

# ASAP

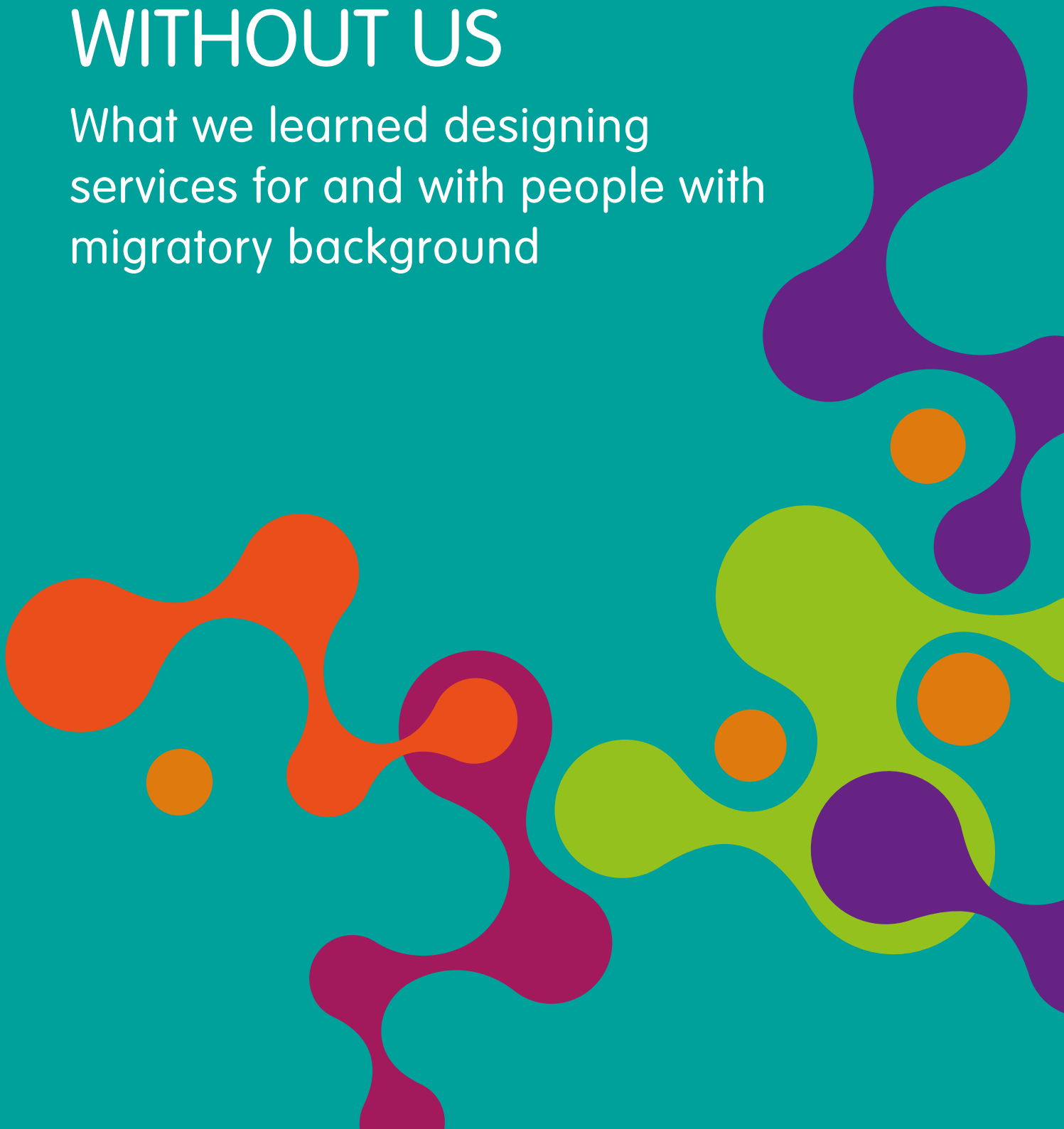
Accessing services, Sharing  
Approaches and Practices



European Union Asylum, Migration  
and Integration Fund

# NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

What we learned designing  
services for and with people with  
migratory background





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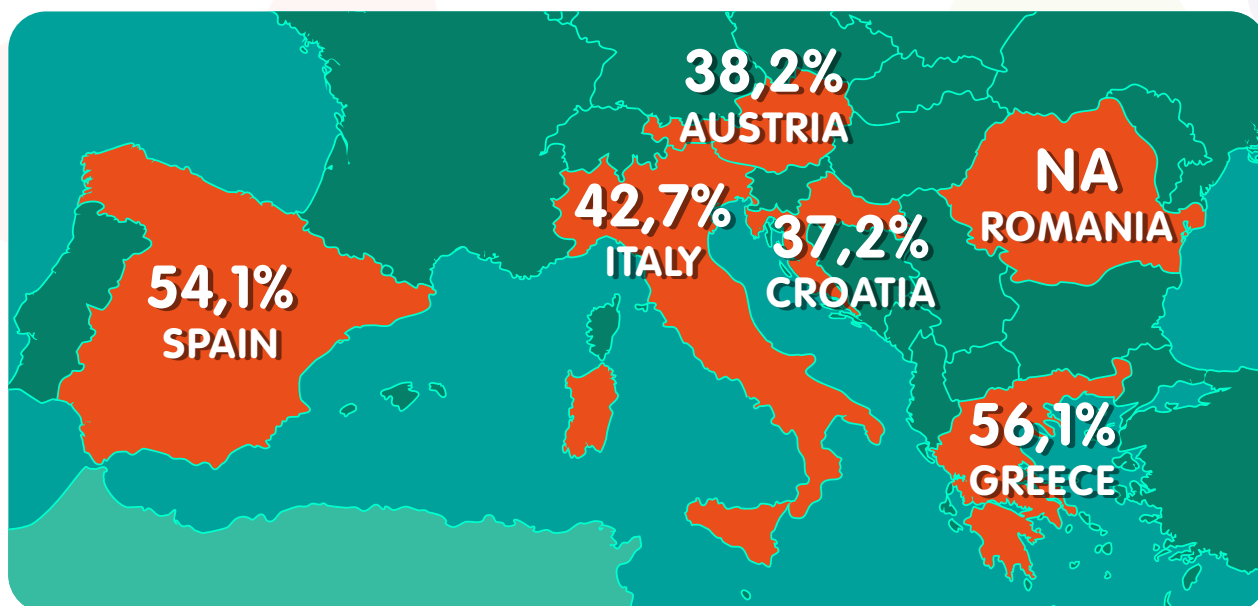
## What is ASAP? The project at a glance

From 2014, the rapid increase in arrivals of migrants and refugees brought to light previously existing deficits and accentuated the structural limitations of local public capacities to provide a migrant-inclusive access to basic services. The pandemic exposed the vulnerability of migrants with limited access to social protection and highlighted barriers in access to public health information. Faced with many urgent and unprecedented challenges, many local authorities took social and economic emergency measures that left out migrants, who lacked information and support to access the new measures. Reaching the most vulnerable groups remains challenging: social isolation is one of the main issues facing migrant women, together with low skills in host-country language and intersecting forms of discrimination. Public services and civil society organisations (CSOs) play a crucial role in facilitating access to services, as they can implement complementary tasks: public service providers should deliver appropriate, culturally, linguistically and gender-responsive services and information,

while local CSOs are able to communicate well with migrants and have capacities to engage with their communities. A strong collaboration between local authorities and CSOs can lead to broad and complementary responses to integration challenges, capable of catering for the service needs of vulnerable groups while enhancing social cohesion in their communities.

