



GUIDE FOR THE RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION OF **REFUGEES**

PAAIR - Action Plan for the Reception and Integration of Refugees



Executing Entity



In partnership with



Co-financed by



Co-funded by
the European Union



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EDITION NOTICE

TITLE

Guide for the Reception and Integration of Refugees

PROJECT

PAAIR – Action Plan for the Reception and Integration of Refugees

EXECUTING ENTITY

AMURT Portugal – Social and Humanitarian Support Association

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

Ananda Marga Poland

Migration Centre of the Municipality of Fundão

CO-FINANCED BY

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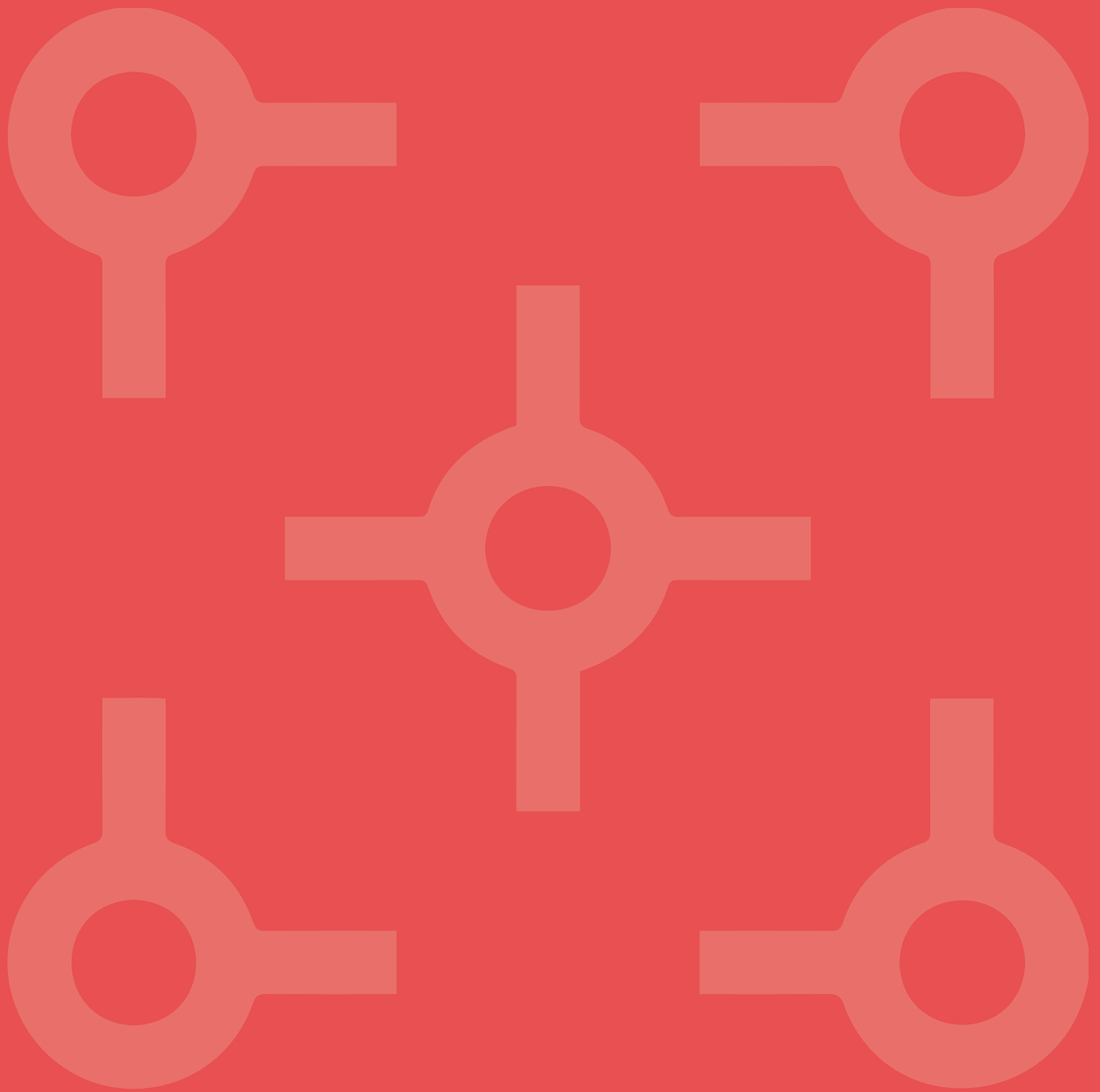
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01.

INTRODUCTION



Everyone is a citizen of the world by birth. Every human being has the right to go and settle anywhere and to live as a human being.

- P. R. Sarkar

1. Introduction

In recent years, the world has seen an unprecedented increase in the number of refugees. According to the **UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**, there are more than 26 million refugees globally. Many of these people are fleeing wars, political persecution, gender-based violence and human rights violations. Humanitarian crises around the world, such as the war in Syria, tensions in Afghanistan, persecution in Myanmar, the war in Ukraine and the worsening climate situation in various parts of the world are just a few examples of the causes of these forced displacements.

As a result, the reception of refugees has become a critically important humanitarian issue that has been widely discussed and addressed by numerous countries. This process involves not only providing shelter and security, but also creating the conditions in which these people can be integrated so that they can rebuild their lives with dignity.

The reception and integration of refugees should not be the responsibility of only a few countries. International cooperation is essential for the fair distribution of this responsibility to ensure that refugees receive the protection and assistance they need. The 1951 Geneva Convention establishes a legal framework for their protection and must be respected by all signatory nations. In addition, the international community needs to work together to address the root causes of

forced displacement, including the peaceful resolution of conflicts, support for sustainable development and fight against climate change.

Seeing the complexity of the problem, **AMURT Portugal** in partnership with the **Fundao Migration Centre** and **Ananda Marga Poland** felt the need to create a guidebook based on their experiences, with the goal of sharing a strategic action plan for the humane reception of refugees, ensuring effective and dignified integration into local host communities wherever they may be.

This guidebook, co-funded by ERASMUS+ through the **PAAIR project**, describes best practices and effective tools including communication models and checklists for emergency reception and refugee integration in order to promote equity, inclusion and autonomy.

Additionally the project aims to foster cooperation between European organizations dealing with refugee crisis management through humanitarian support.


1.1. AMURT Portugal – Association for Social and Humanitarian Support

AMURT – Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) founded in India in 1965 by P.R. Sarkar.

Since its inception, **AMURT**'s dedicated volunteers have worked to improving the quality of life and development of the most vulnerable populations, including those suffering the devastating impacts of disasters and conflicts.

Its mission goes beyond emergency relief: **AMURT** seeks to empower individuals and communities to use their own resources to meet their basic survival needs and to create the necessary conditions for their development in all its dimensions, economic, social and spiritual.

With over 50 years of work experience, **AMURT** has built a global support network, establishing teams in 80 countries, ready to respond to development and disaster relief needs almost anywhere in the world.

 **AMURT Portugal's** efforts to respond to the growing refugee crisis was the main impetus for the **PAAIR** project.

Inspired by the work of **Ananda Marga Poland** and in partnership with **AIMA – Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum**, **AMURT** welcomed its first refugee family, a couple with five children, from Syria, to Paul village near Covilhã in June 2023. Support included the provision of accommodation, food and other practical support, with the aim of fully integrating the family into Portuguese society.

Due to the success of this operation, in June 2024 AMURT Portugal welcomed another refugee family, a couple with six children, this time from Afghanistan. The organization's principles of supporting the most vulnerable inspired the Erasmus+ **PAAIR** project, making it possible to put its commitment to humanitarian aid and social integration into practice once again.

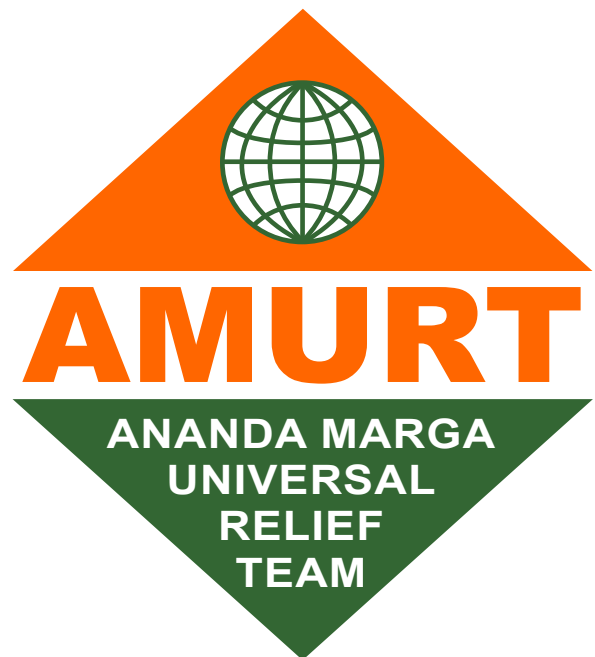


Fig. 01 – AMURT's logo

1.2. Ananda Marga Poland

👉 **Ananda Marga Poland** was founded in 1989 and is based at **Ananda Putta Bhumi**, an ecological farm that also functions as a learning centre.

The organisation is dedicated to environmental education, and promotes a balanced and healthy lifestyle, that addresses physical, mental and spiritual well-being in harmony with nature. Its approach is based on regenerative and holistic ecology, and aims to maintain an optimal ecological balance.

To achieve this goal, **Ananda Putta Bhumi** organizes trainings, regular yoga classes, spiritual retreats, events and an annual eco-festival.

The organisation's projects attract local residents, university students, farmers, international volunteers and other participants interested in organic and sustainable agriculture.

One important aspect of the project is that it maintains a good flow of communication with the local community and its residents, as well as with various local and regional institutions, government bodies and civil society.

Due to its geographical location close to the Ukraine border and its strong moral values and community service, the organization quickly prepared for the crisis generated by the war in that country. In line with its principles, the farm opened its doors to welcome 32 refugees, thus becoming a reception centre.



Fig. 02 – Ananda Putta Bhumi logo

Ananda Marga Poland actively participated in the planning and implementation of the project's activities, both by sharing its experiences and as a coordinator of actions designed to raise awareness of the refugees' needs and difficulties in the host community. It also helped to create a local strategy to minimize those difficulties.



1.3. CMMF – Centre for Migration of the Municipality of Fundão

Fundão is a municipality located in the central region of Portugal made up of 23 parishes with around 26,500 inhabitants. It is deeply committed to counteracting the progressive depopulation and ageing of its population, characteristic of regions in the interior of the country.

About eight years ago, the municipality set itself the goal of becoming a **"Land of Welcome"** and the Fundão Migration Centre was established by the local city council in 2016. The centre is housed in a 1930s building previously occupied by a Catholic seminary.

In 2018, in partnership with the **High Commission for Migration**, the municipality also established the **Office for Inclusion and Cultural Diversity** at the CMMF. This office assembled a multidisciplinary team composed of psychologists, social workers, socio-cultural animators, translators and intercultural mediators, lawyers and specialised professionals, dedicated to welcoming, integrating and promoting autonomy for migrants.

With the establishment of this department, the Migration Centre began welcoming asylum

seekers and refugees. As the work progressed, it became evident that a project was needed to guarantee ongoing quality support for these groups and to expand the capacity to assist more people.

This led to the creation of the **"Casa F"** project, with the aim of welcoming and providing support to 150 applicants requiring international protection, including 30 unaccompanied minors.

