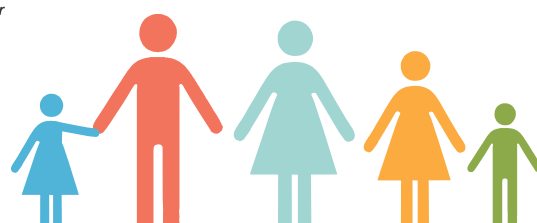




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YOUR GUIDE TO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



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INTRODUCTION



Overview of the ACTIN Project

A significant amount of discussion is ongoing across the EU regarding immigration. Concerns, misperceptions, and a general lack of information have fostered a climate of uncertainty about extending support, services, or a welcoming hand to many groups of newcomers.

The **ACTIN** project aims to support and reinforce the integration and inclusion of migrant and refugee children and adolescents in education and, by extension, in European society as a whole. As a project funded under the EU's AMIF programme, ACTIN will achieve this by bringing together expertise from seven European countries and also by consolidating connections between Universities and NGOs involved in migration and

education.

ACTIN aspires to approach migrant education holistically and to empower migrant young learners but also the relevant stakeholders, i.e., educators, migrant parents etc., by employing a series of activities in formal and informal educational settings. **ACTIN aspires to a holistic approach:**

ACTIN aspires to a holistic approach

01 IN SCHOOL

ACTIN specialist team is developing formal education approaches and activities that aim to empower migrant and refugee young learners and relevant stakeholders in crucial domains such as vocabulary and grammar learning, language-and-content learning, and cultural awareness in formal educational settings. Our approach draws from cutting-edge language learning activities, such as pedagogical translanguaging, focus on form, language-and-content learning activities, and socio-cultural facilitative activities. The activities use evidence-based and innovative methods and take into consideration learners' individual variability to promote agentivity, critical thinking, inductive learning and analytical skills .ACTIN is also developing an online open-access resource for teaching staff and other professionals as well as for students who want to practice their languages.

02 IN COMMUNITIES

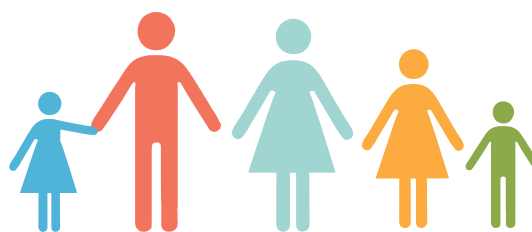
From a non-formal education perspective, ACTIN, led by a team of experienced NGOs are developing three key resources and guidelines to their adoption:

1. ACTIN SOLIDARITY CAFES
2. The subject of this Guideline, the ACTIN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
3. ACTIN BUDDY SCHEME



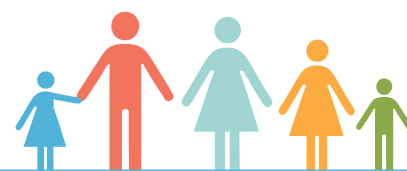
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Objectives + Goals of the Guidebook of ACTIN Extracurricular Activities

*This **Guidebook** serves as a **comprehensive manual for partner facilitators, and coordinators of the ACTIN Extracurricular Activities as part of our Solidarity Cafes and others interested or involved in the ACTIN Project.***



The primary objectives of the Guidebook are to:

- To offer step-by-step instructions for conducting a range of extracurricular activities, ensuring they are accessible, enjoyable, and educational.
- To standardise the implementation of activities across different regions, ensuring all participants receive a similar quality of experience and learning opportunity.
- To equip facilitators with the tools necessary to engage children and adolescents as well as wider age groups effectively, catering to diverse needs and backgrounds
- To assist in the monitoring and evaluation of activities, helping stakeholders measure effectiveness and make informed adjustments.

By engaging migrant and refugee youth¹ in activities that resonate with their interests and cultural backgrounds, ACTIN seeks to promote both educational enrichment and social integration. This is achieved by collaboratively involving local and regional authorities, educational institutions, and migrant associations in the design and implementation of these activities.

Importance of Extracurricular Activities in Integration and Language Learning

01 Learn and Practice New Languages

Informal settings remove the pressures found in traditional classroom environments, allowing migrant and refugee children, young people and adults to practise new languages through natural interactions and fun activities.



02 Build Social Networks

Activities designed to be inclusive and collaborative help migrants and refugees of all ages form friendships and networks, which are crucial for their emotional and social development in a new country.



03 Develop a Sense of Belonging

Participating in community activities helps migrants of all ages feel connected to their new environment, enhancing their sense of belonging and identity.



04 Explore and Develop New Skills

From sports to arts, these activities encourage children, young people and adults to explore different skills and hobbies, aiding in their overall development and self-confidence.



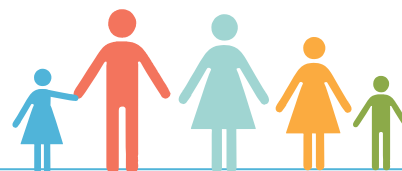
¹ What is the difference between a refugee and a migrant? (unrefugees.org)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK + GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION



Concepts of Agentivity, Facilitation, and Inductive Learning

*This section outlines **three foundational concepts** that can help guide the design and implementation of the ACTIN Project's extracurricular activities. Understanding these concepts can help facilitators and educators involved in the project to optimise the learning experiences and social integration of migrants and refugees in our communities.*



01 Agentivity

Agentivity refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and make their own free choices. In the setting of our extracurricular activities, promoting agentivity means empowering migrants, refugees and local participants to take active roles in shaping the activities and interactions. This approach encourages participants to express their needs and preferences, sharing their experiences and contributing their ideas, fostering a sense of ownership and control over their learning and social integration processes.

To ensure agentivity in the design and delivery of our extracurricular activities, we should:

- encourage participants to suggest and lead activities.
- provide opportunities for participants to make decisions regarding the organisation and running of activities and events.
- facilitate an environment where feedback is actively sought and valued from all participants.

Facilitation in our extracurricular activities involves guiding activities and discussions in a way that encourages participation, learning, and interaction without imposing direction or conclusions. Our ACTIN extracurricular activity facilitators are crucial in creating a supportive environment where all participants feel welcome and valued. They will help our target groups, including locals and migrants and refugees of different ages and ethnicities, to navigate cultural differences and language barriers, ensuring that every participant can contribute meaningfully.

As a partnership, we will aspire to:

- train facilitators in intercultural communication and conflict resolution.
- support the use of facilitation techniques that encourage equal participation, such as round-robin discussions and small group activities.
- encourage facilitators to be observant and responsive, ready to adapt activities based on the group's dynamics and feedback.

Inductive learning is a learner-centred approach that encourages learners to observe, ask questions, and derive conclusions based on their experiences. This method should be particularly effective in our extracurricular settings, where participants can learn from each other's experiences and insights. Inductive learning promotes deeper understanding and retention of knowledge because concepts are not merely taught but discovered through personal and shared experiences.

Later in this Guidebook, we will detail how these principles can be practically applied in suggested extracurricular activities

To design and deliver extracurricular activities underpinned by inductive learning, we need to:

- frame activities so that they start with real-life scenarios, hopes or desires relevant to our participant groups.
- encourage participants to work together on their designs, creations and solutions, facilitators guiding them with probing questions rather than offering direct answers.
- use a variety of inductive learning activities, such as role-plays, simulations, and real-life stories, to cater to different learning styles and backgrounds.

Role of Informal Education in Social Integration

Informal education plays a critical role in the social integration of migrant children and adolescents, offering unique opportunities for learning and interaction outside the formal classroom setting

- Informal education can significantly boost the confidence and self-efficacy of migrant children, young people and adults, by providing them with opportunities to test their skills in warm and welcoming social situations and spaces. Success in these efforts can help foster a positive self-image and a stronger belief in their own abilities to navigate new challenges in their new communities and countries.
- Language is often a barrier for migrants and refugees of all ages and engaging in formal education can be daunting. Informal education can help overcome this by providing a relaxed atmosphere conducive to practice and learning. Language skills are developed as participants engage in conversations during activities they know or enjoy exploring, their enthusiasm often enhances their ability to communicate effectively in their new environment.
- Informal education provides a welcoming environment where migrant participants can interact naturally and form friendships with peers from different cultural backgrounds. These interactions are crucial for building wider social cohesion and more inclusive communities. Through shared activities, children learn to appreciate diverse perspectives and develop mutual respect, reducing prejudices and fostering a more inclusive community.
- Informal settings allow for more flexible and creative approaches to education, which can be particularly effective in bridging cultural gaps. Activities can be specifically designed to include elements from different cultures, helping participants discover commonalities and celebrate differences. Storytelling, music, and art are powerful tools in this context, enabling children to express their cultural identities and learn about others in a respectful and engaging way.

Key Strategies

- Organise group activities that require teamwork and collaboration.
- Encourage social events that involve families and community members, strengthening the network of support for migrant children and adolescents.
- Use games and projects that reflect a variety of cultural backgrounds to promote cultural exchange.
- Integrate cultural heritage elements into everyday learning and special events.
- Facilitate multicultural festivals where different traditions can be showcased and enjoyed by all.
- Provide opportunities for children to share stories and experiences from their home countries.
- Implement language buddy systems where children with different mother tongues pair up to teach each other.
- Use role-playing and simulation games to practise language skills in real-life contexts.
- Encourage discussion groups that focus on fun and engaging topics, allowing children to practise new vocabulary and expressions without pressure.
- Celebrate small achievements and milestones within the activities to motivate and build confidence.
- Allow participants to lead activities or parts of projects to enhance their leadership skills and self-esteem.
- Create a supportive feedback environment where constructive feedback is given in a nurturing manner.

