

Thematic toolkit: Labour market integration

Introduction

The IncluCities thematic toolkits offer practical, tested guidance and inspiration to help cities to reach **European standards in key areas of migrant integration**.

The toolkits are designed primarily for **local governments**, and are particularly **useful for smaller local administrations in Europe** and beyond, as well as for **partners** such as NGOs.

The content of these toolkits results from the crucial part of the IncluCities project, the benchmarking done by seven associations of local and regional governments and eight cities, with the support of the consultancy MigrationWork. These benchmarks helped to define a work programme for the mentoring schemes.

In each toolkit you will find an IncluCities thematic benchmark **drawn from a Europe-wide review of cities' experience in working on each of the four themes:**

- 1 Gender-sensitive integration
- 2 Building a 'city for all'
- 3 Labour market integration
- 4 Language learning support

The IncluCities benchmarks are qualitative standards for integration policies based on good practice and accepted standards from across Europe. They are good tools for self-assessment and goal-setting.

They consist of a set of **key factors** that define the critical conditions for success. Each key factor is illustrated with a section **why and how, and guiding questions**. Where relevant, the key factors were illustrated with good practice examples from the city or association acting as a "mentor" in the project.

Additional factors help to specify the context in which the city operates.

Benchmark: Mobilising citizens to develop tools for decent employment and entrepreneurship for migrants and refugees

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Rationale

While many newcomers arrive in Europe to work, pursue studies or join family members, the EU also receives a large number of asylum-seekers and refugees, not least in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine since February 2022. As host societies, EU Member States are required to facilitate the integration of migrants.

However, employment rates for migrants in general, and refugees and asylum-seekers in particular, are persistently lower than those of the native-born population. Moreover, they are more likely to be employed in low-skilled occupations that have high automation potential in the future.¹

That's why it is important to develop tools for decent employment and entrepreneurship for migrants and refugees.

Context factors for this benchmark:

- Migrants often struggle to find appropriate work or business opportunities, and cities fail to realise the “migrant advantage” because migrant skills and qualifications are not used well
- For more skilled or professional work, migrants also lack access to the networks and contacts that are used by others to find opportunities
- Cities have many residents who would like to promote migrant welcome and opportunity
- Local labour markets often struggle to fill skills gaps
- City administrations generally are keen to promote initiatives that build solidarity and bring people together, and are not seen as privileging one group over another

1 EP Think Tank [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)690651](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2021)690651)



1

Key Factor

Labour market and business opportunities analysis



Why and how? In order to assist migrants to obtain training, find opportunities or develop businesses the city needs to know what the local labour market needs are and in which possible businesses migrants may be placed to develop.

The city may get this information from its own economic development or planning activities, from local chambers of commerce, through periodic enquiries or investigations or by commissioning it e.g. from local universities.



Guiding questions

- ✓ What information is available about the local labour market?
- ✓ What information is available about possible business opportunities in the city?
- ✓ Does this include options to develop new small and medium enterprises?
- ✓ If up to date information is not available about these, how can this information be obtained?
- ✓ Who else in the city may have useful information to contribute?



2

Key Factor **Network with local businesses**



Why and how? The city needs to secure the support of local businesses and use the intelligence they supply to shape programmes, projects and interventions.

Most cities have formal and/or informal business networks, with which the city may develop relationships.



Guiding questions

- ✓ What business associations exist in the city?
- ✓ What relationships does the city have with them?
- ✓ How can the city develop and strengthen these relationships?
- ✓ Can the city discuss initiatives with these associations?
- ✓ If not, how can it develop the space to do this?



3

Key Factor

Good links between the city, migrants and their organisations



Why and how? Good links with migrants and their organisations enables the city to find out about their skills and potential.

Good relationships lead to being better informed of changes in migrant populations and demographics. It also helps to recruit suitable migrants to programmes and ensure programmes are tailored to their needs.

Where there is no such mechanism such as migrant council or consultative body, cities can explore setting one up.

It may be helpful to start with a less formal meeting place, which will allow the participants to explore what level of organisation and involvement is appropriate.

This will also allow the city to exchange information and ideas with migrant residents.



Guiding questions

- ✓ Is there a migrant council or coordinating body in the city?
- ✓ Does it allow the city to consult it about migrant skills and demographics?
- ✓ Can it help recruit migrants to employment and entrepreneurship programmes?
- ✓ How does the city work with the migrant or consultative body to develop, shape and improve its programmes?
- ✓ If there is no migrant council or consultative body, can the city bring migrant community leaders together informally?
- ✓ Can this eventually develop into a more formal body? Or at least meet regularly to provide feedback and intelligence?