Assistance is provided in three phases:

1st phase: On reception decent housing, essential goods, health monitoring and referral are provided;

2nd phase: In the integration phase, Portuguese language classes are offered; assistance is provided with integration into the job market (through referral for training and monitoring of the recruitment process); support is given to fulfill **AIMA** processes and other bureaucratic/social needs (through accompaniment to public services and assistance in mandatory administrative processes to obtain residence in Portugal); health support (from registration and enrollment in the Health Centre to help in cases of medical emergencies) and recreational activities;

3rd phase: Efforts are made to develop autonomy by assisting applicants for protection with the active search for housing once they are integrated.

This support ranges from contacting landlords, helping with rental agreements, setting up utilities such as water, electricity and telecommunications, and providing support in moving house, whether the move is from the



Fig. 03 – Office for Inclusion and Cultural Diversity logo

centre to independent accommodation or between independent residences. Additionally inspections and ongoing monitoring are carried out to assess the process of autonomy.

The municipality of Fundão has already welcomed 288 beneficiaries and applicants for international protection, 174 of whom are still living in the city.

1.4. PAAIR - Action Plan for the Reception and Integration of Refugees



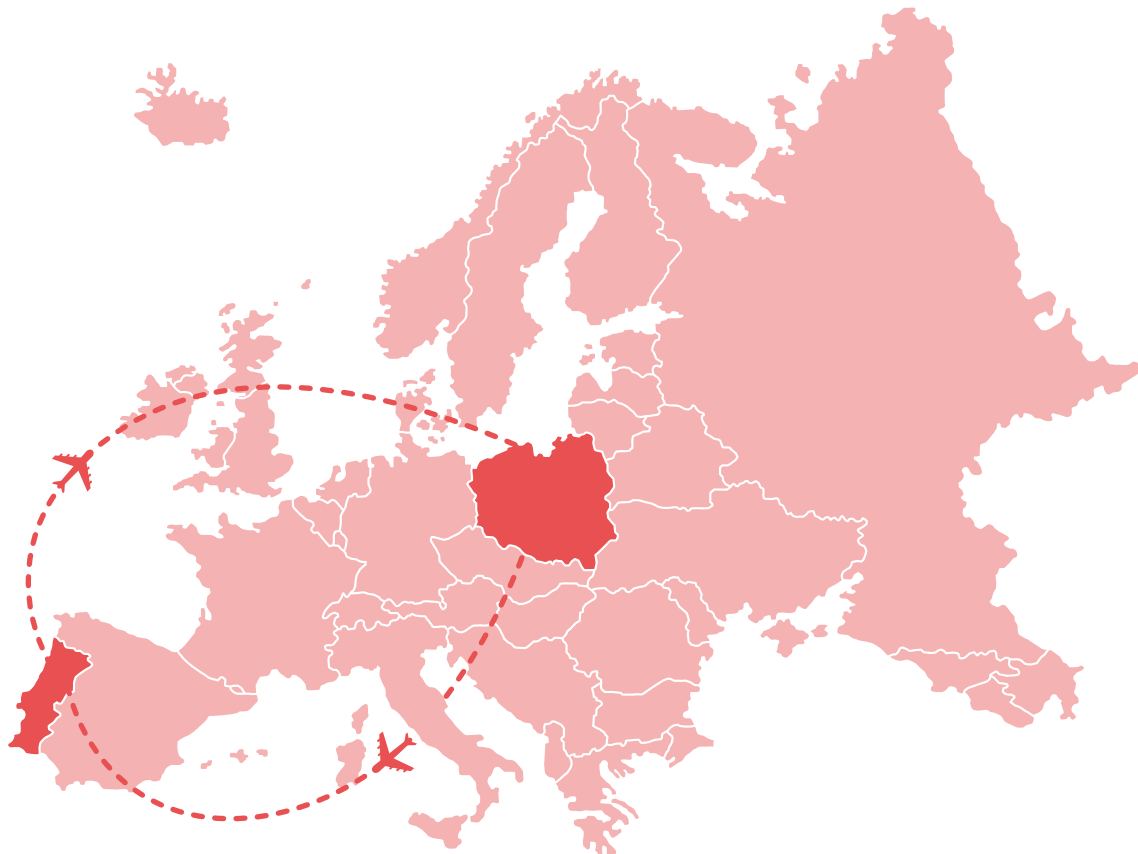
Fig. 04 - PAAIR logo

Aims to:

- **Strengthen Response Capacity:** To increase the capacity of organizations to respond to current and future refugee crises in Europe by empowering teams through the sharing and consolidation of best practices in refugee reception and integration.
- **Cooperation Tools:** To develop practical cooperation tools, such as communication models between host organizations, as well as documents and checklists for support and the anticipation of needs.
- **Skills development:** To promote autonomy and a spirit of unity in the field of humanitarian aid, strengthening the skills of the teams involved.
- **Identifying Needs:** Identifying training, logistics and human resources needed to ensure optimal success in the reception and integration of refugees.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Identify possible local and international partnerships for humanitarian support in emergencies, thus strengthening the collaboration network.
- **Promote Social Values:** Promoting equity, inclusion, citizenship and greater social and humanitarian awareness, both locally and internationally.
- **Dissemination of the Findings:** To promote and actively disseminate the guidebook, in order to widely share best practices.

Activities:

- **Field trip to Poland:** Between 17 – 25 February 2024, a team from **AMURT Portugal** and the **Fundão Migration Centre** visited the **Ananda Putta Bhumi** Centre in Poland in order to learn about **Ananda Marga Poland's** experience in coordinating and welcoming those displaced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The purpose of this visit was to deepen knowledge of the local reality and to promote collaboration and the sharing of insights and practices between the two teams.
- **Field trip to Portugal:** From 18 – 24 June 2024, the **Ananda Marga Poland** team visited Portugal where, together with members of **AMURT Portugal** and the **Fundão Migration Centre**, they visited the towns of Fundão and Paul to gain an understanding of the local reality and the structures and resources for welcoming, integrating and empowering migrants. During the visit, the participants learned about public policies, educational projects and the challenges and constraints faced by the local teams. They also had the opportunity to engage directly with the reception team and with refugees living in Fundão and Paul, with whom they exchanged stories and experiences.



1.5. Reception and integration practices in Fundão, Paul and Podgorzyn

In Portugal, specifically at Fundão Municipality Migration Centre, extensive experience with the integration of migrants, combined with consistent investment in local public policies, has led to the development of well-structured and effective approaches. This sustained effort has led to the creation of specialised programmes, robust support infrastructure and a welcoming community, leading to the effective integration of migrants. Measures implemented:

- Refugees are received from a range of countries, including Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Ukraine, Nigeria and Guinea;
- Five intercultural mediators are employed to serve communities from Ukraine, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and the Portuguese speaking African countries (PALOP);
- A support team made up of 2 psychologists fluent in English, Polish and Russian; 2 social workers; 1 socio-cultural animator; 3 senior professionals specialized in International Relations; and 1 teacher.

In the village of Paul (Covilhã), **AMURT Portugal** has been welcoming refugee families, supported by a professional team dedicated to integrating them into the community.

In the initial phase the following is provided both by the **Fundão Migration Centre** and **AMURT Portugal**:

- Accommodation, with a view to creating the financial self-sufficiency of the families;
- Assistance in the administrative documentation process in Portugal;
- Financial support for 18 months for the beneficiaries



of International Protection, provided by AIMA; if the situation of vulnerability persists after this period, the Social Insertion Income is activated. A family allowance for children and young people is guaranteed during their stay in Portugal;

- The gradual integration of refugee children into the school curriculum, with an emphasis on Portuguese as a non-native language during the first three months. Co-teaching with another teacher in the classroom;
- The inclusion of adaptation measures in the school curriculum; school sports activities promote inclusion through sport.

❖ 01. INTRODUCTION

In Poland, more precisely at Podgorzyn, the integration of migrants was driven by the need to respond to the sudden mass arrival of Ukrainian refugees due to the invasion of their country by Russia. Poland had to improvise immediate measures to deal with the serious humanitarian crisis. The urgency of the situation forced the authorities and the local community to find solutions to accommodate and support this new population.

Some of these refugees were welcomed in the urban centre of Podgorzyn and others at the **Ananda Putta Bhumi** ecological farm, where, it was found that the refugees' participation in the physical activities of the farm work had a very positive impact on their emotional and psychological well-being.

This whole process had good results, mainly due to the quick and creative response of local authorities to an unprecedented migration crisis.

The measures adopted are as follows:

- Initial accommodation was offered at the Ananda Marga Centre and also in private homes, with the City Council providing three months' subsistence allowance to the house owners;
- Assistance in the administrative documentation process by the City Council and the Ananda Marga Centre;
- Financial support for the first three months of the refugees' stay, with a guaranteed family allowance for children and young people after this period;
- The appointment of a City Hall psychologist and an intercultural mediator (recruited from among the refugees due to her ability to speak fluent Polish) to support the Ukrainian community;

- Students were initially placed in a special class for assessment, and school integration started with 6 extra hours of Polish language classes per week;
- The integration of a translator in the classroom;
- School sports activities were a very important step in the integration of Ukrainian pupils in the local school.





02.

**INITIAL RECEPTION OF REFUGEES IN
EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

“

***Injustice anywhere is a threat
to justice everywhere.***

- Martin Luther King Jr

2. Initial Reception of Refugees in Emergency Situations

The initial reception of refugees in emergency situations involves a set of organized procedures designed to ensure an effective and coordinated response to humanitarian crises, such as armed conflicts, wars or natural disasters.

These situations generate massive migratory flows in which refugees, compelled to leave their homes and communities, face numerous dangers and have urgent needs that require immediate humanitarian assistance. Addressing basic needs such as shelter, food, medical care, safety and security is of utmost importance (see Checklist in **Annex I**).

During the initial reception period, it is also essential that the teams on the ground are adequately prepared to provide Psychological First Aid.

“

***The art of listening is like a light that dispels
the darkness of ignorance***

- Dalai Lama

2.1. Introduction to Psychological First Aid

“Introduction to Psychological First Aid”¹

Understanding resilience

The vast majority of people who experience stressful events, including war, recover well without any special intervention.



How are people affected by the crisis?

Each person reacts differently, even in the same circumstances.

It depends on various factors, including: the nature and severity of the events they are going through; personal experience gained in other crisis situations; the type of support they receive

¹Original article by Didi Ananda Devapriya <https://amurt.net/volunteer/introduction-to-psychological-first-aid/>

from others; the person's physical health; personal and family history of mental health problems; traditions and culture; and age (for example, children of different ages react differently).

Psychological First Aid (PFA) involves:

- Providing practical care and support without being invasive or overly insistent;
- Assessing needs and concerns;
- Helping people meet their basic needs (for example, food and water, information);
- Listening to people without forcing them to talk;
- Consoling people and helping them to calm down;
- Helping people to access information, services and social assistance;
- Protecting people from other injuries;

What Psychological First Aid (PFA) is not:

- It's not something that only professionals can do;
- It's not professional advice;
- It does not involve diagnosis or diagnostic tools such as questionnaires, since PSPs don't necessarily enter into detailed discussions about the event that caused the suffering (it's not "de-briefing");
- It's not a measure to ask someone to analyze what happened to them or to try to organize the sequence of events;
- Although PFAs involve the ability to listen, it has nothing to do with pressuring people to talk about their feelings and reactions to events;

What to say and do

- Try to find a quiet place to talk, with minimal distractions possible;
- Respect their privacy and keep their stories confidential;

- Stay close to the person, but keep an appropriate distance depending on their age, gender and culture;
- If the touch is appropriate, touching the shoulder is the least invasive. Pay attention. If the person shows any signs of withdrawal, you should stop immediately;
- Show her that you are listening; for example, nod your head affirmatively;
- Be patient and calm;
- Provide real information if you have it. Be honest about what you know "I don't know, but I'll try to find out this information for you";
- Give information in a simple and easy-to-understand way. Repetition can also help when people are disoriented;
- Accept what the person feels and what they tell you about important events, such as the loss of a house or the death of a loved one: "I'm so sorry. I can only imagine how sad this is for you."
- Affirm the person's strengths and communicate acceptance of their weaknesses;
- Feel free to stay together in silence.