Planning and Preparation - age and audience -appropriate activities

For the successful implementation of extracurricular activities aimed at promoting integration and language learning, it is crucial to tailor these initiatives to be age and audience-appropriate. Effective planning and preparation will ensure that activities are engaging, educational, and suitable for the specific needs and interests of the participants. This section outlines strategies for creating activities that resonate well with diverse groups, particularly migrant children and adolescents.

Understanding your Audience is crucial for the successful design and implementation of any educational or integrative activity. Recognizing the diverse backgrounds, ages, language abilities, and cultural identities of participants allows organisers to tailor activities that resonate deeply, engage effectively, and fulfil the intended educational and social goals. Key steps to understand your audience:

- Begin by analysing the age, background, language skills, and cultural diversity of the participants. Understanding these aspects helps in designing activities that are not only age-appropriate but also culturally relevant.
- Conduct surveys or informal discussions with participants and their families to gather insights about their interests, challenges, and expectations. This information is crucial for aligning activities with the actual needs and preferences of the audience.

Structuring Activities - Effective structuring of activities is vital to ensure that they are engaging and enjoyable. By carefully designing activities that cater to the developmental, cultural, and personal needs of participants, we can create impactful experiences that promote learning, development, and social cohesion. It is important to consider age appropriateness and the need to design activities that match the developmental stages and learning capacities of different age groups.

- **Young Children (Ages 5-8):** Focus on activities that involve play and basic arts, which help in motor skills development and basic language acquisition.
- **Pre-Teens (Ages 9-12):** Incorporate more structured activities such as team sports, music classes, or simple theatrical performances, which encourage teamwork, connectivity and initial steps in complex language use.
- **Teenagers into Adolescents (Ages 13-18):** Engage this group with deeper-level projects like filmmaking, advanced music and theatre programmes, and storytelling workshops that explore deeper themes, promoting critical thinking and advanced language skills.
- **Older Youth and Young Adults (19-30)**
- **Adults (31+)**

Cultural Sensitivity should be considered and embedded in all activities. We must ensure that activities respect and celebrate the cultural backgrounds of all participants. It is important that each extracurricular activity incorporates elements from various cultures and encourages sharing and learning about different traditions and practices.

Conducting Activities - the importance of sensitivity, empathy + fun

*When facilitating activities aimed at integration and community building in informal education settings, **it's essential to approach each session with sensitivity, empathy, and a strong focus on creating a light and fun atmosphere.** These elements are crucial in fostering an inclusive, supportive, and engaging environment where learning and social interaction can flourish organically*

01 Sensitivity

Sensitivity, with regard to facilitating activities ensures that all participants feel respected and valued, regardless of their cultural or personal backgrounds. By understanding and honouring diverse customs and communication styles, facilitators can create an inclusive environment that promotes genuine participation and prevents cultural misunderstandings.

- **Cultural Awareness:** Activities should be conducted with an acute awareness of the diverse cultural backgrounds of participants. This sensitivity ensures that all customs, traditions, and communication styles are respected, preventing any cultural misunderstandings that could hinder participation.
- **Responsive Adaptation:** Facilitators must be attuned to the reactions and comfort levels of the group, ready to make adjustments to ensure that everyone feels included and comfortable.

02 Empathy

Empathy goes beyond simple understanding to actively feeling with the participants. It allows facilitators to connect on a deeper level, recognising and responding to the emotions and experiences of each individual. This connection is essential for building trust and fostering a supportive learning environment where participants feel safe to express themselves and engage fully.

- **Understanding Individual Needs:** Recognising and addressing the individual emotional and learning needs of participants builds a trusting relationship, which is essential for effective learning and integration.
- **Fostering Connection:** Through empathetic engagement, facilitators can encourage deeper interpersonal connections among participants, enhancing the group's cohesion and collaborative spirit.





03 Fun

Fun is a universal language that breaks down barriers and enhances learning. By infusing activities with enjoyment, participants are more likely to engage enthusiastically, retain information better, and form positive associations with the learning process. Fun also serves as a vital tool in reducing stress and anxiety, making learning more accessible and effective.

- **Engagement through Enjoyment:** Keeping activities light and enjoyable is key to drawing in participants and holding their interest. Fun activities reduce barriers to participation, especially for those who might be hesitant to engage in more formal or structured settings.
- **Stress Reduction and Well-being:** Incorporating fun reduces stress and creates positive associations with learning and integration processes, which is crucial for mental and emotional well-being.

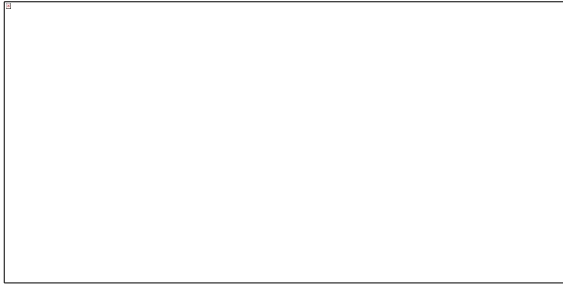
04 Implementing + Maintaining a Light Informal Learning Atmosphere

Maintaining a light and informal learning atmosphere is crucial for encouraging spontaneous participation and making education feel less like a chore and more like an enjoyable discovery. This atmosphere helps to keep the environment flexible and responsive to the needs and moods of the participants, promoting organic learning experiences that are both enjoyable and impactful.

- **Creative and Playful Learning:** Use play and creativity as fundamental elements in activity design. Whether through games, arts, or interactive storytelling, these methods make learning engaging and accessible.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Celebrate achievements with positive feedback, creating an uplifting atmosphere that reinforces learning and boosts confidence.
- **Flexibility:** While maintaining some structure, allow for flexibility to adapt activities based on the participants' feedback and the dynamics of the group. This approach ensures that the atmosphere remains relaxed and responsive to the needs of the participants.
- **Cultural Celebrations:** Integrate festive elements from various cultures, such as music, dance, and food, to keep activities enjoyable and educational. These celebrations are excellent opportunities for participants to share and learn about different cultural backgrounds in a fun setting.



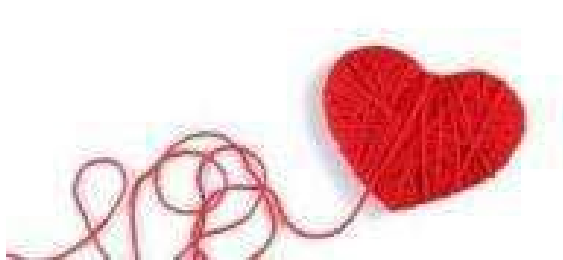
Thematic Areas of Focus



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Storytelling, Music & Theatre



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Creativity Activities



3.3

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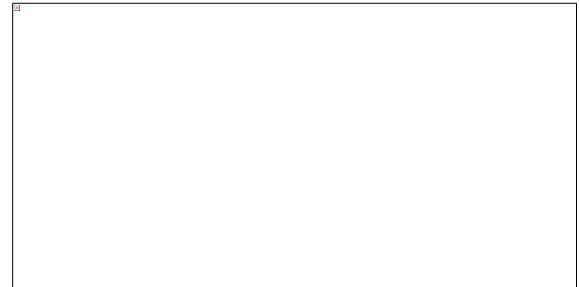
Food & Nutrition



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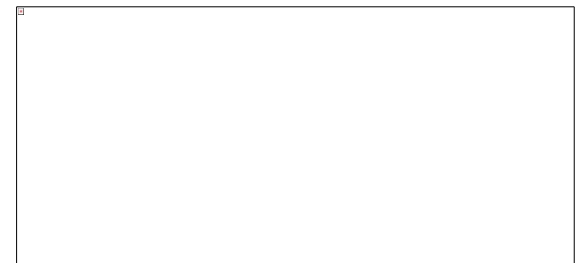
Nature



3.5

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Sport & Recreation



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Wellbeing



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Local history & culture info sessions



3.1 Music, Theatre and Storytelling



Why Storytelling, Music and Theatre for Integration: language learning and cultural awareness

Storytelling, music, and theatre are powerful mediums that transcend cultural and linguistic barriers, making them ideal tools for integration programs. These artistic practices are widely recognised for their capacity to facilitate both language acquisition and cultural exchange.

01 Storytelling: Building Bridges Through Narratives

- Storytelling provides a unique avenue for expression and understanding, allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to share their experiences and cultural heritage in a personal way. Storytelling encourages active listening, a skill crucial for language learning and social integration.
- Narrative-based learning helps improve vocabulary retention and grammatical comprehension more effectively than traditional language teaching methods. This approach provides context and meaning, making it easier for learners to remember and use new language constructs.
- According to a recent study published in the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*², storytelling can significantly reduce prejudices by exposing listeners to different cultural perspectives and humanising broad social issues.

² *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* | SAGE Publications Ltd

02 Music: Harmony in Diversity

- Music is a universal language that resonates with individuals of all ages and backgrounds. It has a role in enhancing our cognitive functions, improving language skills, and promoting social cohesion.
- Research from the European Journal of Neuroscience³ highlights that music education can enhance brain development, particularly in areas responsible for processing sound, language, and speech.
- An article Music, Social Cohesion, and Intercultural Understanding: A Conceptual Framework for Intercultural Music Engagement⁴, shares that music is a source of cultural understanding and a site for cultural exchange. In a world that increasingly requires people of many different backgrounds to live together, routes to encourage intercultural social cohesion are of great importance. This article builds on evidence that the arts—and music in particular—offer unique spaces for fostering a shared socio-emotional experience.