The **ASAP** project directly contributes to the implementation of European integration priorities, from enhancing territorial capacities, resources and expertise to ensuring that **all migrants have safe access to basic services**

### Non-EU citizens at risk of poverty or social exclusion:





## Project activities

ASAP aims at supporting local service providers and CSOs in **6 European countries (Austria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Romania and Spain)** in the implementation of effective and replicable practices which can respond to migrants' needs in the **sectors of employment, housing, education and health.**

<b>PILLAR 1:</b> Establishing a strong collaboration between public service providers and civil society at local level	<b>PILLAR 2:</b> Enhancing the capacity of CSOs and service providers in terms of knowledge, skills and networking	<b>PILLAR 3:</b> Improving knowledge of relevant stakeholders, both at local and European level, about replicable and effective responses to challenges.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Databases on the existing resources and services at local level.</li> <li>● Needs assessments aimed at identifying the major obstacles in accessing basic services.</li> <li>● Multi-stakeholder networks involving public service providers at different levels as well as non-governmental actors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Training and capacity building courses targeting service providers and civil society organisations.</li> <li>● Pilot practices co-designed and tested with the objective to improve a specific basic service and facilitate the access for migrants and refugees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identification, evaluation and modelling of promising practices.</li> <li>● A transnational meeting of exchange of promising practices among European organisations.</li> <li>● Advocacy meetings to present critical situations, difficulties and possible solutions.</li> </ul>

## Cross-cutting tools

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A European Handbook about promising practices discussed in the European exchange and tested in the project.</li> <li>● Local events which will inform migrant citizens about the possibilities offered by public services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cross-media information kits addressed to migrants and refugees presenting the information on available services.</li> <li>● A European video of a selection of promising practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Factsheets containing data from the needs assessments, stories, descriptions of critical obstacles and recommendations about possible solutions.</li> </ul>
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## Partnership

<b>ITALY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● COSPE</li> <li>● SOCIOLAB Società cooperativa - impresa sociale</li> <li>● ANCI TOSCANA</li> </ul> <b>SPAIN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SSF - Solidaridad Sin Fronteras</li> </ul>	<b>GREECE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SYMBIOSIS Symbiosis Astiki Mi Kerdoskopiki Etaireia</li> </ul> <b>AUSTRIA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SUDWIND Sudwind Verein Fur Entwicklungspolitik Und Globale Gerechtigkeit</li> <li>● MIB GRAZ - Migrantinnenbeirat Graz</li> </ul>	<b>ROMANIA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WUT - Universitatea De Vest Din Timisoara</li> <li>● LOGS Asociația Logs Grup De Initiative Sociale</li> </ul> <b>CROATIA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CMS - Udruge Centar Za Mirovne Studije</li> </ul>
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# Why Nothing about us without us

The phrase “*Nothing about us without us*” gained prominence in disability rights movements, particularly in South Africa, as a potent message towards the inclusion and active participation of people with disabilities in decision-making processes that directly affect their lives. The phrase gained prominence as a fundamental principle of disability activism, emphasizing the right of individuals with disabilities to be directly involved in shaping policies, programs, and services that impact them.

Over time, “*Nothing about us without us*” has transcended its original context and become a universal slogan for advocating participatory approaches in various social justice movements. Today, it continues to resonate across different sectors, including immigration, healthcare, education, and beyond, as a powerful reminder of **the importance of inclusivity, representation, and self-determination in the pursuit of equality and justice for marginalized communities.**

The phrase “*Nothing about us without us*” was used in the context of the ASAP project to describe the central lessons learned from codesigning services with people with migratory background. **ASAP put codesign at the core of the development of its practices** to improve a specific basic service and facilitate access for people with migratory background.

## Codesign and ASAP

According to codesign, the wide range approach used throughout ASAP to support practice development on the ground, **everyone can take part in generating ideas, actively deciding what to do and how, and in implementing activities on the ground, learning from each other**

**and contributing with what they wish and can.** Codesign is open to everyone wishing to engage: from public authorities in charge of key decisions to end users.

ASAP offered several spaces in which to involve participants in codesign activities:

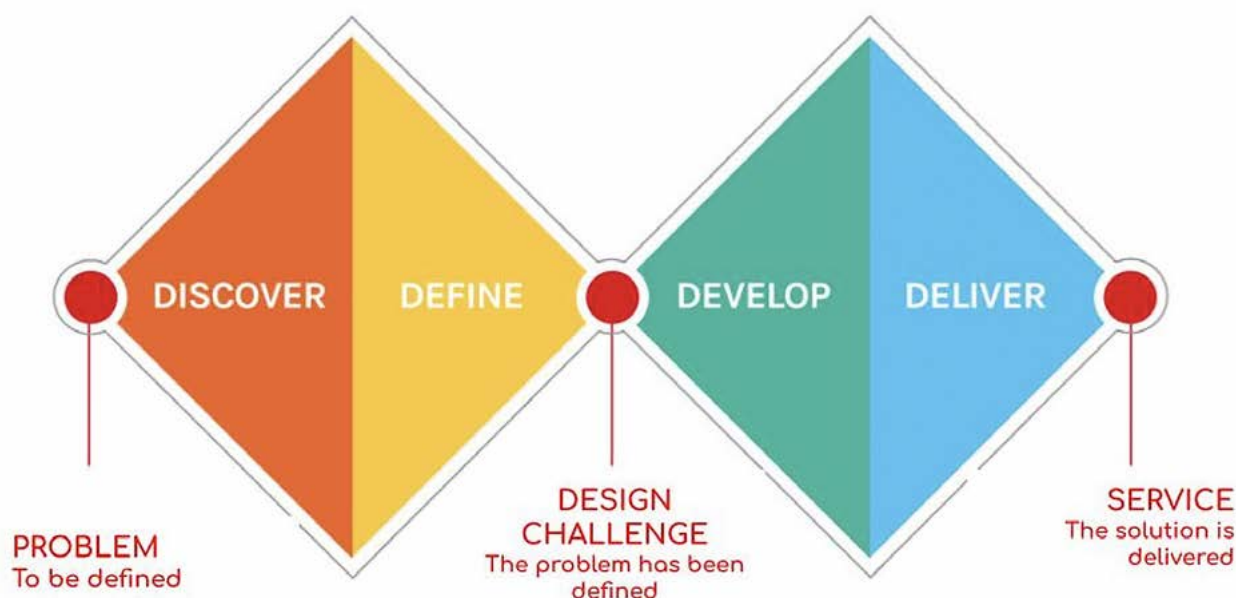
**Multi-stakeholder local networks:** involving public service providers, as well as non-governmental actors, CSOs, migrant organizations, representatives of migrant communities these networks serve a four-fold purpose: discuss main challenges; build links and develop relationships; exchange practices and procedures; create a promising practice. The Multi-stakeholder local networks provide in each country a frame for the project activities, validating and enriching the needs assessment analysis, identifying the key design challenge for the practices, providing the infrastructure for prototypes to be tested and evaluated to ensure that bottle-necks and issues emerged are addressed and learnings incorporated in the pilot.