What not to say or do:

- Don't force anyone to tell you what happened;
- Don't interrupt or rush someone who is talking to you (for example, don't look at your watch, don't talk too fast);
- Do not touch the person unless you are sure it is appropriate to do so.
- Don't judge what the person has done or failed to do, or how they feel. Don't say: "You shouldn't feel that way!" or "You should feel lucky to have survived!"
- Don't make up what you don't know;
- Don't use jargon or technical language;
- Don't tell someone else's story;
- Don't talk to her about your problems;
- Don't make false promises or guarantees;
- Don't think or act as if you should be responsible for solving the person's problems for them;

- Don't ignore the person's strengths and her need to be able to take care of herself;
- Don't contradict the person or communicate in a negative way (e.g. don't say "It's not right to say that").

How can I calm someone down?

- Keep a calm and reassuring tone;
- If appropriate, try to maintain eye contact with the person while you speak with her;
- Remind the person that you are there to help them. Remind them that they are in a safe place.

Listening properly

- Go to people who might need help;
- Ask about their needs and concerns;
- Listen to people and help them calm down.

How can I listen to someone?

- Use your eyes – giving your full attention to the person being helped;
- Avoid using your cell phone while talking to someone;
- Adapt your non-verbal language to the person in front of you. In case of communication through the translator, look at the person you are addressing and the translator will communicate the message in the refugee's language. You will rarely speak;
- Don't speak through a translator without making eye contact with the person affected;
- Ears – really listen to her concerns;
- Don't force her to talk and listen to her if she wants to talk about what happened;
- Heart – show that you care and respect the person.

Active Listening Techniques

- Confirmations: head nods, body tilts, eye contact or expressions like "tell me more";
- Careful silence: "Silence is golden, words are silver". It's difficult to keep silent, but when we do, we learn more from the speaker;
- Important: observe the speaker's facial expression, attitude and gestures (protection in case of strong emotions);
- Paraphrasing: summarizing what has been said precisely in order to clarify and to confirm that what has been said has been understood correctly;
- Give them the opportunity to speak.



2.2. Human Trafficking ²



***My humanity is
bound up in yours, for
we can only be
human together.***

- Desmond Tutu

Human trafficking has grown exponentially in recent years, with devastating consequences for the victims. Predators, including those in human trafficking networks, target individuals in fragile situations.

Women and children are particularly vulnerable to these threats. This requires experts to be very attentive to suspicious situations or signs and to report them to the competent authorities.

It is very important that refugees are informed about their human and legal rights.

What is human trafficking?

Trafficking in human beings is a form of modern slavery and human rights violation which, unfortunately, is still prevalent in the 21st century.

It is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threats, use of force or other forms of psychological pressure, for the purpose of further exploitation.

This exploitation can take the following forms:

- Labour exploitation or forced services;
- Sexual exploitation;
- Involvement in criminal activities;;
- Forced begging
- Domestic servitude;
- Illegal adoption;
- Child/teen pornography;
- Organ removal;
- Slavery or practices similar to slavery;
- Forced marriage.

If you suspect or know of human trafficking, you should report it to the competent authorities:

GNR – Guarda Nacional Republicana:
213 217 000

PSP – Polícia de Segurança Pública
218 111 000

PJ – Polícia Judiciária
211 967 000

or through the [Ministry of Internal Affairs'](#)
[Electronic Complaint System](#)

Signs that may indicate that a refugee is or may be being exploited by a person who claims to be helping them:

- They offer a job with an unrealistically high salary;
- They force the refugee to do work, or provide services or sex without their consent and/or use psychological pressure and manipulation to obtain their consent;
- They have withdrawn or are withholding the refugee's passport or other identification document(s);
- They have removed or are withholding the refugee's personal means of communication

² Text adapted from the article "Protecting Refugees from Trafficking" by Didi Ananda Devapriya <https://amurt.net/volunteer/protecting-displaced-populations-from-trafficking/>

(cell phone, laptop, etc.);

- They force the refugee to comply with strict rules or control them, limiting their sleep/rest/food or water intake, denying them medical care or isolating them;
- They restrict the person's ability to move freely or force them to live or work indoors;
- They ask the refugee to work, provide services or perform sexual acts in order to pay off "debts" (sometimes they can make the "debt" more difficult to pay off or make the refugee think they can't leave until they pay it off);
- They employ the refugee, but do not respect the basic working conditions of an employment contract, and/or do not pay the refugee, and/or only pay the refugee part of what was promised or keep control of the refugee's money.

workplace or employer they might be going to, and share this information with other trusted people;

- Encourage refugees to develop a secret "safe word" or phrase that they give to trusted people that they can use later to find out if the refugee is in trouble.



What can you do to limit the vulnerability of refugees to trafficking?

- Inform them of their rights and where they can access services, help and support;
- Encourage refugees to keep hold of their documents at all times;
- Encourage refugees to keep in touch with people who can support them (if possible, people from their community, family, friends, other support structures);
- Encourage refugees to make sure they have enough information about the person they will be travelling with, the route they will be taking, the address where they will be staying and anyone else who might be there as well, any



03.

**RECEIVING, INTEGRATING AND
PROMOTING AUTONOMY IN REFUGEES**

“

The basic ingredient for a healthy society is simply genuine love.

- P.R. Sarkar

3. Receiving, Integration and Promoting Autonomy in Refugees

A humanitarian and social commitment

The reception and integration of refugees are sequential and complementary. Good integration depends on inclusive and effective reception, i.e. that the basic requirements for a dignified life have been met.

3.1. Reception

The process of receiving refugees is complex and involves a number of challenges. Host countries need to deal with logistical, economic and social issues. The provision of shelter, food, immediate medical assistance, including psychological support, are the main priorities in the reception phase.

In this phase of reception and integration, attention must be paid to and respect for cultural and religious differences maintained.

Reception takes place in several priority areas:

3.1.1. Initial Support:

Provision of basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and medical care in the first few days (see **Annex II** with the checklist of goods needed to equip a house).

A minor refugee from Ukraine was suffering from trauma caused by the war in his country. Through the school and the reception service, he tried to seek psychological help in Portugal, but specialized services for refugees in the area of child psychiatry are limited. The long waiting times for appointments and the lack of staff with knowledge of the realities of refugees aggravated his condition.

3.1.2. Initial Psychological Support:

Identify any urgent psychological needs among refugees to help combat states of despair, sadness and anxiety resulting from the traumatic situations experienced. Identify possible psychological needs for future specialized support.

3.1.3. Communication:

In order to facilitate communication with refugees who do not know the language of the host country, it is imperative that mediators who know the refugee's language are available at the time of reception, whenever possible. If this is not possible, the Google Translate tool can be used, through which communication between speakers of different languages is immediate.

3.1.4. Reception and Orientation:

Provide a warm welcome so that the refugees feel acceptance. Reception organizations should be prepared in this first phase, to provide orientation and basic information about the country, the rights and duties of the refugees, as well as what services are available.

“

Home is where the heart is.

- Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD)

3.2. Integration and the Development of Autonomy

Social integration is one of the most important stages in the process.

While reception is a short term process, integration takes time. Its complexity is the result of the intervention and interaction of three different actors: the state, the groups in which people find themselves and the people themselves.

Being integrated means being adapted to the host society, and not feeling segregated in any way, participating in the local cultural environment and being interested in and prepared for personal and professional fulfillment.

In Portugal, the Refugee Relocation Programme and participation in international initiatives, such as the Voluntary Resettlement Programme, have been significant developments in the integration effort after a successful reception.

The **municipality of Fundão** is a good example of good reception and integration practices, having been recognized through the European Capital for Inclusion and Diversity award in 2023. In addition, several non-governmental organizations, including **AMURT Portugal**, have played a crucial role in providing support to refugees in both the reception and integration phases.

The process of integrating refugees focusses on several key areas:

3.2.1. Access to Accommodation

Access to accommodation: Ensuring that refugees have access to accommodation, even temporary accommodation, with decent hygiene, safety and living conditions, with the necessary furniture and equipment;

Permanent accommodation: There is, at a later stage, the possibility of moving to permanent accommodation, for easier integration, with a view to becoming independent, and taking into account the size of the household (number of members) and their specific needs;

Location: If the accommodation is located in an urban area, there will be more public transport and services on offer, as well as more job opportunities. For families with children, it is advisable to provide the accommodation close to schools or nurseries and, preferably, sports and recreational facilities.

Access to technological equipment: Whatever the type of accommodation, it is important to guarantee access to the internet and technological equipment, particularly cell phones.

“

Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.

- Nelson Mandela

3.2.2. Access to Education

An Eritrean teenager who arrived in Portugal with her family was placed in a public school in the Lisbon region, but found it difficult to integrate.

Although she was very interested in studying, the lack of support and curricular adaptations to learn the Portuguese language and the teachers' lack of knowledge about her needs meant that she lost motivation and ended up dropping out of school.

Education for children and young people: The inclusion of children and young people in the national education system is a cornerstone of successful integration. Schools need to be equipped to support students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, notably by offering supplementary national language classes. Teachers and educators play a vital role in this process of integration, helping to ease the insecurity and anxiety of refugee children and young people as they adjust to their new environment.

Adult Education: For adults, learning the national language is one of the keys to integration, and the host organizations should provide opportunities to learn.

3.2.3. Access to health services

👉 **Portal SNS** **DGS** 👉

Physical Health: Ensuring access to health services is fundamental. Many refugees arrive with urgent or chronic medical needs that need to be treated. In Portugal, emergency services are accessible free of charge to refugees with serious and urgent needs.

Psychological support: Psychological support is crucial, as many refugees have been through extremely traumatic experiences. This support should help them to create internal tools to cope with the trauma and build a new meaning in life.

One of the important areas requiring attention is the relationship between parents and children after traumatic events. Efforts should be made to strengthen family bonds of love, understanding and tolerance, and to accept negative behaviours that may occur as a result of the difficult experiences (aggression, rebellion, apathy, among others).

Promoting communication between refugees and family members or friends who remain in their countries of origin can be important in reducing the anguish of separation and isolation.

Health Promotion: Develop health promotion campaigns to inform refugees about prevention practices and care available in the local health system.

3.2.4. Integration into the legal, tax, social security and health systems

An Afghan family arrived in Portugal and applied for refugee status. Despite submitting all the necessary documentation, the process took over a year. During this time, they faced financial difficulties, which prevented them from accessing many basic services, such as primary health care.

Access to documents: The refugee needs support in obtaining essential national documents to enable their integration into the host country:

- **Tax Identification Number (NIF)** – is required to enter the job market, open a bank account or comply with tax obligations in Portugal. You can obtain it from the tax office in: **Taxpayer Registration** > Identify > Assign/Alter NIF-Singulares;
- **Social Security Identification Number (NISS)** – is needed to access rights, such as benefits and subsidies, and to comply with obligations relating to contributions. It can be obtained from the Social Security services in **Attribution of Social Security Identification Number (NISS)**. 🖱️

- **National Health System (SNS)** user number – is needed to access health care, to request auxiliary means of diagnosis and therapy and to prescribe and purchase medicines. To obtain this number, you must first obtain a residence permit. **National User Register - SNS** 🖱️

- **Regularization in the country:** The refugee needs support to acquire legal status and regularization (visas, asylum, residence) with **AIMA - Agency for Migration Integration and Asylum** (See procedures in **Annex III**). 🖱️

“

Carry a handful of earth every day and you will make a mountain."