03 Theatre, Drama and Role Playing: A Stage for Empathy + Learning

- Theatre can be deployed as an educational tool and positioned to provide a dynamic environment where participants can explore, enact and become familiar with various social situations and cultural narratives. This playful and experiential participatory action can help solidify language learning and enhance empathetic skills.
- The immersive nature of theatre, drama and role-playing can help our ACTIN participants, locals, migrants and refugees understand and empathise with different viewpoints. A recent report from the European Cultural Foundation⁵ suggests that theatre projects involving multiple ethnic groups can lead to increased empathy and reduced social tensions.
- Participating in theatre productions, particularly community ones, also allows non-native speakers to practise language in a full-bodied context, improving fluency and comprehension. Sometimes, the requirement to perform and practice in another language can help accelerate linguistic competence and confidence.

These artistic practices are easy to get involved in and are entertaining and they are also critical tools for cultural exchange, building inclusive societies and giving diverse voices and cultures a platform and place to be understood and appreciated.

Storytelling Workshop: Stories of Home, Family, Hopes, and Dreams

AGE Pre-Teens (Ages 9-12), Teenagers (Ages 13-18), Older Youth (19-30) and Young Adults (31+)

This storytelling workshop is designed to engage migrant and refugee children, adolescents, and their families, along with local community members, in sharing personal narratives that resonate with universal themes of home, family, hopes, and dreams. By facilitating an open exchange of stories,

the workshop aims to enhance language skills, foster cultural understanding, and strengthen community ties. The structure of the workshop is designed to create a supportive and inclusive environment where all participants feel valued and heard.

³ [Researchers find that children's brains develop faster with music training \(usc.edu\)](https://www.usc.edu/news/2018/05/08/researchers-find-that-childrens-brains-develop-faster-with-music-training)

⁴ [Music, social cohesion, and intercultural understanding: A conceptual framework for intercultural music engagement - Alexander Hew Dale Croke, William Forde Thompson, Trisnasari Fraser, Jane Davidson, 2024 \(sagepub.com\)](https://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav)

⁵ [Activities report – ECF - Annual Report \(culturalfoundation.eu\)](https://www.culturalfoundation.eu/)

Goals of the Workshop

- Through storytelling, participants practice articulating thoughts and ideas clearly and confidently in a second language, improving both linguistic and narrative skills.
- Sharing and listening to stories from diverse backgrounds enhance empathy, reduce biases, and promote a deeper understanding of different cultural and personal experiences.
- By bringing together migrant, refugee and local populations, the workshop helps forge strong community ties, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support among participants.

Underpinning Educational Concepts

01 Agentivity



Participant-Led Storytelling:

The workshop empowers participants by giving them control over the content and the flow of their narratives. This self-directed storytelling nurtures a sense of agency as individuals choose how to present their personal and cultural backgrounds.

Decision-Making Opportunities:

Participants decide whether to share their stories in small groups or with the entire assembly, fostering independence and self-determination within the supportive framework of the workshop.

02 Facilitation



Supportive Environment: Facilitators play a key role in creating a welcoming atmosphere that encourages sharing and interaction. They are trained to handle sensitive topics with empathy and respect, ensuring that all participants feel comfortable and supported.

Guided Discussions: Facilitators guide the post-storytelling discussions, gently steering conversations to explore common themes and diverse experiences. This method ensures that discussions are inclusive and constructive, allowing participants to reflect on shared human experiences while appreciating cultural uniqueness.

03 Inductive Learning



Learning Through Experience: The workshop utilises inductive learning strategies by allowing participants to derive understanding and insights from the personal stories shared. This approach helps solidify learning as participants connect emotional and cultural information to broader

concepts.

Collaborative Problem Solving: During group discussions, participants collaboratively explore solutions or responses to scenarios presented in stories, practising critical thinking and social skills in a real-world context.

Storytelling Workshop Objectives

- **Enhance Communication Skills:** Improve participants' storytelling and language skills through guided activities.
- **Foster Cultural Exchange:** Encourage sharing of personal and cultural histories to enhance mutual understanding.
- **Build Community Connections:** Strengthen bonds among participants by sharing personal stories that resonate with universal themes.
- **Encourage Emotional Expression:** Establishing a supportive space for expressing personal hopes, dreams, and memories.

Target Audience

Migrant and refugee children and adolescents, along with their families and local community members.

Duration

Approximately 2-3 hours, allowing for introductions, storytelling, discussions, and a closing reflection.

Venue

A quiet, intimate space such as a community centre room, library private area, or even an outdoor setting suitable for gatherings.

Materials Needed

- Comfortable seating arrangements in a circle or semi-circle.
- Recording equipment for capturing stories, if consent is provided.
- Notebooks and pens for participants who prefer to write down their thoughts.
- Decorative items to create a welcoming and cosy atmosphere.
- Refreshments to make the environment more inviting.



Storytelling Workshop Schedule

Time	Activity	Description
15 Mins	Introduction	- Welcome and ice-breaker activities to make everyone comfortable. See proven examples in appendices that you can adapt. - Brief explanation of the workshop's purpose and the importance of the themes.
15 - 30 Mins	Warm-Up Activity	A simple storytelling circle where each participant shares their name and a favourite memory from their childhood. This sets a precedent for sharing and listening.
30 -120 Mins	Themed Storytelling	Part A: Individual Reflection (15 minutes) - Participants reflect on their own experiences and jot down key points about stories they wish to share related to home, family, hopes, or dreams. Part B: Storytelling in Pairs or Small Groups (30 minutes) - Participants pair up or form small groups to share their stories in a more intimate setting, which can help shy participants feel more comfortable. Part C: Sharing with the Larger Group (15-45 minutes) - Volunteers share their stories with the entire group. Not everyone must share; respect for personal comfort levels is crucial.
120 -150 Mins	Guided Discussion	- Discuss common themes and emotions that emerged during the storytelling. - Highlight the diversity of experiences as well as the commonalities that connect us all.
150 -165 Mins	Reflection and Closure	- Participants reflect on what they learned from others' stories. - Close with a group activity that consolidates the community feeling, such as creating a collective art piece or a group photo. - Collect feedback on the workshop to gauge its impact and areas for improvement. - Provide information on future sessions or related activities to keep participants engaged.

Implementation Notes

- Ensure facilitators are trained in empathetic listening and cultural sensitivity.
- Prepare to handle emotional responses with care and professionalism.
- Facilitators should guide the discussion subtly, allowing natural flow while ensuring respectful and constructive interaction.

3.2 Creativity Activities



Why Creativity for INtegration: language learning and cultural awareness

Creativity plays a pivotal role in enhancing integration efforts, particularly in the realms of language learning, cultural awareness and social inclusion. Incorporating creative approaches into extracurricular activities provides numerous benefits that can significantly enrich the integration process for migrants and refugees.

01 ACTIN Craft in Action

Many migrants and refugees bring with them a wealth of craft skills from their native cultures, ranging from traditional weaving and pottery to embroidery and woodworking. These skills are a powerful part of their cultural identity and, from an ACTIN perspective, a potential avenue for integration, skill-sharing, and even economic opportunity within new communities. ACTIN Craft in Action suggests that we leverage these talents through a series of facilitated workshops where migrants and refugees of all ages can refine their existing skills under the guidance of skilled people in the local community.



Irish tapestry artist Francis Crowe delivered workshops to migrant and refugee women and was so inspired, she created a thought-provoking artwork that delve into important social and cultural issues. titled **“Torn Apart”**. This powerful work explores the human experience of intersectionality, inequality, and social injustice, particularly through the lens of family separation. **Watch “Torn Apart” by Frances Crowe.**

Make it Happen

How can you organise craft workshops with minimal budgets and volunteer support? We have some ideas that will work for all ages

Textile Traditions Workshop

Execution:

Partner with local textile artisans who can volunteer to teach different techniques. Use donated or second-hand fabrics and textiles. The collaborative quilt or tapestry can use scrap materials to minimize costs.

Pottery and Ceramics Studio

Execution: Collaborate with a local pottery studio that can provide space during off-peak hours at a reduced cost or in exchange for publicity. Use natural clay sources or recycled clay from other projects. Volunteers can handle teaching and kiln operations.

Jewellery Making and Metalwork

Execution: Source inexpensive materials like beads, wires, and recycled metals from donations or craft recycling centres. Jewellery artists can volunteer to lead sessions, sharing tools to cut costs

Woodworking and Carving

Execution: Use reclaimed wood or wood scraps from local carpenters or construction sites. Partner with retired woodworkers or carpentry schools for volunteer instructors. Focus on small projects to keep material use low.

Basketry and Woven Crafts

Execution: Gather natural materials like reeds and grasses or use strips of old fabric. Local weavers or senior community members with weaving skills can volunteer to teach.

Paper Crafts

Execution: Utilize recycled paper, old magazines, and newspapers collected from the community. Local artists or teachers can volunteer to conduct sessions on different paper techniques.

Cultural Sculpture Making

Execution: Use recycled materials and inexpensive clay or plaster. Sculpture sessions can be led by local artists or art students looking to gain teaching experience or community service hours.

