



Forging a common path:

A European approach to the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers

International Rescue Committee | July 2018

A child and her mother, both refugees resettled in the US, taking part in the IRC's New Roots community gardening project. *Jean-Philippe Dobrin/IRC.*



Forging a common path: A European approach to the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers

I. Executive Summary: Towards a Common Integration Pathway for people seeking protection in Europe	3
II. Setting the scene: Integration of people in need of international protection in Europe	4
Refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe	4
Integration of refugees and asylum-seekers	6
Why act now?	9
The IRC in Europe	9
III. A European approach to integration	11
A European integration policy?	12
IV. Five principles to guide the path towards successful integration	19
 1. Context-specific	19
 2. A partnership approach	20
 3. Rooted in the community	25
 4. Strength-based and client-focused	29
 5. Sensitive to the needs of specific groups	32
VI. Conclusion: Time to embark on a common path towards refugee and asylum-seeker integration	38

Company Limited by Guarantee
Registration Number
3458056 (England and Wales)

Charity Registration Number
1065972

Front cover: Two young Afghan asylum-seekers in Germany walk with the IRC's Education Specialist who oversees the IRC's Healing Classroom programming in Germany. *Timo Stammberger/IRC.*

Written by Lena Donner and Ilaria Molinari. With special thanks to Genevieve Caston for her support. We are grateful to IRC colleagues Lucy Carrigan, Geoffrey Cressman, Katharine Davis, Susan Donovan, Marina Drymalitou, Robin Dunn Marcos, Giorgio Faedo, Elizabeth Hamann, Emily Jacquard, Daphne Jayasinghe, Lucy Keating, Lisa Küchenhoff, Laura Kyrke-Smith, Rachel Landry, Stefan Lehmeier, Henrieke Max, Jost Neumann, Richard Pyle, Elinor Raikes, Martha Roussou, Samer Saliba, Barri Shorey, Ilektra Simitsi, Imogen Sudbery, Melanie Ward and Jamie Weiss Yagoda for contributing their time and expertise.



IRC Voice, actor Lena Headey during a visit to a refugee camp in Greece. Tara Todras-Whitehill/IRC.



I. Executive Summary:

Towards a Common Integration Pathway for people seeking protection in Europe



Above: A group of refugee women who participate in Care.com's workshops in Germany. Together with partner Care.com, the IRC offers information, orientation and employability training to refugee women interested in working in the care industry in Germany. *IRC.*

The European Union (EU) is at a unique turning point at which it is vital to invest in the integration of people who have sought protection here. While their integration is key to wider societal cohesion and fostering an environment that is more welcoming to all, this group faces specific challenges and barriers to integration stemming from the changing nature of global displacement, structural issues in member states exacerbated by high volumes of arrivals in 2015 – 2016, and certain aspects of asylum policy at the EU and national levels. These issues are widespread, persistent and likely to be exacerbated if not addressed immediately and with a long-term, structured approach.

Humanitarian organisations, particularly those like the IRC which has experience in working with displaced persons across the arc of the crisis – from the moment of displacement to their local integration or resettlement to a third country – have a unique contribution to make in supporting the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe, in both policy and practice. Our global experience shows that continuous support is needed to address acute needs as well as to enable people to thrive and regain control of their lives as soon as possible after displacement, and that successful integration is to the benefit of receiving societies as well as people seeking protection.

This report argues that the EU has a key role in putting this into practice, and that the implementation of the European Commission's Action Plan on Integration coming to an end in June 2018, ongoing discussions about the restructuring of EU funding for integration and a new Commission in

2019 create an ideal moment to reflect on the shape and extent of future EU action on integration.

After providing an overview of the current situation of refugees and asylum-seekers in the EU in Section II, the report aims to contribute to this process by highlighting good practices and suggesting some fundamental considerations informed by the IRC's many decades of experience in supporting the integration of people seeking protection internationally, in the United States (U.S.) and in Europe.

Section III argues that despite limits to its legislative competence, the EU has a key role to play in shaping a European integration policy that should support actors delivering policy and services at the local and national levels, including through a strategic approach to EU funding. Section IV sets out five fundamental principles that should underpin a common approach to integration by these actors. These principles, informed by humanitarian practice, stipulate that: integration support that enables full participation in society should be context-specific, build upon strong and varied local partnerships, be rooted in local communities, be strength-based and client-focused, as well as sensitive to the needs of specific groups.

We conclude that, at a time where populist voices in member states dominate the debate on migration and displacement, the EU can provide principled leadership that clearly communicates the benefits of successful and early integration to all members of European society and promotes an understanding of integration as a pathway, rather than an ensemble of emergency measures.

II. Setting the scene:

Integration of people in need of international protection in Europe

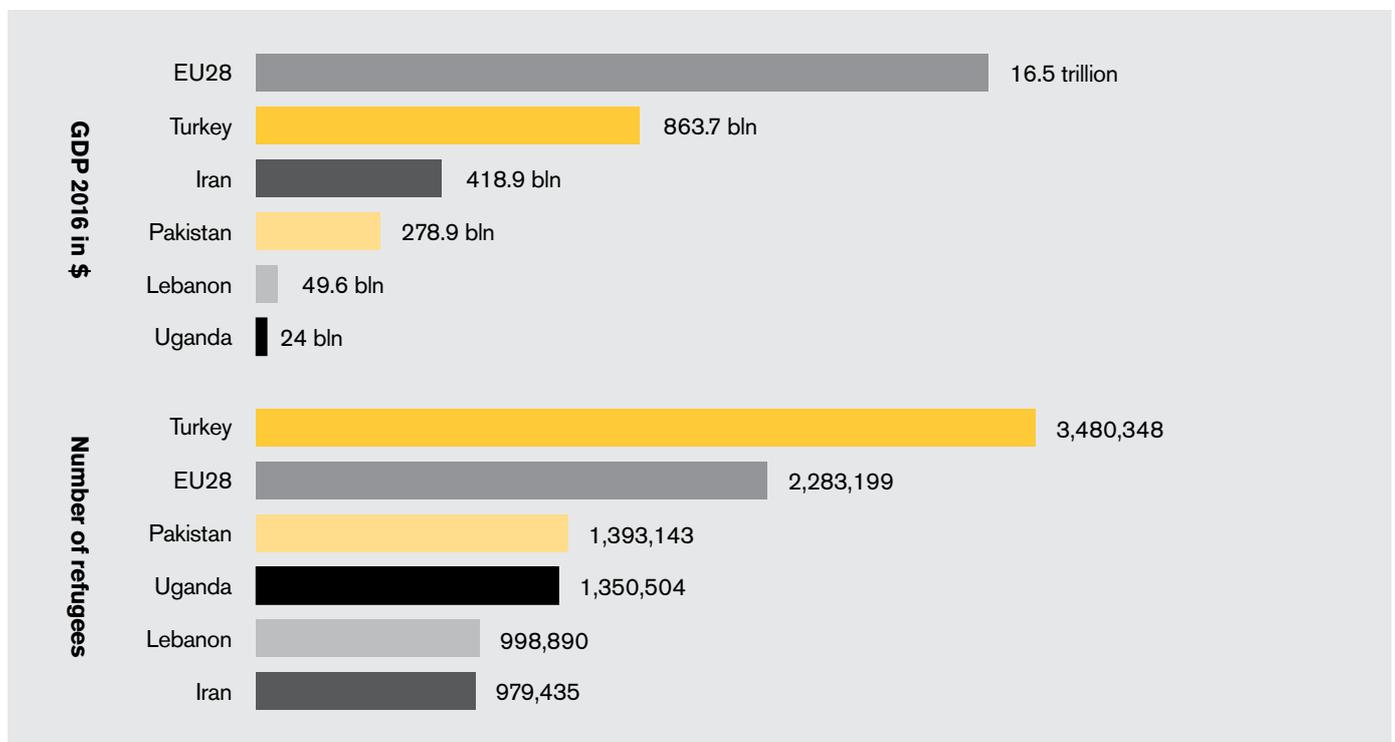
Refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe

On 1 January 2017, the EU was home to 21.6 million non-EU migrants, 2 million of whom had crossed its borders the year before.¹ Among these individuals are a significant number of persons potentially in need of international protection, many of whom arrived within a very short space of time: according to UNHCR estimates, 1,224,000 asylum-seekers arrived in Europe between 2015 and 2016, with around 1 million people crossing the Mediterranean to reach Greece and Italy in 2015 alone.²

It should be borne in mind that non-EU migrants represent just 4.2% of the total EU population, and that the EU as a whole continues to host fewer refugees than Turkey alone (this particular group representing a mere 0.4% of the EU population). These numbers should therefore, in themselves, not be a reason for significant concern. In addition, despite common narratives in the media and

political discourse concerning the 'refugee crisis', migration to and within Europe is by no means a new phenomenon, and there are a number of structures and actors in place to support the reception and integration of migrants, including refugees and asylum-seekers. Nevertheless, in the context of the current global displacement crisis, the sudden increase in arrivals, the lack of preparedness to receive and integrate this specific cohort, as well as a concurrent Europe-wide increase in support for populist parties continues to affect European societies, politics and welfare systems,³ adding for example to existing shortcomings in the housing and education sectors.⁴

Figure 1: Comparison of EU and top refugee-hosting states



Sources: World Bank GDP 2016; UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017, 2018*



Above: Refugee children celebrate Eid at a refugee accommodation site in Alexandria, Greece. *Kathleen Prior/IRC.*

The reasons for this perceived crisis are complex. Until 2015, the focus was largely on the integration of persons migrating within the EU, or of third country nationals who arrived in the EU for work – with a few exceptions, numbers of asylum-seekers were relatively low in many member states and did not, therefore, warrant continuous large scale interventions. Numbers of refugees resettled directly from third countries were also very low, with many EU member states not resettling at all, meaning that formal pre-departure integration programmes including cultural orientation were few and far between.⁵

Besides their large number, the demographics of arrivals in 2015/2016 were different to previous groups, many suffering the effects of long and dangerous journeys, including complex healthcare needs,⁶ lower educational levels and skills atrophied through prolonged displacement and trauma.⁷ They were also mostly young (30% under 18, 50% between 18 and 34) and male (70%).⁸

Many local actors therefore lacked not only capacity, but also expertise as to the countries of origin and specific strengths and vulnerabilities of the new arrivals. New actors, including large numbers of volunteers, appeared

in response. However, as governments struggled to maintain popular support in the face of the effects of the displacement crisis, this increase in actors was not accompanied by centralised coordination, nor by an increased space in policy-making for those at the frontline, including cities, municipalities, volunteers and refugees themselves.

In addition, existing fora for exchange, at both national and regional level, have often focused on academic or policy issues rather than practitioner-focused best practices. This has led to difficulties in sharing positive and negative experiences and an inefficient use of time and resources as stakeholders seek to solve similar problems in different locations.

The context in Europe has since begun to shift away from one of sudden high numbers of arrivals. Many refugees who arrived in 2015/2016 are unable to return due to continued conflict in countries of origin, and large numbers of asylum-seekers remain in limbo due to the lengthy and inefficient processing of their claims. In the meantime, both of these groups continue to lack the support to integrate fully in the European countries they have fled to.



Integration of refugees and asylum-seekers

There is no one internationally agreed definition of integration, reflecting its local and context-specific nature. The IRC defines integration support as support which ensures that refugees and asylum-seekers are able to participate and thrive within the communities and societies in which they have settled, whether on a temporary or permanent basis.

Above: Participants in Project CORE (Creating Opportunities for Refugee Employment), a joint initiative of the IRC and the Intel Foundation in Germany. *Tara Todras-Whitehill/IRC.*

CASE STUDY: A refugee's view on successful integration

Rami, 23, arrived in Germany from Damascus in September 2015. He was put up in a hotel for the first six months he was in Germany, and left to find his own footing.

He signed up for German lessons -six hours a day- and looked for ways to start rebuilding his life, joining social networking groups to meet people locally, and beginning to make friends.

"I was always interested in computer sciences and programming, but I didn't get the opportunity to go to university in Syria, because the war broke out and I had to leave", he says. "Then a German friend told me about an introductory course on computer programming. It was three months long and taught all the basics -like html/CSS- and was a great start."

After that initial course Rami heard about the Devugees programme run by the Digital Career Institute. "The course covered a lot about programming, it also taught us how to learn by ourselves, interpret documents and use different

programming codes. Our teacher was great. He's German with over 30 years in the industry. He would give us real life tasks and ask us to work through them, so we could practice on the sorts of scenarios we might get in the working world. At the end we got a certificate to show what we have learned." After the course Rami secured a three month internship at a software company. "The internship was a great opportunity to show I was motivated and learning quickly. It was a chance to prove myself and I got a job in the same company straight after the internship finished. I like the job and everyone is very nice and friendly". Now, with a full time job and a salary Rami has been able to rent his own apartment and is financially independent. "I am a SUCCESS. I have succeeded!", he says. "Now I have certificates and am building on my work experience which will help me in the future. All the people I know from the course have succeeded, got a job and an apartment." The secret of their success? "If you have a goal you will reach it."

Why invest in the integration of asylum-seekers?

The IRC believes that integration is a pathway that, in order to be successful, should begin as soon as possible. This means offering basic integration support also to asylum-seekers while they await a decision on their claim, even if their claim may ultimately be dismissed, because:

- Promoting the integration of asylum-seekers has no bearing on whether or not they should be allowed to stay, which will be determined through the asylum process; but
- The demographics of recent arrivals increase the likelihood that they will be granted refugee status; therefore
- Given the length of asylum procedures, withholding integration support until status determination would set people on a path towards social exclusion, clearly counterproductive for the individuals seeking protection and local communities alike; and
- Even if people ultimately leave, our experience shows that there are clear and immediate benefits to newcomers being actively involved in local communities as soon as possible.

To date, EU member states' efforts to integrate non-EU migrants and refugees have been patchy,⁹ and according to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) 2015, no EU member state has yet succeeded in creating an environment fully favourable to the integration of migrants.¹⁰ Various stakeholders have suggested approaches and policies conducive to creating such an environment, generally covering areas that may be broadly categorised as labour market, educational, housing, and sociocultural integration.¹¹ Depending on the context of the member state in question, necessary improvements may be as varied as facilitating access to entry-level jobs or vocational training, training teachers to provide safe and inclusive learning environments, designing dispersal policies that take into account housing and labour market needs and opportunities, or supporting interpersonal exchanges among new arrivals and the receiving community.

Successful integration benefits everyone in society: evidence has shown that countries with inclusive integration policies also tend to be more developed, competitive and happier places to live.¹² This is the case regardless of the legal status of the non-EU migrants in question – in fact, there is an increasing understanding that mainstreaming support, creating the conditions to allow all persons who need support to access existing services that are available to the local population, is the most effective approach.¹³ However, this report will focus on the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers, respectively 2,283,199 and 962,428 in the EU by the end of 2017,¹⁴ for the following reasons.¹⁵

Specific challenges for refugees and asylum-seekers

Refugees and asylum-seekers may face particular and different barriers to integration compared to other non-EU migrants, due to the unplanned, often traumatic manner of their arrival, their specific demographics, and structural factors such as national or EU asylum law and policy (discussed in more detail in Section III).

The changing nature of global displacement, in which record numbers of people are forcibly displaced over longer periods of time (on average, refugees have been displaced from their home for 10 years; for those who have been displaced for five or more years, the average jumps to more than 20 years),¹⁶ further from their countries of origin,¹⁷ and often in urban areas, adds to barriers to integration for this specific group. It means that individuals arriving in Europe post-2015 will often have experienced longer, more dangerous journeys, and will have been out of education or work for longer periods of time than other migrants, including refugees and asylum-seekers who arrived before them.

Asylum-seekers, as people seeking protection from persecution whose status is still undetermined,¹⁸ find themselves in a particularly precarious situation due to widespread and persistent delays in asylum procedures,¹⁹ as well as uncertainty among service providers and employers regarding rights and obligations pending an assessment of their claim. For example, the likelihood of recognised refugees and persons entitled to subsidiary protection 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. Research in Germany has confirmed that this has the potential to turn into a vicious circle: those who spend longer periods in reception centres or temporary accommodation centres during the asylum process are also less likely to have the time and resources to invest in language skills and other skills relevant for finding employment.²⁰

The effects of such delays in training and a lack in language skills are extremely significant for refugees' long term employment rates, with research showing that it takes refugees between 15 and 19 years to catch up with the EU average.²¹ This has significant financial and other costs for the host country, as well as the individual person and their dependents.

