As well as the obvious benefits for the individual, the integration of those arriving needing protection foster many gains for a country as a whole, from the cultural and social riches that come from a diverse but socially cohesive society, to the economic benefits both individually and collectively.

However, for refugees there are many barriers to this happening, and in the first 5 years after arrival, only one in four refugees is employed, the lowest of all migrant groups. After 10 years, their employment rate reaches 56% but it remains below the employment rate of the native-born in most countries. (European Commission 2014)

Refugees generally arrive with weak, if any attachment or link to the host country and have gained qualifications and work experience in very different labour market conditions. Long periods of inactivity also lead to demotivation and deskilling; deskilling in turns means that



they could only accept low-skilled jobs, remaining trapped in a low socioeconomic cycle. This impacts on their willingness and resilience to effectively commit to their integration.

In 2015 43% of third country nationals had not achieved upper school level as opposed to 22% of host country nationals. (European Commission 2018). And there is additionally a gap between refugees and other non-EU migrants in terms of educational attainment, particularly amongst men (European Council). A significant part of the difference in the employment rates between refugees and other migrants can be explained by differences in their education level, i.e. that refugees are more often found among the low-educated whose employment rate is generally far below average. Skills have also often been attained in informal settings with no attendant qualifications. Additionally, high-qualified migrants often take positions which only need lower qualifications at the beginning of their integration process in order to get a foot into the labour market, but leaving little work for the lower qualified.

Refugees are much more likely to be overqualified than other migrants. In total, almost 60% of employed tertiary-educated refugees in the EU are overqualified for the jobs they occupy, more than twice the level of the native-born and also well above the levels for other migrant groups. Issues with validation and evaluation of their foreign qualifications and a lack of documentation due to having to flee their home country are often cited as reasons for this. (European Commission).

The level of knowledge of the host country language also has a considerable impact on the employment outcomes of refugees, and less than half of refugees in the EU reported to have an advanced knowledge of the host country language, compared with two thirds of other migrants from non-EU countries. (European Commission 2014)

The EU Commission has also particularly focused attention on migrant women as an important target group re integration. The gap between employment of non-EU born women versus native women is 8 percentage points larger than the gap among men (Li, 2018). Analysis cites a lack of mapping and validation of women's' prior knowledge, skills and experience and a lack of understanding and support for their other responsibilities (particularly caring) as some of the reasons for this double disadvantage. (Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality 2015)





Image: @lepratorium

Guidelines

Many integration challenges faced by refugees are similar to those faced by other third country nationals living legally in the European Union. For example, racial and religious discrimination, whether from employers, neighbours, landlords and others, and xenophobic attitudes to those newly arrived in the country, affect refugees and other migrants alike. Consequently, broader policies and legislation that try to rectify these biases more generally within a country are crucial. Most migrants also have the barrier of language to some degree and the need to build bridges of understanding and connection in relation to the many cultural differences and barriers that they face. Many aspects of integration policies for refugees should, therefore, be mainstreamed in general integration plans drawn up for third country nationals generally, with additional explicit policies, strategies and ring-fenced monies for their support. (UNHCR)

Strategies to combat racism and xenophobia, measures to enhance participation in community activities, and confidence-building initiatives with host communities can benefit refugees as well as other migrants, particularly if they are planned in consultation with refugee and other immigrant communities themselves. Understanding cultural differences

and related issues are important, however recognizing that we are all individuals, and that every refugee will need slightly different forms of integration support, depending on their personal circumstances, are likely to provide a more targeted response, and help work against cultural stereotyping and any consequent assumptions made.

National Level

As mentioned above, there has been no attempt at harmonisation of legislation around migrant integration in the individual EU countries. Thus national pictures of refugee support, and particularly those with low skills, as part of integration policies varies from country to country. To ensure effective co-ordination of funding at EU and national level, clear processes and resources to manage any delays in the start of the integration process, country-wide parity and local comparability of service it is vital to have an overarching national approach. (European Commission, 2016).