Upcycling and Sustainable Crafts

Execution: Organize donation drives for old furniture, textiles, and other materials that can be upcycled. Workshops led by DIY enthusiasts or local artisans can focus on transforming these items into new products.

Painting and Visual Arts

Execution: Purchase bulk paints and canvases or use alternative materials like cardboard for painting surfaces. Local painters or art students can volunteer their time for teaching and overseeing mural projects.

Cultural Masks and Performance Props

Execution: Use affordable materials like paper-mâché, cardboard, and natural items for mask-making. Theatre groups or art teachers can volunteer to run these workshops, which could culminate in a community performance.

General Tips for Budget Management and Volunteer Engagement:

- **Networking:** Build strong relationships with local artisans, art colleges, retirees, and community centres to find volunteers and resource donations.
- **Publicity:** Offer promotional benefits to craftspersons and arts centres such as featuring them in event promotions, community newsletters, and local media outlets.
- **Resource Sharing:** Encourage a culture of sharing and reusing materials among workshops to reduce costs.

And most importantly.....

- **Community Involvement:** Engage the community in gathering materials, assisting in workshops, and participating in events to spread the workload and foster a sense of ownership
- **Language learning:** Incorporate language learning and cultural education into craft sessions, allowing participants to practice language skills in a practical, relaxed setting.

Providing a creative outlet can help migrants and refugees cope with the stresses of displacement and integration. Crafting is known for its therapeutic benefits, such as reducing anxiety and increasing self-esteem. Mastering and sharing a skill can significantly boost an individual's confidence and sense of accomplishment, contributing positively to their overall integration into the community.





02 ACTIN Photography for Expression

The power of photography to enable migrants and refugees to tell their stories, express emotions, and share their perspectives with the broader community is an enlightening undertaking.

To get started, consider partnering with local photographers or a camera club who are willing to volunteer their time and expertise. These professionals can provide workshops and hands-on training sessions, teaching participants basic photography skills such as composition, lighting, and storytelling through images. Utilizing borrowed or donated cameras—even simple smartphones—participants can engage in this art form without the need for expensive equipment.

Materials for the program, such as tripods and additional cameras, can be sourced from donations or loans from community members or local businesses. For displaying the photographs, consider digital exhibitions hosted online or utilize community spaces like libraries, cafes, and community centres that can offer wall space for free or at a minimal cost.

Encourage participants to explore their new environment through photo walks or assign projects that reflect their personal experiences and cultural backgrounds, culminating in an exhibition that celebrates the diversity and stories within the community. This not only provides a platform for expression and integration but also fosters interaction and understanding within the local population.

By focusing on accessible technology and leveraging community resources, Photography for Expression initiative can create a meaningful impact, allowing individuals to connect and express themselves creatively while fostering a deeper understanding across different cultures within the community.



A calligraphy workshop is a lovely way to introduce participants to the art of beautiful handwriting. Calligraphy is a meditative and rewarding activity that enhances fine motor skills, cultural appreciation, and artistic expression. This workshop is suitable for teenagers (ages 13-18), older youth (19-30), and adults (31+) and can be particularly appealing to individuals interested in arts, crafts, and cultural heritage. We recommend using different scripts that reflect various cultural heritages.

Objectives

- **Enhance Fine Motor Skills:** Develop and refine participants' motor skills through the precise movements required in calligraphy.
- **Promote Cultural Appreciation:** Introduce different calligraphic styles from around the world, such as Arabic, Chinese, or Western scripts, enhancing cultural awareness and appreciation.
- **Boost Patience and Focus:** Encourage participants to engage in a detailed, focused activity that requires patience and concentration.

- **Artistic Expression:** Provide a creative outlet for participants to express themselves artistically in a unique and personal way.

Materials Needed

- Calligraphy pens or brushes
- Ink pots or cartridges
- High-quality paper suitable for calligraphy
- Practice sheets with guidelines
- Examples of calligraphy from various cultures

Venue

A quiet classroom or community centre room with tables and ample space for participants to work comfortably.

Duration

Approximately 2-3 hours, which allows for an introduction to calligraphy, practice time, and sharing of work among participants.



Exploring museums offers a unique and enriching experience for migrants and refugees, providing them with invaluable opportunities to learn about and integrate into their new community's culture and history. These trips not only aid in language acquisition but also foster a deeper understanding of the local cultural

landscape, enhancing both social connections and personal growth. As educational havens, museums serve as gateways to both the past and the present, making them perfect venues for newcomers to connect with the heritage of their new home while preserving the essence of their own cultural identities.

Benefits of a Museum Trip for Migrants and Refugees

Cultural Integration and Awareness:

Migrants and refugees gain valuable insights into the local history and cultural dynamics that shape their new community, aiding their integration process. The exposure to a variety of cultures within museums helps participants appreciate cultural diversity, including seeing their own cultures reflected within a global narrative.

Language Learning:

Interactive displays and multimedia installations in museums provide engaging contexts for language learning, helping migrants and refugees improve their vocabulary and practical communication skills. The rich, contextual settings offered by museums enhance language comprehension, allowing participants to practice new linguistic skills in real-world scenarios.

Social Connections and Community Building:

Museum trips create opportunities for migrants and refugees to build new social networks, fostering connections through shared cultural experiences and discussions. Group activities within the museum setting encourage community engagement and support, providing a welcoming environment for all participants.

Educational Advancement:

Museums offer access to supplementary educational resources that deepen participants' understanding of various academic subjects through tangible, interactive learning experiences. By engaging with museum exhibits, participants develop critical thinking and observational skills, enhancing their ability to analyse and interpret information.

Psychological Well-being:

Exhibits showcasing human creativity and resilience can inspire and motivate migrants and refugees, providing them with relatable stories of overcoming adversity. The immersive and educational environment of museums offers stress relief and mental enrichment, contributing to the overall well-being of participants.

Visiting a **folk or heritage museum** offers a unique opportunity to delve deep into the traditions, customs, and everyday life of a culture. These museums often showcase local craftsmanship, traditional costumes, tools, and historical artifacts that bring to life the stories and achievements of ordinary people, making the cultural learning experience both relatable and immersive. Folk museums can be an interesting place to create a sense of continuity and belonging, especially for those striving to find their place in a new cultural setting while preserving their own heritage.



Sensory art workshops are designed to create a unique and inclusive art experience that engages multiple senses, making art accessible and enjoyable for all participants, including those with sensory sensitivities or disabilities. These workshops can be particularly beneficial in integrating diverse communities, as they encourage expression and communication through non-verbal means.

Sensory art workshops under the ACTIN initiative can significantly benefit participants by enhancing sensory integration, promoting emotional expression, and improving social skills. They also raise awareness about the importance of accessibility in art and can help break down barriers to cultural participation for individuals with sensory sensitivities. These workshops provide therapeutic benefits and can enrich the cultural fabric of the community.

Here's how to effectively organise and conduct these workshops:

Planning the Workshops

Venue Selection: Choose a venue that is accessible and comfortable, with adequate space for movement and various activity stations. Ensure that the environment can be adjusted to suit sensory needs, such as lighting and sound control.

Material Preparation: Select materials that stimulate different senses safely and engagingly. This includes tactile materials like clay, fabric, or foam; visual materials like bright colours and lights; auditory materials like music or sound effects; and even olfactory materials with non-irritating scents.

Workshop Structure:

Plan structured activities that allow for both guided and independent exploration of materials. Activities should be flexible to accommodate participants' comfort levels and sensory thresholds.

Professional Involvement: Involve professionals like occupational therapists, special education experts, or artists skilled in sensory art techniques to design activities that are therapeutically beneficial and creatively fulfilling.

Participant Preparation: Provide participants and their caregivers (if applicable) with clear information about what to expect during the workshop, including the types of activities and materials involved. This helps in managing expectations and preparing them adequately for the sensory experience.

Conducting the Workshops

Warm-Up Activities: Begin with simple, calming activities to ease participants into the sensory environment. This could include simple stretching, deep breathing, or a brief guided meditation.

Rotational Stations: Set up different stations that focus on specific sensory experiences, allowing participants to move at their own pace. Each station should have clear instructions and support staff to assist participants as needed.

Collaborative Projects: Incorporate collaborative projects that encourage teamwork and social interaction, such as a large mural or a group sculpture. This fosters a sense of community and shared achievement.

Cool Down and Reflection: End with a cool-down period where participants can relax and reflect on their creations and experiences. Provide opportunities for feedback and expression about their feelings and any insights they gained.

Post-Workshop Activities

Exhibition or Sharing Session: Organize an exhibition or a sharing session where participants can display and discuss their artworks. This celebrates their achievements and shares their creative expressions with a wider audience.

Feedback Collection: Collect feedback from participants and caregivers to understand their experiences and gather suggestions for improving future workshops.

Documentation and Promotion: Document the workshops through photos or videos (ensuring to respect privacy and consent) to promote the benefits of sensory art workshops and encourage more widespread adoption of similar programs.



3.3 Food & Nutrition



Why Food & Nutrition for INtegration: language learning and cultural awareness

Food is a universal language that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers, making it an exceptional tool for integration, language learning, and cultural awareness. Integrating food and nutrition into programs aimed at helping migrants and refugees can significantly enhance their effectiveness by fostering social bonds, facilitating communication, and enriching cultural understanding.