- Confúcio

3.2.5. Inserção no Mercado de Trabalho

A Ukrainian refugee with experience in civil engineering struggled to find work in his field.

Without recognition of his professional qualifications obtained in his country of origin or sufficient command of Portuguese, he was forced to accept temporary, low-paid jobs outside his area of expertise.

Even today, two years later, he is still in this situation.



In Portugal, the **IEFP, I.P.** - Institute for Employment and Vocational Training's mission is to promote the creation of quality employment and to combat unemployment by actively implementing employment policies, including vocational training. There is a support network in place to facilitate the integration of refugees into the job market, organised by the Professional Insertion Offices.

Recognition of Qualifications: Many refugees arrive with qualifications and professional experience, but these may not be immediately recognized in the new country.

These qualifications and experiences should be formally recognized by the relevant authorities: the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation is responsible for academic qualifications and the Ministry of Employment and Social Security handles professional qualifications;

Legal guidance: Refugees need legal support to help them understand their rights and duties, and to resolve documentation issues necessary for them to enter the job market.

Employability: The creation of special employment support programmes for refugees, including vocational guidance, internships and mentoring, could make it easier for them to enter the job market.

Partnerships with local companies to create job vacancies for refugees is also recommended.

3.2.6. Social and Community Inclusion

Community participation: Facilitating refugees' participation in community activities is an excellent way to promote integration. Cultural, sporting and social events that involve both refugees and the local population help to create bonds and combat xenophobia.

3.2.7. Monitoring and evaluation

Continuous follow-up: This is essential during the integration phase in order to ensure that the refugees are adapting well and overcoming their challenges. This can be done through home visits, regular interviews and progress assessments.

Impact evaluation: Integration programmes must be constantly evaluated to measure their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

Gathering feedback from the refugees themselves is key to adjusting practices and policies.



04.

**MAIN CHALLENGES IN THE RECEPTION
AND INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES**

“

*There is no path to peace.
Peace is the way."*

- Mahatma Gandhi

4. Main Challenges in the Reception and Integration of Refugees

The reception and integration of refugees presents unique and complex challenges, due to the vulnerability and diversity of displaced populations. The main challenges identified are grouped into the following areas:

4.1. Physical and Mental Health

- **Trauma and Mental Health:** Many refugees have suffered severe trauma due to conflict, violence and forced displacement, which can lead to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD);
- **Access to Health Care:** Refugees often find it difficult to access adequate health care due to lack of documents, language barriers or unfamiliarity with the host country's health system.

4.2. Language and Cultural Barriers

- **Language differences:** The diversity of languages among refugees and local host populations can create challenges in communication, access to services and social integration.
- **Cultural differences:** Cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings, discrimination or isolation. Adapting to new social norms and cultural practices can be difficult for both refugees and host communities.

4.3. Access to Education



- **Interruption of studies:** Many refugees, especially children and young people, have to interrupt their education due to the forced change of country and resuming their studies in the new country is a difficult process.
- **School Integration Challenges:** Refugee children and young people can find it difficult to integrate into schools, due to differences in the curriculum, language barriers and discrimination.

4.4. Accommodation

A Syrian family with five children, fully integrated in terms of work, found it difficult to get a house. Many landlords refused to rent houses to refugees out of mistrust or prejudice.

With a limited supply of social housing, the family ended up living in precarious and overcrowded conditions for several months.

- **Poor Housing Conditions:** Many refugees live in inadequate housing conditions, such as temporary shelters, reception centres or in overcrowded accommodation.
- **Difficulties in accessing housing:** Finding permanent, affordable housing is a challenge, especially in urban areas where the supply of housing is limited and expensive.

4.5. Psychological and Social Support

- **Lack of Support Services:** In many places, there is a lack of specialized psychological and social support services for refugees, which makes it difficult to overcome the multiple challenges they face.
- **Training and Awareness:** Professionals working with refugees are not always properly trained to deal with their specialised needs, ranging from legal issues to emotional support.

4.6. Regularization and Legal Status

- **Processing Documents:** The process of obtaining refugee status and other legal documents can be slow and bureaucratic, leaving many refugees in a situation of legal uncertainty and vulnerability (see **Annex III**).

4.7. Unemployment and exploitation

- **Unemployment:** Refugees often have difficulty finding employment, due to the lack of recognition of their qualifications, language barriers and discrimination in the job market.
- **Exploitation:** Refugees are more vulnerable to labour exploitation, being forced to accept

precarious and poorly paid jobs. Consider also that, in many cases, refugees have incurred debts while fleeing their country of origin that they do not have the means to pay back.

4.8. Social Integration and Discrimination

Co-existence between refugees and the local population can generate tensions, especially in places where resources are scarce.

The fear of overloading health, education and social services systems, and the decrease in general job vacancies, can fuel feelings of xenophobia and discrimination.

To mitigate these challenges, it is essential to promote awareness and education campaigns that help to eliminate prejudices and value diversity. We highlight two of these challenges:

- **Xenophobia and Discrimination:** Refugees often face prejudice, xenophobia and discrimination from local populations, which can hinder their social integration and create community tensions.
- **Social isolation:** The lack of social and support networks can lead to social isolation, aggravating mental health problems and making it difficult to adapt to the new environment.

4.9. Recognition and Protection of Rights

Respect for human and protection rights is an ongoing challenge, especially in situations where resources are limited and public attitudes can be hostile.

4.10. Coordination and Resources

- **Lack of Coordination between Agencies:**

Coordination between the different government agencies, NGOs and international organizations can be fragmented, leading to a duplication of efforts or gaps in the services offered.

- **Limited resources:** The scarcity of financial and material resources often limits the ability of host communities to provide adequate support to refugees.

4.11. Challenges for Support Workers

Working to support refugees is a complex task that requires staff not only to have a set of professional and emotional skills, but also considerable resilience in dealing with the difficulties inherent in the integration and reception process. Various factors make this work demanding and, at times, emotionally draining:

- The way the reception system works: in Portugal, the slowness of the refugee integration processes, the lack of adequate resources, the barriers to entry into the job market, the bureaucracy and the interdependence of various entities, limit the ability of the support workers to respond. These constraints result in frustration for professionals, who find it impossible to provide quick and effective responses.
- Regular direct interaction with refugees can present significant emotional challenges for staff. Some employees report having to deal with feelings of ingratitude from those they are assisting. This sense of devaluation is heightened when refugees express dissatisfaction or discontent with the support they are receiving, especially when their

expectations exceed the actual capabilities of the system. While most professionals recognise these psychological dynamics, they may still have an emotional impact.

- Staff may experience feelings of powerlessness when refugees fail to meet commitments considered essential for successful integration, such as attending training sessions or actively seeking employment. Such behaviour can compromise the progress of the refugees themselves and limit the impact of the resources dedicated to their reception. For staff, investing time and energy without seeing tangible results can be demotivating, potentially leading to frustration and discouragement.
- The emotional burden of this work is further exacerbated by constant exposure to stories of suffering and loss. Professionals often struggle to manage the psychological impact of these experiences and feel a lack of adequate support to deal with the resulting emotional strain. The absence of psychological support for support workers is a significant gap, as it limits their ability to respond effectively and negatively impacts their well-being in the exercise of their duties.
- The lack of support networks and specialised training for support workers also reduces the effectiveness of the support system and adds to the emotional burden placed on the professionals involved.



05.

STRATEGIES



Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.

- Martin Luther King Jr

5. Strategies

The strategies to be adopted in this guide should take into account the challenges identified in point 4, along with other indispensable factors. Welcoming and integrating refugees effectively requires coordinated strategies in several key areas, such as health, education, housing, employment and entrepreneurship:

5.1. Health

5.1.1. Initial Health Assessment:

Carry out full medical checks after the refugee's arrival, to ascertain their health status.

5.1.2. Access to Health Services:

Create channels of rapid access to health care, including the assignment of a family doctor and access to specialized treatments. Ensure translation and cultural mediation during consultations where necessary.

5.1.3. Health Education:

Impart training on public health and hygiene. Some refugees may not know the basics.



5.2. Psychological support

5.2.1. Psychological support programmes:

Provide psychological support and therapy to deal with the trauma stemming from conflict and displacement. This should include counselling services and support groups led by professionals experienced in war trauma and migration related challenges.

5.2.3. Risk groups:

Providing specialised support for vulnerable groups, particularly the elderly, those with disabilities, children and adolescents, with a focus on improving access to the psychological care they need.

5.3. Education

5.3.1. Educational Assessment:

Carry out an assessment of the refugee's skills and educational levels, with the aim of integrating them into appropriate educational programmes.

5.3.2. Teaching the national language:

Implement intensive courses in the national language to facilitate the social and educational integration of refugees, providing programmes tailored to meet the needs of different age groups.

5.3.3. Tutoring and Academic Support:

Arrange tutoring programmes to help refugee students to keep up with the school curriculum with a focus on basic subjects such as maths and science.

5.3.4. Recognition of Diplomas:

Facilitate the recognition of qualifications and diplomas refugees obtained in their countries of origin, allowing them to continue their education or start a career compatible with their training.

5.3.5. Cultural inclusion:

Integrate intercultural education into the curriculum to promote understanding and tolerance between local students and refugees.

5.4. Accommodation

5.4.1. Temporary accommodation:

Provide temporary accommodation in reception centres or other places until a long-term solution is found. These centres must offer a safe and dignified environment, with access to basic services.



5.4.2. Permanent Housing:

Develop housing support programmes, such as rent subsidies and partnerships with landlords to facilitate refugees' access to the housing market.

5.4.3. Housing Self-Sufficiency:

Create transition programmes to help refugees achieve housing self-sufficiency, including support in job search, financial management and access to credit.

5.4.4. Community Housing:

Encourage community housing models that promote social integration and mutual support between refugees and the local community.

5.5. Employment

5.5.1. Integration into the Labour Market:

Create professional integration programmes to provide refugees with jobs compatible with their skills. Provide internships, training programmes and integration into the local or national job market;.

5.5.2. Vocational Training:

Provide vocational training courses and workshops that correspond to the needs of the local labour market. Include modules on labour legislation, organizational culture and sector-specific skills.

5.5.3. Mentoring and Counselling:

Establish mentoring programmes to help refugees find jobs, write resumes and

prepare for interviews. Engage local professionals to share experiences and facilitate connections in the job market.

5.5.4. Skills Recognition:

Facilitate the recognition of informal or uncertified skills that can be used for formal employment.

5.6. Entrepreneurship

5.6.1. Support for Entrepreneurship:

Develop programmes that encourage entrepreneurship among refugees, including access to micro-credit, training in business management and support in creating business plans.

5.6.2. Business Incubators:

Create incubators or co-working spaces where refugees can develop their business ideas with the support of mentors and experienced professionals.

5.6.3. Local Partnerships:

Establish partnerships with local companies and producer associations to facilitate access to business networks, capital and markets.

5.6.4. Financial education:

Offer financial education courses to help refugees manage their resources, save and invest in new businesses.

5.7. Integrated Approach

It is essential that these strategies are implemented in a coordinated manner and integrated into local and national action plans.

Collaboration between the government, NGOs, businesses and civil society is key to ensuring that refugees receive the necessary support in all aspects of their lives in a timely manner, thus promoting sustainable and successful integration.

To this end, it is important to identify the organizations at the national level that are dedicated to supporting refugees, such as:

PAR – Refugee Support Platform

PAR coordinates the reception and integration of refugees in Portugal, through partnerships with civil society organizations, local authorities and companies.



Fig. 05 – PAR logo

Portuguese Red Cross

The **Red Cross** provides humanitarian assistance and offers support to refugees in areas such as reception, health and integration.



Fig. 07 - Portuguese Red Cross logo

CPR - Portuguese Council for Refugees

The **CPR** is an organization that provides social and legal assistance to refugees in Portugal.