For refugees, non-economic imperatives are usually what forces them to move to another country, which distinguishes them from voluntary migrants. They are less likely than other migrants to move to countries where they have already some cultural, linguistic or economic links, and unlike other migrants, refugees do not enjoy the protection of their countries of origin and have to rebuild their lives in new countries of residence, without the option of returning home. Often refugees are forced to flee at short notice, leaving behind their belongings and documents. They may have lost contact with family members and with social support structures in their country of origin. All these things need to be taken into account when a country is planning and implementing integration measures.

In many countries asylum claims are often prolonged and drawn out. An extended asylum procedure can be one of the main obstacles to the successful social, economic and cultural integration of refugees and reception policies are more effective if they are guided by the potential longer-term outcomes of the process. By the time of receiving their status, refugees may have been in the host countries sometimes for years, and so need to have the support during this period to enhance their possibility of successful integration (UNHCR 2007). It is also important to address the impact of the insecurity and vulnerability that this process can engender. National policies within this area are crucial to encourage the best possible practice. There are also important national policies and strategies, not directly linked to



refugees or integration, more generally that would sit behind more specific strategies, such as equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies.

Important elements at a national level would include:

- Clear, workable national policies with related legislation on both immigration and refugee/asylum seeker integration
- Where possible, relationships with the countries of origin of migrants to set up pre-departure / pre-arrival measures to support the early onset of integration processes (European Commission, 2011a, 2016). This to include support via Embassies (European Court of Auditors, 2018) and also policies and procedures to support swift family reunification where applicable, with a broad and culturally sensitive definition of ‘family’.
- Reception policies for new arrivals that are designed to minimise both the process time and isolation and separation from host communities. In many countries there is widespread and persistent delays in asylum procedures, characterised for refugees by insecurity and inactivity, as well as an uncertainty among service providers and employers regarding rights and obligations pending an assessment of claims. This extended asylum procedure can be one of the main obstacles to the successful social, economic and cultural integration of refugees. Statistically, the likelihood of recognised refugees being employed is significantly greater than those waiting for a decision on their claim, even in countries where asylum-seekers are legally allowed to work. (UNHCR)
- Policies that ensure that access to employment for asylum-seekers is granted progressively, taking in to account the duration of asylum procedures, including allowing those going through the process the right to work whilst their application is being considered (United Nations 2007)
- Policies that promote an active role (within a variety of arenas including work and community life) from day one of a humanitarian legal status being granted
- Close co-operation between all parties working at arrival to ensure where procedures are lengthy, asylum-seekers have access to a broader range of benefits and services
- A level of stability and activity whilst claims are being processed, including geographically appropriate, stable and adequate housing and activities and education for children (Directorate-general for Internal Policies, 2016)
- Targeted national strategies, and ring-fenced monies, for integration of particularly vulnerable migrant / refugee groups such as the low skilled (including targeted measures for

learning the host language, raising educational and skill levels, assessing skills gained in non-formal settings, building networks) and women (including targeted measures related to support for family and child care responsibilities, social orientation and participation, learning the host language, accessing the labour market, democratic participation and host country citizen participation). Also for those who have been in the host country for a long period of time, but are struggling (for a variety of reasons) with integration. Quotas for engaging and supporting these more vulnerable within more generic integration programmes (Li, 2018)