Figure 2: Refugee employment rates

Employment rates of refugees, years after arrival/recognition in %					
Years after arrival/recognition	Germany	Sweden male	Sweden female	Denmark	UK
1	19	14	8	15	43
2	27	24	14	32	49
5	49	49	32	63	n.a.
10	62	56	50	75	n.a.
Natives 2015	75	79	78	75	73

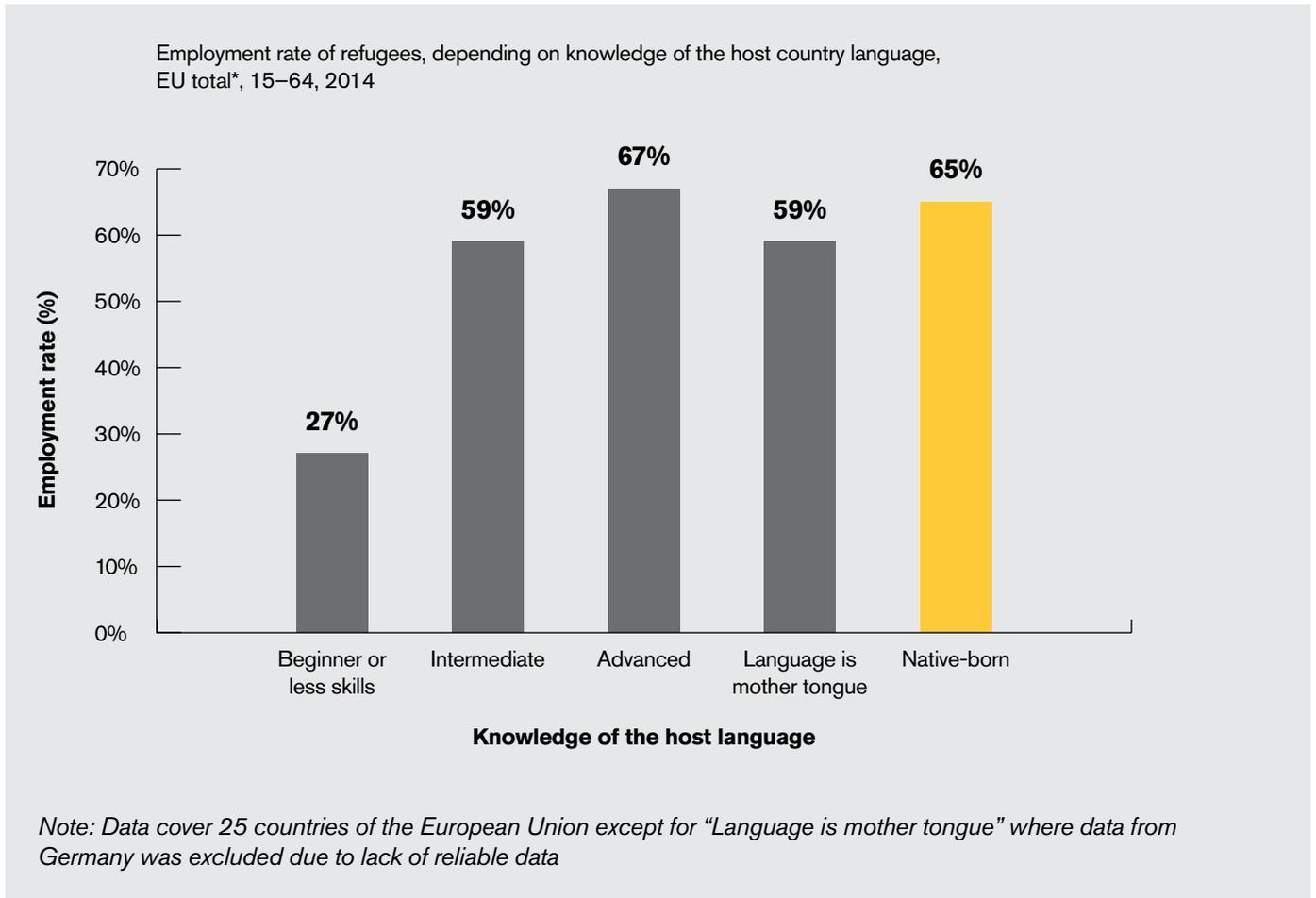
Note: For Germany and Sweden, years since arrival are considered; and for Denmark and the UK, years since recognition

Source: Poutvaara and Wech, *Integrating refugees in the labour market: a comparison of Europe and the United States, 2016*

In addition, 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%).²² The employment rate of refugees tends to rise almost in parallel with the level of their knowledge of their host country's language, with the

exception of refugees with an advanced level of language knowledge having a higher employment rate than those whose mother tongue is that of the host country (67% vs. 59%). The inclusion of France in the sample explains this discrepancy: many refugees from North and West Africa, even if fluent in French, face high levels of discrimination in the labour market.

Figure 3: Refugee employment rates relative to language skills



Source: European Commission, Labour market integration of refugees in the EU, 2016

Why act now?

These additional and specific barriers create an incentive to put in place urgent support that is targeted towards refugees and asylum-seekers whose asylum claims are currently pending. With regard to those individuals whose asylum claims are ultimately dismissed, the benefits of even temporary active engagement in the host society, including its labour market mean that even if people ultimately leave, early investment in their integration should not be considered a waste. On the contrary, their contribution may be substantive: evidence from a July 2017 report by the Department of Health and Human Services commissioned by the Trump Administration found that refugees have contributed \$63 billion more in government revenues over the past decade than they cost.²³ Conversely, the negative effects of social exclusion and marginalisation during this period, including the consequences for the public perception of asylum-seekers and refugees,²⁴ should not be overlooked.

In any case, it should be recognised that the demographics of recent arrivals increase the likelihood that a large proportion will ultimately be entitled to refugee status and to long-term, ideally permanent, protection in Europe: more than half of refugees and asylum-seekers arriving in Europe from 2015 onward come from fragile, conflict-ridden states such as Syria (29%), Afghanistan (15%), and Iraq (10%).²⁵ For this group, early intervention pending asylum decisions lays the ground for much more effective integration once status is awarded, as research by the OECD has shown that extended inactivity slows the integration process.²⁶ While awaiting decisions, asylum-seekers often have to wait months for services that are made readily available for recognised refugees, and by the time they are granted humanitarian status, precious time has been lost and their ability to fit into their new lives might have been damaged permanently. On the labour market integration front, unemployment during waiting periods can lead to depression and disempowerment, and cause skills to atrophy, causing long-term unemployed asylum-seekers to face steep barriers to re-entering the labour market upon receiving refugee status.²⁷

In addition, even a positive asylum decision may result in a temporary status allowing refugees to stay for one or several years. The continued uncertainty of their position resulting from obligatory status renewal at regular intervals often causes additional barriers to accessing housing, education, services and the labour market, as well as considerable distress. Integration support that is limited to the time of arrival or understood only as linked to the initial asylum process is unlikely to fully address these barriers. Continuous, tailored support that can form part of a long-term integration pathway is therefore essential, at all stages of the asylum claim and as long as needed thereafter – to the advantage of beneficiaries as well as host societies.²⁸ As part of this support, certain foundational integration services, including cultural and practical orientation, should be made available regardless of an individual's formal status and as soon as possible after arrival.

Without recognition that more and concerted efforts are needed to address this situation, systemic integration challenges will likely remain for years to come, both in those EU member states hosting the highest number of new arrivals, and in those countries hosting lower numbers but with relatively weaker economies and a less welcoming political environment to support them. What began as primarily an emergency response to address the consequences of pre-existing structural deficiencies in 2015, now needs to evolve into a concerted, ongoing effort to support refugees and asylum-seekers in making Europe their home.

The IRC in Europe

The IRC's roots are firmly planted in Europe: founded in 1933 at the request of Albert Einstein, our organisation played a key role in resettling European refugees to safety in the U.S. at the end of the Second World War, and again in providing aid and securing shelter for Hungarian refugees across Europe and the U.S. in the 1950s.

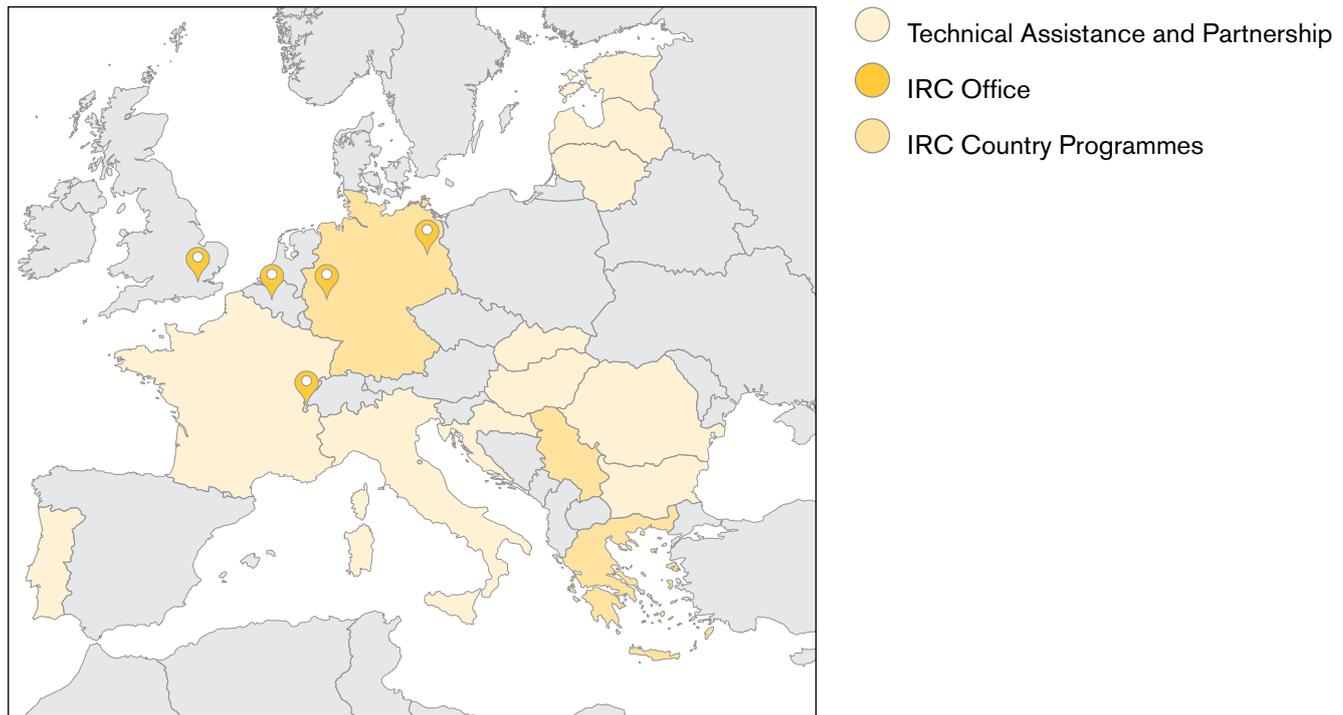
The IRC's work to support refugees and asylum-seekers seeking safety in Europe re-started in June 2015 as an emergency humanitarian response to the unprecedented number of arrivals in Greece, and was subsequently expanded to Serbia in October 2015. In 2016 the response was extended to neighbouring Balkan countries also experiencing high numbers of arrivals, and to Germany where more than one million refugees had sought sanctuary.²⁹ In November 2017, the IRC began registration in Italy with a view to supporting refugees and vulnerable migrants.

Since 2017, as the context in Europe has shifted, our response has evolved into supporting the integration of those refugees and asylum-seekers seeking to make Europe their home, primarily by extending our support to local actors invested in the effective longer-term integration of new arrivals.

IRC Vision

Local government and civil society are empowered and enabled to support the socio-economic inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugees across Europe.

The IRC's European programmes are based on a technical assistance model, designed to support local service providers to improve the quality and effectiveness of integration support measures and services, ensuring that refugees and asylum-seekers can participate and thrive in host countries and communities, whether on a temporary or permanent basis. This work is currently implemented through our country offices in Germany, Greece, Italy and Serbia, as well as through an expanded network of nine additional countries through the European Resettlement and Integration Technical Assistance (EURITA) project (described in more detail in Section IV).

Figure 4: The IRC's current European footprint

Our programmes draw on many decades of expertise in supporting durable solutions for the world's displaced: as a resettlement agency assisting refugees in rebuilding their lives in the U.S., and as a humanitarian organisation empowering displaced people not only to survive, but thrive in some 40 countries. In Europe, this technical expertise is further complemented and supported by regional policy expertise held by our offices in Brussels, Geneva and London.

Our operational footprint in Europe, working in European countries with very different experiences of migration based on their geographical position, social, economic and historical contexts, continues to strengthen our ability to provide integration support taking into account a wide variety of structural factors. The IRC is now adapting and sharing our international and U.S. experience to respond to needs in Europe, taking into account context-specific factors such as sophisticated social welfare systems, multi-layered governance structures and highly-regulated labour markets – as well as the significant differences between individual EU member states in these respects. It is upon this basis that we make the recommendations set forth in this report.

III. A European approach to integration

As an area closely bound up with many sensitive areas of core national sovereignty, such as education and employment, the main responsibility for integration policy remains with the member states, and the EU has limited legislative competence under the Treaties.³⁰ EU action on integration has therefore focused on funding initiatives and coordination efforts through sponsored networks and platforms.³¹ Most activities have taken a mainstreaming approach, seeking to facilitate the integration of all non-EU migrants by ensuring access to existing support structures.

These have included important developments such as the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals,³² part of the European Commission's New Skills Agenda for Europe, which will "help individuals produce a profile of their skills and to help an adviser identify any recommendations or next steps". Additional actions include the Online Language Service portal, with a separate website dedicated to language learning specifically for refugees, the Handbook on Cultural Awareness,³³ published as part of the European Agenda for Culture, and the joint Commission-OECD analytical paper on the labour market integration of migrants which came with a set of concrete policy recommendations on labour market access, countering fragmentation in national integration policies, and fostering more coordination at national, regional and local levels.³⁴

These activities have taken place within a top line policy framework designed by the European Commission, the Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals.

The implementation of the Action Plan is coming to an end in June 2018, and the Commission does not currently intend to renew it, but rather to improve what is already in place.³⁶ In July 2017, the Commission published a tool to assess progress under the Plan, with an overall evaluation planned for the end of 2018.³⁷ Over the past two years, progress has been made mainly on priorities 2 – 5, with coordination of pre-departure measures lagging behind and advanced mainly through the EU-funded EU-FRANK project, which aims to provide operational support to EU member states in the field of resettlement.³⁸

Despite these efforts, considerable differences in integration policy and funding among member states remain, and it could be argued that the resulting disparity in integration support and standards across member states remains, *in itself*, a barrier to the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers in the EU.

Delays and low reception standards in some member states have contributed to new arrivals lacking a sense of belonging, encouraging them to move to those member states perceived as offering better social and economic benefits.³⁹ While refugees and asylum-seekers may have other motivations to move from the country of arrival in the EU, including cultural or family ties to a particular member state that may facilitate integration, continued movement and the associated delay in accessing services is detrimental to longer-term integration prospects. It also has knock-on effects on resources and planning capacity

The EU Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals³⁵

The Action Plan recognises that "many EU Member States are facing similar challenges, and the EU level can add value through the structural support it provides." It "provides a common policy framework which should help Member States as they further develop and strengthen their national integration policies for migrants from third countries, and describes the policy, operational and financial support which the Commission will deliver to support them in their efforts."

The Action Plan sets out five policy priorities, as well as proposed EU tools to support integration across the EU. It is important to note that, like most above-mentioned EU initiatives, the Action Plan relates to all third country nationals legally resident in the EU – although there is repeated specific reference to refugees and asylum-seekers, the Action Plan pursues the Commission's "mainstreaming" approach to integration. Its priorities are:

- i. Pre-departure/ pre-arrival measures
- ii. Education
- iii. Labour market integration and access to vocational training
- iv. Access to basic services
- v. Active participation and social inclusion

The proposed tools include policy coordination, e.g. through the European Integration Network and the European Migration Forum, and funding, e.g. through the European Integration Fund, Structural Funds and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

in destination states, to the potential detriment of those refugees and asylum-seekers already in these countries.