It also runs integration programmes.



Fig. 08 - CPR logo

International Organization for Migration (IOM) Portugal

IOM is a United Nations organisation that works in the areas of migration and health, labour migration, resettlement and relocation, assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR), and deals with migrants' rights and border management.



Organização Internacional para as Migrações (OIM)
Agência das Nações Unidas para as Migrações

Fig. 09 - OIM logo



06.

RESOURCES



Love is the most subtle force in the world.

- Mahatma Gandhi

6. Resources

6.1. Public Social Support

In Portugal, refugees and beneficiaries of temporary protection are entitled to various forms of social support, on equal terms with nationals, to guarantee their subsistence and facilitate their integration into the local community. Access to this support is provided by public institutions and regulated by legislation focussed on the protection of people in situations of vulnerability.

6.1.1. Family Allowance

The family allowance is a social benefit granted to families with dependent children, and is designed to help with the costs of their education and support. Refugees in Portugal are entitled to this benefit, as long as they are legally resident in the country and meet the income requirements. This benefit is paid monthly and varies according to the age of the dependents and the family's income bracket.

To access the family allowance, refugees must register with **Social Security**, present the requisite documentation and provide proof of income.

This support is continuous and is reassessed annually or whenever there are changes in the family's economic conditions. It is granted for as long as the dependents are within the eligible age range:

- Up to the child's 16th birthday;
- It can be extended up to the age of 18 if the young person continues studying at secondary school;
- It can last until the age of 24, if the young person is in higher education.

6.1.2. School Social Action

School social action is a set of measures designed to ensure equal opportunities in access to education, with financial support for the purchase of books, school materials, meals, school transport and, in some cases, accommodation for the most disadvantaged students.

Refugee families can request this support directly from the school. Support is granted on the basis of income and may vary according to the individual needs of the child or young person. The support is awarded annually.

6.1.3. RSI - Social Integration Income

The RSI is a benefit provided to people facing extreme financial difficulty. This support guarantees a minimum income for subsistence, while also creating a plan for the social and professional integration of the beneficiaries.

Refugees with Temporary Protection Status can apply for the RSI, which not only

provides an income supplement, but also ensures that they receive assistance from social services in finding employment, in enrolling in vocational training or in gaining access to other public services.

The benefit has an initial duration of 12 months, and may be renewed annually as long as the beneficiary continues to meet the eligibility criteria. During this period, the beneficiary is subject to an integration contract designed to promote their social and professional integration, and their socio-economic situation may be reviewed periodically.

6.1.4. Unemployment benefit

Refugees who have worked legally in Portugal and find themselves involuntarily unemployed, may be entitled to unemployment benefit under the same conditions as Portuguese citizens.

To access this support, the refugee must have completed the minimum period of **Social Security** deductions and register as unemployed with the **IEFP - Institute for Employment and Professional Training**.

This allowance guarantees temporary financial support while the beneficiary seeks new employment and is accompanied by measures to support professional retraining and reintegration into the job market.

The duration of the unemployment benefit depends on the length of time the refugee has contributed to **Social Security** as an employee.

6.1.5. Health Support

Refugees in Portugal have the right to access the **National Health Service** under the same conditions as Portuguese citizens. This means that they have access to primary health care, hospital care, subsidised medicines and public health programmes. To guarantee full access to these services, refugees must register at the health centre in their area of residence, where they will be given a user number.

If necessary, refugees can also benefit from social health support, such as exemption from user fees, support in purchasing medicines and access to specialised care in the case of chronic illnesses. These benefits can be reassessed annually or whenever there is a change in the beneficiary's health or financial situation.

The right to access the **SNS** is lifelong, from the moment the individual receives their user number.

6.1.6. Housing Support

In collaboration with local authorities and non-governmental organizations, the Portuguese state provides housing support to refugees who do not have the means to arrange adequate accommodation.

This support can include access to social housing or the payment of rent through programmes such as the Porta de Entrada Programme or the Affordable Rent Programme.

Providing housing is one of the first measures necessary to stabilise refugees and promote their social integration.

The duration of housing support can vary depending on the type of support:

- If it is accommodation in a reception centre or temporary housing, the support can last until the refugee finds a more stable means of subsistence and is able to rent housing independently.
- If it is social housing, the social rental contract is renewed periodically and can last indefinitely, as long as the family continues to meet the eligibility criteria.

6.1.7. Pocket Money

In addition to formal support, after obtaining refugee status, refugees also benefit from additional financial support, known as "pocket money".

This monetary support is intended to cover small day-to-day expenses and is provided on a monthly basis, especially to people who are in the early stages of integration and do not yet have their own income or a stable job.

The amount of pocket money can vary, depending on the circumstances and the refugee's individual or family needs.

This support is normally granted during the first 18 months when refugees are housed in a reception centre or other support structure.

6.2. School Inclusion

Em Portugal, os refugiados, tal como todos In Portugal, refugees, like all students, have the right to an inclusive and quality education, in accordance with national

legislation and school integration policies. Inclusion is a fundamental principle in the Portuguese education system, guaranteed by Law 54/2018 (School Inclusion Law). Schools are obliged to work collaboratively with families and society in general to ensure that refugee students have the support they need for full and successful integration into the education system.

6.2.1. Principles of School Inclusion in Portugal

The School Inclusion Law mandates that all public schools in Portugal have a responsibility to create conditions that enable all students, including those with special needs, can learn and develop to their fullest potential.

This law is based on the following principles:

- Equal opportunities: All students have the right to attend regular public schools and access the common curriculum, with the necessary adaptations to ensure their full participation.
- Education for All: Inclusive education aims to promote academic success, reduce drop-out rates and ensure that all students fully participate in school life.
- Diversity: A diverse range of backgrounds, cultures, languages, abilities and needs is regarded as a valuable asset, and schools are encouraged to adapt to the unique characteristics of each student.

6.2.2. Specialised Support for Refugees to help with School Integration

Refugees of school age have access to the same support and inclusion facilities as any

other pupil in Portugal, with adaptation to meet their integration needs, especially with regard to language and culture.

- Portuguese Language Learning Support

One of the main challenges for refugee students is the language barrier. To overcome this obstacle, the Portuguese education system offers programmes to teach Portuguese as a Non-Mother Tongue (PLNM). These programmes aim to:

- Help refugee students learn Portuguese quickly and effectively so that they can participate in regular classes.
- Provide additional support through tutoring or individualized mentoring, where necessary.
- Gradually integrate refugee students into mainstream classes as they develop proficiency in Portuguese.

6.2.3. Cultural Mediators

Some schools and municipalities work with intercultural mediators, who help facilitate communication between the school, families and refugee pupils. These mediators help to understand cultural differences, clarify issues related to the Portuguese education system and support the integration of refugee families into the school community.

6.2.4. Psychological and Guidance Support

Refugee students often bring with them traumatic experiences of war, displacement or loss, which can affect their academic performance and well-being at school.

Schools must provide psychological support

and counselling to help them deal with these emotional and psychological issues.

Multidisciplinary teams, composed of psychologists, social workers and other professionals, should be prepared to provide individualized support and develop intervention plans when necessary.

6.2.5. School Social Action

Refugees are eligible for School Social Action, which is granted on the basis of the family's socio-economic situation. The process is streamlined for refugees who arrive in the country under vulnerable conditions. The support consists of:

- Subsidies for the purchase of books and school supplies.
- Support for meals (namely lunch in the school canteen).
- Subsidies for school transportation to ensure access to the school, especially in more remote areas.
- Accommodation for students studying at a distance from their place of residence.

6.2.6. Curriculum Adaptation

In order to overcome the linguistic and cultural barriers faced by refugee pupils, schools must make the necessary curricular adaptations:

- Individual support in more demanding subjects;
- Individualised teaching programmes that respect the students' learning pace and special needs ;
- Individualised assessment, taking into consideration the difficulties of integration into the Portuguese education system.

6.3. Other support: Voluntary Return

The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) support for voluntary return is a programme designed to assist migrants to return to their countries of origin in a safe and dignified manner. This support is especially important for those in vulnerable situations, such as refugees and undocumented migrants.

The programme also offers assistance that includes transportation, temporary accommodation and help with reintegration, such as vocational training and financial support to start small businesses. In addition, the IOM works in collaboration with local governments and community organizations to ensure that the return process is transparent and respects human rights.

Through this support, IOM not only facilitates the refugees' return, but also contributes to the development of their home countries, thus fostering more orderly and safer migration practices. This holistic focus helps to minimize the negative impact of forced migration, allowing individuals to rebuild their lives in a familiar environment, with dignity and opportunities for growth.



ANNEXES

Checklist for the Reception of Refugees in Emergency Situations

This Checklist for the Reception of Refugees in emergency situations aims to provide comprehensive guidelines for frontline teams in order to ensure an effective and coordinated response to humanitarian crises.

1. Initial needs

- ☐ **Drinking Water:** Guaranteed access to safe and sufficient water for consumption or personal hygiene.
- ☐ **Food:** Access to nutritious and appropriate food, including options for children and people with dietary restrictions.
- ☐ **Shelter:** Tents, blankets, mattresses or any improvised shelter.
- ☐ **Clothing:** Clothing suitable for the climate and essential items such as footwear.
- ☐ **Hygiene:** Hygiene kits containing soap, a toothbrush and toothpaste, sanitary napkins, nappies and toilet paper.
- ☐ **Energy:** Access to energy sources such as torches, batteries and solar chargers.

2. Medical and Health Care

- ☐ **Medical Care:** Medical teams should be on hand to provide first aid, and for the treatment of injuries and illnesses.
- ☐ **Essential Medicines:** A supply of basic essential medicines for the treatment of chronic diseases.
- ☐ **Mental Health:** Psychological support to deal with trauma and stress.
- ☐ **Sanitation:** The installation of portable or dry toilets, hand-washing stations and waste management.

3. Safety and Security

- ☐ **Protection Against Violence:** Ensure protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and human trafficking.
- ☐ **Support for Vulnerable Groups:** The provision of special protection for unaccompanied minors, women, the elderly and people with disabilities.
- ☐ **Safe Spaces:** Create safe areas for vulnerable groups.
- ☐ **Documentation:** The provision of assistance in obtaining or replacing identity documents and in the administrative processes granting refugee status.

4. Communication and Information

- ☐ **Information on Rights:** Provision of information on refugees' rights, such as how to apply for asylum and other essential services.
- ☐ **Contact with Family:** Facilitating communication so that people can reconnect with their family and/or friends.
- ☐ **Local Information:** Keeping refugees informed about the local situation and any relevant changes.



5. Education and Reintegration

- ☐ **Emergency Education:** Distribute school supplies and provide recreational and educational activities for children and young people to help reduce trauma.
- ☐ **Preparing for reintegration:** Plan social and economic reintegration programmes, including professional training.

6. Coordination and Logistics

- ☐ **Resource Management:** Monitor and manage the distribution of resources and donations.
- ☐ **Partnerships:** Collaborate with NGOs, local public services, government bodies and international organisations to optimise the response.
- ☐ **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Carry out regular evaluations to adapt responses to emerging needs.

7. Legislation and Human Rights

- ☐ **Respect for Rights:** Ensuring that all actions are in line with international conventions on the rights of refugees.
- ☐ **Advocacy:** Work for administrative protection and recognition of refugee status.