- Integration policies and strategies that attends to the needs of family groups as well as individuals, recognising the impact of relationship and kinship dynamics on integration.
- A legislative entitlement for all refugees and migrants to take part in an integration programme. All programmes to be ongoingly monitored and evaluated to meet identified national standards, both in terms of breadth and quality of content. These standards to link to an all-Europe agreed agenda. To include either compulsory elements or financial incentives to encourage participation by all groups. (Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality 2015)
- An integral focus of the programme to be host country language training (including literacy). There is evidence that a lack of knowledge of the host country’s language is a primary cause of unemployment among the refugee population in Europe. Refugees with an intermediate language level have an employment rate of 59%, more than twice that of those with a lower level (27%). Language training should be adapted to the broad and various learning capacities of asylum-seekers and also convey key orientation information about the host society and its functioning. (UNHCR). Within this to include policies promoting the offer of a combination or work (possibly voluntary or work experience) and language training
- Other elements of programmes to include basic skills including digital competence
- National policies and strategies to reflect an understanding that Integration is a two-way street which requires a whole of society approach, and that engages people in the receiving community beyond government and support organisations (TNS Qual+, 2011)
- The importance of equivalency systems for qualifications from different countries was highlighted in the 2011 European Agenda for the integration of third-country nationals, with a need for a robust, clear and well publicised system in place nationally. As part of this system, innovative ways to assess and validate previous formal learning are important, given a common lack of certificates and proof of previous studies amongst refugees. Free services and courses to ratify these qualifications should be available (to allow continuity of profession



and offer available skills to the labour market). Also important is the national development of educational skills testing to assess and validate non-certificated skills and experience from informal settings. (European Commission, 2016)

- Linked to the above, policies, practices and programmes that attempt to counter the prevalence of refugees’ over-qualification for the level that they enter the labour market
- Nationally, strong workers’ rights, anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation related to the workplace, including related to minimum pay, job security, sick and holiday pay, childcare and parental leave and flexible working (European Commission, 2017)
- At a national level policies, strategies and funding that supports the entry into, well-being within, and progression for refugees in the labour market. Strategies to include pro-migrant policies to reduce xenophobia in the job market and building co-operation and engagement between employers, refugee support providers and municipality departments responsible for work and benefits. The European Commission’s 2017 initiative ‘Employers together for Integration’ encourages and supports these aims.
- National strategy for work-based learning for refugees, linked to national apprenticeship, sector skills, voluntary sector and traineeship programmes and aligned to national and local labour market needs. Thus giving the opportunity for host country work experience, widening of social networks, language training and experience and confidence building.
- A national information, advice and guidance service offering wrap-a-round support service incorporating rights, entitlements, benefits and skills development services
- Linked to the above, a national certificated, professional careers counsellor/case manager training that includes equal opportunities, anti-discrimination, refugee and gender awareness elements (<http://eacg.eu/>)(European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2009).
- Systems in place to ensure close co-operation between national and local government and non-governmental organisations including a focus on monitoring. This to include rigorous data collection (from new arrivals and later down the line from those in work and education) to ensure appropriate targeting of services and equality of opportunity, evaluation of projects to share best practice and as a counter argument for negative attitudes towards refugees. This monitoring and evaluation to feed into the national strategy and policies. (European Court of Auditors, 2018)
- Nationally broad strong Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment legislation linked to all aspects of life – with monitoring and evaluation around enforcement, including linked to race,



religion and gender. Governmental bodies for the promotion of equal opportunities. All local government and those receiving national funding to promote and monitor equal opportunities. Monies ringfenced for marketing and publicity of the laws, including for work in schools and with employers. Monies for initiatives around race equality and promotion of refugee's participation and rights (European Commission 2018)

- Health services with ring fenced funds for work related to refugee physical and mental trauma including from torture, the effects of war, poverty and displacement including gender-based violence (Directorate-general for Internal Policies, 2016. Specific training for professionals working in areas linked to integration, particularly in the areas of health, education and employment, to assist them in dealing with refugees' psycho-social needs, including reactions to traumatic experiences. (UNHCR)
- Housing in most countries is an issue. A housing policy and funding that ensures a level of stability for new arrivals, with migrants neither segregated into disadvantaged areas or housed away from any known contacts or communities (European Commission, 2016) (Directorate-general for Internal Policies, 2016)
- Legislation regulating the countries media and the promotion of hate crimes. Conversely media campaigns by the government targeting host country citizens to support refugee and migrant acceptance and integration (TNS Qual+, 2011)
- A naturalisation policy that concludes the legal dimension of the integration process in as supportive, and refugee friendly way as is possible. For example, not having lengthy required residence, or too stringent language requirements, making the procedure transparent and uncomplicated, and ensuring the cost of the process makes it accessible to all (United Nations 2007)
- Appropriate discussions, policies and funding for on-line services that support integration, challenging the multiple barriers for refugees of learning and developing on-line (lack of resources, hardware and digital skills)