**Capacity Building Sessions:** a specific time is allotted in each country to capacity building activities addressed to public service providers and to CSOs and TCNs organization. The capacity building sessions, designed to address different learning needs and requirements, are an ideal place to discuss the needs, challenge and possible solutions and to adopt a human centered perspective in codesigning practices truly centered on the needs of people with migratory backgrounds.



All ASAP practices have been, at different levels, codesigned, implemented and tested by partners in cooperation with local networks, capacity building participants and direct users, in the belief that everyone, from experts to end users, should participate in the creation or innovation of services, products, projects and activities in order to meet their needs.

## The double diamond diagram model



The double diamond diagram is the model used in ASAP to frame the process that each partner brought forward in understanding the local context and engaging users and stakeholders in finding solutions to key challenges.

The model is inspired by the work of designers of services, products and spaces to **put people at the center of the solution** they implement and involving the human perspective in every step of the process.

According to this model, **design is a process that is divided into divergent phases** (the group explores all possibilities) **and convergent phases** (the group realigns to a position).

These moments of exploration and refinement apply to two fundamental elements of design: the **problem** and the **solution**. Along the path of the Double Diamond, the group discovers something new about the overall starting problem, de-

fines more specifically the challenge it wants to meet, explores different possible solutions, and comes to choose and refine one of them through field-testing activities, all the way to delivery.

**DISCOVER:** Helps the group address the right problems by better understanding the context and the needs of the people you are designing with and for. In the discovery phase, the needs assessments were presented and discussed with local multi-stakeholder networks, experiences of people with migratory backgrounds were shared and understood.

**DEFINE:** Helps the group put problems in order of priority and frame a challenge to address that is both in line with people's needs and attainable within the scope of the project. In this phase, a sector of intervention was identified as well as a challenge in the form of a calling question "How can we...?"

**DEVELOP:** Helps the group move from the challenge and the understanding of the context, to





come up with potential solutions to develop and test. In the development phase, multiple ideas to address the design challenge were brainstormed with local networks and during capacity building sessions.

**DELIVER:** Helps the group put prototypes in place, test them with key users and gather feedback in order to refine the identified solution, scale up, replicate or move to something else. Partners designed their practices with their local networks and with participants in capacity building sessions and implemented live prototypes of their practices on the ground. User feedback was collected and discussed to strengthen the practice efficacy and guide future actions.

## The ASAP Exchange Event and its recommendations

During the ASAP Exchange event held on the 22 February 2024 in the venues of Maison Amazone, in Bruxelles, representatives of partner organizations and other practitioners in the field of integration services and codesign practices took part in **a day of exploration and peer learning** dedicated to enhancing access to services for people with migratory background in Europe.

The event represented an opportunity for European practitioners to exchange experiences, ideas, and **co-create guidelines to strengthen the engagement of users and stakeholders, to improve access to basic services and to promote stronger integration in Europe**. The guidelines contained in this document are the product of their collective reflections and exchanges and have thus been codesigned on the basis of the lessons learned in ASAP and in other projects and actions developed throughout Europe.

In the course of this event, the phrase *“Nothing about us without us”* recurred frequently, underscoring a fundamental principle of inclusive decision-making and representation and inviting partner organizations, NGOs, public institutions, and service providers to **acknowledge the central role that people with migratory backgrounds can play in shaping services and policies**. By emphasizing the importance of inclusivity, representation and self-determination, the phrase and the lessons learned from ASAP, highlight the need for **greater diversity, inclusion, and political participation in Europe among individuals with a history of migration**. In the quest for a just integration of people with migratory backgrounds, the provision of inclusive and effective public services stands as a cornerstone. However, beyond service provision lies the imperative of aiming for genuine representation, acknowledgment of the contributions of these communities, of the amplification of their voices, and of active involvement in decision-making processes concerning issues directly affecting them. This **holistic approach, that connects services with policies and participation with representation**, not only fosters social cohesion but also paves the way for a more unified and inclusive Europe.



# Six promising practices developed through ASAP

The general objective of the ASAP project is to improve the availability and quality of information on and access to public services for people with migratory background, by identifying and addressing the existing obstacles and promoting new promising practices. Following the local mapping of practices and organizations, a participatory needs assessment, the creation of multi-stakeholder local networks and the provision of capacity building for local service providers and CSOs, **in each project location, the partners developed practices to address spe-**

**cific challenges and respond to the needs of people with migratory background** in one or more basic services, in the fields of employment, housing, education and health. The focus of each practice varied depending on the characteristics of each local context and on the needs of the target group in a specific sector identified during the needs assessment.

**All the practices have been designed, implemented and tested by partners in cooperation with local networks and users, following co-design and the human centered design approach.**

## ITALY

### Support system to access housing for people with migratory background and complex vulnerabilities

COSPE | Florence

The most recent data highlight the problem of access to housing in Italy and even more so in cities with a high tourist density such as Florence. The costs of a rented home have become unsustainable and well above the spending capacity of even average salaries. For persons with migratory background the situation is made more serious because of the presence of racism and discrimination. CSOs dealing with migrants' reception and social inclusion try to find versatile responses to the different needs of the people they work with and for. The pilot practice proposed focuses on the following activities: 1. providing legal counseling service for people with migratory background on access to housing through a dedicated desk; 2. facilitating access to housing through rent intermediation actions between owners and tenants and through forms of economic and social guarantees; 3. mediation of possible conflicts between owners and tenants; 4. setting up a financial fund to provide guarantees to homeowners against possible tenants arrears, encouraging them to rent their properties.