Household Checklist



Bedrooms

- Double and single beds with mattresses
- Sheets for double and single beds
- Pillows, duvets and blankets
- Pillowcases
- Bath and face towels
- Bedside tables
- Bedside table lamps
- Ceiling lights
- Cupboards for storing clothes
- Dressing tables
- Desk(s)



Living room

- Dining table with chairs
- Furniture
- Lamps
- Sofa and armchairs
- Television
- Internet
- Floor mats
- Heaters



Bathroom

- Towel rails
- Cupboard
- Bathroom products (shampoo and shower gel, soap)
- Toilet brush with stand
- Mirror
- Bathroom mats



Kitchen

- Plates
- Cutlery
- Wooden spoons, cutting knives
- Glasses and mugs
- Pots and pans
- Platters, glass bowls and bowls
- Fridge
- Water heater
- Dishwasher
- Stick blender
- Blender
- Mixer
- Washing machine
- Stove with oven
- Kitchen towels
- Tablecloths
- Dishwashing liquid and scouring pads
- Washing powder
- Detergents for cleaning the home and bathroom
- Mop, bucket, broom and dustpan
- Kitchen cupboards
- Clothes lines or clothes stands and pegs



Legal Procedures for the Regularization of Refugees in the Country

The process of regularizing migrants who are refugees or have temporary protection status in Portugal involves several stages designed to guarantee the protection of their human rights, while maintaining national security and adhering to European and international standards. The procedure involves several government bodies, including the **Agency for Migration Integration and Asylum - AIMA**, which plays a central role in processing applications for asylum, temporary protection or other forms of international protection.

1. Request for International or Temporary Protection

When a migrant arrives in Portugal and wishes to apply for asylum (international protection) or benefit from temporary protection, they should go to **AIMA** or a border post on arrival in the airport. The granting of asylum is based on the 1951 Geneva Convention, which provides the right to protection for people persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions.

Temporary protection, on the other hand, may be granted in exceptional circumstances, such as the refugee crisis from Ukraine in 2022. This special provision can be utilised in the case of groups fleeing conflict, widespread persecution or serious human rights violations.

2. Opening the file and registering the application

The application is registered by **AIMA** after collecting personal data, fingerprints and other information necessary to identify the applicant. AIMA then registers the case and issues a provisional document confirming the applicant's status as a candidate for protection. This document allows them to remain legally in Portugal while their application is processed.

3. Interview

The applicant is called for an interview, during which they have to explain the reasons for their request for international or temporary protection. It is important that the applicant provides all relevant information about their situation, including documentary evidence or testimonies in support of their case. The interview is conducted by an AIMA officer specializing in asylum and protection issues. In the case of minors or individuals with special needs, special protection measures are adopted.

4. Analysis

Examining the application involves verifying the facts presented by the applicant, and assessing the situation in their country of origin. The authorities may use various sources of information, including international reports, to verify the authenticity of the reasons provided. Processing times can vary, depending on the type of protection requested. In general, **AIMA** has up to six months to make a decision on asylum applications. However, the deadline can be extended, especially if there are a large number of applications or complex issues associated with a particular case.

5. Decision: Approve or Reject

If the application is approved, the applicant is granted refugee status or subsidiary protection, depending on the severity and nature of their circumstances. This status guarantees the right to live and work in Portugal, as well as to benefit from health, education and social integration services. In the case of temporary protection, the status is granted for a specific period, but can be renewed depending on the evolution of the situation in the country of origin.

If the application is refused, the applicant may lodge a judicial appeal against the decision within the legally established time limit. If the appeal is denied, the applicant will be notified to leave national territory voluntarily. Failure to comply with this order may lead to repatriation proceedings.

6. Integration and Support

Once granted refugee status, refugees or individuals with temporary protection have access to social integration programmes. These include support in learning the Portuguese language, integration into the job market and access to housing. The Portuguese government, collaborates with various non-governmental and international organizations, such as the Portuguese Council for Refugees, the **CPR**, to provide social and legal assistance throughout the process.

In addition, special programmes guarantee the education of minors and access to health care, facilitating their harmonious integration into Portuguese society.



Checklist for Promoting Refugee Integration and Autonomy

The Checklist for Refugee Integration and Empowerment covers the essential areas for successful integration, promoting social, economic and cultural inclusion.

1. Initial Support

- ☐ Provision of temporary accommodation at a reception centre or in a private house/flat.
- ☐ Provision of basic resources (food, clothing, hygiene).
- ☐ Assessment of immediate needs (health, psychological, social).

2. Health

- ☐ Registration with the local health system.
- ☐ Initial medical assessment and follow-up.
- ☐ Psychological and psychiatric support.
- ☐ Specialised public health programmes (mental health, rehabilitation, nutrition).

3. Education

- ☐ Enrollment of children and adolescents in local schools.
- ☐ Adult literacy programmes.
- ☐ Access to local language courses.
- ☐ Recognition of foreign diplomas and certificates.

4. Housing

- ☐ Support in finding suitable and affordable permanent or subsidised housing.
- ☐ Specialised assistance with rental contracts and housing rights.

5. Security

- ☐ Assessment of risks and threats.
- ☐ Access to protection mechanisms (police, social services).
- ☐ Access to prevention programmes against violence and discrimination.

6. Regularisation

- ☐ Check legal status and regularisation (visas, asylum, residence permits).
- ☐ Translation and authentication of personal documents (certificates, diplomas, school transcripts).
- ☐ Issue of national (local) documents (NIF, NISS, SNS).

7. Employability and Training

- ☐ Evaluation of competences and professional experience.
- ☐ Access to training and retraining courses.
- ☐ Labour market orientation.
- ☐ Entry into the labour market.
- ☐ Support for entrepreneurship and microcredit.



8. Social integration

- ☐ Integration-orientated cultural and community activities.
- ☐ Involvement with local organisations, IPSSs and NGOs.
- ☐ Support for cultural and social adaptation.

9. Rights and Citizenship

- ☐ Guidance on rights and duties in the host country.
- ☐ Access to legal and advocacy services.
- ☐ Information on citizenship processes.
- ☐ Access to social programmes and benefits.

10. Monitoring and follow-up

- ☐ Creation of an personalised life and family plan.
- ☐ Continuous monitoring of the household's progress and well-being.
- ☐ Periodic adjustments and reviews of the life plan (every 6 months or 1 year).
- ☐ Long-term evaluation and plan for autonomy.

11. Civic Participation

- ☐ Encouraging refugees' active participation in decisions that affect their lives.
- ☐ Create spaces for them to share their experiences and needs.
- ☐ Inclusion in participatory processes or community forums.

12. Communication and Information

- ☐ Access to clear, translated information about the services available, their rights and their duties.
- ☐ Educational materials should be made available in several languages.
- ☐ Intercultural education programmes to prevent fake news and disinformation.



Testimonials



Antonina, 33

Ukrainian, living in Fundão (Portugal)

There was a time when despair seemed the only reality, when impotence in the face of fate became an overwhelming presence. Anyone who survived the war knows that remembering it is a painful exercise, a challenge to sanity. I, who experienced the horror with my own eyes, understand that there is a blessing in living under a peaceful sky. But the war scarred me deeply! A scar that I will carry for the rest of my days.

It all started in 2014, when war broke out in my beloved city of Donetsk. I was forced to abandon my home, to hide in foreign lands, but love for my country brought me back in 2016. I believed with all my might that no one would ever tear me from my ground. I was wrong.

That fateful morning, I was awoken by insistent phone calls. On the other end of the line, I was told to pack my bags and leave. I went out for a walk with my dog and, at five in the morning, I saw something I would never forget: the whole city was already on the streets, people were crowding into stores and ATMs, all in a desperate frenzy. By six, the stores were open, but the shelves were almost empty – only pasta and sugar remained.

On the third day of the war, we left the cellar, trying to warm up at home and prepare something to eat. But the weather betrayed us. The city was plunged into danger. I heard the sharp sound of a missile cutting through the air. We ran to the basement but were hit by a violent shockwave that knocked us to the ground. The ceiling began to collapse on us and the lights went out. At that moment, maternal instinct overwhelmed me and, with all my strength, I protected my daughter. For the first time, she looked at me with fearful eyes and asked: 'Are we going to survive? Why do they want to kill us?'

After the first heavy bombardment, I found shrapnel stuck in the door of our house. The thought that haunted me was: 'If we had gone out ten seconds later, who among us would have been hit?' The shrapnel was at the level of my daughter's head and the fear became unbearable. The house next door was destroyed, reduced to rubble, as if it had never existed. We were left without internet, water, electricity, heating – and the cold was biting.

We lived like animals, , cooking on a wood stove, while the incessant bombing made silence an unattainable luxury.

“

The nights were even worse than the days. We couldn't sleep; the fighting intensified and exhaustion ate away at us.

The sound of shells and armored vehicles was constant and our silent prayers were our only comfort. Sometimes we went out to breathe the cold night air, but the darkness was lit by distant flashes, as if we were living in an apocalypse.

Over time, we formed survival bonds with our neighbours, agreeing on routines, making sure they knew where we were in case we were buried. One friend gave birth in the basement; another lost her daughter in Mariupol and there was no way of finding out what had happened to her. We were cut off from the world.

After ten days of terror, I decided to leave, even against my family's wishes. My friends came to pick me up. They stole fuel from an abandoned military car and we began our escape. But the war gave us no respite. I heard a plane in the sky, and fear froze in our veins



**Bombs were
dropped and the
ground seemed to
crumble beneath
our feet.**

We took refuge in the basement, but we knew we weren't safe. Finally, we managed to get into the car and set off, leaving behind a scene of destruction and despair.

The road to Dnipro was an endless nightmare. We passed burning fields, destroyed buses and

cars, bomb craters. At the sight of an approaching tank, calmly, I asked the children to lie down on the ground, as if we were playing hide-and-seek, but the truth was that I was trying to protect them from imminent death. By some miracle, we managed to escape.

We arrived in Dnipro exhausted, and a friend took us in. On our first night in safety, we ignored the bombing alert, so exhausted were we, and fell into a deep sleep. When I woke up the next morning, I saw myself in the mirror for the first time in days. The horror of the war was reflected in my now gray hair.

After the nightmare, fate took me to a refugee camp. It was hard to accept my new condition. I only had my daughter and our dog, Marcel, for company. I accepted the opportunity to go to Portugal without hesitation. The journey was long and arduous, full of hardship. When we arrived in Poland, some volunteers took us in and five days later, we were in Portugal. Finally, I found a place to rest.

On our arrival in Portugal, we were housed at the Centre for Migration in the city of Fundão. Many people wanted to help, and I am eternally grateful to them. We received donations of clothes, medicines, toys, books - everything had been prepared for us

The war left deep scars. I lost my faithful companion, Marcel, and was dragged into a devastating depression. Panic attacks overwhelmed me and every explosion, every siren, revived the terror. But little by little, I rose from the ashes. I learned the language, made friends and rebuilt my life. But the war still haunted me, like a dark ghost. My mother died in occupied territory, and the pain of not being able to say goodbye to her destroyed me again.

My daughter faced great challenges when she arrived in a new country. At first, in kindergarten, she felt frightened and vulnerable, as if the world around her was an impenetrable puzzle because of the language barrier. The feeling of being unprotected accompanied her, making the first few days especially difficult.

Then came school, a new challenge to be conquered. The first six months were a daily battle, both for her and for the teachers, but my daughter faced everything with courage. I'm immensely proud of her. Over time, she began to understand what the teachers were saying, to communicate with the other children and, most importantly, to make new friends. Her resilience fills me with admiration.

It was then that we discovered a new hobby for her – judo. From the very first competitions, she began to win first place, a victory that reflected not only her physical strength, but also her determination. Later, her passion for gymnastics blossomed, and now she has two favourite sports – judo and gymnastics.

At school, her dedication is reflected in her good grades. She is an incredibly friendly and kind girl, surrounded by friends who adore her. The road ahead is promising, and I know that the future holds a special brightness for her.