Unpreparedness and a continued lack of coordinated long-term integration planning by member state governments and the EU has also fostered feelings of hostility and confusion among EU citizens. According to a Standard Eurobarometer survey from November 2017, immigration rose in importance to the public for the first time in over two years and was seen as the most important issue facing the EU,⁴⁰ with four in ten respondents considering it as more of a problem than an opportunity, especially in the case of non-EU migrants.⁴¹ Europe across the board is experiencing a worrying increase in xenophobic public discourse, as well as an increase in support for anti-immigration and populist political parties, exemplified by some of the conduct in the election campaigns in the Netherlands, Austria, France and Germany, as well as in the UK referendum on leaving the EU. Violent attacks against refugees and asylum-seekers have increased in several countries, both a symptom and a cause of decreasing social cohesion, a worrying sign of the direction of social progress and an additional barrier to integration leading – in the most extreme cases – to further trauma for the victims.⁴²

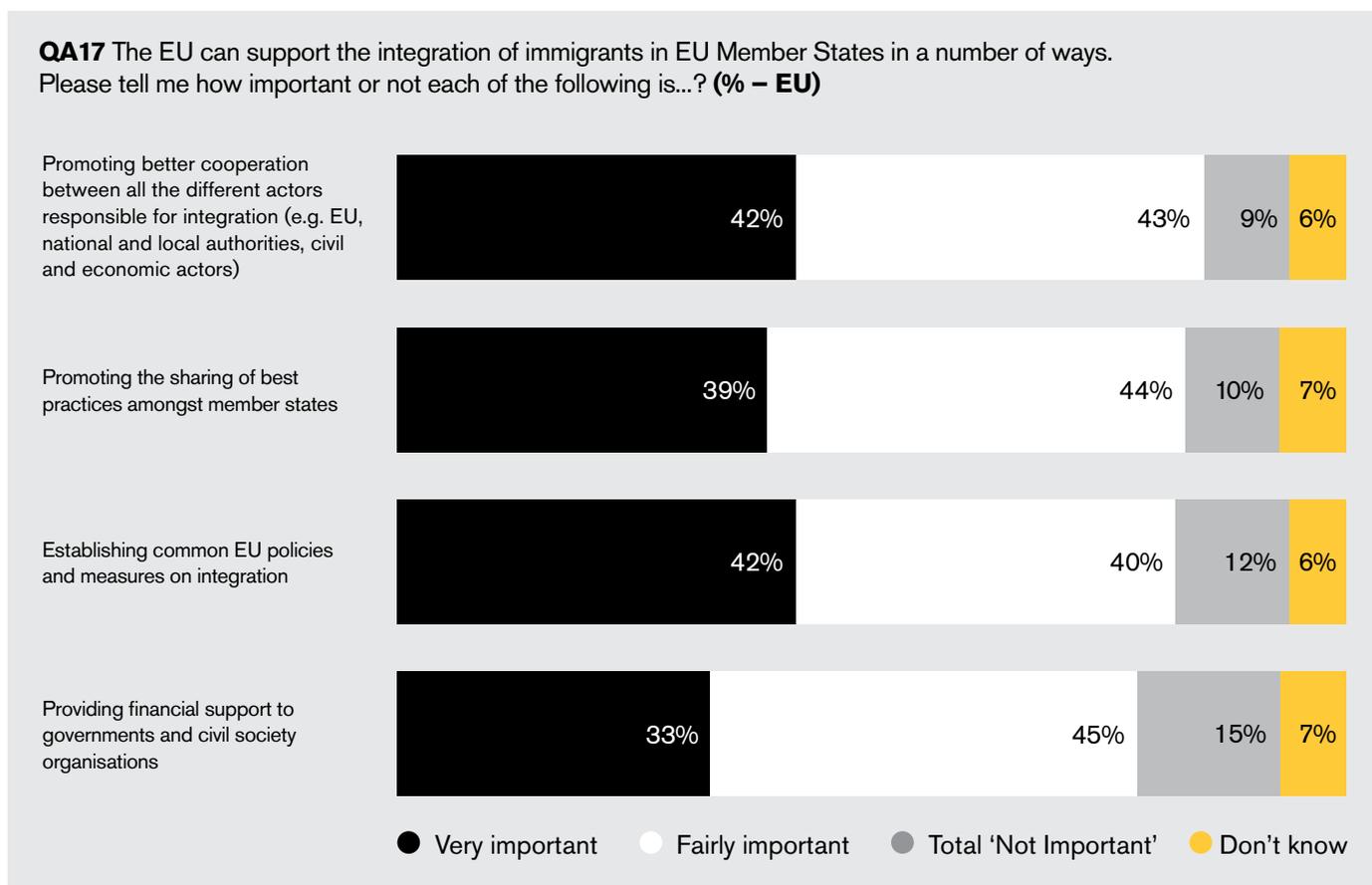
This raises the question of whether the EU could or should be doing more to address the disparity in integration standards across the EU.

A European integration policy?

As the Commission recognised in its 2016 Action Plan, “ensuring that all those who are rightfully and legitimately in the EU, regardless of the length of their stay, can participate and contribute is key to the future well-being, prosperity and cohesion of European societies. In times when discrimination, prejudice, racism and xenophobia are rising, there are legal, moral and economic imperatives to upholding the EU’s fundamental rights, values and freedoms and continuing to work for a more cohesive society overall. The successful integration of third-country nationals is a matter of common interest to all member states.”

There is also public support for additional EU efforts in furthering this common interest: despite the scepticism towards immigration expressed in 2017, in 2018 seven in ten Europeans said that integrating immigrants is a necessary investment for their country in the long-run, and 82% agreed that establishing common EU policies and measures on integration is important.⁴³

Figure 5: Public support for common EU policies and measures on integration



Source: European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 469: Integration of Immigrants in the European Union, April 2018

With the implementation of the Action Plan coming to an end and the ongoing negotiations on the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) that will determine the level of investment, priorities, structures and management of integration funding for the next seven years,⁴⁴ now is the time to consider the possible shape and extent of future EU action on integration. This report aims to contribute to this process by highlighting good practices and suggesting some fundamental considerations informed by the IRC's experience in supporting the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers through international and U.S. programmes and demonstrating how these principles can be applied to the European context.

Recommendations

The EU should create a Common Integration Pathway for refugees and asylum-seekers, with high common standards across the EU as a goal and with the evaluation of the 2016 – 2018 Action Plan on Integration as its starting point.

In the course of this evaluation, the Commission should disseminate best practices in the areas covered by the Plan, identify gaps and distribute learning so far to inform the development of Minimum Standards for Integration to serve as benchmarks for progress on the Pathway. By spring 2019, the Commission should publish a renewed Action Plan on Integration to provide guidance and maintain momentum by outlining forward-looking actions.

Recognising the limits to the EU's legislative competence and that the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers happens at the local level, the IRC believes that there

is a case to be made for the European Commission to renew its Action Plan building on lessons learned in 2016 – 2018, and for the EU to take a bolder role in steering collective European policy in support of national and local action. In doing so, the EU's mainstreaming approach to integration should be applied wherever possible, but a targeted approach taken with regard to asylum-seekers and refugees where necessary. In addition to the reasons given above, imperatives for such an approach arise from:

The Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and the Union Resettlement Framework (URF)

The lack of a common European integration policy leads to challenges in a region aspiring to harmonise reception standards for refugees and asylum-seekers. The EU's Common European Asylum System creates common rules and procedures in the area of international protection – these rules apply only to refugees and asylum-seekers, not other migrants. A separate legal framework warrants a separate consideration of its consequences for integration.

The CEAS is currently under review, following recognition that the system to date – and in particular its proclaimed “cornerstone”, the Dublin Regulation – placed an unsustainable level of responsibility on frontline arrival states such as Greece and Italy. This reform can only work if integration is taken into due account: otherwise secondary movement motivated by differing standards will continue, undermining any common responsibility-sharing system that is ultimately agreed. This would be to the detriment of refugees and member states, and public distrust in the ability of authorities to receive and support new arrivals in a sustainable manner will continue to grow.



Above: The Together for Refugees campaign, a partnership between the IRC, the Dutch Refugee Council and Ben & Jerry's, collected 50,000 signatures in support of an increase in resettlement and a more welcoming environment for refugees in the EU. Here, IRC and Ben & Jerry's staff in London hand deliver a petition to the Bulgarian Embassy. *IRC.*

In tandem with the CEAS reform, the EU institutions are currently negotiating a Union Resettlement Framework that has the potential to increase both the quality and quantity of European refugee resettlement.⁴⁵ To date, resettlement numbers have been small compared to global need, and have varied greatly among member states – some of which do not currently resettle at all. In the meantime, the European Commission has called for 50,000 resettlement places to be made available by October 2019,⁴⁶ and has received almost that same number of pledges from member states.

The IRC has long been calling for an ambitious Union Resettlement Framework, and believes that EU member states have the capacity to collectively resettle at least 108,000 refugees per year, or 540,000 over five years. However, significantly scaling up resettlement in an environment with varying experiences of both asylum and resettlement has important implications for integration policy and practice.

At the core of any sustainable resettlement programme is the commitment of the state to offer refugees who cannot return to their country of origin, nor integrate in their current country of asylum, protection and a durable solution. The measure of effective resettlement is therefore not only the number of refugees resettled, but also how well they are received and supported in the process of becoming full participants in the community of their new home. Resettlement is also designed to protect the most vulnerable refugees including women and children at risk, survivors of torture or refugees with urgent medical needs: particular care may therefore be needed to address healthcare, education, or gender-specific needs. In order to facilitate integration, these needs must be communicated clearly to local actors and the resources made available to address them.



Above: Syrian refugees Azzam and Nisreen, resettled by the IRC in San Diego, U.S, enjoy a day at the seaside with their family. *Jeeheon Cho/IRC.*

The IRC's experience as a resettlement agency shows that integration is of critical importance to the success of resettlement, for refugees and receiving communities alike. In Europe, we believe this requires new and innovative approaches to resettlement that focus on achieving self-sufficiency, reducing state dependence, building partnerships with the voluntary and private sector, reuniting families, and supporting community involvement. To support this, the IRC is sharing expertise, tools and best practices with new and emerging EU resettlement countries through its EURITA project and the resettlement resources website, both described in section IV.

The EU can add real value to these efforts by coordinating and resourcing best practice in integration programmes. However, the Union Resettlement Framework currently makes no reference to integration support, mentioning integration only to allow member states to favour the resettlement of those refugees deemed to have high integration potential.

Not only are European asylum policies such as the Union Resettlement Framework unlikely to be sustainable when lacking a common approach to integration, some elements of the current EU approach have the potential to actively undermine integration at the national and local level, adding to the imperative of the EU to act. This includes EU legislation that leads to the forced dispersal or return of refugees to member states that may be unable or unwilling to cater to their needs,⁴⁷ policies that may affect family reunification⁴⁸ and legislation setting common standards for legal status and the rights and obligations attached (including the need for frequent review and renewal of status).⁴⁹

EU asylum policy may have particular effects on labour market integration: a recent study suggests that lengthy asylum procedures and uncertainty regarding status renewal contribute to the employment gap between refugees and other non-EU migrants, and that refugees in countries that have dispersal policies that do not take into account labour market conditions suffer additional negative effects to comparable refugees (arrival time, origin, age, gender) in other countries without such policies.⁵⁰ In this regard, the IRC is currently working with the University of Stanford's Immigration Policy Lab to analyse historical resettlement data on refugee arrivals in the U.S., to model the relationship between placement location and selected integration outcomes such as employment. The project will then design and implement a pilot of the resulting algorithm in Switzerland to maximise asylum-seekers' chances of finding a job. The algorithm will allow officials to send individuals to the canton that best fits their profile, rather than allocate them randomly, as under the current system.⁵¹ The tool promises to strengthen placement decision-making, leading to better integration outcomes for refugees and potentially being applicable to the wider European context.

Recommendations

As step one on the Common Integration Pathway, the EU institutions should acknowledge that a common asylum policy implies a common responsibility for its effects on the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers.

In particular, the co-legislators should **introduce intelligent distribution** and reference labour needs and opportunities (beyond national unemployment rates) when designing regional distribution keys which could determine the member state responsible for assessing an asylum claim or resettling a refugee.

The European Commission should **act as an Integration Champion with regard to EU asylum law and policy**, e.g. in the ongoing negotiations on, and the later implementation of, the Union Resettlement Framework, by:

- Encouraging member states to grant refugees permanent residence status upon arrival, allowing them to rebuild their futures and access long-term support;
- Promoting the provision of pre-departure cultural orientation as well as post-arrival integration measures;
- Facilitating and supporting compromises between Parliament and Council that ensure that family unity is preserved and perceived integration potential does not become an exclusion ground for resettlement under the Framework; and
- Ensuring the inclusion of cross-references to the integration-related rights set out in the Qualification Regulation.

The EU's role in funding integration efforts

Through funding, the EU is in a position to make decisions that impact national priorities for integration as well as their implementation – this must go hand-in-hand with responsibility to shape these processes transparently through a common policy framework. The negotiations on the new multiannual financial framework (MFF) provide a timely moment to reflect on the future of EU funding for integration. Building on the lessons of the Commission's Action Plan on Integration, this major upheaval offers a real opportunity to ensure that the EU's infrastructure is designed in such a way that it really adds value to member state efforts.⁵² To this end, the focus should be on building a system that is results-oriented and prioritises flexibility and the creation of synergies. Decisions taken as part of these negotiations will have a major bearing on the success or otherwise of the EU's attempts to establish

an effective and well-managed response to migration that delivers benefits for local populations and new arrivals alike. It will be closely watched by local authorities, service providers and volunteers who depend on this funding to deliver quality services to refugees and asylum-seekers across the Union.

The Commission has proposed to “reinforce the Asylum and Migration Fund [previously Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, AMIF] to support the work of national authorities to provide reception to asylum seekers and migrants in the period immediately after arrival on EU territory”, while shifting “support to facilitate the long-term integration after the initial phase of reception” to Cohesion Policy supported by the Structural Funds (the European Social Fund (ESF)+ and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)). The proposal includes some significant innovations that, done well, could be hugely beneficial. For example, it makes sense to transfer the funding for longer-term integration measures from the previous AMIF to the Structural Funds and the longer-term, structured approach these funds offer. It is also logical that integration is mainstreamed into interventions such as active employment measures, currently covered by the Structural Funds.

However, this shift should be accompanied by the recognition that, as outlined in the previous section, targeted integration support should be increased in its intensity and duration in the light of the numbers and needs of the refugees and asylum-seeker arrivals of 2015/2016.

At the same time, the split between the newly-named AMF and the Structural Funds should not lead to silos, in recognition of the inherent links between reception conditions and longer-term integration measures – allocating money for the two issues from separate funds should not result in policies from DG Home (administering the AMF) negatively impacting the ability of DG Employment and national authorities to allocate and manage funding under Cohesion Policy in a way that is fully conducive to refugee and asylum-seeker integration. A single rulebook for the seven EU funds implemented in partnership with member states is a good first step towards facilitating synergies in this regard.⁵³ In addition, the new responsibility for DG Employment in this respect should be accompanied by adequate resources and training, reflecting for example the need to shift from the almost exclusive focus on labour market measures under the current ESF to encompass the much broader integration needs of refugees and asylum-seekers.

More than 80% of AMIF funding is currently administered through shared management by member state governments, leaving significant margins of appreciation to national decision-makers in how spend EU funds. Under the ESF+, this rises to 99%: the overall sum of €101.2 billion includes €100 billion for the ESF+ under shared management with member states. It will be essential to

ensure that the 25% of reserved funding for social inclusion remains strictly earmarked and is not diverted to other priorities, especially in the current political context.⁵⁴

This allocation of a quarter of the fund is welcome, even though lacking a specific allocation for measures targeting third country nationals.⁵⁵ However, learning from AMIF, which to date included a mandatory minimum allocation of 20% to integration measures, shows that a minimum allocation obligation is insufficient, with significant amounts of the allocated funds being left unspent by member states.⁵⁶ The institutions should therefore consider minimum spending allocations for integration under the new funding mechanisms in order to avoid bottlenecks at national level, and should ensure that this increase in member state involvement does not add to the existing barriers to the access and use of integration funding for civil society and local stakeholders.

In this respect, the MFF negotiations also provide an opportunity to reflect on the limits to the involvement of cities and municipalities in European integration policy and funding. The Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, established under the EU's own Urban Agenda, has recently developed ten recommendations on how to improve better access to European funds dealing with inclusion and integration, of which the IRC particularly supports:⁵⁷

1. EU funds should be earmarked and a percentage of the funding set aside for municipalities.
2. The Commission should establish a Block Grant that can fund and address specific challenges in cities and municipalities. It would combine resources from AMF, ESF+ and ERDF to create a flexible fund that can adjust to local needs and changing challenges, combine sectoral policies and involve all local stakeholders.
3. EU funds should align more with the needs of municipalities. This could be achieved by strengthening the partnership principle across EU funds.⁵⁸

Recommendations

As step two on the Common Integration Pathway, the EU should adopt a more assertive approach to EU funding that incentivises and motivates all European stakeholders to forge this common path. To this end it should wield the soft power it holds through its ability to shape, define and allocate integration funding in a way that leads to tangible outcomes for local communities, refugees and asylum-seekers alike.

As part of the ongoing MFF negotiations, the EU should establish four Guarantees for integration funds to ensure that money is more effectively targeted at achieving the common goal of high integration standards for refugees and asylum-seekers across the EU, thereby retaining focus and momentum along the Pathway.

1. A Beneficiary Guarantee to ensure EU funding is delivering towards the integration needs of refugees and asylum-seekers and to ensure money in new funding pots is not diverted to other political priorities.

- Ring-fence an adequate percentage of the AMF specifically for national (short-term) integration measures.
- Encourage member states to put in place structures to allow for continuous communication between the various national authorities responsible for implementing integration funding under AMF, ESF+ and ERDF.
- Mirror these structures at EU level to allow for communication between DG Home and DG Employment on integration outcomes beyond the labour market aspect.

- Ensure that DG Employment is resourced and staff are trained to reflect the new responsibility of sharing the management of funding for medium- to long-term integration of refugees and asylum-seekers with member states, recognising that integration support for beneficiaries in need of international protection, in particular measures which support aspects of integration other than the labour market, may require a targeted approach that cannot mean 'business as usual'.
- Ensure that implementing partners of the MFF subscribe to and demonstrate adherence to the five principles outlined in this report.

2. A Local Communities Guarantee that ensures that EU funding directly reaches municipalities and facilitates access for civil society.