Exploring the Role of Food in Integration

There is no greater thing that binds us as people than food. We all need to eat, and most of us enjoy exploring new flavours and foods. Sitting down at the dinner table offers more than just a meal—it's a chance to connect. As we share the various dishes, we also share the trials and tribulations of our day. Eating with others opens up conversations, helps us discover common ground, and provides an invaluable opportunity to learn about each other's cultures and lives.

In the context of ACTIN, when our migrant and refugee participants engage with local ingredients and try out new recipes, they have a chance to practice their language skills and explore local customs in a natural and enjoyable setting. The type of shared culinary experiences we cover in the pages which follow help break down barriers, enabling friendships and deeper integration into the community.

Creating an ACTIN Global Cuisine Cook and Talk Series offers an engaging culinary initiative designed to celebrate the diverse culinary traditions brought to communities by migrants and refugees from around the world. This series invites participants to cook together, share meals, and engage in meaningful conversations about food, culture, and personal stories.

Each session could be focused on dishes from different countries, providing a platform for cultural exchange and mutual understanding through the universal language of food. By cooking and conversing, participants not only enhance their culinary skills but also deepen their appreciation for global cultures, fostering a sense of community and inclusivity. For inspiration, here are some best practice initiatives in this space.

Sligo Global Kitchen – Ireland began as an art project supported by The Model, a contemporary art center in Sligo, Ireland. It was initiated to create a space for people living in direct provision to cook, eat, and socialise with the local community.

Key Elements

Community Engagement: SGK regularly organizes meals open to the public, where anyone can come and enjoy a diverse array of dishes, fostering greater community spirit and cultural exchange.

Empowerment Through Participation: Participants take turns leading cooking sessions, showcasing dishes from their home countries, which empowers them by placing value on their cultural knowledge and culinary skills.

Impact: SGK has transformed into a vibrant community initiative, where people from lots of different cultural backgrounds come together to share their traditional cuisines with locals and other migrants. This has helped reduce the social isolation often experienced by those in direct provision while also enriching the local community's cultural landscape.



www.facebook.com/foodsies/



“MMM...ulticultural Cooking: Mixing Flavours – Matching Nations at Ioannina’s Kitchen - Greece

The Ioannina's Kitchen Symposium “MMM...ulticultural Cooking: Mixing Flavours – Matching Nations” is a dynamic culinary event located in Ioannina, Greece, that celebrates multicultural cooking and community-building. This initiative was designed to bridge cultural divides and foster unity through the shared experience of cooking and eating.

Highlights

Cultural Exchange Workshops:

The event includes cooking workshops where participants teach each other how to prepare dishes from their native countries, facilitating an exchange of culinary traditions and stories.

Community Integration:

By involving both locals and migrants, the Kitchen Symposium strengthens social cohesion and helps new arrivals feel welcomed as part of the community.

Public Events and Celebrations:

The symposium culminates in public feasts that showcase the multicultural dishes prepared during the workshops, drawing broader public engagement and media attention to the positive impact of such cultural interactions. The event was open to the public, while attendees had the opportunity to taste specialties from Syria, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Greece, along with a recipe from the Jewish community of Romaniotes in Ioannina.

[Food Unites: Celebrating Multicultural Cooking at Ioannina's Kitchen Symposium - EPIC-UP \(epicamif.eu\)](https://epicamif.eu)

The ACTIN Heritage Recipe Exchange is a vibrant, educational, and enjoyable way to foster integration and celebrate the rich tapestry of food and cultures within a community. It provides a platform for storytelling, learning, and connection, making it a valuable addition to any cultural integration initiative. The ACTIN Heritage Recipe Exchange is an activity designed to celebrate cultural diversity and foster community integration through the sharing of traditional

recipes. Participants are encouraged to bring recipes from their cultural backgrounds, prepare them together, and share the stories behind these dishes. This activity helps participants learn about different cuisines, cooking techniques, and the historical context of various dishes. This activity is suitable for all age groups but is particularly engaging for families, culinary enthusiasts, and individuals interested in cultural histories.

Objectives

Cultural Appreciation: Increase understanding and appreciation of different cultures through their culinary traditions.

Language Practice: Enhance language skills as participants explain recipes, cooking terms, and food-related stories in a new language.

Social Integration: Foster connections and friendships among diverse community members through shared cooking experiences.

Educational Opportunity: Teach nutritional information, cooking skills, and safe food handling practices.

Materials Needed

- Kitchen space adequate for cooking and dining. Cooking utensils and equipment.
- Ingredients for the recipes (participants can bring specific items if required).
- Printed recipe cards (see next page) or a digital platform to share and document recipes.

Venue

A community centre kitchen, school home economics classroom, or any suitable space with cooking facilities.

Duration

Approximately 3-4 hours, allowing time for cooking, eating, and discussion.

Time	Activity	Description
30 mins	Introduction and Setup	Participants introduce their recipes and share the cultural significance or personal stories associated with them.
2 hours	Cooking Session	Participants cook their dishes in small groups, assisting and learning from each other, facilitated by a chef or knowledgeable host.
30 mins	Meal Sharing and Discussion	Everyone sits together to enjoy the meals prepared, discussing the flavors, ingredients, and cooking techniques used.
30 mins	Reflection and Feedback	Participants reflect on what they learned, exchange feedback, and discuss how the experience affected their understanding of different cultures.

[illegible]

3.4 Nature



Why Nature for INtegration: language learning and cultural awareness

Embracing nature provides a unique and enriching pathway for the integration of migrants and refugees into new communities. Nature-based activities offer serene and neutral settings that can ease the stress of adaptation. Shared outdoor experiences such as hiking or gardening can help break down cultural barriers and promote mutual understanding. By stepping outside, participants enter a world of learning and connection, where nature serves as both a classroom and a bridge between cultures.

01 Guided Nature Walks and Hikes

Guided nature walks and hikes offer migrants and refugees, including families with children, a chance to explore the diverse landscapes of their new environments while learning about local plants and ecological systems. These guided excursions should be enriched with discussions about native flora, traditional uses of plants, and local conservation efforts, deepening participants' connection to their new home. Tailored activities for children, like scavenger hunts, can make these walks educational and engaging for all ages, fostering a sense of wonder and respect for nature.

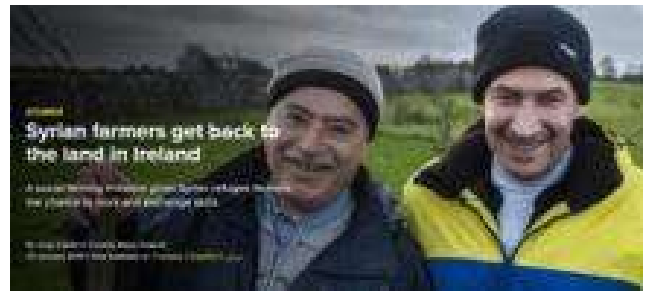


While not nature based, **L'Alternative Urbaine à Bordeaux** offers an interesting model of training to train those far from employment, like migrants to become urban “tourguide” scouts.

02 Gardening and Farming Projects e.g. social farming

Gardening and farming projects, including social farming, offer a practical and therapeutic way for migrants and refugees to connect with their new environment and community. These initiatives provide a space where individuals can learn agricultural skills, engage in physical activity, and enjoy the therapeutic benefits of working with the earth. Participants can grow plants native to both their new and original homes, fostering a sense of continuity and belonging. These projects also encourage community interaction and cooperation, creating a supportive network where cultural knowledge and agricultural techniques are shared. As a result, gardening and farming can help ease the transition for migrants and refugees by providing them with a sense of purpose, community connection, and the satisfaction of contributing to their new society.

In County Mayo, Ireland, a 10 week social farming initiative for Syrian refugee farmers provides an opportunity for the refugees to exchange agricultural skills with local farmers, enhancing community integration.



(UNHCR)

03 Wildlife Tours

Wildlife tours can provide a focused educational experience that brings migrants and refugees face-to-face with local wildlife, guided by local experts who explain animal behaviours, conservation challenges, and their ecological roles. These tours often lead to discussions on broader environmental issues, helping newcomers appreciate global and local efforts in wildlife conservation and inspiring them to participate in these initiatives actively. Top tips for organising and participating in wildlife tours:

Prepare and Educate: Before embarking on a wildlife tour, ensure all participants are briefed on the types of animals they might see, their significance to the local ecosystem, and any safety guidelines. Education about local wildlife can enrich the experience and foster a deeper appreciation.

Respect Wildlife: Always maintain a safe distance from animals, avoid feeding wildlife, and keep noise levels low to minimize disturbance. Respecting the natural habitat of wildlife is crucial for their well-being and for a genuine observation experience.

04 Biodiversity Conservation Actions e.g. beekeeping

Biodiversity conservation actions like beekeeping are especially beneficial for migrants and refugees as they provide practical skills and connect them with their new environment. Engaging in beekeeping helps migrants and refugees learn about local biodiversity and environmental practices while improving language skills through hands-on activities and interaction with local experts.

Bees and Refugees **are an** environmental justice organisation who have developed an interesting model dedicated to promoting beekeeping as a craft, community-building activity, and therapeutic practice for both refugee and local communities in London.



www.beesandrefugees.org.uk

05 Fishing Expeditions

Fishing expeditions are particularly beneficial for older migrants and refugees, offering a relaxing way to learn local fishing rules and engage with the community. These activities are suited to older individuals as they provide a calm, patient environment ideal for those who might appreciate a slower-paced activity. Many refugees from Syria's coastal regions come from backgrounds that include fishing either as a livelihood or a cultural practice. This background can help facilitate their integration into new communities, especially those near bodies of water, where fishing is prevalent. Participants in these type of

activities can learn about sustainable fishing practices, local species, and compliance with fishing regulations, which are crucial for ecological conservation and legal fishing.

Integrating practical activities like fishing into language learning can make the process more engaging and effective, particularly for older migrants and refugees, who may find that practical and culturally familiar contexts enhance their ability to acquire a new language and cultural knowledge.

3.5 Sport & Recreation



Why Sport & Recreation for INtegration: language learning and cultural awareness

Sport and recreation activities provide a dynamic platform for integration, particularly effective for migrants and refugees learning a new language and acclimatizing to a new culture. These activities naturally foster social interaction and team spirit, creating a friendly environment where language barriers can be more easily overcome.

01 Adventure and Exploration

Adventure and exploration activities, such as rock climbing, orienteering, and kayaking, provide a thrilling way for migrants and refugees to engage with their new environment. These outdoor challenges encourage participants to step out of their comfort zones, fostering personal growth and resilience. Through these activities, participants have a great opportunity to build language skills as they follow instructions, communicate with team members, and engage in problem-solving.

When the activities include people from the wider community, the adventure-based learning is taken to another level by helping develop trust, teamwork, and leadership, making it an effective tool for cultural exchange and community integration.



02 Making Traditional Sports Welcoming

Traditional sports, like Gaelic football, cricket, or pétanque, can play a significant role in fostering community integration when made accessible to refugees and migrants. By holding "try-it-out" sessions and emphasising cultural exchange rather than competition, these sports become a way for newcomers to connect with local traditions, learn new skills, and form friendships within their new communities. To create an inclusive environment, organisers should offer clear, simple instructions, provide language support, and encourage participation from individuals of all skill levels. Here are some additional guidelines for making traditional sports welcoming to refugees and migrants:

Cultural Sensitivity: Be mindful of cultural differences in behaviour, modesty, and physical contact during the activities.

Language Support: Use visual aids and bilingual instruction where possible to ensure everyone understands the rules and can participate confidently.

Inclusive Rules: Modify the rules slightly if needed to accommodate varying skill levels and experiences, promoting a fun and supportive environment.

Local and Migrant Mix: Encourage local participants to join, ensuring a balanced mix of locals and newcomers to foster cultural exchange.

Provide Equipment: Make sure that equipment is available for everyone, especially for those who might not be familiar with or have access to the required gear.

03 Multicultural Sports Events/picnics

Multicultural sports events and picnics create an open and friendly environment for migrants, refugees, and locals to connect through casual activities and shared meals. These events combine sports like football, volleyball, or frisbee with social elements such as picnics where participants bring traditional foods from their cultures. The informal nature of these gatherings encourages participation from people of all ages and abilities, providing a platform for language learning and cultural exchange. Organising family-friendly games and mixing teams helps break down barriers and fosters understanding and friendships in a relaxed atmosphere.

Icebreakers and Group Introductions: A great way to start a multicultural sports event or picnic is by hosting a fun icebreaker activity to introduce participants. Simple games like "Human Bingo" where attendees ask each other questions to find commonalities (e.g., "Find someone who has lived in more than three countries"), can warm up the group. This encourages interaction, helps people feel more comfortable, and creates an inclusive atmosphere before starting the sports activities. These small efforts help build connections and set a welcoming tone for the day. See annex for more great icebreaker ideas.



A Cultural Relay Race could be a great example of a multicultural family-friendly game for such events. This relay race could involve participants completing fun tasks that represent different cultures. For example, one leg could involve balancing a traditional basket on their head, another could be hopping while carrying an item related to a cultural symbol, or tossing a small ball into a basket representing a local sport. Mixing cultural elements from different backgrounds creates a fun and educational game that encourages teamwork and cultural appreciation.

3.6 Wellbeing



Why Wellbeing for INtegration: language learning and cultural awareness

Focusing on wellbeing is essential for successful integration, particularly for migrants and refugees who face significant challenges as they adapt to a new environment. Wellbeing activities—such as yoga, mindfulness, and group discussions—help participants manage stress, improve mental health, and foster emotional resilience. These activities also provide an opportunity for language practice in a relaxed and supportive setting.

01 Understanding Mental Health and Supports in the Community

For migrants and refugees, understanding mental health services in their new community is critical to their well-being and successful integration. Many may face stress, trauma, or cultural adjustment challenges that affect their mental health. Providing clear information about local mental health resources, such as counselling services, support groups, or wellness programs, empowers individuals to seek help when needed.

Educating participants on the cultural perceptions of mental health in their new community also promotes better understanding, reducing stigma and encouraging positive coping strategies as they adapt to their new environment.

Emotional and social scaffolding involves providing the necessary support structures to help migrants and refugees adapt to their new communities. This includes emotional support, fostering a sense of belonging, and building social networks. Emotional and social scaffolding plays a critical role in language learning and cultural awareness by providing a supportive environment where migrants and refugees feel comfortable and confident engaging with new languages and cultures.

Emotional support reduces anxiety and promotes a positive mindset, which is essential for absorbing new information. Social scaffolding, such as community networks or peer groups, offers real-life opportunities for language practice and cultural exchange. These structures create safe spaces for making mistakes and learning through interaction, ultimately enhancing both language proficiency and cultural integration.

The **ACT and Connect for Integration (ACTIN) Buddy Scheme** plays a key role by creating supportive, educational (non-formal), and reciprocal relationships between migrants, refugees, and locals. Through this scheme, both groups are able to thrive, develop meaningful connections, and engage in mutual learning, creating an inclusive environment that strengthens resilience and community ties.



Resilience building is crucial for migrants and refugees. Strengthening resilience involves developing the emotional and psychological tools necessary to face difficulties, adapt to change, and bounce back from setbacks. Through group activities and discussions, migrant and refugee individuals of all ages can be empowered to recognise and value their inner strength.

Resilience Building Activity: Problem-Solving Circle

Objective: To build resilience through collaborative problem-solving, fostering emotional strength and critical thinking.

Activity:

1. Form a circle with participants.
2. Each person writes down a challenge they've faced (personal or integration-related).
3. The group takes turns sharing their challenges.
4. As each challenge is shared, the group collaboratively suggests possible solutions or coping strategies.
5. Reflect together on how these strategies can be applied in real-life situations.

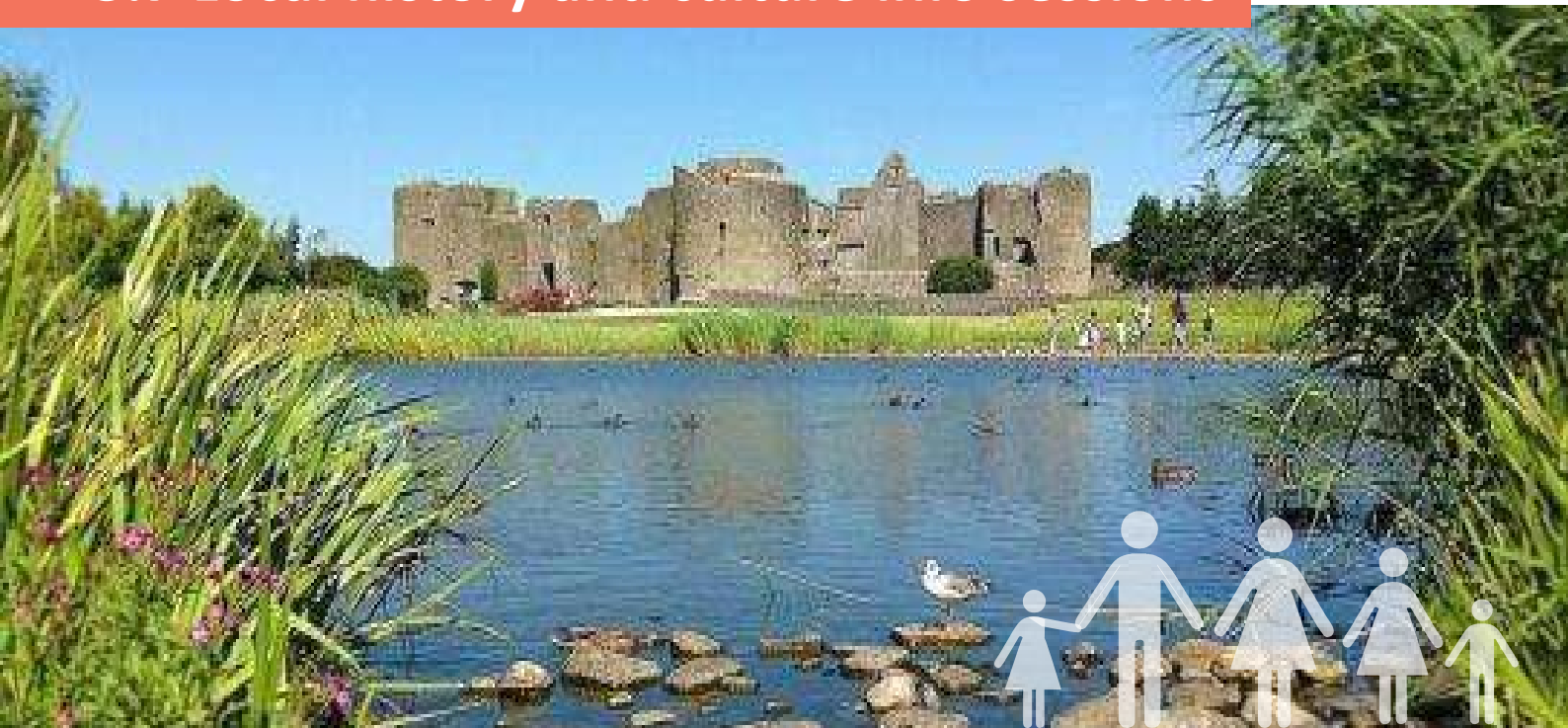
Mindfulness and yoga are powerful tools for promoting emotional balance, stress relief, and overall well-being. For migrants and refugees, these practices offer a calming way to cope with the mental and emotional challenges of integration, such as trauma, anxiety, or uncertainty.