I learned to value life, to appreciate freedom. But I paid too high a price to understand these simple things – I lost loved ones, I lost my home, but I gained the strength to carry on. And today, I live for both of us, for those who have gone, and for every day of peace I can still breathe.

I learned to value life, to appreciate freedom. But I paid too high a price to understand these simple things – I lost loved ones, I lost my home, but I gained the strength to carry on. And today, I live for both of us, for those who have gone, and for every day of peace I can still breathe.”

“

**Even though the war left me
scarred, I couldn't give up. I
stood firm for my daughter,
who saved me with her
presence, who gave me hope.**

Testimonials



Anna, 37

Ukrainian, living in Podgorzin (Poland)

"It was the day after we returned from our family vacation. On February 24th, my husband woke me up at 4 a.m. and told me that the war had begun.

I didn't believe him; I thought it was a celebration of a birthday or a wedding. We lived in Odessa, on the Black Sea coast, and we often heard explosions and fireworks at night. I got out of bed and looked out of the window towards the sea. That day, the sky was clear and starry, and I saw another explosion – it was a Russian missile. The sound was so loud and so close that the windows of my house shook with the vibration.

“

My children ran into my room, crying and looking frightened. They didn't understand what was happening

My husband told me again – it's war. Within an hour, I decided to leave the country for a few weeks. In a state of shock, I couldn't even pack my bags. I kept hearing explosions. My phone was ringing all the time. Everyone was panicking.

A few hours later, we were already in the car trying to get out of the city. There was no gas at the filling stations, all the stores were closed and there were huge queues at the ATMs. The country was plunged into fear. At that time, you don't think about what's going to happen to your business, your bank account, your house – you just want to be safe.

At the borders, there were queues of cars over 10 km long. A man told us that in an hour's time the border guards' shift would change and that they would no longer allow men to leave. My husband said he wanted to cross the border quickly and I would have to drive alone with the children. I'm not a very good driver, but I had no choice but to let him go and continue driving alone.

After six hours in line, we crossed the border and left Ukraine. Now I had another question on my mind. What to do next? Where to go? After doing meditation, I had an answer: we're going to Poland, to the Ananda Marga Master Unit. I felt that it wasn't my decision, as if some higher being had made it for me. I trusted my intuition.

It's been two and a half years since I was last at home in Ukraine. I never thought I'd move to another country; now my home is in Poland. Many of my friends ask me if I've got used to living here. Of course I have. During this time, I've made new friends, learned the language and can communicate with the locals. My children go to a Polish school and have made new friends.

For the first six months after we moved to Poland, every day I thought that the war would be over tomorrow and that we would be going home. For

six months, my life seemed to stand still. The waiting was the most terrible; it was hard to accept. But one morning, I woke up and realized that I needed to move on, to develop, to learn, to acquire new skills. I started painting, cooking healthy food, playing the piano and learning languages. I started doing the things I didn't have time for in Ukraine.

“

**Life goes on
and I enjoy it.**

It doesn't matter what country you live in; what matters is feeling happy and enjoying the moments that happen in your life. Because nobody knows what will happen tomorrow.”

Testimonials



Rita Lucas

AMURT Portugal Reception Staff

"The first family we took in was a "resettlement" family, i.e. they left Syria in the middle of the war and were initially settled in Jordan, their first host country, where they lived for 10 years before arriving in Portugal.

In Jordan, it was possible for the family to re-establish itself and increase their numbers - father, mother and five young children by the time they arrived in Portugal. From the very first moment, the parents were very empowered and aware of their rights as refugees in our country.

The first few months were very difficult for the family, as they had expected to come to a city where they would have more facilities, transport, shopping centres, etc. and also that they would be living with people from the same culture.

However, the welcome in Portugal took place in a village in the Portuguese countryside. So the first few months were challenging, not only because of adapting to a new country and a different culture and language, but also because of the need to manage the family's expectations.

This process was particularly hard for the mother, as she would be the person spending the most

time at home. The children would be going to school and the father would be getting a job. This dissatisfaction of the mother was often expressed through blame of the support team; she would often make comparisons between her family's situation and that of other refugee families in other cities.

“

The culture of this family is very different from ours, especially with regard to the role of women.

The mother was forced to marry an older man at the age of 16 and left her parents' home directly for her husband's house, without having the opportunity to have any other kind of experience or responsibilities, and this was reflected in her relationship with society and her interactions with the school.

As she has never worked, the mother has no concept of work discipline or the value of time, which is evident in some of her actions: she forgets to pick up her children from school; her eldest daughter takes on many of the household responsibilities.

The clash with the local culture was also aggravated by the fact that this is a small village, where mentalities are more closed due to less exposure to different cultures, leading to complaints and unease among the neighbours when she, for example, threw buckets of water on the floor and stairs to clean them.

In fact, this mother has significant difficulties in keeping to her schedule and managing her younger children's activities.

During our trip to Poland, the mother was included in the visiting team. When we all met up in Lisbon airport on the outbound journey, she was ecstatic and thanked us a thousand times for taking her with us. It was the first time in her life that she had travelled independently unaccompanied by her father or husband. During the week spent together, we observed that her behaviour was irresponsible and immature, because she was living what she hadn't been allowed to at a young age.



This kind of behaviour was sometimes difficult for the staff to deal with, as it requires a lot of patience and intense monitoring.

With regard to integration into the world of work, we noticed that the mother doesn't feel comfortable working outside the kitchen, where she feels at ease. When she is offered another type of job, she resists, perhaps out of fear that she won't be able to manage it or out of anxiety about leaving her comfort zone.

It is our hope that during the project's integration period, the mother will increase in maturity and awareness.

The second family we received, who came

straight from Afghanistan, a country where human rights are severely violated, is from a completely different reality.

They are a family from a very precarious background with little power and no idea of their rights in Portugal, but always expressing great humility and gratitude. Somehow it is much easier to help integrate this family.

A few months after they arrived, they showed great openness and expressed deep appreciation for everything that had been given, suggested and shown to them.

In this case, the focus will be on empowering the family so that, at the end of the project, they are able to make their own choices, claim their rights and live their lives independently.

Refugee Reception Flowchart Template

Aim: To show the stages of the reception process from the arrival of the refugees to their integration into the community



Local Strategic Partnership Network Map Template

Objective: This is a map of the entities involved in welcoming refugees and their interactions. It includes NGOs, governments, private companies and community groups.



BOOKLET

INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

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01. Introduction

This booklet was developed to complement the Guide for the Reception and Integration of Refugees created as part of the **PAAIR - Action Plan for the Reception and Integration of Refugees** project, funded by Erasmus+.

Its aim is to provide integrated communication strategies that are essential for an effective and humane reception of refugees, and promotes interaction that is sensitive to their cultural, emotional and social needs.

Integrated communication in refugee reception is essential to ensure that everyone involved in the process - from reception professionals to the refugees themselves - can share information clearly, effectively and empathetically.

This booklet presents the key elements for structuring and implementing an integrated communication strategy, offering practical examples that can be adapted to different contexts.

From creating accessible communication channels to preparing culturally sensitive materials, the strategies discussed here aim not only to overcome language and cultural barriers, but also to create an environment of trust and mutual respect. The success of an effective communication strategy lies in its ability to be inclusive, consistent and

collaborative, and provides reception teams with the tools to fully support refugees in their integration into the new country.

We hope that the principles and methods presented here will serve as a practical and inspiring guide for those involved in refugee reception, emphasising the importance of communication as a fundamental aspect of this process.



2. Structure of the Integrated Communication Strategy for Refugee Reception

An integrated communication strategy for refugee reception must be carefully planned to ensure that information is transmitted in a way that is clear, accessible and sensitive to their needs and conditions.

In addition, this communication should involve all the various stakeholders, including government organisations, NGOs, local communities and the refugees themselves.

2.1. Communication Objectives



Clearly defining these objectives is the first step. They must include:

- **Information:** Ensure that the refugees receive accurate information about their rights, the services available to them and the stages of the reception process.
- **Guidance:** It should help them to understand how to access essential services such as health, education and how to navigate the administrative process.
- **Raise awareness:** Promote awareness and empathy among the local community to facilitate the integration of the refugees.
- **Encouragement:** The active participation of organisations and volunteers in welcoming and supporting the refugees should be encouraged.

2.2. Identify the Stakeholders

Identify the different target groups that we need to communicate with.

- **Refugees:** People from a diverse range of cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds.
- **Local Community:** Residents of the area where the refugees will be hosted, local educational institutions and businesses.
- **Partner Organisations:** NGOs, religious institutions, government agencies and other entities involved.
- **Media:** journalists, tv and radio reporters, etc..

2.3. Development of Key Messages

Create clear messages adapted to each target audience:

- **For Refugees:** Clear messages should be written in several languages about their rights, legal procedures and available services.
- **For the Local Community:** Information on the reception process, with an emphasis on the importance of integration and the role that each citizen can play.
- **For Partner Organisations:** Communication on coordinating efforts, sharing resources and mutual support.

- **For the Media:** Messages highlighting real stories and examples of success in the integration of refugees, to promote balanced and empathetic coverage.

2.4 Creation of Materials

Develop a range of support materials, including guides, videos, infographics, and other resources, to effectively communicate across multiple channels. Each format serves a distinct purpose:

- **Guides:** Comprehensive handbooks covering essential topics like rights, local services and integration steps. These can be distributed in print and digital formats for easy access.
- **Videos:** Short, engaging videos that introduce key information on topics such as navigating public services, local cultural practices and success stories from refugees. Ideal for social media, websites and community centres.
- **Infographics:** Visually clear infographics that simplify complex information, such as the steps in the application process, available resources or key contacts. Suitable for posters, social media and informational brochures.
- **Multilingual Brochures:** Concise pamphlets in multiple languages, summarizing essential services, support networks, and contact information, to be distributed in reception centres, hospitals and schools.
- **FAQs and Quick Reference Cards:** Portable resources that answer frequently asked questions about local laws, healthcare, housing and other vital areas, designed for easy reference.

These materials should be adaptable for display in physical spaces (like reception centres and libraries) as well as digital channels (such as websites, social media and email newsletters).

2.5. Choice of Communication Channels

Select the most effective communication channels for each audience:

• Refugees:

- Printed materials: Welcome guides in several languages.
- Digital: Mobile applications, informative websites, social media.
- Reception Centres: create focal points for direct contact, with the support of translators and cultural mediators.

• Local Community:

- Social Campaigns: To promote inclusion and support
- Community events: meetings, workshops, talks
- Engage with Local Businesses and Employers:
 - Business Networks and Industry Conferences: Engaging through professional associations (e.g. Chamber of Commerce) fosters interest.
 - LinkedIn and Professional Forums: Sharing success stories and incentives (e.g. tax benefits) makes integration appealing.
 - Targeted Webinars: Short, focused webinars about hiring refugees and fostering diversity in the workplace.
- Educators and Schools:
 - School Newsletters and Parent-Teacher

Meetings: Direct channels for updating parents, teachers and students about integration efforts.

- Workshops and Training for Staff: Equipping educators with tools to create an inclusive environment.

- Use platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X to share updates, success stories, event announcements and educational posts.
- Local media: Publish articles, success stories and opinion pieces in local newspapers, radio stations and local digital media to highlight refugee experiences and encourage support for integration.
- Community Newsletters: Send regular newsletters via email or print to keep refugees, volunteers and local residents informed about upcoming events, integration milestones and opportunities to get involved.
- **Partner Organisations:**
 - Regular Meetings: Face-to-face or online meetings to align actions.
 - Collaborative platforms: Tools such as Google Drive for sharing documents and information.
- **Media:**
 - Press Releases: with relevant data and stories
 - Interviews and direct reports: Encourage the participation of experts and community leaders in interviews and opinion pieces

2.6. Planning and implementation

Create a detailed timetable for the implementation of communication activities, aligning actions with key stages in the reception

process, such as the arrival of refugees, initial school integration periods and other critical moments. Clearly assign responsibilities for each activity and set deadlines.