Local Level

The European Agenda for Integration 2011 highlighted the key role for local authorities in a successful integration policy. These authorities tend to be responsible for the integration process and delivery of services for the refugees living in their area. There is no ready-made, one size fits all approach to integration, and different geographic areas will have differing

needs in relation to this integration and local authorities / municipalities are well placed in terms of understanding their local demographics and networks, having relationships with local organisations and having a level of power through funding and local legislation to understand and meet these differing needs (European Commission, 2011). They are also responsible for providing and administering basic indispensable services such as housing, health care and education. The EU have reiterated their ideal of a 'multi-stakeholder' approach involving all relevant partners, with the Commission committed to working with local and regional authorities.

Important elements for guidelines at a local level would include:

- The local authority/municipality to put resources into a broader strong equality of opportunity environment, including training, media campaigns, local legislation and policies, encouraging the participation, promotion and well-being of refugees in all areas of life (European Commission, 2016).
- The local authority/principality to have a co-ordination and network support role around the many partners involved in integration services (likely a mix of public, private, and third sector organisations), with local agreements, monitoring and evaluation of services for equality of opportunity and supporting the creation of partnerships and networking environments for those in these services focusing on working with refugees (European Commission, 2011).
- Ongoing monitoring and impact evaluation of current local programmes by the local authority/municipality to ensure content is relevant, has impact and supports integration. This to include combining and streamlining of services where appropriate as well as procuring new funding, to ensure any overlap or gaps in the offer/services are minimised.
- A strategy supporting positive action to encourage refugees into roles and positions of responsibility and power, including within public life, local authority, refugee projects (European Commission, 2016).
- Local authority to fund and monitor local projects and partnerships offering training and activities to support migrants and refugee in their ability to fully integrate into their host society. These to have a variety of focus, for example; language learning, digital skills, social integration, employability skills, enhancing participation in public life, cultural understanding, networking skills, mental health support and tackling social isolation, through training



programmes, advice and guidance, mentoring schemes, work experience amongst other methods (European Commission, 2016)

- A particular focus on programmes that support the low skilled to attain a basic level of competence to take out into host society including the work place. This to include digital competences, language training including literacy, and broader life skills such as budgeting, healthy lifestyles, cultural awareness and more general orientation skills. Training to include exercises that are easily adaptable to a variety of environments, involve a variety of learning styles and that are fun and relevant for the participants.
- Programmes to include elements of equal opportunities awareness, civic competencies, democratic values and citizenship
- As well as integration programmes, there to be an offer of vocational skills development, that includes practical as well as theoretical experience including through links to local apprenticeship programmes
- Programmes to be financially accessible, for example, offering monies and or support for child and other care, offering incentives such as free lunch and travel. (European Commission, 2011b)
- To support, both financially and administratively, the involvement of geographically and culturally accessible organisations within the local community for integration programmes and activities (for example in schools, health centres and local NGOs). This to include local ethnic minority community groups
- To facilitate an awareness raising programme of available activities, support and learning for refugees using appropriate techniques and messages eg a local directory of services in a variety of languages (European Commission, 2016)
- Local authorities to co-ordinate and fund initiatives that promote a strong commitment by the host receiving community to the integration of refugees including joint host/refugee projects, programmes and activities and cultural programmes, to foster respect and understanding of diversity (TNS Qual+, 2011)
- Measures to more generally strengthen migrant democratic participation, to encourage an equal representation in public life (European Commission, 2011a).
- Integration programmes and activities to be offered as early as possible but also with an inbuilt flexibility within the offer in terms of time frames and individualised programmes and with longer term support available (European Commission, 2011a).