***The practice has the potential to impact policies that support access to housing for a wide range of profiles: not only people with migratory backgrounds, asylum seekers, unaccompanied foreign minors, ex-prisoners with migratory background, victims of trafficking, but also low income households and the impoverished middle class.***





## ROMANIA

### Tackling discrimination towards people with migratory backgrounds in Romania through training for teachers, delivering lesson plans for pupils and audio-visual material for children, concerning discrimination and inclusion

**LOGS and West University of Timișoara | Timișoara**

One of the main challenges that refugees and migrants face in Romania is the lack of sufficient Romanian language classes and also teachers who are trained to tackle discrimination towards the TCNs. By involving and empowering local teachers and professors to engage pupils in learning about the circle of discrimination, who the migrants are, and how the local communities could commit to helping, rather than excluding.

The need for better Romanian language classes and support in the educational system was emphasized by the needs assessment conducted by WUT and LOGS in Timișoara.

*Embedding refugees input in the process of codesigning activities was guaranteed by remaining flexible in the design and production of materials, allowing the development of supports and materials originally not foreseen but emerging as important through the feedback collected. Students' participation in the creation of an illustrated guide and short video made the materials produced more attractive and adequate to the target group.*

## AUSTRIA

### International Information Talks & Support of the International Welcome Center to improve information about services, fight structural racism and strengthen participation

**SÜDWIND and Migrants' Advisory Board | Vienna and Graz**

In Graz, and generally in Austria, in addition to structural discrimination and structural exclusion experiences, the difficulties in accessing information emerged above all. There is a lot of information available in Austria – but it is very numerous and often not comprehensible to people. The pilot practice implemented by Südwind faced this problem by organizing information talks for newcomers to Graz, on topics in the areas of: health, education and training and the labor and housing market as well as by supporting the opening of an International Welcome Office opening - a Welcome Center as a one-stop-shop where people who are new to the city can get information about basic services such as Healthcare, School System, German classes and referrals to other offices; having targeted, accessible and easy to understand information available in the right language and through the right channels; having space in which people can network, exchange, find a community and feel at home.

*The fact that the Information Talks are developed by a person with migratory background, facing similar issues to the participants and in a space run by persons with migratory backgrounds, make the experience much easier to access and much more relatable*



## The 'Navigate' Pilot: Improving access for migrants and refugees to public services and facilitating their integration process in a rapidly changing environment

**Symbiosis** | Northern Greece

Migrants are usually not familiar with mental health services and procedures, the educational environment in Europe and in Greece, as well as the way employment operates. They are often overwhelmed by the whole new environment in which they have to integrate efficiently. The main challenge concerns the cooperation and availability of public services due to the heavy workload of public services and often unwillingness to cooperate in special circumstances, skills and language limitations. The pilot practice focuses on providing work support, mental health and social support, educational and administrative support to vulnerable migrants and refugees through accompaniment, as well as counselling on accessing integration relevant public services. The target group consists of people who are unable to integrate by effectively accessing services locally. Advising, counselling, accompanying, info sessions, focus groups discussions, educational visits, peer to peer exchanges with local population are some of the main services that started and continue to be provided in this context. The pilot practice duration has been nine months, from December 2022 to August 2023.

*Through **an integrated public service approach, addressing multiple sectors, including mental health care, education, employment, and housing**, the practice created a more holistic and supportive environment for people with migratory background. This approach recognizes the interconnected nature of various challenges faced by migrants during their integration journey and seeks to provide tailored solutions that cater to their diverse needs.*



## Piloting a language assistance model within the healthcare system

Centar za Mirovne Studije / Centre For Peace Studies | Zagreb

The absence of Croatian language courses for people with migration background and the language barrier are the biggest obstacles to successful integration in Croatia. The Centre for Peace Studies launched an experimental pilot practice aimed at raising awareness of the importance of recognizing the language barrier in accessing healthcare services through three interrelated groups of activities:

Raising awareness among healthcare workers about the existence of online translation and communication tools.

[Tarjimly](#) is a mobile application made by the NGO of the same name that brings together a network of volunteer or part-time interpreters who can be accessed through a request for translation, based on which the user is connected with a translator within 2-5 minutes;

[Respond Crisis Translation](#) is a network of professional and amateur translators around the world who offer translation services at prices whose amount depend on the type of translation / profile of the organization that requires the translation;

Hiring interpreters to support people when accessing healthcare services.

More than 60 hours of interpretation services for Arabic, Ukrainian, Farsi, and French language have been provided in 7 different healthcare institutions. We also collected feedback from users and interpreters to gain insight into the quality of the service provided and the challenges that users and interpreters face when accessing healthcare services for the purpose of creating and/or advancing the language assistance model within the healthcare system.

**Creation of a network of interpreters who can support people who don't speak Croatian language when accessing health services.**

*The practice showed the need to **develop systematic solutions to overcome language barriers**, across various integration services, by addressing the significant demand for translation not only when accessing healthcare.*



**Training users in e-government to enhance access to public services, information, documentation, and procedures, thereby increasing job opportunities**

**Solidaridad Sin Fronteras (SSF) | Madrid, Alcorcón**

Access to employment depends on the procedures of the public administration, which has few services dedicated to TCN citizens and whose procedures are necessary for the job search process or applications for the necessary documentation to access a job. Most of these are online procedures very complex to be implemented with information and data that are not easy to locate and obtain. The initiative focuses on addressing the complexities of administrative processes, which often act as barriers for job seekers due to the lack of readily available information. Through this initiative, SSF seeks to empower TCNs by providing training in e-government procedures, including obtaining e-certificates, registering in the Cl@ve system to be authorised to access and apply for digital public administration spaces. This comprehensive training covers a number of essential procedures, such as obtaining official documents, interacting with the tax office, social security and public employment services. By equipping participants with the necessary skills to navigate these processes independently, SSF aims to improve their employment prospects and facilitate access to basic services and smoother integration into the world of work.

*Increasing participants’ agency and autonomy in dealing with public administration procedures has a direct impact on their quality of life. Digital participation of people with migratory backgrounds makes public administrative processes more transparent and clear for everyone, by making key information accessible. Well-informed citizens become active participants in decision-making, contributing to the construction of a more inclusive and representative society.*

**European [video](#) of ASAP promising practices**





# Shared Lessons learned

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ASAP Partners worked collectively on modeling and evaluation of the practices developed, in order to highlight key insights for a first set of shared lessons learned.

## **Integration in service orientation and delivery.**

Despite partners were asked to ground their activities in a specific sector (health, education, housing, employment), through the codesigned practices, they highlighted the importance of addressing multiple needs simultaneously, either by concentrating all relevant information in one place/space (the one stop shop model), or by using counseling about a specific need (ex. access to administrative procedures) as an entry point to tackle underlying issues (ex. mental health, language barriers, etc).