2.7. Community Awareness and Education

Organise educational actions for the local community, addressing topics such as:

- **Cultural Diversity:** Programmes that promote understanding and respect for different cultures.
- **Positive Impacts of Integration:** Provide information on the social and economic benefits of receiving refugees.
- **How to support:** Provide guidance on how individuals can contribute in order to help facilitate the integration process.

2.8. Measurement and Evaluation

Establish key performance indicators to evaluate the impact of communication. For example:

- **Reach:** The number of refugees and members of the local community reached by the messages.
- **Translation Accuracy and Comprehension Rate:** How effectively information is understood across language barriers, based on surveys or feedback.

• **Community Engagement and Event Participation:**

- **Event Take-Up Rate:** Measure attendance rates at community events, workshops and orientation sessions, reflecting engagement and interest among refugees and the local community.
- **Adherence to Support Programmes:** Track the involvement of community members in structured support programmes, such as volunteer mentorship, language exchanges, or employment training initiatives for refugees.
- **Volunteer Involvement:** Track the number of local volunteers participating in support activities, indicating community involvement in the integration process.
- **Interaction on Social Networks:** Analyse the level of interest in social media posts or pages dedicated to refugee support and integration, as indicated by likes, shares, comments and followers.

• **Feedback and Satisfaction**

- **Refugee Satisfaction Surveys:** Conduct regular surveys to gauge refugee satisfaction with the support and communication they receive.
- **Community Feedback:** Collect input from local community members on their perception of the integration efforts and areas for improvement.

• **Social Integration:** Levels of integration of refugees into the local community can be measured through surveys and case studies and also through:

- **Employment and Housing Placement Rates:** Measure the percentage of refugees successfully securing jobs or housing within specific time frames.

- **Language Programme Completion Rate:** Track the number of refugees completing language or cultural orientation programmes.

2.9. Adjustments and Continuous Improvement

Communication must be adaptable. Conduct periodic reviews of the strategy based on the feedback received and the measured outcomes.

Adjust messages, channels and methods as necessary to ensure that the communication remains effective and relevant.



3. How to implement an Integrated Communication Strategy

3.1. Train the Communications Team

- **Identify a dedicated team:** Include communications representatives, specialists in public relations, translators, intercultural mediators and representatives of partner organisations.
- **Define responsibilities:** Clarify who will be responsible for each aspect of the strategy, such as creating content, managing communication channels, monitoring results, etc.

3.2. Initial Research and Investigation

- **Map the context:** Carry out an initial investigation to understand the profile of the refugees and the needs, challenges and expectations of the local community.
- **Identify the stakeholders:** Identify all the parties involved, including local governments, NGOs, IPSSs, community leaders, the media and the refugees themselves.
- **Data Collection:** Gather information on perceptions and communication needs through surveys, interviews and focus groups.



3.3. Define Clear Objectives

- **Set clear goals:** Define what you want to achieve with the strategy, such as increasing awareness of refugee rights, improving the perception of the local community and/or increasing volunteer participation.
- **Define performance indicators:** Examples include the number of refugees informed about available services, attendance rates at community events and the reach of positive media coverage regarding refugee integration efforts.

3.4. Message and Content Development

- **Create key messages:** Develop messages for each target group that are clear, concise and culturally sensitive.
- **Develop a range of support materials** such as guides, videos, infographics and other resources to effectively communicate across multiple channels. Ensure they are available in several relevant languages.
- **Test messages:** Before disseminating widely, test messages with small groups of refugees and community members to ensure that they are clearly understood and well received.

3.5. Choice and Preparation of Communication Channels

- **Select appropriate channels:** the choice should be based on the nature of the target audience. Choose the most effective channels (social media, printed leaflets, digital platforms, face-to-face meetings, etc.)
- **Establish partnerships with the media:** Work with local journalists and other media to ensure fair and balanced coverage of the reception process.
- **Develop an online presence:** If applicable, create a dedicated website or platform that serves as a centralised resource where refugees can access important information such as services, rights, and integration support. This platform should also provide local community members with opportunities to offer assistance.

3.6. Activity planning and timetable

- **Draw up an action plan:** Define a detailed timetable for each communication activity, aligning it with key events (e.g. arrival of refugees, start of classes, etc.).
- **Coordination with partners:** Ensure that all the organisations involved are aligned with the communication plan, avoiding duplication of effort and maximising the use of resources.
- **Prepare crisis responses:** Develop a crisis communication plan to deal with unexpected or negative situations that may arise.

3.7. Capacity Building and Training

- **Team training:** Offer training for the communications team and volunteers on how to deal with refugees in a culturally sensitive and effective way.
- **Partner training:** Hold workshops for partners and community leaders on the importance of integrated communication and how they can contribute to the strategy.

3.8. Implementation of Communication Actions

- **Launching activities:** Carry out actions according to the established timetable. This can include distributing information materials, organising events and launching social media campaigns.
- **Real-time monitoring:** Monitor the execution of activities in real time, adjusting the strategy as necessary based on the feedback received.

3.9. Community Outreach and Mobilisation

- **Organise community events:** Organise meetings, talks and cultural activities that involve both refugees and the local community.
- **Encourage volunteering:** Create campaigns to recruit volunteers and mobilise local resources to support refugees.
- **Facilitate direct interactions:** Encourage mentoring or sponsorship programmes where members of the local community offer direct support to refugees.

3.10. Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Feedback:** Use questionnaires, interviews and focus groups to evaluate the effectiveness of communication between refugees and the local community.
- **Indicator analysis:** Measure the results against the indicators established at the start of the strategy.
- **Regular Reports:** Produce regular reports to record progress, identify challenges and adjust the strategy as necessary.

3.11. Adjustments and Continuous Improvement

- **Adjust based on feedback:** Use the feedback gathered to make continuous adjustments to the strategy.
- **Review messages and channels:** Check that the messages are reaching the right audience and that the channels chosen are still the most effective.

3.12. Final Report and Dissemination of Results

- **Prepare a final report:** Gather all the data, feedback and challenges into a comprehensive report.
- **Share the results:** Publicise the results amongst all the stakeholders, including partners, funders and the local community. This helps maintain transparency and can generate ongoing support.

4. Resources

4.1. Examples of Materials:

| Reception Guide for Refugees | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Format | Leaflet or PDF |
| Content: | <p>Welcome message.</p> <p>Essential Information: Refugee rights, necessary documents, administrative procedures.</p> <p>Available Services: List of essential services (health, education, administrations) with addresses, opening hours and how to access them.</p> <p>Important contacts: Emergency numbers, local NGOs or IPSSs, cultural mediators</p> <p>Local Map: Map of the region with the location of the main services.</p> |
| Languages | Available in the languages most commonly spoken by refugees (e.g. Arabic, Hindi, French, English, Ukrainian). |

| Information Posters and Banners | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Format | Printed or digital |
| Content: | <p>Key messages: Example: "You're not alone, you can find support here."</p> <p>Contact Information: Where to find help, emergency telephone numbers, support centres.</p> <p>Refugee Rights: A visual summary of the fundamental rights of refugees.</p> |
| Location | To be prominently displayed in reception centres, hospitals, schools and other high-traffic locations. |

Information Videos

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Format | Short duration (2-3 minutes) |
| Content | <p>Welcome video: An introduction to the host country, explaining the main cultural aspects and how to access services.</p> <p>Tutorials: Videos explaining how to register with health services, access education, and the administrative regularisation process.</p> <p>Telling Stories: Stories from other refugees who have successfully navigated the reception process, offering hope and practical guidance to newcomers.</p> |
| Languages | Narrated or with subtitles in the refugees' languages. |
| Distribution | Available on digital platforms, displayed in reception centres and shared on social media. |

Social Media Campaigns

| | |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Channels | Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), WhatsApp |
| Content | <p>Informative Posts: Share regular posts about services, events and refugee rights.</p> <p>Impact Stories: Share success stories of integrated refugees to inspire and capture the local community.</p> <p>Events and Activities: Promote community meetings, cultural fairs and volunteer opportunities.</p> <p>Awareness campaigns: Create hashtags and campaigns to increase visibility and support for the reception of refugees.</p> |
| Languages | Posts should be made both in the local language and in the languages of the refugees. |

Workshops and Community Events

| Format | Planning Document |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Content | <p>Aims of the Event: To facilitate integration and cultural understanding between refugees and the local community.</p> <p>Agenda: Detailed schedule of activities, such as talks, round table discussions, cultural presentations.</p> <p>Support Materials: Leaflets, PowerPoint presentations and enrollment forms.</p> <p>Facilitators: A team consisting of cultural mediators, integration specialists and community leaders.</p> |
| Examples of Activities | <p>Cultural Café: Informal meeting where refugees and locals share stories and traditions.</p> <p>Information sessions: On the rights and duties of refugees, with space for questions and answers.</p> <p>Practical Workshops: Local language lessons, guidance on the labour market, how to access public services.</p> |

4.2. Campaign Ideas

“Faces of Resilience”

Description: Feature profiles of refugees who have successfully integrated into the community, highlighting their journeys, achievements and contributions.

Channels: Social media, posters in public spaces, local news reports.

“A Day in Their Shoes”

Description: Share stories from refugees’ perspectives, focusing on their daily lives, challenges and hopes. Include videos, photos and testimonials to build empathy and understanding.

Channels: Social media, YouTube, community events.

“Neighbours in Support”

Description: Encourage locals to share messages of welcome, solidarity and support through short videos or photos.

Channels: Social media, digital boards in community centres, libraries and other high-traffic areas.

“Language of Welcome”

Description: Create videos and posts teaching simple welcoming phrases in the languages most spoken by incoming refugees, encouraging locals to greet new arrivals in their own language.

Channels: Social media, schools, local businesses, community workshops.

4.3. Schedule of Events

| Date | Activity | Description | Duration | Audience |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Day 1 | Welcome Talk | Sessão introdutória que descreve os serviços disponíveis, os programas de apoio e os direitos básicos dos refugiados. | 1 hour | Refugees, Support Workers |
| | Meet the Community | Casual gathering for refugees and local residents to meet and share stories over refreshments. | 1 hour | Refugees, Local Community |
| Day 2 | Round Table on Integration | Panel discussion with representatives from NGOs, local government and refugee community to discuss integration. | 2 hours | Refugees, Community Leaders |
| Day 3 | Cultural Presentation Night | An evening of performances by refugees showcasing music, dance and art from their home countries. | 2 hours | General Public |
| Weekly (Ongoing) | Language Exchange Workshop | Interactive language sessions pairing refugees with local volunteers for language practice and cultural exchange. | 1.5 hours | Refugees, Local Volunteers |
| Month 2 | Multicultural Cooking Class | Cooking class where refugees teach locals to prepare traditional dishes, fostering cultural appreciation and bonds. | 2 hours | Refugees, Locals |
| Month 3 | Community Feedback Round Table | Open session to gather feedback from refugees and locals on integration efforts and areas for improvement. | 1.5 hours | Refugees, Locals, Partners |
| End of Third Month | Cultural Festival Day | Cultural presentations, food stalls, music and interactive exhibits celebrating refugee cultures. | All day | General Public |
| Quarterly | Volunteer Training Session | Training for locals interested in supporting refugees, covering cultural sensitivity, language basics, and support roles. | 3 hours | Local Volunteers |
| Bi-Annual | Reflection and Recognition Event | Formal event acknowledging progress, with awards for outstanding contributions to refugee support and integration. | 2 hours | Refugees, Community Leaders |

GUIDE FOR THE RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES