

COMMISSION AND OECD PRESENT REPORT ON THE **LOCAL INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS**



"Working together for local integration of migrants and refugees provides concrete examples of how different-sized cities have shaped migrant and refugee integration policies at the local level. While many of the examples in this report are from European cities, these lessons are also relevant to other OECD countries and beyond. The report's Checklist for public action to migrant integration at the local level is a tool that any city or region can use to work across levels of government and with other local actors in their efforts to promote more effective integration of migrants. Success in this area is important for all."

European Commissioner
for Regional Policy
Corina Crețu

Secretary General
of the OECD
Angel Gurría

The report, a joint initiative of the European Commission and the OECD, is part of a broader effort to support the social and economic inclusion of migrants in EU societies. 9 large European cities (Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Glasgow, Gothenburg, Paris, Rome and Vienna) and the smaller German town of Altena were studied to assess how they met this objective – what was done, what worked and what could have been done better.

The report provides a checklist for public action in the field of migrant integration. It outlines **12 key points** for local, regional and national policy-makers and practitioners to consider as they develop and implement local integration programmes.



DEVELOPING LOCAL INTEGRATION POLICIES

1. IMPROVING THE COORDINATION OF INTEGRATION POLICIES ACROSS GOVERNMENT LEVELS



Integration policies require strong coordination mechanisms as they are often designed, implemented and evaluated at different levels of government. Nearly 90% of the 72 cities surveyed reported a lack of adequate coordination with central governments.

What could be done: Clearly identifying roles and responsibilities through institutional mapping; promoting dialogue at all levels in view of increasing mutual knowledge of integration practices.

Example: In **Germany**, a multi-level federal working group on Migration and Public Health aims to improve healthcare and access to information for migrants. The group includes around 50 members from different branches of public and urban health systems, cities, Länder and the federal State.

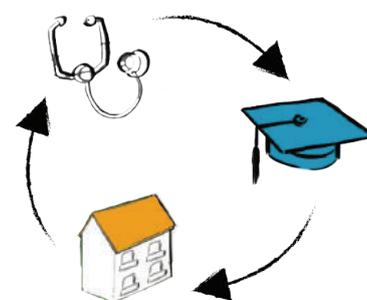
2. IMPROVING THE COHERENCE OF INTEGRATION POLICIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF MIGRANTS

Integration policies require an integrated approach across different sectors (housing, education, employment, health). Lack of coherence between them may lead to limited access to services. For example, language classes may not be accessible via public transport or organised during hours incompatible with day-care services for children.

What could be done: Creating steering groups focused on the matter at central level; adopting a local cross-sectoral integration strategy; consulting and involving local migrant communities; establishing public service one-stop-shops

A clear, coherent vision can be accompanied by communication campaigns expressing objectives and the added value of integration.

Example: in **Sweden**, Gothenburg's cross-sectoral "sustainability strategy" goes beyond integration and addresses more broadly inequalities affecting marginalised groups, particularly in living conditions and access to healthcare.



3. ACCESSING AND EFFECTIVELY USING FINANCIAL RESOURCES AT LOCAL LEVEL TO SUPPORT MIGRANT INTEGRATION

Cities may struggle in accessing financial resources in the implementation of integration policies.



What could be done: Working more directly with authorities managing funding at national, regional and local levels of government (cities can directly manage a part of EU funds and access funding under the Urban Innovative Actions initiative); pooling resources between partner cities; attracting funding from private actors and foundations; exploiting the potential of fundraising.

Example: In west **Sweden**, the Västra Götaland region coordinates calls for proposals for EU-funded projects based on specific regional needs. This partnership includes representatives from the neighbouring Halland region, the county government, the municipalities, universities, the employment agency and civil society actors.

4. BETTER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT CHANGES OVER TIME IN INTEGRATION POLICIES

On average, it takes refugees up to 20 years to have a similar employment rate as the native born. Integration should start on day one. Migrants should avoid long periods of unemployment after arrival.

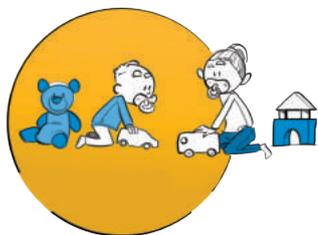
What could be done: Supporting migrants in their integration path as soon as they arrive and regardless of the legal status, with an integrated approach combining, for example, language and skills training and professional integration; involving migrants, research institutions and local organisations who have experience in receiving newcomers

Example: **Amsterdam** made sure that migrants receive early guidance with regard to employment, education and civic integration. This support is coordinated by several stakeholders, such as the Refugee Council, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, the Public Health Service, housing associations, social welfare services, employers, and civil society initiatives.



5. CLOSING THE SPATIAL GAP BETWEEN MIGRANTS AND NATIVE-BORN PEOPLE

Spatial segregation of migrants is high and potentially increasing in many cities. Segregation and discrimination constitute two major and mutually reinforcing obstacles for integration.