- A strong focus on local employer involvement in strategy, projects and initiatives to support refugees into the labour market. Employers to offer work experience, mentoring schemes, taster programmes, aspirational and motivational talks, flexibility around work times and recruitment criteria (European Commission 2011a). Initiatives that encourage this to offer employer training to raise awareness, challenge stereotypes and to support creation of mechanisms which tap into skills and capabilities of migrant communities. As part of this a focus on employers involved with branches of the labour market that could provide employment for low-skilled / qualified refugees, at the same time as encouraging access to well remunerated, medium skills jobs in sectors that are generally receptive to non-native workers, creating real opportunities for the beneficiaries to escape the low socio-economic cycle or unemployment.
- As part of local network co-operation, the creation of innovative ways to provide host country work experience to refugees, including work-based laboratories and work shadowing with other professionals. This experiential, practical learning is essential to compliment more theoretical knowledge, to support different learning styles, to support understanding of local labour markets, widen social networks, improve language learning and host country cultural awareness, as well as to build a CV. A thorough introduction to work experience is essential for all participants (migrants, employers and other employees) to ensure realistic expectations from all in relation to themselves and others in the situation
- The possibility of other experiential laboratories, linked to a variety of social situations, such as in healthcare and education to build confidence and support cultural awareness in broader contexts
- Because of challenges to enter the labour market for refugees, a local offer of support to promote self-employment as a viable alternative to paid work, including programmes of mentoring, entrepreneurship skills curriculums, start-up funding etc (European Commission 2011a)
- Local authority/municipality to provide accommodation to the newly arrived that supports integration. This includes accommodation that is not ghettoising, forcing refugees to be isolated from host communities, but equally that is near local facilities including community centres and groups, that is of an adequate size and standard for their needs. Frequent changes of place of residence exacerbate instability and also hinder active participation of children at school

- Local offer to include comprehensive information sharing systems that can be used by all partners to ensure support is targeted, personalised and relevant and to prevent gaps in the offer and individuals being marginalised or falling through the net of services available

Practitioner Level

Refugees and those seeking asylum will often have multiple barriers. These can be both from their internal and external conditions, impacting them moving towards integration and reaching a sense of feeling a valued, productive and recognised member of their new host society. Professionals working with these people, whatever their field of work, need a structure to give the best support they are able. Legislation, policy and systems within organisations are important not just for clients, but also to protect professionals against overwhelm at the complexity and scale of need. They need it to be formally recognised that holistic, individualised and intensive support is often essential for this group. Additionally, training, resources, supervision and appropriate caseload volumes are important.

Guidelines to support practitioners include:

- Refugees (particularly low skilled ones) are statistically a long distance from the labour market. They often need long-term, ongoing support to fulfil their aspirations and potential, including support to build peer and social networks, host country work experience, understanding of the labour market landscape, appropriate digital skills and a chance to build confidence and ability where deskilling has taken place. This necessitates the existence of professional case managers / careers counsellors offering targeted individual support within employment support services (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2009)
- Because of the, often complex and upsetting, needs of the client group, professionals working with them to receive regular supervision from relevant experienced professionals. Linked to this, professionals to be offered regular professional networking events to enhance good practice as well as to support the emotional wellbeing of those working in this capacity