## **The central role of networks.**

All partners used local networks to initiate their codesign process with stakeholders and users and adapted the methodology to local contexts. All highlighted the pivotal role that networks of actors with shared goals and objectives play in expanding the reach of the practice, for example by supporting the shift from practice testing to influencing policy or by federating specific groups around shared demands through cooperation and collaboration.

## **Building users capacity and autonomy.**

Capacity building, a central component in ASAP, was highlighted as key in the development of promising practices, to strengthen the role of users and stakeholders in the design of the practice itself, to develop users agency and autonomy to navigate orientation services, as well as to strengthen confidence and trust.

## **The role of professionals with migratory backgrounds.**

The importance of recognizing the value of the contributions of people with migratory backgrounds in representative bodies and in orientation and integration services at different levels was highlighted to underline the need to increase diversity hire in public and private institutions and to advocate for equitable wages and in general financial recognition of their work.

## **Holistic and multidimensional approach to reach multiple targets.**

Lastly, ASAP practices are promising not only because they make basic services more accessible to people with migratory backgrounds, but also because they have a potential positive spillover effect, benefiting a much wider range of users, such as the impoverished middle class to other vulnerable groups, such as Roma and persons with disability or reduced mobility.



## Other best practices in the field of integration and service delivery

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The following 5 best practices from other European projects and contexts have been selected after desk research to be presented and shared at The Asap Exchange Event, held in Bruxelles on Thursday 22 February 2024 in the venues of Maison Amazone. An event of exploration and peer learning dedicated to enhancing access to services for migrants, refugees, and third-country nationals through Europe. These best practices were chosen based on three inter-related criteria:

- The importance of creating cross-dissemination moments between different AMIF projects, thereby giving a central role to other projects presented under the programme with complementary objectives and synergic methodologies.
- The central role given to user and stakeholder engagement, aligning with the co-design approach developed within ASAP.
- The significance of learning from the local environment of Brussels and Belgium, and what it has to offer in terms of best practices for integration.

The practices presented here come from the Amif funded projects [INCLUD-EU](#) - Promoting the exchange of good practices between European regions about migrant integration; [Ment](#) - Migrant Entrepreneurs team-up with mentors; the [Migration Office](#) of the City of Prato, in Italy; and [Bon Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering](#), the Brussels reception office for integration supporting the Flemish integration policy.





## Working with a Migrant Advisory Board

### IOM The Netherlands and City of Tilburg | Tilburg

In the framework of the Includ-EU AMIF Funded project, the International Organization for Migration in the Netherlands and the City of Tilburg designed and implemented two pilots: 1) the pilot Integration+; 2) the Refugee Advisory Board (RAB). Among its various activities, the second pilot aimed to enhance the professionalization of the Refugee Advisory Board (RAB), to ensure that refugees' needs are met by actively contributing ideas and opinions on policy, as well as the implementation of actions in the realms of reception, housing, and integration, thus fostering a smoother and more rapid integration process within the region.

Active since 2018, the RAB gives independent advice to organizations in the region and is guided by the City of Tilburg. It is an innovative body of local residents with migratory backgrounds. The board meets monthly to advise policymakers on matters related to migrant inclusion. The RAB had a prominent participatory component by design. The pilot was well-received by local and regional authorities and was particularly successful in operating along with the mainstream reception system and strengthening participation in policymaking, being especially effective in bringing the voice of the migrants into this latter.

*How to set up a board that will last, be inclusive, and address important and timely issues?*

*Among the **key success factors** are being clear about the **purpose** and the criteria for board members; having (at least) one **support person** to organize and guide the board; and providing **compensation**, which must come in one form or the other, as these people are providing a service and their contribution needs to be recognized.*



## Migration Office of the City of Prato

### Social and Immigration Service of the City of Prato | Prato

In a context of heightened migration, with a significant presence of foreign residents, many of which are Chinese nationals, and a high percentage of pupils in local schools with foreign origins, the Migration Office of the City of Prato operates across three main areas. Firstly, it provides desk and public services, offering multilingual integration services that are available 24 hours a week. Secondly, it initiates permanent projects, such as SAI, which is aimed at individuals owning international protection or asylum seekers and SATIS, focusing on interventions to support victims of trafficking and/or exploitation. Lastly, the office focuses on school inclusion, collaborating with educational institutions to facilitate the integration of foreign students in the 6-14 age group. This includes a comprehensive approach, starting from a welcome week at the beginning of the school year, followed by language facilitation workshops and a cooperative language model integrated throughout the academic year.

Participation within the community is encouraged through various channels, including an informal network with community representatives and collaborative event organization. The office also uses digital platforms such as the website Pratomigranti and the social network WeChat, extremely popular among the Chinese community, to connect with users and to share information and offer support.

Projects undertaken by the office are supported by local funds to ensure the sustainability of activities. Additionally, they leverage EU, national, and regional funds to implement innovative actions aimed at testing and eventually integrating innovative practices into the local system.

*A key element of the approach is the adoption of an **integrated territorial system**, characterized by formal agreements between stakeholders in the area, structured and continuous services, and experimental actions supported by external funds. Territorial inter-institutional coordination plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of these integrated services.*



## Bon, the Brussels reception office for integration

### Bon - Agentschap Integratie & Inburgering | Bruxelles

Since 2015, Bon, part of the Agentschap Integratie & Inburgering, a Flemish government agency, has been dedicated to welcoming newcomers and individuals of foreign origin. With a team of multilingual professionals, Bon strives to ensure individuals feel at home in their new environment. Bon offers a comprehensive free and accessible integration program including social orientation courses, Dutch language classes, diploma recognition, participation and networking opportunities, guidance towards employment, and individual coaching.

Additionally, legal advice on immigration, asylum, and family law is provided, along with tailored support for organizations. Social interpreting services and assistance with Dutch-speaking school orientation are also available, along with follow-up counselling after program completion.

Moreover, Bon assists Brussels-based organizations in their diversity policies, offering training, environmental analyses, and action plans for accessibility and diversity.

Two key lessons learned from challenges encountered include the importance of adapting continuously to reach the target audience. Collaboration and agreements with local authorities are crucial for accessibility within a city of 19 different communes. Additionally, implementing continuous feedback systems aids in gauging the effectiveness and appreciation of services provided.

*Bon started in 2004 as a non-profit organization and in 2015 became part of the Agentschap Integratie & Inburgering, a Flemish government agency. Its core focus has remained the same: recognizing that effective communication is paramount for newly arrived residents and helping individuals feel more at home in their new environment.*



## Enhancing migrants' digital skills and social inclusion

### IOM Slovenia and the Adult Education Center Jesenice | Jesenice

In the framework of the Includ-EU AMIF-funded project, IOM Slovenia and the Adult Education Centre Jesenice launched a pilot program on enhancing migrants' digital skills and social inclusion. Two groups of migrants underwent a 60-hour capacity-building program which encompassed digital skills and Slovene language workshops. The workshops also focused on facilitating practical orientation and the job-seeking process in the local community.

The pilot program enhanced the digital skills of residents with a migrant background while equipping them with practical knowledge about orientation in the local community and available services and improving their language skills. It was particularly successful in bringing to the fore the importance of digital skills to achieve greater participation and social and digital inclusion.

The pilot had a strong gender empowerment component as most beneficiaries were women. Successful implementation also relied on the tailored approach responding to the needs in the local community, which was ensured through close collaboration with the local partner, i.e. the Adult Education Center Jesenice.

*The pilot demonstrates the critical importance of a community-based approach and targeted programs addressing the needs in the local community by establishing partnerships with local partners, but also emphasizing the need for tailored interventions to support digital inclusion of migrants.*

## MEnt - Migrant Entrepreneurs team-up with mentors

Somos Más | Madrid

MEnt is an innovative and dynamic incubation and mentoring program designed to support migrants and refugees in launching entrepreneurial projects.

The project was based on the recognition of the entrepreneurial potential within migrant communities, MEnt aimed to harness these energies by providing tailored support in the initial stages of business development.

The project included calls for entrepreneurs; short training sessions; light incubation cycles; matching with mentors and final pitching in front of mentors, potential investors, and supporters.

The project required to balance the need for rapid results with thorough incubation for immigrant entrepreneurs and attentiveness to negotiating and navigating business practices across different countries and industries.

The project developed easily accessible tools and resources for entrepreneurship education, with a focus on social entrepreneurship, guiding participants in co-designing their ventures and fostering conscious leadership qualities throughout the process.

MEnt helped partners strengthen innovative approaches such as games, participatory leadership techniques, and coaching to enhance awareness and foster a supportive community where participants can share experiences, support each other, and access toolkit resources and training.

*MEnt highlighted the need to put co-creation at the center of the process, to create spaces for consciousness and presence, to develop empathy and harness the power of proximity and collective effort. Finally, it showed that trust is key and that it has to be built through shared experiences and collaboration around common objectives.*



# Insights and recommendations

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The ASAP Exchange Event provided a unique opportunity for European practitioners to exchange experiences, ideas, and co-create guidelines to strengthen the engagement of users and stakeholders, to improve access to basic services and to promote stronger integration in Europe.

The **guidelines** are collected here in the form of insights and recommendations on:

- How to implement **effective and inclusive orientation and integration services** for people with a migratory background
- How to **strengthen direct involvement of stakeholders and users** in defining and designing better services
- Lessons learned for the design and implementation of **future European cooperation projects**

The last section contains **recommendations aimed at specific groups and entities**: public service providers; governments and policy makers at local, regional and national levels; the European Commission; the general public opinion and the media; organizations of people with migratory background.

The **organizations that shared their practices and contributed to drafting these guidelines** are: Bon - Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering, Belgium (BE); ANCI Toscana, Firenze, Italy (IT); Centar za mirovne studije (CPS), Zagreb, Croatia (HR); COSPE, Firenze, Italy (IT); Migration Office, City of Prato, Italy (IT); International Organization for Migration (IOM), The Netherlands (NL); LOGS, Timișoara, Romania (RO); Migrant:Innenbeirat, Graz, Austria (AT); Sociolab Cooperativa Impresa Sociale, Firenze, Italy (IT); Solidaridad Sin Fronteras (SSF), Alcorcón, Spain (ES); Somos Mäs, Madrid, Spain (ES); Südwind, Austria (AT); Symbiosis, Thessaloniki, Greece (GR), University of Timșoara, Romania (RO).

## How to implement effective and inclusive orientation and integration services for people with a migratory background

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*We should always ask ourselves: what integration are we promoting? And especially for whom? With whom? By whom? People working in integration services and on integration policies should focus more on these elements to avoid the pitfalls of forced integration.*

The following recommendations emphasize the importance of collaboration, inclusivity, and governance measures to ensure the successful integration of people with migratory backgrounds into society.

### **Foster integrated territorial systems:**

Collaboration among different public institutions at different levels and in different sectors, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and other stakeholders should be aimed at establishing





integrated territorial systems for service delivery. Engaging diverse stakeholders from both private and public sectors and different sources of funding in a coordinated way, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of integration policies. Promote diversity in public services and organizations: Ensure diversity in public services across all sectors, as well as in CSOs and NGOs, to actively promote inclusivity and offer adequate representation of people with migratory backgrounds in different services, sectors and organizations that work to develop approaches and practices to address their needs and foster integration.

#### **Facilitate political participation:**

Enable people with migratory backgrounds to engage in political processes, including the right to vote at the municipal level, to ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes. Encourage the active involvement of people with migratory backgrounds themselves in policy development and implementation.

#### **Provide safe spaces for people with migratory backgrounds:**

Create safe spaces where people with migratory backgrounds can discuss issues confidentially and seek support for a number of interconnected issues, thus facilitating their access to the services they really need, being these emergency living spaces, safeguarding measures against exploitative environments or other issues.

#### **Enhance intercultural competence and effective communication:**

Equip professionals working with people with migratory backgrounds with intercultural expertise to effectively address the diverse needs of these populations. This includes ensuring communication on social networks is accessible and tailored to them, by using the social networks that the different communities use and by providing information in their native languages, but also offering multilingual services on a daily basis and providing accessible information in languages relevant to their communities.

## **How to strengthen direct involvement of stakeholders and users in defining and designing better services**

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*How can we make it so that more people with a history of migration are represented in decision making bodies and institutions? This is one of the key issues that we need to address.*

The following recommendations highlight the importance of empowering people with migratory backgrounds, fostering collaboration and promoting inclusivity. By prioritizing their involvement, along with stakeholders from various sectors, actions and services can be more responsive and effective in meeting their needs.

#### **Make participation accessible:**

create an inclusive environment that enables active participation by removing barriers and facilitating engagement. Measures such as offering childcare services for mothers attending events

or meetings, providing travel transportation reimbursements to alleviate financial burdens, and ensuring the availability of interpretation services for individuals with language barriers are all effective ways to open spaces of full participation in activities, discussions, and decision-making processes.

#### **Embed user feedback mechanisms in service design:**

Establish effective feedback mechanisms involving users and stakeholders to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of initiatives aimed



at supporting individuals with migratory backgrounds. Implementing a systematic and continuous polling system or questionnaires to gather feedback can provide valuable insights into the experiences, needs, and preferences of the target audience. This feedback should be actively solicited and carefully considered throughout the project lifecycle to inform decision-making processes, enhance program design, and optimize service delivery.

