Integrating Refugees: The Central Role of Cities

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Shaping the Arrival and Integration of Refugees

- Cities are places where integration fails or succeeds.
- Cities develop and implement key activities furthering the integration of asylum seekers.
- Cities have an interest to play a coordinating role in cooperation with other responsible actors.

Mural in Tarifa, Spain
photo: Thomas Fabian
The Role of Cities: EUROCITIES Statement on Asylum

- In their 2015 statement, EUROCITIES members stress the key role cities have in managing the integration of refugees and asylum seekers and call for, among others:
  - a comprehensive EU migration policy that recognises the challenges faced by cities and local level solutions,
  - measures to improve the integration of asylum seekers and refugees at local level,
  - a better sharing of responsibility and solidarity across Europe,
  - adequate European and national funding for cities to support services provided to asylum seekers and refugees at local level, e.g. for language training,
  - involvement of city authorities by the EU and national governments in the implementation of the Common European Asylum System.
Integration of Refugees: Many Issues, Many Players

- National government
- Regional government
- Private partners
- Migrant organizations
- Diverse civil society
- Supporters
- Citizens with concerns towards refugees
- Housing
- Employment
- Education
- Health
- Language

Local authority
Local Authority Plays Key Role

- communicates with citizens
- provides services to refugees (housing, welfare assistance)
- defines own integration standards
- cooperates with other authorities and private partners
- supports civil society – enables engagement
- fights racism and solves conflicts

source: key for an electrical enclosure; Wikimedia Commons; photo: Harke
Principles to Promote Refugee Inclusion

- Be inclusive!
  - Special services for refugees might be helpful at the start – but are not a long-term solution.
  - Existing services should be open and accessible to all.

- Provide help for people to help themselves!
  - Strengthen personal responsibility and self-reliance of refugees.

- React immediately to conflicts – with a clear position!
Strategies to Promote Refugee Inclusion

- Show a positive attitude
- Engage in active communication
  - as early as possible
  - take questions seriously
  - involve supporters
  - various target groups:
    - public
    - stakeholders
    - neighbours of houses for refugees

Mayor Thomas Fabian informs neighbours about a new home for refugees opening up soon
photo: City of Barcelona
Strategies to Promote Refugee Inclusion

- Support civil engagement
  - example: mentoring programme for refugees

- Involve the whole community
  - example: cultural initiatives or sports clubs

Poster, photo: Thomas Fabian

Youth at Leipzig football club SV Lindenau 1848 e.V., source: http://fussball.lindenau1848.de/news/allgemein/
Strategies to Promote Refugee Inclusion

- Make services accessible to all
  - include the goal of integrating refugees and migrants in local planning strategies
  - train your staff in intercultural competences
  - employ people with migrant background
  - open institutions, such as libraries, to new users

meeting at the senior club
photo. Seniorenbüro Leipzig Ost

German language course; Flüchtlingsrat Leipzig e.V.
photo: Mahmoud Dabdoub
Strategies to Promote Refugee Inclusion

- Invest in preventative measures such as social work in refugee houses.

House for refugees in Leipzig, Markranstädter Straße
left: office of social workers; middle: play room; right: streetview
photos: Thomas Fabian
Our Task: Arrival Cities

- Refugees shall arrive well in our cities.
- It is our duty to accompany them on their way into our urban societies.
- This will be achieved in joint efforts of administration, politics and civil society.

Leipzig's mentoring programme “Ankommen in Leipzig”
photo: Eric Kemnitz
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