- Continue efforts to improve access to EU integration funding for local stakeholders, including through simplified rules and reporting requirements.
- Widen the target group under the AMF to ensure that short-term integration funding also covers measures that benefit the local community.
- Encourage and incentivise member states to put the partnership principle into action, e.g. by putting in place permanent consultation structures between national authorities and local implementing partners of all EU integration funds, following a community consultation model, to guarantee input from a wide range of civil society actors when designing and evaluating national programmes.

Recommendations (continued)

3. A Transparency Guarantee to increase accountability of EU integration funds.

- Building on the learning from the AMIF mid-term review, introduce spending as well as general allocation requirements; and
- Allocate multi-year, predictable funding for integration support measures that define outcomes and are based on evidence, and ensure that evaluations of EU-funded integration projects focus on impact, not just outputs.

4. An Investment Guarantee that ensures enough money is allocated to meet the integration needs of refugees and asylum-seekers in a sustainable way.

- With regard to the 25% allocation to social inclusion under the ESF+, ensure transparency from the outset on amounts spent by member states, including disaggregated data on spending per beneficiary target group.
- Ensure that EU-funded pilot measures are of sufficient scale and reach to assess impact and are designed from the outset to allow for potential cross-border, large-scale and long-term application.

The need for leadership and cross-border coordination

While the significant differences between EU member states cannot be ignored, the IRC's EURITA project has also demonstrated a number of common integration challenges faced by practitioners across the EU, notably an absence of practitioner-focused technical assistance (further details on the project can be found in Section IV). Such common challenges can be mastered under the guidance of the EU, if the institutions are willing to make the case for certain 'universal truths' that apply beyond national borders. These include: that integration and the resulting social cohesion is to the benefit of EU citizens as well as refugees and asylum-seekers; that foundational integration support should begin as soon as possible after arrival in the EU (or before, in the case of resettlement from a third country), regardless of status and the expected duration of stay; and that, given the right support, refugees and asylum-seekers contribute economically, culturally and socially to the communities that welcome them.

A common approach works: data gathered by the Migrant Integration Policy Index show that integration in Europe has been most successful in areas that are typically well covered by EU law, such as basic security, fundamental rights and protection from discrimination. On the other hand, the greatest obstacles to integration are found in areas where European policies are generally weaker and divergent, such as in employment, education and health support.⁵⁹

Alongside the ongoing CEAS reform, the EU should therefore develop Minimum Standards of Integration with measurable outcomes. With regard to refugees and asylum-seekers, such standards should encourage adherence to the five principles informed by humanitarian practice which are outlined in Section IV of this report, and should go beyond measuring mere access to services, employment and education to measure active participation, for example by reflecting career progression or certification levels. In the meantime, holding member states accountable to the normative Common Basic Principles on Integration⁶⁰ and strengthening EU policies on employment, education, and health are essential to achieving widespread quality integration programmes.

It is suggested that the common interest in strength-based case management, information sharing, community engagement, interpretation and economic empowerment shown by EURITA participants in member states with very different social, historical and economic contexts point to a need for additional support and the potential for policies addressing the wider European, rather than merely local or national, context. Further EU supporting and coordinating efforts in these areas would be well invested – as would further support of existing peer-to-peer support activities, in line with the recommendations set out in a recent MPI Europe report.⁶¹

In addition, certain longer-term elements of supporting integration are best done at a regional level: longitudinal data collection on, for example, education or employment outcomes, as well as cross-border information and knowledge exchange on common challenges, are more easily coordinated and more sustainable if uncoupled from national election cycles and related political interests.

Recommendations

As step three on the Common Integration Pathway, recalling the recognition in the Common Basic Principles that integration is a dynamic, two-way and long-term process without static outcomes, the EU should seek to provide continued and principled guidance towards the common goal of successful integration. It should capitalise on its ability to provide this guidance in a long-term and cross-border manner that is uncoupled from national short-term political objectives and is informed by the EU's founding values.

As the EU Integration Champion, the European Commission should demonstrate principled leadership, for example by:

- Taking a strength-based approach to its own policies, e.g. by ensuring refugee and asylum-seeker voices are heard in policy development, and encouraging the application of such an approach in member states, e.g. by promoting multilingualism as an asset and continuing efforts to facilitate skills matching;
- Communicating the importance and benefits of early integration support, regardless of asylum-seeker or refugee status, to national policy-makers and EU citizens;
- Assisting in strengthening links between EU citizens and asylum-seekers and refugees in receiving

communities and fostering a welcoming environment for all, for example by developing a common understanding of volunteering for refugee and asylum-seeker integration through a handbook on working with asylum-seekers and refugees, or by designing a common “skills passport” for European Solidarity Corps volunteers and guidelines for organisations that engage them; and

- Continuing to promote a mainstreaming approach to integration policy and practice while acknowledging specific needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, including the specific rights and obligations arising from EU asylum law and policy.

The European Commission should clearly focus its efforts on the areas where the EU, as a supranational body, has a unique added value, e.g. by:

- Supporting and coordinating cross-border practitioner-focused peer-to-peer exchanges and communities of practice, including through regular and local workshops, study visits and (online) discussion fora; and
- Allocating funding for the design and implementation of cross-border longitudinal research on integration, including on what works to achieve education and employment outcomes that go beyond mere access to education and jobs to include attendance, progression, learning, well-being and certification.



Above: A family seeking protection in Greece. Tyler Jump/IRC.

IV. Five principles to guide the path towards successful integration

Globally, the IRC's work towards the integration of displaced persons is grounded in the following five principles, which we consider to be vital signposts for any pathway towards the successful integration of refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe.⁶²

5 key principles for integration support measures:



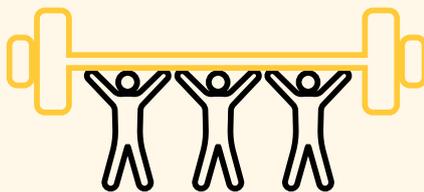
Context specificity



Strong partnerships



Roots in the community



Strength-based and client focused



Sensitivity to specific group needs

1. CONTEXT-SPECIFIC



There is no ready-made, one-size-fits-all approach to integration, particularly in a region like the EU which covers member states with a variety of social, cultural, economic and historic contexts. The unique characteristics of the receiving country, including the economic and political climate, social welfare systems and the norms and values prized by citizens are equally as important to take into account as integration challenges specific to the status or individual characteristics such as age, gender or nationality of refugees and asylum-seekers.

The importance of cultural orientation

Ensuring that integration support measures are specific to the context of the receiving community are key to their sustainability: for refugees and asylum-seekers, context-specific support ensures that they can fully participate in the society of their new home. Formal cultural orientation programmes, both post-arrival and, in the case of resettled refugees, pre-departure, can provide vital signposts to assist with the navigation of this landscape. Cultural orientation plays a key role in the U.S. resettlement programme, where curricula are developed for both pre-departure and post-arrival orientation programmes through the CORE project.⁶³ Learning from CORE highlights the importance of thoughtfully adapting the means of communication to the context of the audience: for example, it may be appropriate to hold separate sessions for men and women, or to include more practical exercises like demonstrating how to use public transport, rather than relying on printed materials alone.

Many European countries are similarly recognising the value of communicating clearly with refugees and asylum-seekers about the socio-cultural aspects of the receiving society as a first step of making sure the integration process is supported in a context-specific way. For example, IOM Norway, through the Norwegian Cultural Orientation Programme (NORCO),⁶⁴ has organised cultural orientation training for refugees on the practicalities of life in Norway since 2003. The training aims to develop a realistic visualisation of life in Norway, an understanding of the receiving municipalities' expectations, minimise culture shock and facilitate early self-sufficiency. A particularly promising aspect is that participants are not simply told about life in Norway, but are given the opportunity to experience it through role-play, case studies, problem-solving activities, games, debates, and other activities that require their full participation.

Incorporating the local context into the design of integration services

From the perspective of the receiving community, taking into account the local context should mean taking into consideration whether and how particular members of the local community may be vulnerable in similar ways to refugees and asylum-seekers. This ensures that measures aiming to support refugees and asylum-seekers can also be designed to support vulnerable groups among the local population, reducing the likelihood of fostering feelings of resentment towards newcomers. Context-specific support should also involve existing diaspora by connecting newcomers with communities from their countries of origin where these exist.

IN PRACTICE: Rescuing Futures

The IRC is implementing the Citi Foundation-funded “Back my Business” initiative in Greece (as well as in Jordan and Nigeria). The project strives to integrate refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, as well as local unemployed youths (aged 18 to 35), into the Greek labour market. Including Greeks alongside IRC's usual beneficiaries is essential from a context-specific point of view, given the extremely high levels of youth unemployment. This approach is proving to be beneficial for receiving communities, and has attracted the interest and support of local and national institutions. Beneficiaries can participate in entrepreneurship skills training (digital, marketing, and communications skills as well as drafting and implementing a successful business plan) and, after a selection process, in a mentoring scheme. At the end of the training, successful participants receive a small grant as an incentive to initiate their own entrepreneurial activity.

Any integration policy, whether at local, national or regional level, should therefore be underpinned by a detailed context analysis that takes into account not only the barriers to integration specific to refugees and asylum-

seekers, but also the context of the receiving community. Strong partnerships with partners rooted in local communities are key to understanding this context, as well as to avoiding the duplication of efforts and ensuring the best use of resources.

2. A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH



Across Europe there are a large number of actors supporting the integration of newcomers, ranging from government services and municipal initiatives to programmes implemented by non-governmental actors including large welfare associations, local NGOs or groups of volunteers. Experience has shown that more actors do not necessarily mean an improved quality of services – in fact lack of coordination often leads to shortfalls for both beneficiaries and providers.⁶⁵ Policy-makers and practitioners should therefore prioritise the building of multi-dimensional partnership models with a variety of integration stakeholders including national and city authorities, civil society organisations, NGOs, the private sector and academic institutions.

Partnering with the private sector

In addition to working with local partners widely recognised as integration actors, policy-makers and practitioners should also seek out partnerships with actors who may not be intuitively associated with integration, notably the private sector.⁶⁶ Access to employment opportunities is instrumental to successful integration, and employer partners play a role in hiring refugees, hosting internships and apprenticeships, advising on the skills and competencies needed in work-readiness and bridging programmes, and partnering on targeted recruitment. Employers can also serve as mentors for refugee entrepreneurs, providing guidance and support to asylum-seekers and refugees who are running their own businesses. In addition, businesses are in a unique position to influence their customers, raise awareness through campaigning and advertisement, using their brands for impact on public opinion to foster a refugee-friendly climate conducive to successful integration – an example of this is the IRC's partnership with Ben & Jerry's on the Together for Refugees campaign.⁶⁷

Humanitarian organisations like the IRC can support private sector partners through capacity building, including training on working with vulnerable communities, codes of conduct, and employment standards. Context is again key to building and maintaining these relationships: the best ways of engaging with the private sector (and for the private sector to engage) may differ depending on economic context, target group and attributes of the labour market in the country in question. At the same time, employers are often able to articulate barriers and challenges faced and can offer a practical, country-specific perspective on what is needed to make labour market integration work. To make the most of this potential, the

strongest partnerships are the ones that foster a threefold commitment in terms of funding, technical expertise and advocacy.

IN PRACTICE: BRAN – Business Refugee Action Network

The IRC, Ben and Jerry's, Virgin, Tent Foundation and The B Team recently came together to establish the Business Refugee Action Network (BRAN), with the aim of maximising European business action and impact in support of refugees.

BRAN is the first initiative with a focus on European business. The network builds on and works with national, regional and global partners to scope and coordinate business-led approaches, assess business partnerships that work, scaling and activating effective, refugee-focused business models and collectively speaking out to support a refugee-friendly business environment and a more positive public debate. A strong coalition of businesses for the long term, the network complements the many business commitments already made by piloting, interrogating and scaling effective initiatives – particularly in Europe – and by generating business-led evidence and learning.

BRAN held its inaugural roundtable meeting in January 2018 and is convening bi-annually.

Partnering with cities and municipalities

Integration happens at the local level, and with the majority of displaced people and migrants settling in urban areas cities are at the forefront of supporting newcomers in their communities. Considering city stakeholders, especially municipalities, within multi-dimensional partnerships seeking to address integration is therefore essential to ensure that short-term humanitarian programming leads to the long-term self-reliance of displaced populations in a manner that contributes to the overall resilience of the city.

There is widespread recognition that this is the case. The SHARE Network project⁶⁸ was developed by ICMC in 2012, co-funded by the European Commission as part of the European Resettlement Network (ERN), and inspired by the European Parliament call for projects aimed at sharing experiences and best practices in resettlement and integration of refugees between municipalities. The pilot phase in partnership with the city of Sheffield and other actors⁶⁹ established a discussion network where the municipalities and regional authorities of Member States with a long resettlement experience could share their best practices with other less experienced Member States' local governments. In addition, UNHCR and NGOs had the chance to connect with cities interested in resettlement and to share their own best practices in the resettlement

and integration of refugees. Phase II of SHARE saw the strengthening of the networks between regional and local authorities and their civil society partners,⁷⁰ with the final objective of increasing the capacity of both municipalities and civil society actors in refugee integration, facilitating the sharing of innovative and contextualised solutions, and promoting synergies between resettlement and mainstream actors working in asylum and migration.

Humanitarian organisations can support such partnerships in three key ways: assisting local partners in implementing projects, strengthening the technical capacity of municipalities, and pursuing advocacy messages at the city level. The IRC is a platform partner of 100 Resilient Cities (100RC),⁷¹ pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation, and has engaged with eleven member cities currently dealing with urban displacement, helping to shape their thinking on how to ensure that resilience-building initiatives are designed to benefit the most marginalised and vulnerable residents of each city.⁷²

IN PRACTICE: 100 Resilient Cities

100 Resilient Cities is a Rockefeller Foundation initiative “dedicated to helping cities around the world build resilience to the economic, social and physical challenges that are increasingly part of the 21st century”. The 100 member cities employ a Chief Resilience Officer to design and implement a resilience strategy, which often has to take urban displacement and migration into consideration. Through a platform partner network, cities have access to a list of external organisations providing specific services, among which the IRC provides a humanitarian focus.

We have contributed to the resilience strategies of four cities in the 100RC platform – Athens, Amman, Paris and Milan – and have subsequently entered into programmatic partnerships with the Municipalities of Athens and Amman in order to implement initiatives included in their respective resilience strategies. We have also replicated this work with non-100RC member cities such as Kampala. A recent IRC report drawing on lessons from our work with Amman and Kampala highlights the benefits of humanitarian-municipal partnerships in addressing urban displacement while building resilience.⁷³ Here, a partnership approach can:

- Strengthen coordination, sustainability, and impact of multi-stakeholder responses to urban displacement;
- Link integration programming to long-term development goals of the city;
- Improve the understanding of municipal authorities in relation to the needs and preferences of urban displaced; and
- Ensure the inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugees is considered alongside displaced and marginalised residents in municipally-provided public services.



Above: IRC and Amman Municipality staff together, conducting community surveys in Amman, Jordan. *IRC.*

CASE STUDY: Partnership in practice – the Municipality of Athens

The IRC has been working with the Municipality of Athens since July 2016, and the partnership has taken many forms including technical guidance and expertise.

Lefteris Papagiannakis, Athens Municipality Vice Mayor on Migrant and Refugee Affairs said: “The City of Athens had very little experience in migrant and refugee reception when, in 2015, it suddenly found itself in the forefront of a major refugee crisis. The Greek government didn’t provide any support in the form of tools, facilitating access to funds or policy design to the Municipalities, meaning each area had to take action on its own using whatever resources and expertise was available. An immediate response was needed to address the emergency situation and international humanitarian organisations like the IRC provided expertise and knowledge in a timely manner. What really

mattered for us is that they were able to support the local authorities very quickly, with great flexibility and expertise. Humanitarian organisations didn’t hesitate to ‘do the job’ and get stuck in to tackling the real problems. The Athens Municipality has been praised by its Northern European counterparts for the joint approach it is using, which is less bureaucratic and leaves a greater room for adapting to the real and current needs of the target population. It offers more tailored support to beneficiaries as it caters for all and it doesn’t exclude certain groups that do not fit into a rigid system. The greatest value of working with IRC has been building the capacity and skills of the staff working on refugee and migrant reception at the Municipality. This knowledge and engagement will stay with the Municipality of Athens and, critically, enable us to share this know-how with other regions.”

These partnerships have yielded tangible results in supporting municipalities at the forefront of urban displacement in understanding how to tailor existing and planned city projects to support integration and promote self-reliance of displaced populations, and better prepare for future largescale arrivals into each city. In addition to avoiding the duplication of efforts and ensuring the best quality of service for beneficiaries, such a partnership model fosters and profits from the strong links that local partners have in the communities we serve together.

Partnering with humanitarian organisations

Humanitarian organisations can provide key support to existing actors in convening or advisory capacities to strengthen long-term integration support infrastructure. Concretely, humanitarian organisations that have experience working with the same population – in the asylum-seekers and refugees’ countries of origin, transit and first asylum – can contribute to partnerships by:

- Advising on beneficiary strengths and needs, working with partners to ensure that enthusiasm and goodwill are transformed into projects that meet needs and are cost- and resource-efficient;

- Sharing and adapting successful programme models to new contexts;
- Providing technical assistance, including sharing best practices, tools and resources with partner organisations and training them on management, finance and fund raising;
- Building capacity to increase the scale and reach of support measures;
- Generating and communicating evidence about what works to implement impactful programmes, as well as how, where, for whom and at what cost;
- Communicating with beneficiaries to assess needs, ensure accountability and that interventions reach the desired target group; and
- Managing expectations of partners and beneficiaries regarding likely outcomes of interventions.

Resettlement Resources*

The resettlement resources website hosts IRC open-source resources, guidelines, and toolkits that both follow and support the five principles outlined in this section. Resources include templates, guides, videos and presentations and e- learning modules. The site will also create a forum for practitioners to connect and the IRC plans on launching communities of practice on thematic topics later this year.

Key topics will include:

- Interpretation and Language Access
- Case Management and Service Delivery
- Community Engagement and Integration
- Economic Empowerment
- Vulnerable Populations & Psychosocial Support

*<https://www.resettlementresources.org/europe/>

RESETTLEMENT RESOURCES
HOME EUROPE U.S. GLOBAL

Request technical assistance from the IRC [here](#)



Resettlement & Integration:
EURITA



Economic Empowerment



Education



Safety

The IRC in Europe supports local service providers including community based-organizations, municipalities, other public bodies as well as non-governmental organizations working towards the socio-economic inclusion, safety and self-sufficiency of refugees and asylum seekers.

Partnering with local actors who are firmly rooted in the communities where asylum-seekers and refugees are settling enables humanitarian organisations to continuously learn more about these communities, and to adapt and contextualise tools and approaches as a result. In this way, multidimensional partnerships enable a faster, more organic and more sustainable response to humanitarian needs, in emergencies, protracted displacement situations and in integration alike.

Building networks and fostering peer-to-peer exchanges

Multidimensional partnerships as described above can be, and in many cases are, supported by networks spanning a wide range of academic, policy and practitioner

stakeholders. For example, the CITIES-GroW project, started in February 2017 and coordinated by EURO CITIES, involves 16 European cities with the aim of supporting migrants' integration through economic activities.⁷⁴ With the support of non-profit think tanks and consultancies like the Migration Policy Group, Migration Work-CIC, and the Migration Policy Institute, the project pairs up cities (mentors/implementers) and makes sure to provide practical advice on how best to address migrant integration challenges through job skills matching, support to migrant entrepreneurs, and measures to facilitate access to the labour market. The desired outcome will be the development of effective integration strategies with a long-term impact on policy and practice.

IN PRACTICE: EURITA - European Resettlement and Integration Technical Assistance Project

Funded by the U.S. Department of State, the IRC's EURITA project brings together expert practitioners from the U.S. with those from 11 participating European countries to share best practices, develop tools and action plans to enhance the development and implementation of refugee resettlement and integration strategies in their local context. EURITA is all about finding practical, quick, context-sensitive solutions, amplifying the refugee and asylum-seeker voice and using IRC's experience in resettlement in the U.S.

EURITA offers sustained peer-to-peer support through a variety of activities. These include:

- Initial three-day country-specific workshops in participating countries in 2016 and 2017;

- Integration experts actively working with stakeholders in 11 European countries and available for individual and group consultations to provide technical assistance on specific topics;
- Planned thematic trainings in 2018 and 2019 on topics of interest such as interpretation and language access, case management, information sharing, economic empowerment and community engagement;
- Resource development and sharing via the EURITA Resettlement Resources Website; and
- Ongoing engagement with some 450 EURITA stakeholders through webinars, e-learning activities and Communities of Practice.



Above: Participants in a EURITA Workshop. IRC.

By focusing on the provision of technical assistance regarding post-arrival integration support to local practitioners in a context-specific manner, the IRC's EURITA project is designed to complement similar previous or ongoing EU-funded initiatives that focus on, for example, exchanges at the state, policy or academic levels, or on the pre-departure stage of refugee resettlement. These include the ERN+,⁷⁶ the SHARE Network⁷⁷ and the EU-FRANK project.⁷⁸ The breadth of these various programmes demonstrates the appetite among policy-makers and practitioners alike for peer-to-peer support in a variety of fields impacting upon integration, while making the most of existing expertise as well as new approaches. Future initiatives should aim to be equally mutually reinforcing and focus on the sustainability of the networks they create, bearing in mind the long-term nature of integration processes.⁷⁹

3. ROOTED IN THE COMMUNITY



It is now widely acknowledged that integration is a two-way street which requires a whole of society approach – an approach that engages people in the receiving community beyond government, policy or political circles.⁸⁰ Demanding that refugees and asylum-seekers assimilate to their new surroundings without recognising the role played by the receiving community in all its constituent parts does not take into account, let alone address, structural barriers, hostility or discrimination, and therefore does not facilitate full participation in society.

An approach focused only on providing services to relatively small groups of newcomers also has the potential to increase tensions in the receiving community, which may feel the new arrivals are receiving support beyond that provided to, for example, long-term unemployed nationals. Ultimately, this may contribute to a rise in xenophobia and hostility that leads to further social exclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers. Support measures should therefore both involve and support the community, including diaspora and other immigrants, as well as vulnerable groups among the local population, while supporting refugees to become active citizens.

Building trust through open exchanges

The EURITA project has identified community engagement as an area which practitioners felt needed further attention in several European countries. In the U.S. resettlement context, a key component of working with the community is the support and leadership of coordination meetings that involve all local community stakeholders. In recognition of the importance of maintaining community support for the resettlement and integration of refugees, resettlement agencies are required by the U.S. Government to organise these meetings quarterly to facilitate exchange among stakeholders and identify challenges. Meetings will typically include representatives of all groups involved in integration,

including medical service providers, public officials and social service providers, educators, local businesses and employers, legal professionals, faith communities and NGOs.

Building on the success of this model, the IRC has sought to replicate community consultations in Greece by supporting the Athens Municipality and founding donor the Stavros Niarchos Foundation in creating a system of working committees engaging local government and social service providers with NGOs.



IN PRACTICE: ACCMR - The Athens Coordination Center for Migrant & Refugee issues

The Municipality of Athens established the ACCMR in order to support the efficient and targeted coordination of initiatives and programmes being implemented in the City of Athens by multiple actors. The municipality has launched five structured thematic Working Committees for the collaboration of international organisations, institutional authorities, local NGOs and community-based organisations that provide key services for refugees. All organisations involved participate on a voluntary basis, which constitutes the most innovative and encouraging aspect of the initiative.

The five Working Committees (on urbanisation, education, health, livelihoods and legal support) started meeting on a monthly basis in June 2017 and now include 80 member organisations. They strive towards defining a comprehensive service delivery system that takes into consideration the short-term and long-term goals of integration.

The IRC currently chairs the Livelihoods Committee, which counts 46 participating organisations and in March 2018 organised the event “We live together – We work together”, attended by more than 180 representatives of organisations, institutions, private companies and beneficiaries. The event saw employers and refugees come together, the former to share concerns and challenges, as well as positive experience, on hiring refugees, the latter to share their own success stories.

Above: A speaker at the IRC-facilitated ACCMR event “We live together – We work together” in Athens. ACCMR/IRC.

Similar models are in use in a variety of EU member states including the Netherlands and Poland.⁸¹ In 2015 – 2016, Utrecht hosted five neighbourhood information sessions to address residents' concerns about the arrival of refugees, and in particular the establishment of two refugee centres in key locations in the city. These sessions involved a range of stakeholders, including the vice mayor responsible for refugees and asylum-seekers, the police chief and a doctor working in asylum centres. Neighbourhood stakeholders were invited to discuss issues such as safety with the police, local policy with the vice mayor, and volunteer activities. The meetings helped to reassure residents and encourage a positive attitude towards refugees. For the past 15 years, Utrecht has taken a human rights approach to migration which has led to a generally inclusive and accepting attitude among citizens. Information sessions appear to be most successful when the relevant politicians, NGOs, social workers, health professionals, and the police work together to dismiss fears and debunk rumours.⁸²

The Gdansk Model is a comprehensive programme to help refugees and migrants integrate by promoting the active involvement of refugees in all spheres, from education and culture to labour and health, and at the individual as well as institutional level. An advisory council, with 13 migrant representatives, including two refugees, keeps the Mayor abreast of refugee concerns. According to the UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Volker Türk, the Gdansk model is a great example of the way local leaders can set an inclusive tone and foster integration to counter populism and xenophobia.⁸³ The integration model helps newcomers with legal counselling, job-seeking, and Polish language classes, and teams up immigrants with volunteer mentors who can help them with everyday problems. It also foresees how city structures and local police should act in cases of racism, hate crime and discrimination.⁸⁴

Harnessing the power of volunteerism

Local volunteers are key to fostering community cohesion, including by shaping the perception of refugees and asylum-seekers among their neighbours, families and friends. In the U.S., the work of IRC's 27 resettlement offices is supported to a great extent by community members, with volunteers active as, for example, family mentors, job search assistants, or English as a second language teaching assistants. Volunteers often also donate money and goods, are friends and mentors to new arrivals as well as ambassadors for them in the community.

Below: Hanna and Werner with their friend Aiman and little Werner. Tara Todras-Whitehill/IRC.



CASE STUDY: New friends in a new home

Part of moving to a new place and starting a new life, is the difficult journey to finding a new place in the world where you can belong. For refugees uprooted from everything they know, everything that is familiar and secure, friendship is an extraordinary gift.

Marwa, a Syrian mother, had a difficult journey to Germany. She spent time in refugee camps on Lesbos in Greece, left to look after her three daughters by herself, and separated from her husband Aiman who was already in Germany. The family were eventually granted asylum in Germany, but not before they had been split apart for over a year. The children are doing well in school, and they now speak German, but starting a new life in Germany has not been easy.

Although relieved to be safe, they felt quite isolated until they made an extraordinary new friend. Werner and his wife Hanna, have been the rock the family needed. Werner and Aiman met through a church group when Aiman was newly arrived in Germany, and battling to be reunited with his wife and children. Werner gave Aiman support, understanding, friendship and kindness.

"Even if we speak different languages, we can all speak the language of the heart," Werner said. Aiman was particularly struck by Werner's generosity and humanity. "I love him," he said. "I lost a brother [in Syria] but have gained a new one here." That's not the only new family member Aiman gained; In December 2017 in Germany, Marwa gave birth to a baby boy. "I wondered, how can I ever repay Werner for his kindness?" Aiman asked. "Then I thought - naming a child is a gift that lasts forever."

Engaging volunteers has also been shown to make a remarkable difference to integration outcomes in Europe: in the UK, the charity TimeBank trains volunteer mentors to help refugees integrate into society. While the Time Together mentoring programme is not specifically oriented towards finding a job, employment among mentees rose from 5% to 47%.⁸⁵ Volunteer-led initiatives can, in the short-term, also fill critical gaps where service providers or established NGOs fall short due to time, legal or resource constraints. For example, in Austria, the charity Refugees

Work was founded in November 2015 after an NGO platform was contacted by a business wanting advice on how to hire refugees.⁸⁶ Having tried and failed to find an NGO with the time and resources to take on the idea, Dominik Beron and his colleague Jacob Wagner decided to crowd-fund and do it themselves instead. Within the constraints of the Austrian law, Refugees Work aims to help both asylum-seekers and refugees, by matching asylum-seekers with volunteer opportunities and refugees with work suitable to their experience.⁸⁷

CASE STUDY: Generation Rescue

The United States have displayed mixed responses to refugees seeking safe haven, but behind the politics there exists a thriving network of citizens doing what they can to show welcome to new arrivals. The IRC's young professionals community, GenR (short for Generation Rescue) is a group of young, influential humanitarians who have joined forces to help people rebuild their lives and has chapters in 9 U.S. cities with thousands of members and supporters across the country. Since 2010, it has fostered a community of like-minded individuals committed to the IRC's work in their own cities and around the world. The Dallas chapter of GenR opened in 2015 and has since swelled to over a hundred members who volunteer, fundraise, and mobilise in support of refugees resettled in their community. GenR: Dallas members participate in monthly volunteer, fundraising, and advocacy events with IRC Dallas beneficiaries including film screenings, community garden work days, youth programme career days, community barbeques, apartment set ups and airport pickups.

Michele Villarreal, who oversaw GenR: Dallas from 2015 -2017 said: "[In 2016] there was a lot of anti-refugee resettlement rhetoric during the Presidential election campaign, we were getting calls asking 'Are these people legal? Are they dangerous?' The reality is we have facts on our side, and that's really what I arm our GenR members with. Our members learn about the refugees' stories and talk through their fears and plans for the future. Their purpose is to tell those stories to others -to go into workplaces and talk about refugee resettlement and tell people that refugees are just like you and me, and have dreams and aspirations and just need a chance.'

In November 2017, the IRC in Dallas resettled Tolassa, an Ethiopian Oromo refugee. Tolassa is a competitive 5k, 10k, and half marathon runner, whose personal best half-marathon time is 1:09:15. Prior to his international debut, he was arrested and jailed for speaking out against government corruption and human rights violations perpetrated against the Oromo people. With the support of the GenR: Dallas, Tolassa was able to register for the

2018 Rock 'n' Roll Dallas Half Marathon and was kitted out with new running gear. On Sunday, March 25th, Tolassa joined 6600 other people and ran the course through Downtown Dallas. Tolassa celebrated his first four months in the United States by placing 2nd in his division and 15th overall, finishing the half marathon in 1:22:36. To learn more about GenR visit www.Rescue.org/genr



Above: Tolassa being interviewed after the 2018 Rock 'n' Roll Dallas Half Marathon. Andrew Holzschuh/IRC Dallas.

Harnessing this potential is now key in Europe, which witnessed an outpouring of support from members of the public in response to the large numbers of people in need arriving in 2015 and 2016.⁸⁸ Given their role as community advocates, maintaining these existing volunteers and activating new ones becomes increasingly important in hostile political climates, which may simultaneously make volunteering a less attractive option.⁸⁹ One challenge in this regard may be that Europe continues to lack a structured approach to volunteer management and volunteering is therefore understood and viewed in many different ways. Perceptions of and ideas about volunteering can differ across countries, amongst people of different ages and backgrounds, and within different organisations and authorities.

Coordination efforts like the coordination office for refugees established in the district of Berlin Neukölln in June 2015 can help to address this. The coordination office's aim is to acquire a comprehensive overview of the work of volunteers, start-ups and civil society organisations, and support their work better. The refugee coordinator is responsible for identifying, overseeing and connecting the different organisations working with refugees, and for the development of communication channels among all parties involved. This is good practice for both sides: it provides the district of Neukölln with an overview of all voluntary work and engagement, and civil society organisations with one contact person at district level with expertise on refugee integration policy and practice. In this context, the district of Neukölln emphasises the importance of existing neighborhood structures and infrastructure of charity associations. In particular, the support of Arab associations is crucial in order to facilitate refugee integration in the district.⁹⁰

A well-defined, agreed and publicised model of volunteering for refugee integration can further support coordination initiatives, by creating a shared commitment to volunteering, building strong partnerships to support volunteering initiatives and activities for refugee integration, strengthening engagement in volunteering at an individual and organisational level, and easing any concerns or misconceptions about the impact or operation of volunteering. To assist with shaping this, the EURITA project has made available an extensive collection of volunteer resources including volunteer management guidebooks, job descriptions and orientations for new volunteers on its resource website.⁹¹

Finding common ground

Relying on the tremendous commitment and goodwill of Europe's many volunteers to support the integration of new arrivals is not enough. Negative portrayals of refugees and migrants have prevailed in media and political discourse, and national and local elections have demonstrated an increase in support for populist and anti-immigration parties across the EU since 2015.⁹² Data shows that such support is not necessarily linked to negative personal experiences, with the strongest showing for anti-immigrant parties consistently observed in locations hosting low numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers.⁹³

Beyond programmes that directly involve the local population as volunteers, stakeholders seeking to support integration should therefore also focus on promoting positive stories and challenging negative public and political narratives around migration generally, and forced displacement specifically. Programmes that seek to foster interpersonal exchanges and build connections between refugees and local communities can contribute to this by creating opportunities for participants to connect with refugees in their local community, learn about their countries of origin and the causes of displacement.



Above: Refugees resettled in New York sowing seeds at the IRC's New Roots garden in the Bronx. The IRC's New Roots Programme connects refugees with their new communities through farming. Many refugees have been able to supplement their incomes through sales made at local farmers' markets across the cities where the IRC works. *Donna Alberico/IRC.*



Above: Children participating in the Berlin Kickt project in Germany. *IRC.*

Food and sport as unifiers

In the U.S., food has proven to be a great unifier and basis for the community to work together towards a common goal. For example, since 2008, the IRC's New Roots programme has developed services and infrastructure aimed at engaging refugee and low-income families in urban agriculture, nutrition education, and accessing healthy food. The IRC has a network of more than 40 New Roots gardens, farms and markets in 13 U.S. cities, where more than 2,700 refugees and their neighbours grow, prepare, share, buy, and sell fresh local foods in their communities.

In June 2018, 14 cities in Europe and in the world will host the third edition of the Refugee Food Festival, which was born as a citizen initiative and was later developed by the Food Sweet Food Association with the support of UNHCR. The festival uses chefs and food from refugees' home countries to bring together local communities and newly arrived migrants, creating an opportunity to change the perception around refugees and asylum-seekers. The festival also provides an excellent opportunity to connect refugee cooks with the community of local chefs and restaurant owners, accelerating their integration into the labour market.

Playing sports can equally help to break down barriers and form lasting friendships and connections, the premise upon which the Berlin Kickt project was launched in Germany in April 2018. Berlin Kickt is a unique partnership between the IRC, Nike and buntkicktgut, and a project which makes the best use of the unifying power of play and the universal language of football. Coaches who themselves mostly have a refugee or migrant background run weekly sessions and activities in five schools for boys and girls from all backgrounds and walks of life, including refugee children.

These types of programme also actively create opportunities to demonstrate the cultural and economic contribution that refugees and asylum-seekers can make to the receiving society to those who would not usually come into contact with refugees. The IRC's experience as a resettlement agency shows that once they acclimate to their new environment, refugees thrive in and contribute to their communities, building careers, purchasing homes and becoming active citizens.⁹⁴ Communicating this contribution in a tangible manner holds the possibility of transforming a newcomer from an outsider to a neighbour in the eyes of the receiving community. It is also the foundation of a strength-based approach to integration programming.

4. STRENGTH-BASED AND CLIENT-FOCUSED



The 3.1 million refugees and asylum-seekers currently in the EU have been displaced for different reasons and lengths of time, are of different ages, nationalities and educational backgrounds, and have different hopes and dreams for the future.⁹⁵ What unites them is their resilience and their willingness to face a multitude of challenges in order to find safety and build a future, for themselves and their families. To ignore this potential is to waste resources, create frustrations among refugees and asylum-seekers who may be over-qualified or feel patronised, and to foster negative perceptions of refugees and asylum-seekers as the undeserving recipients of charity among the receiving community.

Integration support measures, whether at the regional, national or local level, should therefore be underpinned by a fundamental understanding that each individual brings with them strengths and skills that can help them thrive in their new home, and be designed to empower them to make the most of this potential. Putting in place structures to allow for a holistic, individualised case management approach can help ensure this is the case.

Case management: a holistic and strength-based approach

In the U.S. resettlement context, the holistic case management approach assigns a case manager to each newly arrived refugee and their family. The case manager is responsible for individually overseeing each case providing counselling, direction and developing an integration plan. The case manager supports the refugee in navigating and accessing all of the services required in their plan, and a trusted relationship is built to provide one focal point who fully understands the case. The common goal is early self-sufficiency and refugees are referred to employment service programmes within the first 10 days of arrival for early intervention, as early employment is regarded as central to supporting refugees to thrive in their new home.

In line with this focus on self-reliance, case managers use a strength-based approach which applies the principle that everyone has inherent resources that can be used to help them meet their own goals. This approach relies on the following assumptions:

- Humans have an innate capacity for health and healing;
- A positive future outlook is conducive to healing and success; and
- Most people know what is right for them.

All integration-related decisions and self-sufficiency plans are developed with and are guided by the refugee. Plans are created within the first 30 days of arrival and are adjusted periodically as the refugee progresses or their situation changes.



Above: Ashti (centre), a Yazidi refugee from Iraq, poses with two employees at his Iraqi restaurant in Scottsdale, Arizona. He was able to open his own restaurant thanks to the IRC Phoenix's micro-loan programme. *Ethan Fichtner/IRC.*

Recognising the many differences between the U.S., international and European contexts, the IRC is exploring ways to adapt the strength-based case management model for European use. Case management is already applied in some European countries, including Finland and the UK.⁹⁶ For example, within the UK's Gateway integration support programme, the Refugee Council in Sheffield aims to provide flexible support and interventions that meet the requirements of each individual refugee by developing a Personal Integration Plan (PIP).⁹⁷ Shortly after arrival, the Refugee Council's integration support staff conduct initial assessments with each resettled refugee, completing the PIP during the first few weeks and actively supporting its implementation thereafter. The PIP serves as a catalyst for dialogue between refugees and service providers, and determines specific areas of interest or concern, as well as refugees' goals and objectives for life in their new home. Key areas of analysis in the PIP are housing, income and finance, education and training, health and wellbeing, employment and volunteering.

Despite these promising practices, fully adapting a strength-based case management approach to the European context will necessitate a shift from the generally accepted narrative of refugees and asylum-seekers as victims and the recipients of charity, towards an understanding of individuals as potential contributors to the society that offers them a new home. Beyond working with receiving communities, addressing barriers to educational and labour market integration will be key to making the most of this potential.

A key challenge for European policy-makers in this regard is a continued focus on rigid one-size-fits-all certification requirements in education and employment by governments and industry alike. For example, in many European countries, the primary focus remains on learning the host country language and obtaining formal qualifications, as these are understood as prerequisites to participating in education or entering the labour market, despite evidence from the OECD showing that on-the-job training that links language learning to vocational training and work experience is more effective.⁹⁸ Even in highly regulated European labour markets this need not be the case: in Sweden for example, refugees following the "Swedish for Immigrants" language course can combine this with part-time employment, with feedback from participants indicating that the model simultaneously facilitates swift language acquisition and entry into employment.⁹⁹ On-the-job training is also available to certain groups of refugees in Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Spain and Switzerland.¹⁰⁰

The importance of individualised pathways and progression

Taking a strength-based approach to labour market integration should include the recognition that self-sufficiency may be reached in a variety of ways, including through entrepreneurship and self-employment. This has the added benefit of demonstrating the contribution refugees can make to local economies in a tangible way. A narrow and exclusive focus on early employment can trap refugees and asylum-seekers remaining in low-skilled, entry-level 'survival jobs' that may initially cover living expenses but do not allow them to fulfil their potential. In the context of resettlement, initiatives such as the LINK-IT project can facilitate the application of a strength-based approach, which is also a means to move beyond basic employment options. LINK-IT helps the authorities in receiving countries to receive advance information about the refugees' background, education and skills to support their integration into the labour market at the earliest possible stage.¹⁰¹ Such initiatives are particularly important given the finding by the Business Refugee Action Network that European employers struggle to understand and fully benefit from refugees' and asylum-seekers' qualifications as they do not translate directly into equivalent European qualifications and certifications.

The EU could further support progress in this regard by developing a simple qualifications framework that illustrates the equivalence of common qualifications in main countries of origin to common qualifications in EU member states. Existing resources, such as the German BQ Portal,¹⁰² a platform to empower assessment authorities and companies to evaluate vocation and training qualifications obtained abroad, offer a useful starting point and bear potential for scaling to an EU-wide, English-language qualifications framework. Post-arrival, career development programmes are designed to help refugees move into higher-skill, higher-wage jobs that offer opportunities for career advancement.

Key components include opportunities for refugees to strengthen their work-readiness and soft skills, develop technical skills including the opportunity to earn industry-recognised credentials, individual career counselling, a period of on-the-job training after completion and, in some cases, support for adults lacking basic skills to improve these skills in a contextualised, vocationally-oriented programme. Career programmes can serve refugees with a wide range of educational and skill backgrounds, ranging from those with limited formal education to those with college degrees and professional experience.



Above: IRC staff and participants in Project CORE in Germany. In a programme funded by Intel, the IRC works with partners to provide web development training to refugees and asylum-seekers in Germany. *IRC.*

The importance of a meaningful pathway for progression applies equally in the education context. Defining access and language acquisition as the main education outcomes does not account for subsequent poor performance or drop-out rates – particularly detrimental in EU member states like Germany, where progression in educational and professional systems remains certification-based. For this reason efforts should be made to support refugee and asylum-seeker children to access mainstream education as soon as possible, to allow them to obtain relevant certificates along with their peers.

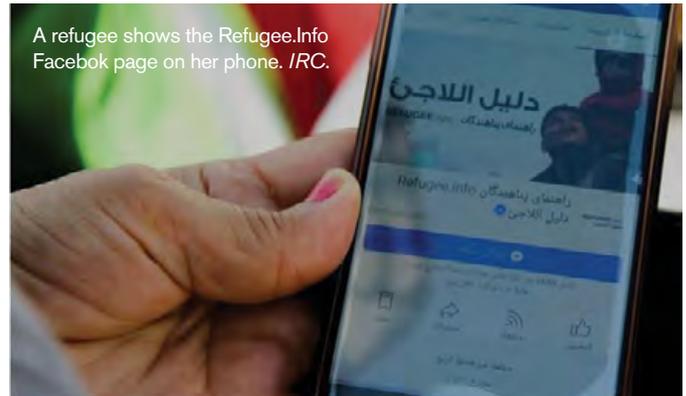
A rigid prioritisation of host country language acquisition is also often to the detriment of the children's mother tongue – children who have been displaced from an early age often lack formal education in their first language and risk losing it altogether if its maintenance is not supported alongside learning the new, local language. Using a strength-based approach to frame multilingualism as an asset rather than a burden, for example through supporting native language teaching alongside teaching in the host country language, in turn opens up employment possibilities for refugee teaching assistants – a win-win for all involved. Even though there are many trained teachers among asylum-seekers, their lack of local language skills and highly standardised teacher training systems are significant obstacles to integrating those teachers into school systems as intermediaries who could help with the integration of refugee students. A pilot project at the University of Potsdam recently graduated the first class of refugee teachers after a two-year training programme. However, since these graduates still lack a German teacher training diploma, they can only be employed as teacher aides, not as fully-fledged teachers.¹⁰³

5. SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF SPECIFIC GROUPS



Recognising the resilience and strength of refugees and asylum-seekers and supporting the mainstreaming of integration policies is key to a strength-based approach to integration. Holistic case management as described above is designed to, wherever possible, ensure refugees' access to existing services for all vulnerable populations – including by the provision of interpretation and cultural mediation where needed.¹⁰⁴ However, it is important to note that some of the challenges a refugee or asylum-seeker encounters may require a specialised approach and to acknowledge that mainstream service providers may not have the capacity to fully address these needs.

Providing timely and comprehensive information directly to refugees and asylum-seekers is therefore particularly key to reducing anxiety and uncertainty, as well as empowering them to make decisions for themselves and their families, thereby limiting the effects of both structural and individual barriers to integration. However, compared to nationals or other migrants, displaced persons may have more difficulty in accessing information about available services, including those intended to assist the most vulnerable, for example due to language barriers or a lack of trust in authorities.



A refugee shows the Refugee.Info Facebook page on her phone. IRC.

CASE STUDY: Refugee.Info*

If refugees have accessible information about their rights, laws and the availability of age- and gender-appropriate services, they regain power to make choices that protect themselves, their families and each other. Refugee.Info is an adaptable platform designed to increase information available to displaced men, women and children – whether they are on the move, in camps, or in urban settings – so they can make informed decisions to enhance their safety and access to basic services. It is an approach which provides information in an accessible way, including video and audio content, considers language and literacy barriers, and builds trust in the messenger by having refugee moderators.

Responding to the pleas of strangers is part of daily life for Firas now, as he uses his own experience to help others in his role as moderator for Refugee.Info. “I can tell them ‘I was in your situation, but look how different my life is now, and yours will be too’. Firas was two years into his biomedical engineering degree at Damascus University when he had to leave Syria, travelling through Turkey to Greece. In Greece, he lived in tents “enduring the cold, the wind, the rain”. At the time, European nations were closing their borders to new arrivals and Firas found himself, along with thousands of other refugees, moving from camp to camp. “There were so many rumours flying around. ‘The border will open tomorrow. There’s a new route to go north’. Through Refugee.Info I found accurate information about what was actually happening.” Now living in Germany, Firas is helping others whose lives are still in limbo, giving them reassurance and hope. “Before the war, I had a dream to help people through my work as a biomedical engineer. Now I know that even though my life has changed, I can still live out my dream to help people, in other ways. I will not waste time, and I will never give up.”

Refugee.Info is currently deployed in Greece, Italy, Serbia and Bulgaria, and is exploring expansion to France and Germany in the short-term.

*<https://www.refugee.info/selectors>

Women

Fewer qualifications, less experience in gainful employment, less or delayed participation in language acquisition, as well as traditional roles and obligations within the family, mean that many female refugees and asylum-seekers face additional barriers to integration, particularly but not limited to labour market integration. Programmes that specifically target and seek to economically empower women can have an impact far beyond the immediate financial benefits, potentially reducing intimate partner violence, increasing decision-making authority for women and reducing tolerance of gender-based violence in the community.¹⁰⁵

The Mentor Network for migrant and refugee women established by the Danish Center for Research on Women

and Gender (KVINFO) in 2002 is a good example of the far-reaching potential of targeted support.¹⁰⁶ By establishing connections with working women with a wide range of professional profiles, refugee and migrant women are empowered to participate in the labour market as well as to establish a social and professional network. Support from the volunteer mentors can include advice on job applications and interviews, workplace culture and reassessment of employment potential. However, the Network also offers purely social matches, where the emphasis is on ancillary goals such as full participation in Danish society, for example by improving Danish language skills or dealing with the absence of family members and a new social network.

IN PRACTICE: Support, Training & Assistance for Integration and Refugee Self-Sufficiency - The STAIRS project

The STAIRS project aims to prepare refugees and asylum-seekers in Germany, with a special focus on women, for the vocational training required to enter the labour market. The IRC will offer information and orientation, employability training, professional language training, internships and opportunities for employment.

The project focuses on the care sector, filling an important gap in the labour market as there is a particularly acute shortage of skilled care workers in Germany. As a first step of implementation, the IRC has partnered with Care.com, the world's largest brokerage platform for the care and childcare industry, to develop the two-week long Care Forward Orientation Course for refugee women. Beneficiaries receive an introduction to the legal framework and a general overview of the German labour market, learn about job profiles of educators and nursing staff, and subsequently are linked with internships or job placement opportunities (using Care.com's online platform) and one-on-one mentoring, through partnerships with social service providers and care institutions.

This project includes a classic strength-based component. Asylum-seeker and refugee women participate in a collective, two-week orientation course that gives them an overview of a range of topics related to labour market integration (right to work, structure of the care industry, key regulations, work readiness, etc.). Once this collective, group-based orientation course has been completed, the IRC connects each participant with a case manager who helps them to create a personalised career plan. Each participant uses the knowledge they gained during the course as well as a greater awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses to craft a plan that will guide them into the German labour market and the support services available to them.

To ensure low-threshold access, all training courses are accompanied by a translator, so that beneficiaries can develop language skills and professional skills simultaneously; child care is also provided during the course, making it easier for beneficiaries to access services.



Above: A group of refugee women who participate in Care.com's workshops in Germany. IRC.

CASE STUDY: Care Forward

In 2017, the IRC joined forces with Care Forward to create a unique training programme for refugee women, aimed at increasing their chances of accessing Germany's competitive labour market. Since 2012, some 500,000 female asylum-seekers have arrived in Germany and there is a projected shortage of 600,000 nurses and educators by 2030.

The crux of the programme was the identification of this niche in the job market that refugees could fill. Stefan Lehmeier, Deputy Country Director of IRC Germany said, "We know from experience here in Germany and around the world that refugee women have a significant potential but tend to be underestimated. We have come together with care.com and started from scratch, asked ourselves what the ideal orientation package would look like. It is not just about finding a job and making an income, it is about to being able to participate in society and being able to express your personality. The care sector is growing and will continue to grow, this is the moment for us to bring these two sides together: the refugee women and their talents with available jobs in the growing care sector."

The course helped Nour, 30, from Syria, to develop her interest in working in the care sector. "I even profited from the breaks. They gave us room for individual conversations with the teachers. We could ask important questions. I learned a lot of helpful things like how important it is to be punctual." Following her Care Forward training, Nour is now taking a six month vocational language course before applying for a paid apprenticeship as a nurse, which will last three years, certifying her as a nurse in Germany.

Linda Robens, Project Manager of Care Forward, said: "We want to empower these women by providing information and guidance about a labour market that is completely unknown to them and that works differently from the one they are used to from their home countries. Like finding out how to find a job, how to apply, how to write a CV and also things like what to expect in the job interview and what kind of questions you will be asked."

To date every Care Forward course has been filled and now there are waiting lists to participate. More than 100 participants have graduated from five courses which have been held in Arabic, Farsi and Tigrinya. Jobs secured afterwards include childcare and domestic help as well as elderly care. "Women love to come to the trainings", Linda Robens says, "On the last day of the training they didn't want to leave."



Above: Nour, a Syrian participant in Care Forward. *IRC.*

Children

The successful and timely integration of child refugees and asylum-seekers is of particular importance to ensure their specific developmental needs are met and to set them on a path for a successful future, as well as contributing to long-term social cohesion. However, this group of beneficiaries also faces particular hurdles to integration. For example, many newly arrived children have faced interruptions to their schooling and can lack foundational academic and socio-emotional skills as a result. Some have been in and out of multiple school systems. Accessing school and learning in a new country – where the language, curriculum, pedagogy, and expected classroom behaviour can all be quite different – can be challenging.

Flight and displacement themselves can also lead to a level of stress that impacts on integration. Research from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University has shown that early adversity has profound effects on children. Basic brain architecture, the foundation of all future learning and behavior, is developed in the first years of life and is highly dependent on experience. During this sensitive time, prolonged and severe stress and the absence of stable, nurturing care can result in toxic stress – flooding the brain with dangerously high levels of stress hormones – and can permanently damage biological and neurological systems. As a result, these children are at severe risk for impairments that will follow them throughout

their lives: poor physical and mental health, cognitive deficits, and reduced economic earnings. In other words, early adversity affects children immediately, but it also has long-term effects on children's lives, and ultimately on society at large.

A recent study highlighted that quality schools are key to overcoming these barriers to ensure the successful

integration of child refugees,¹⁰⁷ an understanding that also underpins the IRC's *Healing Classrooms* approach. Policy-makers should recognise the inherent value to educational outcomes to integration, while also defining and promoting them as key to the wellbeing of refugee and asylum-seeker children and youth. This should go hand-in-hand with the recognition that prolonged periods of uncertainty such as displacement impact these outcomes.

Healing Classrooms: Building upon Global Education Approaches to Promote Well-Being and Inclusion in Europe

The IRC's *Healing Classrooms* approach—built on 30 years of practical experience and a decade of research and field testing—offers children a safe, predictable place to learn and cope with the consequences of displacement. Unlike many education programmes that focus solely on teaching reading, maths, and other traditional subjects, *Healing Classrooms* also builds children's social-emotional skills. This approach is based on research that shows social-emotional learning programmes improve students' life skills, behaviour, and academic performance. These strategies have informed IRC's education programming in various contexts, ranging from countries of origin and first asylum like Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Niger, to U.S. resettlement programming.

Beginning with a small number of interested schools, the IRC Germany team drew from existing materials, their own experience in the classroom, and teacher feedback to develop appropriate *Healing Classrooms* interventions for the German context. This included considering the master's level education and many years of teaching experience most German teachers already have, and

which specific interventions and materials might be most useful in their situation and best suited to their skillset. For each school, an individual support plan is developed according to the needs and interests of the school leadership and staff, which can include a combination of teacher professional development opportunities and relevant teaching and learning materials.

In the 2017-2018 school year, the IRC Germany team is supporting over 400 educators at 30 locations in 11 of the 16 federal states with *Healing Classrooms* workshops. Feedback has indicated that the IRC's approach stands out for several reasons: the IRC brings international experience through sharing materials developed and tested in other contexts, as well as through videos that give teachers insight into the types of educational experiences their students may have had previously; includes information about brain science and toxic stress, and their relevance to educational interventions; and provides concrete activities and approaches focused on what teachers can do in the classroom to help children feel well and learn.



Above: The IRC organises art activities as part of psychosocial activities for Syrian refugee children in Arbat refugee camp, in Iraq. *Kamil Hashem/IRC*.



Above: Two young Afghan asylum-seekers in Germany who participated in the IRC's Healing Classroom programming. Healing Classroom programmes train teachers to recognise toxic stress in refugee students and adapt their teachings to ensure refugees have the support they need to learn. *Timo Stammberger/IRC.*

Youth

Refugees and asylum-seekers aged between 16 and 24 have a unique set of needs¹⁰⁸ and the length of time youth have spent in displacement with limited access to education and employment opportunities is a significant barrier to integration.¹⁰⁹ Most will need to acquire new language skills necessary for academic and professional success in receiving countries. They will often have missed large portions of education in their home countries or along the route and as a result miss critical academic skills their peers may take for granted. They may face challenges in earning a school leaving certificate due to having reached the end of compulsory school age and significant interruptions in formal education in their home country.

Recognising that refugees who arrive as teenagers or young adults often fall through the gaps of traditional schooling systems, the SchlaU School in Munich offers an interconnected set of initiatives that provide a fast-track to the Certificate of Secondary Education or Certificate of Intermediate Education; the Transition from School to Work programme, which provides educational and social assistance to participants in vocational training; and the Workshop for Migration Pedagogy, a teacher-training programme that provides research, learning materials, and training with the aim of incorporating SchlaU principles into mainstream schools.¹¹⁰

Young people are also disproportionately affected by unemployment: youth unemployment in the EU is higher than general unemployment rates, with non-EU migrant youths facing the highest unemployment rates.¹¹¹ In the case of refugee and asylum-seeker youth, a range of physical and psychological limitations to health may also result in additional marginalisation in terms of access to meaningful employment. For this group, targeted support that bridges these gaps, for example by providing assistance to identify and access further education or to develop relevant soft skills, is therefore of high importance.¹¹²

Entrepreneurship can provide a solution for some.

However, many of the barriers to employment equally apply to starting a business, and entrepreneurship brings with it the risks of precarious employment and significant financial obligations. Young refugees and asylum-seekers therefore need specific support to access the financial resources and technical skills required for starting their own business.

CASE STUDY: Youth Entrepreneurship in Greece.

Moussa, 28 years old, from the Ivory Coast, took part in Rescuing Futures, an innovative entrepreneurship programme funded by Citi Foundation, in partnership with the IRC, which focuses on training both refugees and Greek nationals in the skills they need to start their own business.* It is an example of the important role the private sector can play in the successful integration of refugees into their new communities.

Moussa wants to open the first Ivorian restaurant and shop in Greece. Dishes will be available with traditional Ivorian spices, but they will also be available without, as "some people don't like too much spice," Moussa acknowledges. His teacher is George Vlachos, a Greek marketing expert. "It's a fight to run a successful business," Vlachos says, "and in that fight I need a marketing strategy." Moussa's shop will also sell traditional products from Ivory Coast, including shoes, clothes, masks and jewellery. Moussa wants to hire Greek people. "I want to help people who don't work," Moussa says.

The class included young men from Ivory Coast, Central African Republic, Afghanistan and Cameroon. As they departed, they promised to support each other. "With this programme I have a new network," Moussa says with a radiant smile. "To be successful in business you need to network"

*The Citi Foundation/IRC partnership, "Rescuing Futures" is implemented in Greece by Solidarity Now, in collaboration with Knowl Social Enterprise.

Recommendations

All national and regional stakeholders engaged in delivering integration services or designing integration policies for refugees and asylum-seekers should assess their approach against the following five guiding questions:

1. Is the planned approach context-specific?

- Do pre-departure and post-arrival cultural orientation programmes take into account the specific needs of refugees and asylum-seekers and include practical elements as well as written materials and classroom-based activities?
- Has there been a needs assessment among the local population to identify vulnerabilities that may be similar to those experienced by refugees and asylum-seekers, and does the planned approach address these?

2. Has the planned approach taken into account existing actors and does it include and promote long-term, multidimensional partnerships with:

- The private sector, in particular employers?
- City stakeholders and municipalities?
- Humanitarian organisations and other actors that hold particular expertise on the countries of origin, journeys, strengths and needs of refugees and asylum-seekers?

3. Is the approach rooted in the community? Can it contribute to social cohesion by:

- Putting in place structures that encourage the regular exchange of views between all stakeholders involved in the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers, following a community consultation model which requires regular meetings between practitioners and the local community?
- Creating space in policy development and implementation for the voices of those on the frontline of integration: local authorities, urban communities, volunteers and asylum-seekers and refugees themselves?

4. Is there a structure in place to allow for a centralised and holistic strength-based case management model for newly arrived refugees and asylum-seekers? Could this be complemented by:

- Investing in and working with employers to design and deliver on-the-job language training?
- Recognising the importance of academic and professional progression and including this in integration outcome parameters?

5. Does the approach allow for the mainstreaming of integration support? Does it ensure that, where necessary, measures remain sensitive to the needs of specific groups, in particular refugee and asylum-seeking women, children, and young people?

VI. Conclusion:

Time to embark on a common path towards refugee and asylum-seeker integration

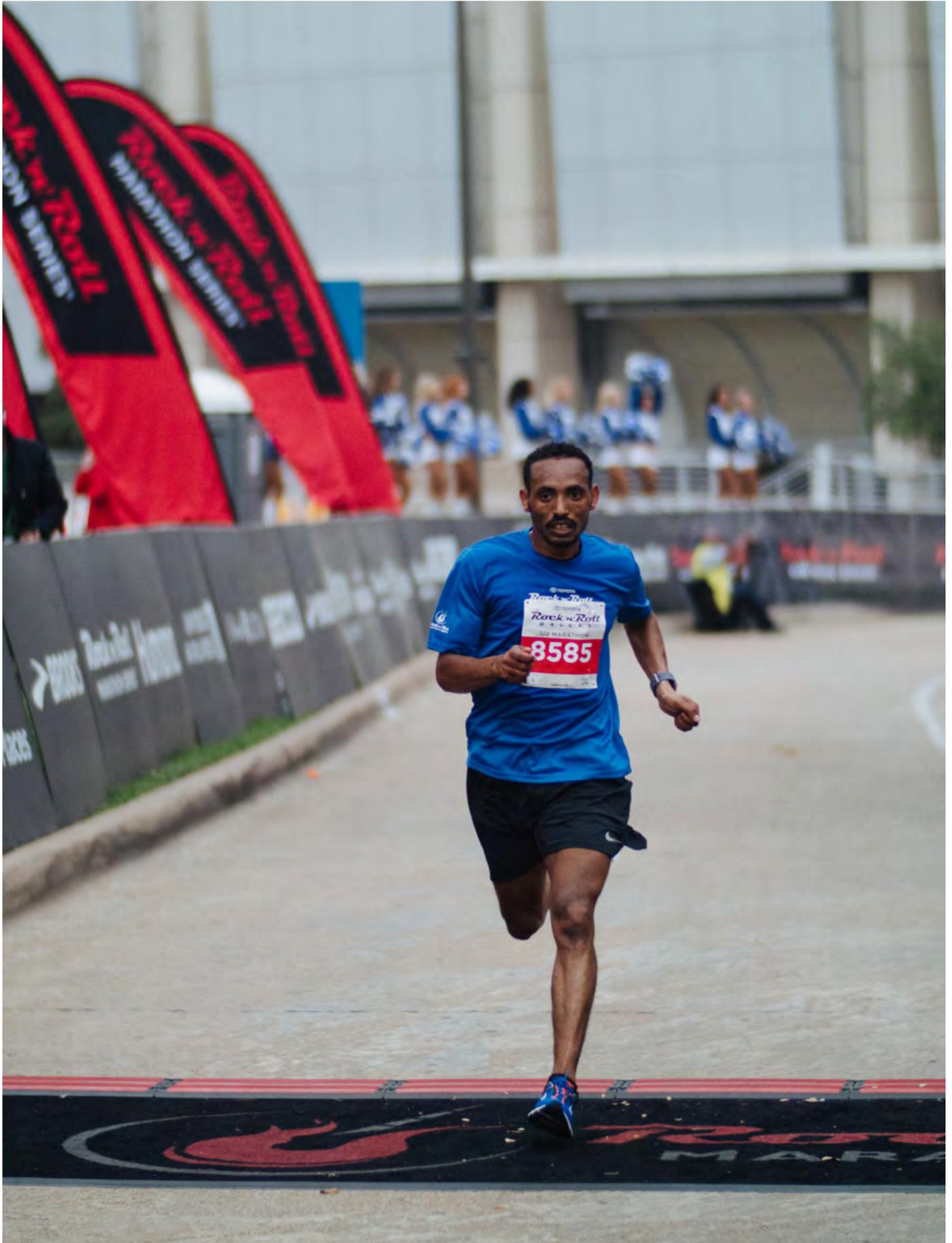
There are currently 2.1 million recognised refugees and just under 1 million asylum-seekers with pending asylum claims in the EU, many of whom arrived in the short space of time between 2015 and 2016. This report has argued that now is the time for the EU and its member states to invest more strategically in their integration: it must be recognised that the changing nature of global displacement means that a large proportion of these individuals will continue to require protection in the EU for years to come, many permanently.

The report has sought to underline that, despite differences in the social, economic and cultural contexts of its member states, the EU is in a unique position to formulate a European integration policy that guides and supports national efforts to this effect. European leaders should recognise this as a key turning point: at a time where populist voices are being raised in member states, there is an increasing imperative upon the EU to demonstrate leadership that fosters social cohesion and adherence to its founding principles, and whether or not it is successful in doing so is likely also to determine the future path of the Union as a whole. The ongoing negotiations on the EU's future budget and the upcoming review of the Commission's Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals provide excellent opportunities to take further steps in this direction.

Based on the unique humanitarian expertise of the IRC as an organisation working with refugees and asylum-seekers in countries of origin, transit and destination, the report has outlined five key principles that should guide any approach to the integration of this particular group of persons, whether at EU, national or local level, and has highlighted examples from across Europe to show how they may be put into practice.

These examples include initiatives that are context-specific by providing thoughtful cultural orientation and practical information to refugees, or by taking into account the needs of vulnerable groups among the local population. They cover projects which demonstrate strong and multidimensional partnerships between the many different stakeholders supporting integration across the EU, including employers, cities and municipalities, and civil society. The highlighted examples are strongly rooted in the communities these partners serve together, by engaging local volunteers and building links between newcomers and the local population. They are strength-based, recognising the skills and strengths of refugees and asylum-seekers and the contributions they can make to receiving societies, while also recognising that some individuals may need targeted support to thrive in their new home. All of them have in common their fundamental understanding of integration as a pathway: a two-way street that requires early and continuous support, regardless of an individual's status, and that is guided by the goal of ensuring social cohesion to the benefit of all.

In this way this report has aimed to contribute to shaping a common and sustainable European approach to integration that empowers refugees and asylum-seekers to fully participate in member state societies, to the benefit of all EU citizens, old and new. Four in ten of these citizens currently view immigration as more of a problem than an opportunity: if European leaders want to demonstrate that they take these concerns seriously, and that the EU is part of the solution rather than the cause, the first step must be to invest in the common policies on integration that a large majority believes to be important.



Above: Tolassa crossing the finish line at the 2018 Rock 'n' Roll Dallas Half Marathon. *Andrew Holzschuh/IRC Dallas.*)

References

1. Eurostat, Migration and Migrant Population Statistics: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Migrant_population:_almost_22_million_non-EU_citizens_living_in_the_EU
2. UNHCR, 2015: <http://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/latest/2015/12/5683d0b56/million-sea-arrivals-reach-europe-2015.html>
3. MPI, Towards a whole-of-society approach to receiving and settling newcomers in Europe, 2016; McKinsey Global Institute, Europe's New Refugees: A Roadmap for Better Integration Outcomes, 2016.
4. On housing challenges, see: City of Amsterdam, Report on the Working Conference on Reception and Housing of Migrants and Refugees, 2016 http://www.eukn.eu/fileadmin/Lib/files/Report_Working_Conference_Housing_Reception.pdf
5. On education challenges see: European Commission Meeting Report of the Joint Working Group seminar on the integration of migrants, 28 March 2017
6. From 2003 to 2014, a total of 55,767 refugees were resettled in the EU, an average of 4,647 per year; no people were resettled to Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia and Slovenia (UNHCR Resettlement Data Finder, last consulted on June 12th 2018).
7. Blitz et al., Health Challenges in Refugee Reception: Dateline Europe 2016. 2017: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5750902/>
8. A 2015 report by Germany's chamber of psychotherapists found that half of refugees are experiencing psychological distress and mental illness resulting from trauma. One fifth of refugee children are also suffering from PTSD, according to the same report. <https://www.bptk.de/aktuell/einzelseite/artikel/mindestens-d.html>
9. Eurostat, Migration and Migrant Population Statistics: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics->
10. OECD, Indicators of immigrant integration 2015: Settling in, 2015
11. Sweden is the highest ranking EU country, but still lags 2 points behind the score required to qualify as an environment fully favourable to the integration of migrants (Huddleston et al., Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015, 2016)
12. See McKinsey Global Institute, Europe's New Refugees: A Roadmap for Better Integration Outcomes, 2016; OECD/European Commission, Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015 – Settling In, 2015: <http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/Indicators-of-Immigrant-Integration-2015.pdf>
13. Huddleston et al., Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015, 2016
14. MPI Europe, The Future of Immigrant Integration in Europe: Mainstreaming Approaches for Inclusion, 2014: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/Mainstreaming-General-Report-FINALWEB_0.pdf
15. UNHCR, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017, 2018
16. According to the Geneva Convention, a refugee is a person who "owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country". <http://www.unhcr.org/4ca34be29.pdf>
17. Center for Global Development-IRC, Tackling the Realities of Protracted Displacement: Case Studies on What's Working and Where We Can Do Better, April 2018: <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/tackling-realities-protracted-displacement-case-studies-whats-working.pdf>
18. In the previous period of peak migration from 1990 to 1993, almost half of the migrants entering Europe came from the Balkan countries of the former Yugoslavia, Romania, and Bulgaria (McKinsey Global Institute, Europe's New Refugees: A Roadmap for Better Integration Outcomes, 2016).
19. IOM, Glossary on Migration, 2016
20. Even if the legal framework in most European countries and the Commission proposal for an Asylum Procedures Regulation generally set a 6 months limit for completing asylum procedures, in the last few years, asylum-seekers in Europe have experienced severe delays in the completion of the registration of their asylum claims. Data gathered at the end of 2016 showed that among the asylum-seekers who had entered the EU during 2015-2016, an estimated two-thirds (about 760,000) were still awaiting a decision (Phillip Connor for Pew Research center, Still in Limbo: About a Million Asylum Seekers Await Word on Whether They Can Call Europe Home, September 2017). In Greece for example, the time lag between pre-registration and full registration of asylum applications was estimated at an average period of one year in May 2016. Asylum-seekers in Austria have faced delays of several months even for getting an appointment for the first stage of registration with the police. (ECRE, The Length of Asylum Procedures in Europe, October 2016).
21. Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration (SVR), Chancen in der Krise: Zur Zukunft der Flüchtlingspolitik in Deutschland und Europa, 2017: https://www.svr-migration.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/SVR_Jahresgutachten_2017.pdf
22. European Commission, Labour market integration of refugees in the EU, 2016