### **Harness the power of connectors and resource persons:**

recognize the pivotal role of connectors and resource persons from diverse communities as essential in effectively bridging the gap between service providers, authorities, NGOs, and the communities they serve. These connectors, individuals with migrant backgrounds actively involved in their communities, serve as crucial liaisons and facilitators, fostering trust, communication, and collaboration. Recognizing and framing their role, beyond volunteerism, within project activities such as training for trainers and local networks, is essential in reaching users and communities.

### **Promote cultural events to enhance community participation:**

Organizing and promoting cultural events serve as an effective strategy to foster community engagement and participation, particularly among individuals with migratory backgrounds. Cultural events provide a platform for celebrating diversity, sharing traditions, and fostering meaningful connections among community members. Recognizing the significance of cultural events as a catalyst for social cohesion and integration, projects should prioritize the organization of diverse and inclusive cultural activities.

### **Enhance collaboration among CSOs:**

Strengthen relationships among Civil Society Organisations to increase their coordination, as well as their collective advocacy power and effectiveness in promoting the rights and interests of people with migratory backgrounds. By fostering closer collaboration and resource-sharing among NGOs, they can amplify their voices and

produce stronger outcomes. This includes coordinating efforts to foster users and stakeholder engagement, to raise awareness about the valuable contributions of NGOs and their workers, to address common challenges through the design of new services and initiatives, and to advocate for structural changes to support the integration of people with migratory backgrounds.

### **Diversify teams and ensure representation:**

Recognize the importance of diversity within organizational teams to better reflect the communities they serve. By embracing diversity and ensuring representation of people with migratory backgrounds, organizations can gain valuable insights and perspectives as well as creating a strong connection with local migrant communities. This involves actively involving people with migratory backgrounds in all stages of project planning and implementation, as well as establishing mechanisms for ongoing feedback and consultation.

### **Create opportunities for meaningful participation:**

Provide opportunities and resources to facilitate meaningful participation of people with migratory backgrounds in community life and decision-making processes. This includes establishing platforms for one-on-one meetings to strengthen their confidence and engagement, translators to fluidify communication, and the institutionalization of migrant advisory councils with voting rights. By empowering people with migratory backgrounds to actively participate in shaping policies and services, stakeholders can ensure that their needs and preferences are accurately represented and addressed.

### **Adopt a “give and get” approach to participation:**

Employing a “give and get” approach to participation can significantly enhance the engagement and empowerment of individuals with migratory backgrounds. This approach emphasizes reciprocity, wherein participants both contribute their insights, experiences, and skills, while also receiving valuable support, resources, and opportunities in return. By adopting this approach,



Organisations working with and for people with migratory backgrounds can create a mutually beneficial environment where everyone involved feels valued and invested in the process.

### **Utilize multilingual and context-specific approaches:**

Make user-friendly, multilingual materials and services tailored to the specific needs of communities with migratory backgrounds, a standard practice in service delivery. This involves providing language services, fostering digital skills, and ensuring accessibility to information and resources. By utilizing context-specific approaches and prioritizing multilingualism, service providers and organizations can effectively reach and engage

diverse populations with migratory backgrounds, ultimately promoting greater social inclusion and integration.

### **Use social media for communication and outreach:**

Utilize social media platforms as a channel to communicate about the project and reach potential participants, both users and stakeholders. By leveraging social media, projects can increase their reach and success by disseminating information, engaging with potential users and fostering dialogue with different communities. Effective use of social media can enhance visibility, promote inclusivity, and facilitate broader participation in project activities.

## **Lessons learned for the design and implementation of future European cooperation projects**

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*We should strive to empower migrant organizations in the design and management of user centered services in our projects, by providing capacity building and specific budget for their actions.*

The following recommendations emphasize the importance of advocating for systemic changes, cross-sectoral collaboration, community empowerment, and knowledge sharing networks in European cooperation projects. By integrating these elements into project design and implementation, we can increase the impact and sustainability of projects aimed at promoting the integration and social inclusion of people with migratory backgrounds in the EU.

### **Advocate for systemic changes:**

Prioritize advocacy efforts aimed at bringing about systemic changes to address structural barriers faced by people with migratory backgrounds. This advocacy should target legislative and policy reforms to address issues such as structural racism in authorities and public services, disparities in legal status, and barriers

to political participation. By advocating for systemic changes, projects can contribute to creating more inclusive and equitable societies for people with migratory backgrounds across Europe.

### **Create learning networks at EU level:**

Establish learning networks that bring together public authorities, NGOs, and people with migratory backgrounds at the EU level. These networks should facilitate knowledge-sharing among different local networks and organizations, share inspiration, strengthen collaboration, and capacity-building initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of European cooperation projects. By creating spaces for cross-sectoral and multi-country learning, organizations can leverage expertise and resources to address common challenges and achieve shared objectives.



### **Empower migrant organizations in service delivery:**

Promote the design and delivery of services in collaboration with migrant associations, empowering them to play an active role in service provision, also by allocating a specific budget to their activities. This approach ensures that services are culturally sensitive, responsive to the needs of people with migratory backgrounds, and promote community empowerment. By involving people with migratory backgrounds in the design and delivery of services, projects can enhance their relevance, accessibility, and effectiveness.

### **Strengthen political participation of second and third generations:**

Prioritize the political participation of second and third generations of people with migratory backgrounds in the EU, positioning them as role models and advocates for social change. Engage young people with migratory backgrounds and associations in participatory processes from the outset, empowering them to influence decision-making and shape policies that impact their communities. By fostering political engagement among younger generations, projects can build sustainable networks of leaders who champion the rights and inclusion of people with migratory backgrounds.

## **Targeted recommendations on integration services and policies**

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### **Recommendations for public service providers**

- 1.** Collaborate with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that have expertise on integration, including knowledge about the obstacles faced by individuals with migratory backgrounds, to develop improved service provision and policy frameworks.
- 2.** Consider implementing specialized training modules to educate professionals from different sectors about the specific needs and challenges of individuals with migratory backgrounds.
- 3.** Incorporate the expertise of professionals in intercultural mediation and sociology into daily work methodologies to enhance service provision and better meet the diverse needs of individuals with migratory backgrounds.

### **Recommendations for governments and policy makers at local, regional and national levels**

- 1.** Acknowledge the crucial role of basic services for individuals with migratory backgrounds and the reality of migration within communities. Embrace the understanding that migration is a

permanent aspect of society and work towards inclusive policies and practices aimed at counteracting discrimination.