Mindfulness exercises help individuals stay present and manage overwhelming feelings, while yoga encourages physical relaxation and mental clarity. Integrating mindfulness and yoga into daily routines builds resilience and fosters a deeper connection with oneself, ultimately supporting emotional health and smoother adaptation to new environments.

Top Tips for Integrating Mindfulness and Yoga in ACTIN Activities

1. **Start with Breathing:** Begin every session with simple breathing exercises to help participants focus and relax. This sets a calm tone for the activities ahead.
2. **Mindful Moments:** Introduce short mindfulness exercises during breaks in activities. Encourage participants to focus on their surroundings, senses, or physical sensations for a moment of grounding.
3. **End with Gentle Stretching:** Conclude activities with gentle yoga stretches or relaxation poses to help participants unwind and reflect on the day. This helps to promote physical relaxation and mental clarity.

3.7 Local history and culture info sessions



Why local history and culture info sessions for INtegration: language learning and cultural awareness

Local history and culture info sessions offer migrants and refugees a deeper understanding of their new environment.

These sessions provide valuable insights into the traditions, values, and historical context of the community, helping participants better navigate social norms and customs.

01 Local History and culture presentations

Local history and culture presentations offer an engaging way for migrants and refugees to learn about the traditions, historical events, and cultural values that shape their new community. These presentations can cover key historical moments, local heroes, festivals, and the evolution of societal norms, providing a rich backdrop for participants to understand the local identity.

They also offer a practical platform for learning new vocabulary related to history and culture, fostering both language development and deeper cultural awareness.

Some useful guidelines for conducting Local History and Culture Presentations:

- 1. Keep It Interactive:** Encourage questions and discussions throughout the presentation to make it more engaging and to promote active language use. Incorporating multimedia elements like photos, videos, or artifacts can also enhance learning and make the experience more memorable.
- 2. Tailor to the Audience:** Adapt the presentation to suit the language proficiency and cultural background of the participants. Avoid complex terminology and be sure to explain any cultural references that may be unfamiliar, making the content accessible to all.

02 Walking city tours (also connected with language learning)

Walking city tours provide migrants and refugees with a practical way to explore their new surroundings while improving language skills. As participants visit key landmarks, local shops, and historical sites, they learn new vocabulary in real-world settings.

With a guide explaining local history and culture, participants have the chance to practice listening and speaking in the local language. These tours serve as a valuable learning experience and help build connections within the community, fostering cultural integration.

After each stop, participants should be encouraged to ask questions, fostering a deeper understanding of cultural practices while practicing their language skills. Some sample questions could be:

What does this statue or memorial represent?

What cultural events or festivals are celebrated here?

How has this area changed over the years?

Other activities to consider including under walking city tours with language learning and cultural integration are:

Landmark Bingo: Participants are given a bingo card with various local landmarks or cultural symbols. As the group visits each location, participants can mark them off their cards, encouraging both language learning and cultural awareness.

Photo Challenge: Give participants a list of culturally significant places or objects to find and photograph during the tour. This helps improve vocabulary and understanding of local culture while offering an interactive element.

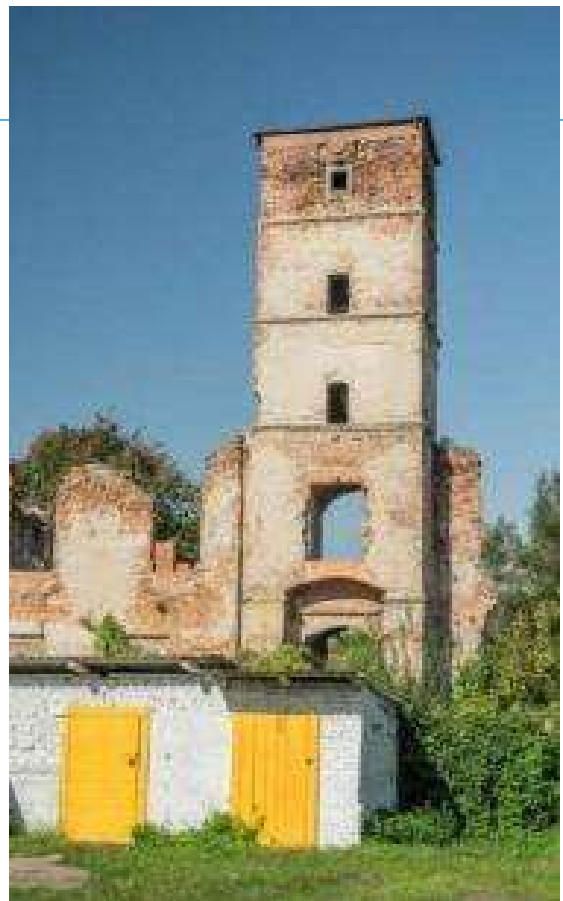
Scavenger Hunt: Create a list of clues (in the local language) related to local landmarks, cultural practices, or street signs. Participants work in teams to solve clues, practicing their language skills in real-world contexts.

Interactive Storytelling: At each stop, participants are encouraged to retell brief historical stories about the location in their own words. This promotes listening, comprehension, and speaking practice.

03 Archaeological sites expeditions

Expeditions to archaeological sites offer migrants and refugees a unique opportunity to connect with the history of their new surroundings while enhancing their language and cultural knowledge.

- Visiting ancient ruins, historical landmarks, and archaeological museums helps participants understand the deep-rooted heritage of the region.
- These outings serve as immersive learning experiences where participants can pick up specialized vocabulary related to history, archaeology, and local culture.
- Through guided tours, they engage in conversations about past civilizations, architectural techniques, and historical events, fostering a richer understanding of the local culture while practicing language skills in a meaningful context.
- These expeditions also encourage participants to reflect on their own cultural heritage, drawing parallels with the new culture they are now part of.



05 Meet my city/places - local youth/kids/adults showing their special places & talking about the city from their perspective, their history

The Meet My City initiative invites local youth, children, and adults to share their favorite spots within their city, offering newcomers a personal and unique perspective on local history and culture. These local guides can introduce places of personal or historical significance, helping migrants and refugees learn about the city from a grassroots level. This approach fosters deeper cultural exchange and provides an engaging platform for practicing language skills through real-world interaction.

Case Study: Les Éclaireurs Urbains in Bordeaux

A great example of this approach can be seen in the *Les Éclaireurs Urbains* initiative in Bordeaux, France. This program trains local residents, including marginalized populations, to guide urban walks, showcasing their own neighborhoods through their lived experiences. Participants offer unique insights into the city, uncovering hidden gems that traditional tours often overlook. By learning about the city through the eyes of its residents, migrants and refugees can connect on a more personal level, gaining a deeper understanding of both the place and the people. You can learn more about this program at [Les Éclaireurs Urbains](#).

This model of community-led tours provides an enriching experience where language learning, cultural understanding, and personal storytelling intersect.



Sahay

A true quiet force, Sahay is a woman whose sweetness is perceived as quickly as her intelligence. Originally from Cuba and a historian by training, she offers us a reading of the Capuchins at Sainte-Croix with this double perspective. Expect to take a trip around the world, listening to the diversity of sounds that abound in the neighborhood and sometimes going back in time with it.

Guidelines for running a Meet My City activity:

- 1. Select and Train Local Guides:** Choose local residents, such as youth, adults, or even seniors, who are passionate about their city. Provide them with basic training on how to lead a tour, ensuring they focus on personal stories, historical facts, and interesting insights about the places they are showcasing.
- 2. Promote Storytelling:** Encourage the local guides to share their personal connection to the places they introduce. This storytelling element makes the experience more relatable and engaging for participants, promoting deeper cultural understanding.
- 3. Create Diverse Tour Routes:** Collaborate with the guides to select a variety of spots, including well-known landmarks, hidden gems, and culturally significant areas. The mix of popular and personal locations will give newcomers a more well-rounded experience of the city.
- 4. Interactive Language Practice:** Encourage tour participants to engage in conversation with the local guides. This interaction will foster real-world language practice, helping migrants and refugees improve their listening and speaking skills in an informal and meaningful context.
- 5. Tailor for Accessibility:** Ensure the routes are accessible for all participants, considering physical abilities, language proficiency, and any other specific needs the group may have. This ensures everyone feels included and comfortable.
- 6. Debriefing and Reflection:** After the tour, create a space for participants to reflect on what they've learned. Encourage them to share their thoughts or ask questions, further enhancing language learning and cultural exchange.
- 7. Pair with Other Activities:** Combine the tour with activities like picnics or workshops to extend interaction time between participants and local guides, reinforcing the bonds formed during the tour.
- 8.** These guidelines will help make the Meet My City activity both educational and enriching for all involved.