23. European Commission, Labour market integration of refugees in the EU, 2016
24. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/18/us/politics/refugees-revenue-cost-report-trump.html>
25. Pew Research Center, Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/07/11/europeans-fear-wave-of-refugees-will-mean-more-terrorism-fewer-jobs/>
26. Eurostat, Migration and Migrant Population Statistics: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics->
27. OECD, Successful integration: Refugees and other vulnerable persons, 2016
28. Hainmueller et al., When lives are put on hold: Lengthy asylum processes decrease employment among refugees, 2016
29. Evidence suggests that the current ad hoc approach to integration that focuses on immediate outcomes and neglects pathways and progression used by many member states is not effective. OECD Research (Education at a Glance: 2017 OECD Indicators) showed that, especially in countries with high levels of humanitarian migration, children and adolescents with immigrant background have higher chances to drop out of school, and have on average worst performances in the classroom, while a joint EU-OECD study (How are refugees faring on the labour market in Europe?, 2016) highlighted how 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.
30. The German Interior Ministry registered 890,000 refugees in 2015, and 280,000 in 2016.
31. According to Article 79(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, may establish measures to provide incentives and support for the action of Member States with a view to promoting the integration of third-country nationals residing legally in their territories, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States. The EU also has the competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States in the areas of culture, education, vocational training, youth and sport (Article 6, TFEU), as well as the integration of persons excluded from the labour market and combating of social exclusion (Article 153, TFEU). EU action is also possible to improve initial and continuing vocational training in order to facilitate vocational integration and reintegration into the labour market (Article 166, TFEU).
32. For example: the ESF Transnational Thematic Network on Migrants, the European Integration Network, the European Network of Public Employment Services, the Mutual Learning Programme, and the European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1274&langId=en&intPagelId=4317>
33. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1412&langId=en>
34. <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/cultural-awareness-and-expression-handbook-pbNC0116125/>
35. OECD, Working together for local integration of migrants and refugees, 2018
36. European Commission, Action Plan for the Integration of Third Country Nationals, 7 June 2016: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf
37. Comments by European Commission's Director General for Migration and Home Affairs Paraskevi Michou, at the "Integration of third-country nationals: Challenges from the European and regional perspective" conference hosted by the Permanent Representation of Baden-Württemberg to the EU on 26 April 2018.
38. <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/main-menu/eus-work/actions>
39. European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge. The project is led by Sweden in partnership with other EU member states and international organisations, and will run from 2016-2020. https://www.migrationsverket.se/download/18.4100dc0b159d67dc614a13b/1496401842710/EU-FRANK_nyhetsbrev1-2017.pdf
40. The 2016 Eurodac report shows that out of 1,018,074 asylum applicants recorded in Eurodac in 2016, 30 % had already made a previous application in another Member State, an increase from 22 % in 2015. 48 % of those hits were in Germany, followed by France (12 %) and Italy (8 %). The Eurodac report also shows that, from a total of 252,559 persons found illegally present in Member States in 2016, 49 % (124,558) had lodged an application in another Member State. (European Parliament Briefing, Secondary Movements of Asylum-Seekers in the EU Asylum System, October 2017)
41. At 39% (+1 percentage point since spring 2017), immigration has gained ground as the most important issue facing the EU for the first time since autumn 2015, after a 20-percentage point decline between autumn 2015 and spring 2017 (European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 88: Public Opinion in the European Union, November 2017).
42. European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 469: Integration of Immigrants in the European Union, April 2018
43. For example, vigilante groups with ties to right-wing extremist groups violently attacked and harassed asylum seekers and migrants in Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary and Sweden (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2017 Fundamental Rights Report).
44. European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 469: Integration of Immigrants in the European Union, April 2018
45. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:c2bc7dbd-4fc3-11e8-be1d-01aa75ed71a1.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF
46. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2016:0468:FIN>

47. European Commission, Press Release, 27 September 2017: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-3406_en.htm
48. Dublin Regulation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:180:0031:0059:EN:PDF>.
49. Dublin Regulation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:180:0031:0059:EN:PDF>; Family Reunification Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32003L0086>; Union Resettlement Framework: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2016:0468:FIN>
50. Qualifications Regulation: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs_autres_institutions/commission_europeenne/com/2016/0466/COM_COM\(2016\)0466_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs_autres_institutions/commission_europeenne/com/2016/0466/COM_COM(2016)0466_EN.pdf)
51. Center for Research and Analysis on Migration, (The Struggle for) Refugee Integration into the Labour Market: Evidence from Europe, December 2017: http://www.cream-migration.org/publ_uploads/CDP_16_17.pdf
52. Eurekalert, Switzerland launches program to test AI for refugee integration, 29 May 2018: https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2018-05/su-i-slp052918.php
53. Comments by European Commission's Director General for Migration and Home Affairs Paraskevi Michou, at the "Integration of third-country nationals: Challenges from the European and regional perspective" conference hosted by the Permanent Representation of Baden-Württemberg to the EU on 26 April 2018.
54. Cohesion Policy, 29 May proposal: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3885_en.htm
55. Annabelle Roig-Granjon, UNHCR, comments at LIBE Joint Hearing, "Assessing the flow of EU migration funding within the Union", 16 May 2018
56. Social Platform: <http://www.socialplatform.org/blog/eu-budget-first-takeaways-from-leaked-european-social-fund-proposal/>
57. UNHCR and ECRE report on AMIF
58. <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/inclusion-migrants-and-refugees/10-recommendations-improving-cities-access-eu-funds-inclusion>
59. On this point see also ECRE, The price of rights: asylum and EU internal funding, May 2018: <https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Policy-Note-11.pdf> For more information on how to put the partnership principle into practice, see: <http://www.socialplatform.org/news/ngos-statement-to-implement-the-partnership-principle/>
60. Huddleston et al., Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015, 2016
61. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/82745.pdf
62. MPI Europe, Scaling Up Refugee Resettlement in Europe: the Role of Institutional Peer Support, March 2018: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/scaling-refugee-resettlement-europe-role-institutional-peer-support> report ref
63. The icons displayed in this report were made available by The Noun Project. Credit goes to Yu luck ("Qualitative Research"), Dumitriu Robert ("Partnership"), Aneeqe Ahmed ("Community"), Ignat ("Strength"), Luis Prado ("Diversity").
64. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32003L0086>
65. <https://www.iom.no/migrant-training>
66. OECD, Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees, 2018: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264085350-en.pdf?expires=1528986480&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=086D118D29CA83E504503457A93AB271>
67. Globally, the IRC works with over 300 employer partners each year, ranging from small local businesses to large Fortune 100 companies with national and international presence.
68. <https://www.benjerry.co.uk/values/issues-we-care-about/refugees>
69. http://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.ttp.eu/files/Building_a_Resettlement_Network_of_Cities_%26_Regions_SHARE_Final_Publication_0.pdf
70. The EUROCITIES network, UNHCR and (associate) partners in Austria (Red Cross), France (Créteil), Paris and France Terre d'Asile (FTDA), Germany (Aachen, Munich, ProAsyl), Spain (ACCEM), The Netherlands (Dutch Refugee Council) and the United Kingdom (the city of Manchester, Refugee Action and Refugee Council).
71. IOM, UNHCR, EUROCITIES and ECRE and partners in: Belgium (Caritas International), the Czech Republic (Burma Center Prague), Finland (Tampere), France (Forum Réfugiés-Cosi and France Terre d'Asile), Ireland (St. Catherine's Community Services Centre), The Netherlands (Refugee Council Limburg) and the United Kingdom (Sheffield) and with associate partners in all the aforementioned countries as well as in Austria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Romania.
72. https://action.100resilientcities.org/page/s/join-the-global-resilience-movement#/-/_/
73. Athens, Thessaloniki, Medellin, Los Angeles, Montreal, Amman, Ramallah, Paris, Miami, Milan and Rome.
74. <http://www.urban-response.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/fromresponsetoresiliencefinalweb.pdf>
75. <http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/projects/CITIES-GroW&tpl=home>

76. Athens, Barcelona, Birmingham, Brighton and Hove, Dresden, Gdansk, Ghent, Helsinki, Lisbon, Munich, Nantes, Nicosia, Riga, Rotterdam, Tampere, and Utrecht.
77. <https://www.resettlement.eu/news/ern-project>
78. [http://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.ttp.eu/files/Building a Resettlement Network of Cities %26 Regions_SHARE Final Publication_0.pdf](http://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.ttp.eu/files/Building%20a%20Resettlement%20Network%20of%20Cities%20Regions_SHARE%20Final%20Publication_0.pdf)
79. EU-FRANK is the European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge led by the Swedish Migration Agency in partnership with other EU Member States (Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Hungary) as well as International Organisations and NGOs.
80. See MPI Europe, Taking Stock of Refugee Resettlement: Policy Objectives, Practical Trade-offs and the Evidence Base, May 2017
81. MPI, Towards a Whole-of-Society Approach to Receiving and Settling Newcomers in Europe, November 2016: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/Gulbenkian-FINAL.pdf>
82. See also IOM's Cultural Orientation Programme in the UK: <https://www.iom.int/uk-cultural-orientation-and-english-language-training-co-elt-giving-refugees-head-start-life-uk>
83. European Commission, EUROCIITIES: Social Affairs, Refugee Reception and Integration in Cities: <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/sites/futurium/files/eurocities-refugees-report.pdf>
84. <http://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2018/2/5a83febd4/polish-city-leads-way-solidarity-refugees.html>
<https://euobserver.com/regions/136477>
85. http://www.wup.gdansk.pl/g2/2017_03/2a4585b2e4931df8ecf7e518cde3cfc.pdf
86. <https://www.timebank.org.uk/time-together>
87. <https://www.thelocal.at/20160406/refugee-job-platform-launches-in-austria> <https://techcrunch.com/2016/04/04/austrian-jobs-platform-aims-to-connect-refugees-and-employers/>
88. For similar initiatives in France and Germany, see Action Emploi Refugies and Worker
89. For more information, see: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intdossier/comparative-analysis-voluntary-and-citizens-initiatives-before-and-after-2015>
90. On the wide-ranging positive impact of humanitarian volunteering in Europe, see Julie Melichar, 1 May 2018, <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2018/05/01/the-political-legacy-of-the-refugee-crisis-volunteers>
91. Council of Europe, Refugees welcome – Refugee integration policies in Berlin Neukölln, 2016: http://www.ville-geneve.ch/fileadmin/public/Departement_1/Autres_fichiers/dossier-info-diversite/refugees-welcome-berlin-neukoelln.pdf
92. <https://www.resettlementresources.org/europe/>
93. This is supported by the electoral success of such parties in elections across the EU, e.g. in Italy, Hungary, Slovenia and Czech Republic. For more information see: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/03/08/the-rise-of-european-populism-and-the-collapse-of-the-center-left/>
94. For instance, respondents in countries such as Sweden, the UK or Luxembourg, where the proportion of immigrants is higher than 8%, have a positive perception, while those in Hungary or Bulgaria, where the proportions are lower than 2%, have a negative perception of their impact on society (European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 469, April 2018).
95. In the U.S., 73% of refugees become naturalised citizens and vote at slightly higher rates than the U.S.-born population, two indicators of their full embrace of the US as their country and commitment to civic engagement (New American Economy). 55% of refugees are currently homeowners, indicating not only economic success but also putting down permanent roots in their communities (New American Economy). Many refugees start their own businesses, creating jobs in their communities. In 2015, the US was home to more than 180,000 refugee entrepreneurs amounting to 13% of the refugee population. By comparison, in 2015 only 9% of the US-born population were entrepreneurs (New American Economy). Refugees who enter the country between the ages of 18 and 45 pay on average \$21,000 more in taxes to all levels of government than they receive in benefits (National Bureau for Economic Research).
96. According to UNHCR, at the end of 2017 there were 2,283,199 refugees and 962,428 asylum-seekers in the EU-28. <http://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547>
97. For information on case management in Finland, see: <http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2010/en20101386.pdf>
98. http://resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.ttp.eu/files/ICMC_WelcomeToSheffield.pdf
99. OECD, Hiring refugees - What are the opportunities
100. and challenges for employers?, September 2016: <https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/migration-policy-debates-10.pdf>
101. UNHCR, A New Beginning: refugee integration in Europe, September 2013: <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/>

- operations/52403d389/new-beginning-refugee-integration-europe.html
102. http://www.opennetwork.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/TENT_StepUp_FINAL.pdf
 103. Initially targeting 500 Syrian refugees, the LINK IT project aims to link pre-departure and post-arrival support to facilitate the social and economic integration of resettled refugees in four European countries: the United Kingdom, Germany, Portugal and Romania. The EU-funded project, which will run for 18 months, will pilot a skills profiling tool in the pre-departure orientation course for Syrian refugees living in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey who will be resettled to the four EU countries. <https://www.iom.int/news/new-iom-project-boosts-integration-syrian-refugees-europe>
 104. <https://www.bq-portal.de/en/home>
 105. <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/international/incoming/refugees.html>
 106. MPI, The Future of Immigrant Integration in Europe: Mainstreaming Approaches for Inclusion, 2014: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/future-immigrant-integration-europe-mainstreaming-approaches-inclusion>
 107. Iyengar & Ferrari, Women's economic and social empowerment in Burundi: Impact Evaluation Paper, 2011; Gupta et al., Gender norms and economic empowerment intervention to reduce intimate partner violence against women in rural Côte d'Ivoire: a randomized controlled pilot study, 2013.
 108. <https://mentor.kvinfo.dk/en/frontpage/>
 109. The study highlighted that schools "can provide safe and stable setting where refugee children can develop meaningful and constructive connections to peers, teachers and other professionals, as well as being a place in which discrimination, racism and stigmatisation can be actively countered." https://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2018-01/cul-skt012918.php
 110. <https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/youthsociety/assets/docs/resources/cfys-refugee-youth-resettlement-report.pdf>
 111. UNHCR, A New Beginning – Refugee Integration in Europe, 2013; de Vroome & van Tubergen, The Employment Experience of Refugees in the Netherlands, 2010.
 112. For more on the SchlaU School in Munich see: <https://www.schlau-schule.de/>; MPI, Mainstreaming 2.0: How Europe's Education systems can boost migration inclusion, February 2018: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/mainstreaming-how-europes-education-systems-can-boost-migrant-inclusion>
 113. Eurostat: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migrant_integration_statistics_%E2%80%93_labour_market_indicators#Youth_unemployment
 114. Youth unemployment in 2016 in the EU-28 is higher than standard unemployment rates for every category: Native born population (18.1% versus 7.8%), migrants born in the EU (20.7% VERSUS 9.8%) migrants born outside the EU (32.4% versus 16.2%).
 115. In the U.S., one strategy that the IRC implements in response to this need is the Connect2Work programme model, which includes intensive academic support to facilitate on-time high school graduation or attainment of a high school equivalency degree, career exploration activities which can include paid internships, youth-friendly work readiness classes to develop critical soft skills, and assistance identifying and enrolling in post-secondary education that lead to the degrees, certificates, and credentials that are necessary for in-demand careers. Internationally, in countries as diverse as Kenya, Thailand, and Cote d'Ivoire, the IRC uses Learn to Earn, a foundational business and life skills curriculum, designed to support youth in earning an income, making better life decisions, and increasing self-esteem. After completing Learn to Earn, youth are able to either to start their own business, or pursue other pathways to employment, including apprenticeships or job placement.

**New York**

122 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10168-1289
USA

Amman

Al-Shmeisani Wadi Saqra Street
Building No. 11
PO Box 850689
Amman
Jordan

Bangkok

888/210–212 Mahatun
Plaza Bldg., 2nd Floor
Ploenchit Road
Lumpini, Pathumwan
Bangkok 10330
Thailand

Berlin

Wallstraße 15A,
10179 Berlin,
Germany

Brussels

Square de Meeûs 5-6
De Meeûssquare 5-6
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Geneva

7, rue J.-A Gautier
CH-1201
Geneva
Switzerland

London

3 Bloomsbury Place
London WC1A 2QL
United Kingdom

Nairobi

Galana Plaza, 4th Floor
Galana Road, Kilimani
Nairobi, Kenya

Washington, D.C.

1730 M Street, NW
Suite 505
Washington, DC 20036
USA

GET INVOLVED
SPREAD THE WORD
VOLUNTEER
DONATE

RESCUE-UK.ORG
44 (0)20 7692 2764