Good practice examples

Fuenlabrada
Mesa por la convivencia de la Fuenlabrada, 'Coexistence board' - boosts social cohesion and fosters active social participation of migrants.
www.mesaconvivenciafuenlabrada.org



4

Key Factor

Opportunities to recruit citizens who want to promote migrant integration and are willing to volunteer their expertise



Why and how? Offering skills and time is a practical expression of solidarity with migrants and allows citizens to be personally involved in promoting migrant integration.

The city may have an existing volunteer bureau, or have an NGO that recruits volunteers to deploy across the city.

Where this does not exist, the city may need to conduct a recruitment campaign for project volunteers. Local NGOs may be able to help with this. The opportunity to work with migrants may attract new volunteers, including migrants themselves.



Guiding questions

- ✓ Does the city have a volunteer bureau or similar?
- ✓ Do NGOs in the city recruit, train and support volunteers?
- ✓ Can the city, maybe in conjunction with NGOs, run a recruitment campaign for volunteers who want to work on migrant integration?
- ✓ Can the city seek to recruit volunteers with particular knowledge of useful areas of employment and entrepreneurship?
- ✓ How will such volunteers be supported and trained?



5

Key Factor

Support for volunteer mentors



Why and how? One very effective way to use citizens' skills and goodwill is as mentors for migrants entering the labour market or going into business.

The support for the volunteer mentors should be integral to the project, and should offer

- Induction that explains the role of migrants and refugees in the city
- Matching of mentors with mentees (this needs to be sensitive to gender, age, etc as well as matching common areas of interest and availability)
- Help if mentors encounter problems with the mentoring relationship



Guiding questions

- ✓ Can the city provide a simple framework to support volunteer mentors? E.g. regular meetings with project leads
- ✓ Do volunteer mentors have an induction programme?
- ✓ What are the criteria for matching mentors to mentees?
- ✓ How can mentors feed back into the project?
- ✓ How can mentors and mentees comment on and improve the project?



6

Key Factor

Mechanism for exchange of information between employers, officials who support business development and those deploying and supporting possible mentors



Why and how? Any programme to facilitate migrants' entry in the labour market or become entrepreneurs needs up to date and good quality information about the locality's needs, opportunities and constraints.

The city may already have a mechanism for collating labour market and local economic development information, that simply needs to be processed and passed on to mentors.

If not, then one can be established by setting up a regular reporting process (e.g. quarterly) and then passing this on as a briefing.



Guiding questions

- ✓ Who holds information about labour market needs in the city?
- ✓ Who holds information about business development needs in the city?
- ✓ How often is this collected and in what form?
- ✓ Who collates this information and uses it to inform the mentors or the project?



7

Key Factor

A programme to support migrants into employment or entrepreneurship that is focused on decent employment and opportunities



Why and how? The aim is not simply to ensure that migrants are working but also that their skills and aptitudes are fully utilised so that they do not undercut labour market standards or become trapped in poor quality low-paid work.

The programme needs to establish at the start what constitutes decent employment and opportunities, and review it regularly using the intelligence collected.



Guiding questions

- ✓ What are local decent wage levels?
- ✓ What are the minimum employment conditions that are decent?
- ✓ How does the programme ensure that it is preparing migrants for decent employment and entrepreneurship?



The municipality of Levadia, the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE) and the mentor city Fuenlabrada with Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (FEMP), contributed to the development of this thematic benchmark.



The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the oldest and broadest European association of local and regional governments. Its members consist of more than 60 national associations of municipalities and regions from 40 European countries. Together, these associations represent some 100,000 local and regional governments. www.cemr.eu

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The **IncluCities** project (2020-2023) aims to improve integration of third-country nationals in middle-sized cities through city-to-city cooperation. Eight municipalities, with varying degrees of integration-related experience, and their national associations of local and regional government participate in the project, led by CEMR and funded by the EU (AMIF). www.includities.eu



MigrationWork is a non-profit consultancy helping communities, practitioners and policy-makers to respond to migration in ways that move towards integration. MW has long-standing experience in organising mutual learning between local practitioners across Europe. Their Europe-wide work is independent, evidence-based and draws on combined track record of working with migration processes, its policy context and its practical challenges. www.migrationwork.org



Partners



INCLUCITIES
CCRE-CEMR
Council of European Municipalities and Regions
1 Square de Meeûs
B - 1000 Brussels

 @InlucitiesEU  @IncluCitiesCEMR

www.inlucities.eu

IncluCities received funding from the European Commission, DG Home Affairs through the AMIF - Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.



Co-funded by
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