- 2.** Recognize the significant presence of individuals with migratory backgrounds within city populations, ensure that information centers are accessible and staffed with well-trained personnel to provide support and assistance.
- 3.** Support the dissemination and promotion of best practices at both regional and European levels. Engage in European networks focusing on migration-related issues to foster collaboration and exchange of knowledge.
- 4.** Collaborate with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), NGOs and other organizations to develop and implement policies facilitating access to basic services for vulnerable groups within the community.
- 5.** Incorporate specific measures addressing language barriers and basic literacy into existing strategies and plans. Prioritize collaboration with CSOs to ensure the effective delivery of services and support for individuals with migratory backgrounds.



### Recommendations for the European Commission

1. Allocate additional funding for direct interventions targeting individuals with migratory backgrounds, with flexibility to tailor actions and initiatives according to their specific needs.
2. Encourage the development of networking activities at the EU level to support collaboration, information sharing, inspiration and mutual learning among organizations working on migration-related issues. Promote interactive events that promote dialogue and exchange of best practices.

### Recommendations for public opinion and the media

1. Avoid dehumanizing and degrading terminology. Favour the expression “people with migratory background” to recognize their dignity and diverse experiences and allow individuals and communities to freely define themselves and their identity.

### Recommendations for organizations of people with migratory background

1. Enhance representation and ensure active participation and representation of members in decision-making networks to effectively advocate for the needs and rights of individuals with migratory backgrounds in the spaces and places where decisions are made.



# Resources

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## Factsheets, guides and videos produced within the framework of ASAP

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### AUSTRIA

Multimedia information kit for NGOs, authorities, stakeholders and communities on education and training, health-care, housing and the labour market (available on [buntes.at](https://buntes.at) in [German](#))

Needs Assessment in Austria (available in [English](#), [German](#))

Explanatory videos for people who are new to Austria to access information and public services (available in [German](#), with subtitles in [English](#), [Romanian](#), [Greek](#), [Italian](#), Spanish, Amharic, Igbo, Lingala)

Video on health-related issues such as the e-card, health insurance, pregnancy, care work (available in [German](#) with subtitles in [English](#), [Romanian](#), [Greek](#), [Italian](#) and [Spanish](#))

Video about the International Welcome Office - an advice center that provides information about life, work, health system, education and housing in Graz in several languages (available in [German](#) with subtitles in English, [Romanian](#), [Greek](#), [Italian](#) and [Spanish](#))

Video to make for people newly arrived in Austria on access to information and public services (available in German with subtitles in Amharic, English, Igbo, Romanian, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Lingala)

### CROATIA

Guide to Access to Health Care in Croatia (available in [English](#); [Croatian](#); [French](#); [Ukrainian](#); [Arabic](#))

Finding general practitioner and gynecologist for foreigners in the Republic of Croatia ([video](#) in Croatian with subtitles in English; Croatian; French; Ukrainian; Arabic)

The e-Citizens portal ([video](#) in Croatian with subtitles in English; Croatian; French; Ukrainian; Arabic)

Medical referrals, sick leave and other questions you might have when accessing healthcare ([video](#) in Croatian with subtitles in English; Croatian; French; Ukrainian; Arabic)

The Croatian Pilot Practice (available in [Croatian](#))

### GREECE

Living Together: A Handbook on Migration and Social Inclusion (available in [English](#); [Greek](#); [German](#); [French](#); Ukrainian, Arabic; Urdu)

Needs Assessment in Greece (available in [English](#); [Greek](#))

Symbiosis practices (available in [English](#); [Greek](#))





The Navigate pilot practice (available in [English](#); [Greek](#))

Guide to Access Mental Health Services (available in [English](#); [Greek](#))

Navigating Essentials (available in [English](#); [Greek](#))

Parallelities #01: The Candidate ([video](#) in Greek with subtitles in English)

Parallelities #02: Three Generations ([video](#) in Greek with subtitles in English)

Parallelities #03: For the Ones to Come ([video](#) in Greek with subtitles in English)

## ITALY

Needs Assessment in Italy (available in [Italian](#); [English](#))

Factsheet on access to services in Italy (available in [Italian](#))

Let's go to school! Guide to enrolment in educational services and the school system in the Municipality of Florence (Available in [Italian](#); [English](#); [French](#); [Chinese](#); [Arabic](#))

Capacity building lesson plan (available in [Italian](#))

## ROMANIA

Welcome in Timișoara. Guide for working in Romania (available in: [Romanian](#); [English](#); [Ukrainian](#); [Arabic](#); [Urdu](#))

10 things you need to know if you are a migrant in Romania ([video](#) in English with subtitles in: Romanian; Ukrainian; Urdu; Arabic)

Migrant working in Romania? Video guide for migrants working in Romania ([video](#) in English with subtitles in Romanian; Ukrainian; Urdu; Arabic)

Capacity building lesson plan (available in: [Romanian](#))

## SPAIN

Needs Assessment in Spain (available in [Spanish](#); [English](#))

Factsheets on access to services in Spain;

Available in Spanish: [First](#); [Second](#); [Third](#); and [Fourth](#).

Available in English: [First](#); [Second](#); [Third](#); and [Fourth](#).

Capacity building curricula for Public Services (available in [Spanish](#); [English](#)); and for Civil Society Organisations (available in [Spanish](#); [English](#)).

Quick Guide of resources for migrant people in the southern crown and municipalities of Madrid (available in [Spanish](#); [English](#); [French](#); [Ukrainian](#); [Arabic](#); [Chinese](#) and [Romanian](#)).

Multilingual Video Guides (available in Spanish, English, French, Ukrainian, Romanian, Arabic and Romanian): [How to obtain the e-government electronic certificate?](#)

Multilingual Leaflets with Video Guide Access (available in [Spanish](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Ukrainian](#), [Arabic](#) and [Romanian](#)).



## Resources from other best practices in the field of integration

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### Bon Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering

The Brussels reception office for integration

Bon website (available in [English](#); [Dutch](#); [French](#); [Ukrainian](#); [Arabic](#); [Bulgarian](#); [Tibetan](#); [Spanish](#); [Turkish](#); [Russian](#); [Farsi](#); [Urdu](#); [Pashto](#); [Polish](#); [Romanian](#))

### INCLUD-EU

Promoting the exchange of good practices between European regions about migrant integration

Project website (available in [English](#))

Digital skills: Murisa's experience - Slovenia ([video](#) in Slovenian with subtitles in English)

Early integration and Refugee Advisory Board: the stories of Betel and Nour – the Netherlands ([video](#) in English and Dutch with subtitles in English)

### Ment

Migrant Entrepreneurs team-up with mentors

Project website (available in [English](#))

### Migration Office of the City of Prato

Pratomigranti (available in [Italian](#); [English](#); [French](#); [Chinese](#); [Urdu](#); [Arabic](#); [Albanian](#))



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