RESOURCES



Material and Supply Lists

To ensure the smooth execution of the diverse range of activities outlined in this guide, it is important to gather a variety of materials and resources that can be adapted to each specific workshop. Below is a general resource list to help facilitate preparation and organization

1. **Seating and Comfort** - Chairs, cushions, or portable mats for indoor and outdoor activities.
2. **Recording and Documentation**- Cameras or smartphones for capturing activities (with participant consent). Notebooks and pens for reflection or note-taking.
3. **Art and Craft Materials** -Basic supplies: paints, brushes, paper, recycled materials (fabric, wood, plastic). Calligraphy pens and ink for specific workshops.
4. **Sports Equipment**- Balls (football, basketball), team bibs, cones, and basic sports gear. Water bottles or hydration stations.
5. **Culinary and Food Materials** - Cooking utensils and ingredients for multicultural food activities. Serving utensils, plates, and cutlery for shared meals.
6. **Sensory and Mindfulness Materials** - Yoga mats, cushions, and music for mindfulness activities. Tactile materials like fabric or clay for sensory art activities. Notebooks for reflection.
7. **Technology and Display** - Projector and speakers for presentations or video screenings. Digital platforms or apps for multilingual support during events.
8. **General Logistics** - First aid kits, sunscreen, and other safety items. Refreshments such as water, snacks, and light meals for participants. Name tags or badges for participant interaction and engagement.

Safety Guidelines

Ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants is a fundamental priority for any activity within the ACTIN initiative.

Each partner delivering activities must strictly adhere to their organisation's existing protocols on risk management, health and safety, and child protection. This ensures that all activities are conducted in a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment. It is important that partners carry out thorough risk assessments, have proper first aid provisions, and ensure that child protection guidelines are followed, particularly when working with young participants. These measures are essential for fostering a safe space where participants can engage confidently and comfortably.

Additionally, each organisation should tailor safety procedures to:

- the nature of the activities, considering the location (indoor or outdoor)
- the physical needs of participants
- the types of materials or equipment being used.

Collaboration with health and safety officers and clear communication with participants about the safety protocols will contribute to the success of the activities.

Monitoring and Evaluating Templates

Monitoring and evaluating the ACTIN activities is essential to ensuring that the objectives of each workshop or event are being met, while also providing valuable insights into areas for improvement.

This process allows partners to track progress, measure impact, and document the success of activities in fostering integration, language learning, and cultural awareness.

Each organisation should use the ACTIN standardised monitoring and evaluation templates to collect feedback from both participants and facilitators. This ensures consistency in data collection and helps assess whether the activities are achieving their intended outcomes.

Monitoring templates should capture real-time observations on participant engagement, attendance, and the overall flow of activities.

Evaluation templates, on the other hand, should focus on the results and impact of the activities, gathering participant feedback on what worked well and what could be improved.

Both templates are essential tools for assessing the success of the activities and informing future adjustments to enhance the effectiveness of the ACTIN project.

Key Aspects to Monitor:

- Participant attendance and punctuality.
- Levels of engagement and participation.
- Adherence to health and safety protocols.
- Overall organisation and facilitation quality.
- Immediate feedback on enjoyment and learning outcomes.

Key Aspects to Evaluate:

- Participant satisfaction with the activity.
- The perceived cultural and language learning benefits.
- Impact on social integration and connection with others.
- Suggestions for future activities or improvements

ACTIN Monitoring of Activities

This form should be completed by the activity facilitators or organisers immediately after each ACTIN activity. It helps track the logistical aspects, participant engagement, and any challenges faced during the event. It should be filled out at the end of each session to ensure accurate and timely documentation.

Criteria	Notes
Name and Date of Activity	
Location	
Facilitator(s) Name(s)	
Number of Participants (Expected vs Actual)	
Participant Age Group(s)	
Punctuality (Were Participants On Time?)	
Engagement Levels (Scale 1-5)	
Type of Participation (Active, Observational, Mixed)	
Activities Completed (On Schedule?)	
Adherence to Health and Safety Protocols (Details of Measures Followed)	
Inclusion of Diverse Cultural Perspectives	
Immediate Feedback from Participants (Any Comments, Positive or Negative)	
Challenges Faced by Facilitator(s)	
Overall Flow of the Activity (Smooth, Delays, Issues)	
Any Additional Comments or Observations	

ACTIN Evaluation of Activities

This form is intended for participants to complete after the activity, ideally at the end of the event or shortly thereafter. It allows participants to reflect on their experience, providing feedback on satisfaction, cultural and language learning outcomes, and suggestions for improvement. Facilitators can either distribute physical copies or use an online version for participants to submit their responses.

Name of the Activity:

Date of the Activity:

Criteria	Notes
Participant Name (Optional)	
Participant Age Group	
Most Enjoyable Aspect of the Activity	
Satisfaction with Activity (Did it Meet Your Expectations? Yes/No)	
What Did You Find Challenging?	
Cultural and Language Learning Takeaways (Describe New Insights)	
Rate Your Enjoyment (Scale 1-5)	
How Comfortable Did You Feel Engaging in the Activity? (Scale 1-5)	
Did the Activity Help You Feel More Connected to the Community? (Yes/No)	
Suggestions for Improving This or Future Activities	
Any Additional Comments	

Appendices



Case Studies of Successful Integration Through Activities

The case studies included in this guidebook showcase innovative initiatives across Europe that use creative, culinary, and community-based activities to foster integration, cultural exchange, and social cohesion among migrants, refugees, and local communities.

Francis Crowe's Tapestry Workshop:

Focus: Workshops for migrant and refugee women, inspiring the creation of "Torn Apart," a tapestry exploring themes of family separation, inequality, and social justice.

Impact: Engages refugees in creative expression, exploring important social and cultural issues.

Sligo Global Kitchen (Ireland):

Focus: Community meals for people in direct provision, fostering cultural exchange and empowerment through cooking.

Impact: Creates a vibrant community space, reducing social isolation and enriching the local cultural landscape.

"MMM...ulticultural Cooking: Mixing Flavours – Matching Nations" (Greece):

Focus: Cooking workshops and public events in Ioannina's Kitchen Symposium that bridge cultural divides.

Impact: Strengthens social cohesion and allows participants to share culinary traditions, culminating in public feasts celebrating multicultural cooking.

L'Alternative Urbaine à Bordeaux (France):

Focus: Training marginalized populations, including migrants, to become urban tour guides, showcasing neighborhoods through their personal experiences.

Impact: Promotes cultural understanding and personal storytelling while providing migrants with valuable skills.

Social Farming in County Mayo (Ireland):

Focus: Syrian refugee farmers exchanging agricultural skills with local farmers over a 10-week period.

Impact: Enhances community integration and provides practical skills exchange in agriculture.

Bees and Refugees (London, UK):

Focus: Beekeeping as a therapeutic practice and community-building activity for both refugee and local communities.

Impact: Promotes environmental justice and offers a meaningful way for refugees to engage with their new communities.

Annex of Icebreaker Activities

Icebreakers play a crucial role in creating an open and welcoming environment, particularly in activities aimed at fostering language learning and cultural awareness for migrants and refugees. They help break down initial barriers, ease participants into group dynamics, and encourage interaction, setting the stage for meaningful communication and deeper connections across cultural lines. We have collated a list of icebreakers and guidelines you can use in a separate annex. These are:

- ACTIN icebreakers - Drawing Together For Children
- ACTIN icebreakers - Map Activity
- ACTIN Icebreakers - Name stories
- ACTIN icebreakers - The Ball Game
- ACTIN icebreakers - The Mirror Game
- ACTIN Icebreakers - Don't laugh
- ACTIN Icebreakers - Emoji Emotions

Glossary of Terms

Agentivity - The capacity of individuals to act independently and make their own free choices, particularly in the context of educational activities.

Biodiversity Conservation - Efforts to protect and manage the variety of species in an ecosystem, often involving practical skills like beekeeping.

Buddy Scheme - A program where newcomers are paired with local volunteers to help with language learning, integration, and cultural awareness.

Cultural Sensitivity - The awareness and respectful acknowledgment of different cultural backgrounds and traditions during activities or interactions.

Facilitation - The process of guiding discussions or activities in a way that encourages participation and learning without imposing conclusions.

Inductive Learning - A learner-centred approach encouraging participants to derive conclusions from their observations and experiences.

Informal Education - Educational practices that occur outside traditional classroom settings, often more relaxed and participatory.

Sensory Art - Art workshops designed to engage multiple senses, making art accessible to participants with sensory sensitivities.

Social Farming - An initiative where agricultural practices are used to promote the integration of migrants and refugees by engaging them in community farming projects.

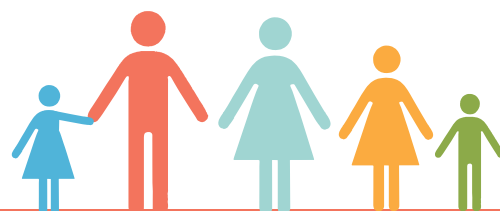
Social Integration - The process of newcomers, such as migrants and refugees, being incorporated into a new society both socially and culturally.

Solidarity Cafes - A community-based initiative focused on informal educational and integrative activities for migrants and refugees.

Transcultural Competence - The ability to effectively engage and work within different cultural contexts, particularly relevant in integration programs.

Translanguaging - A pedagogical approach that uses multiple languages in a learning environment to enhance understanding and linguistic skills.

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