What could be done: Ensuring equal access to quality public services across all neighbourhoods and investing to create shared public spaces (libraries, cultural centres, squares); promoting civil society action for integration

Example: **Athens** implemented the programme “Together” in a number of municipal child day-care facilities in 2015. It aimed to arrange specific moments for migrant and native-born parents to meet and bond.

6. INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF CIVIL SERVICES TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF MIGRANTS

Local civil servants are not always equipped with the necessary skills to ensure equal access to the same services for all. It may be because of language barriers but also preconceived ideas and lack of experience in dealing with integration issues.

What could be done: Providing training to all municipal departments (including teachers, social workers, police and employment services) about their roles in fostering migrant integration; ensuring equal treatment in recruitment in civil service, to also have public officials with a migrant background.

Example: In **Athens**, different EU-funded projects aim to develop the skills of employees of the municipality and health services to plan and implement integration actions in the local community.



7. STRENGTHENING THE COOPERATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND BUSINESS PARTNERS

Outsourcing to NGOs and private partners is widely used to deliver local public services in general, and services for migrant integration, in particular. Some obstacles here include long selection procedures, lack of coordination mechanisms and potential competition with services provided by public agencies.



What could be done: Setting up coordination mechanisms with NGOs, migrant organisations and businesses operating in the sector; evaluating services provided to migrants and establishing standards aligned with national and regional regulations for service provision.

Example: In **Barcelona**, the “Network for Welcome and Support of Migrants” brings together the municipality, neighbourhood and migrant associations and social non-profit organisations. These actors are crucial in complementing the municipal programme for migrants’ integration in the city through language courses, legal advice, employment orientation and social support.

8. IMPROVING DATA COLLECTION TO UNDERPIN EFFICIENT INTEGRATION POLICIES

There is a gap in data on the characteristics of migration at local level. This may lead to a limited monitoring of the effectiveness of integration policies and to a lack of the evidence needed to develop such policies.

What could be done: Including monitoring mechanisms in city integration action plans, tracking the results of municipal action towards integration; improving qualitative data collection, with the points of view of migrants and host communities.

Example: The government agency statistics in **Sweden** compiles and publishes statistical data to monitor integration. The city of **Amsterdam** conducts a quarterly survey on the local population’s perception of refugees. The local community’s approval rate has not declined since 2015.



9. BETTER MATCHING MIGRANTS' SKILLS WITH LOCAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES



Migrants are less likely to be employed and more likely to be over-qualified for their jobs than native-born people. There is also often a mismatch between the migrants' skills and the local job market needs.

What could be done: Matching migrant skills with local job opportunities by building a locally accessible database of migrants' skills; enforcing anti-discrimination legislations; developing strong networks with the private sector to foster integration; offering support to entrepreneurship (coaching, microfinance and strengthening of business network).

Example: The municipality of **Amsterdam** signed a contract with an interim and recruitment company to better understand candidates' aspirations and capture their previous experience. This information is then made available to local companies.

10. ENSURING ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

There is limited availability of social housing for all vulnerable groups. Migrants are more likely to live in overcrowded and substandard housing. The concentration of migrant communities and limited access to adequate housing hamper their integration.

What could be done: Ensuring equitable policies for accessing social housing as well as access to private housing by providing financial and advisory support to migrants and ensuring non-discriminative treatment by landlords; designing housing policies preventing exclusion by improving the distribution of social housing.

Example: The mediation and arbitration agency in **Rome** supports migrants during flat hunting to overcome discrimination barriers. It provides financial counselling to migrants and training to the administrators of residential buildings.



11. ALIGNING SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES WITH MIGRANT NEEDS

Migrants make relatively less use of certain social services compared to nationals (healthcare or free meals at schools) and are more often unaware of their entitlements.

What could be done: Adapting social services to address the barriers that migrants experience (language but also divides caused by internet access, for example); identifying persons with specific needs (unaccompanied children or people with disabilities) and establishing appropriate referral mechanisms to public services; ensuring access to at least basic social welfare services, including for those who do not fulfil residence criteria.

Example: In **Rome**, a municipal programme is designed for people without a stable residence; in each district, marginalised people can ask for a temporary residence in "Via Modesta Valenti". This way they can access social and health services, after having been enrolled in a social programme which then checks periodically on their living conditions.



12. ESTABLISHING EDUCATION RESPONSES TO ADDRESS SEGREGATION AND PROVIDING EQUITABLE PATH TO PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

School systems are often segregated and migrant children have limited access to preschool and early childhood education.

What could be done: Improving social mix in schools, for example with school voucher programmes; assisting migrant children in mainstream public schools; strengthening access to apprenticeship and the capacity of orientation services in secondary schools; improving routes to tertiary education for migrants, improving awareness of and access to early childhood education and care.

Example: Some municipalities in the **Netherlands** introduced a school enrolment system aiming to reach a share of 30% of disadvantaged students in each school.