- Within established professions to have professionals who specialise in working with refugees, with the associated training offer and remunerations. Positive discrimination towards employing refugees and members of minority ethnic groups into these roles
- More generic professionals whose work involves contact with refugees to be offered continuous professional training to support understanding of their particular needs and ways to support integration. This could include using a strength-based approach, understanding needs of specific groups, rooting practice in the community, using food and sport as unifiers and others (Donner and Molinari, 2018)
- Development of handbooks and toolboxes for practitioners on cultural awareness and expression, intercultural dialogue and active participation of refugees and asylum seekers in political, social and cultural life. Additionally access to an up to date directory of available networks and services for refugees (European Commission 2016)
- Professionals who work with refugees, in a variety of capacities, to have the appropriate assessment tools available (mental and physical health, educational and professional qualifications and skills gained in both formal and informal settings, including validation and language skills amongst others), to enhance their diagnostic process, essential for ensuring appropriate guidance and support. Systems in place to ensure that this assessment is streamlined, both within and externally to an organisation. Assessment tools to include: those that are shorter, to offer a quick immediate overview; those with visual outcomes that eliminate language barriers; tools designed to be part of, and to foster, conversation; language that builds confidence and esteem in relation to past activities and achievements
- Front line careers counsellors to receive equal opportunities including refugee and migrant awareness training as part of a professional qualification, to understand how this status affects the encounter that they have with their client. This should include: reflection on own prejudices and presumptions around race/nationality/refugee status, host country norms around work/livelihood and cultural variations, stereotyping and biases within the world of work (<http://eacg.eu/>)(European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2009).
- Their professional qualification should also include case management skills including working in an individualised, flexible way, developing a holistic approach, the focus on relationship, the concept of distance from the labour market and gradual progression. Also, skills and tools to understand the importance of supporting and building confidence and aspiration within refugees in their ability within the labour market and offering tools to support this.

- An emphasis on co-operation and networking between professionals, to support brokerage and sign-posting, help build peer networks for refugees, ensure no overlapping of work and possible gaps in the offer. Training to support these partnership working skills to include an emphasis on employer engagement
- All professionals to receive training in how to deliver targeted, individualised and more intensive support, through relationship and supporting tools to monitor progress, develop skills and build wellbeing
- Training linked to social inclusion skills for frontline staff to mobilise refugee and asylum seekers beyond their basic civic, labour market and welfare needs, including managing conflict and reconciliation skills to fight socio-economic intolerance and injustice

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Appendix A

IO5 - Partner Questionnaire for Background Research

Assessment and Validation of prior learning / knowledge / skills (IO2 Integrass Toolkit, IO3 Quick Scan Competence Questionnaire)

Please write about your experience using the assessment tools during the pilots. You could include:

Generally, do you feel that assessment and validation of prior knowledge, skills etc is important to support migrant integration?

Are these assessment tools a useful addition to other tools?

Was there anything you felt was missing? Did you get all the information that you felt you needed?

Any issues?

Building Competences (IO3 Competence Curriculum)

Please write about your experience of building competences during the pilots. You could include:

Do you think building competences in this way is supportive of integration for low-skilled migrants?

Were the materials easy to understand as a facilitator? Did you notice any gaps?

Did the students appear to understand and enjoy the exercises? Did they appear to increase in knowledge / skills / understanding?

Gaining Work Experience (IO3 Co-working Laboratory Exercises)

Please write about your experience of offering work experience during the pilots. You could include:

Do you think that this type of work experience is important? Will it support migrants in their integration process?

What worked well during the labs? Were there any issues with how they worked?

What skills / knowledge / understanding do you feel was being built?

Do you have any ideas for additional lab exercises / situations?



Individualised Support (IO2 Integress Toolkit Action plan, IO4 Toolkit for the Validation and Quality Assurance of the Curriculum)

Please write about your experience of giving individualised support during the pilots. You could include:

Generally how important do you think individualised support is for integration?
 Do you think that the validation of the assessment and learning will be useful to the migrants in their integration process?
 Do you and other agencies find the action plans helpful? Do the migrants find their action plans helpful?
 Is there anything that you think would be useful that is missing?

Support for Careers Counsellors and other Practitioners working with low-skilled migrants

Please describe what you think important elements of support for practitioners are. You could include:

- Networking opportunities with other agencies
- Specialist training in the needs of migrants
- The bigger picture of national and regional policy around support for migrant integration



Please add any other ideas / thoughts that you have linked to supporting integration of low-skilled migrants from a policy - national / regional perspective. This could include:

*Ideas around legislation *Thoughts around ring fencing monies *Clarifying priorities

Many thanks Many thanks Many thanks Many

