

actin

ACT and connect for INtegration:
language learning & cultural awareness



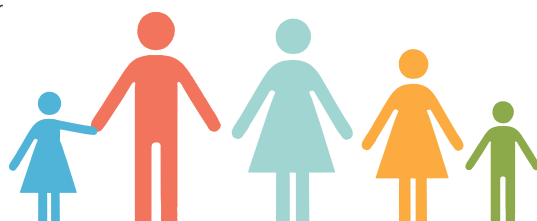
www.actintegration.eu

YOUR GUIDE TO ACTIN BUDDY SCHEME



Co-funded by
the European Union

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

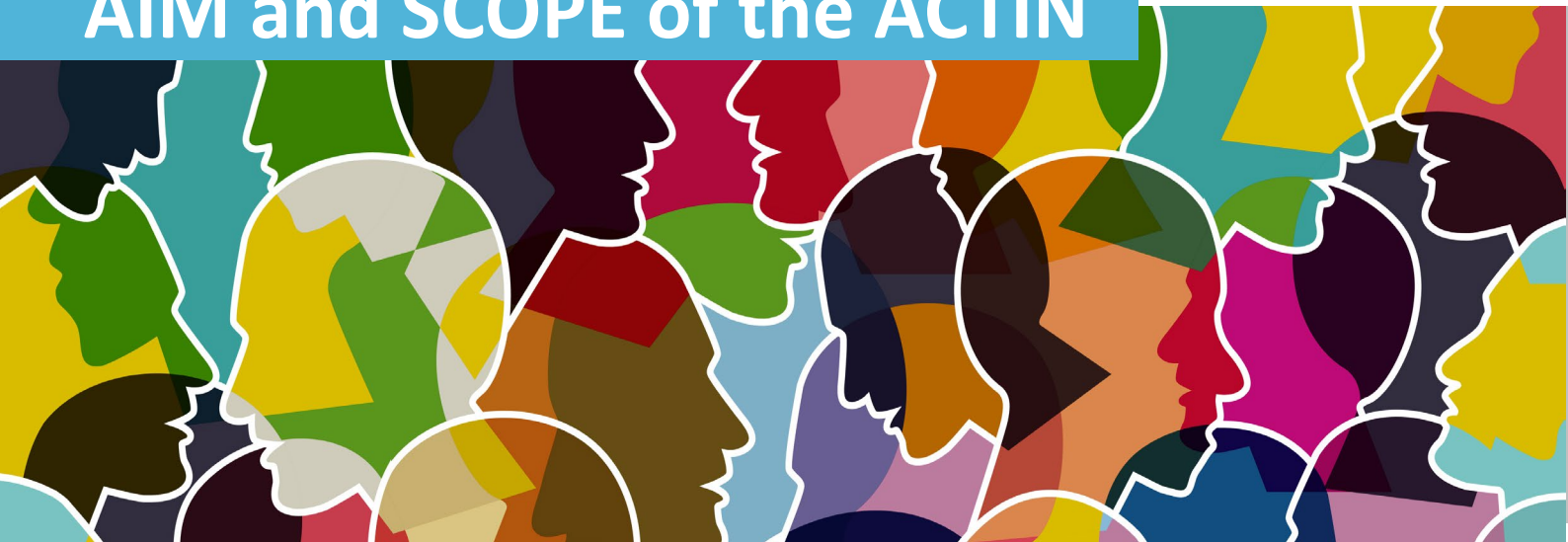


TABLES OF CONTENTS



01	Purpose and Scope of the ACTIN Buddy Scheme Guideline	3
02	Introduction	4
03	Buddy Scheme Framework	9
04	Implementation Strategies	23
05	Support and Resources	44
06	Challenges and Mitigation Strategies	45
07	Case Studies and Best Practices	50
08	Legal and Ethical Considerations	52
09	Measuring and sharing Impact	56

AIM and SCOPE of the ACTIN



AIM OF THE ACTIN BUDDY SCHEME and GUIDELINE

The **ACT and Connect for Integration (ACTIN) Buddy Scheme** aims to create supportive, educational (non-formal), and reciprocal relationships between migrants, refugees and locals, fostering an environment where both groups can thrive.

The aim of ACTIN Buddy Scheme Guideline is to facilitate the integration of young and adolescent migrants and refugees by promoting language proficiency, cultural context and exploration and social inclusion.

SCOPE OF THE ACTIN BUDDY SCHEME GUIDELINE

The scope of this Guideline encompasses detailed methodologies for various engagement models, including one-to-one adolescent pairings, family-to-family connections, and intergenerational match-ups. Each section of the guidelines is designed to equip implementing programme coordinators and volunteers with the necessary tools and knowledge to build meaningful relationships that support language acquisition, cultural exchange, the integration process and contribute to the creation of inclusive, cohesive communities.

To achieve this, our ACTIN team designs and tests activities in informal educational settings which involve migrants, refugees and the local communities. The purpose of this **ACTIN Buddy Scheme Guideline** is

to provide the comprehensive framework and clear instructions for effectively implementing a dynamic person-centric buddy scheme within diverse European communities. While the Guidelines will serve ACTIN partners, they are also open for adoption by others. This publication, dated September 2024, represents the initial iteration of our guidelines. Over the next two years, we anticipate these guidelines will evolve, incorporating insights and refinements gleaned from our ongoing implementation experiences. This iterative process will ensure that the Guidelines remain relevant and effective in addressing the needs of migrants, refugees, and local communities, continually enhancing the support and connectivity provided through the ACTIN Buddy Scheme.

INTRODUCTION



2.1 Background and Contextual Importance of the ACTIN Buddy Scheme

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 nonformal settings.

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. ACTIN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
3. The subject of this Guideline, the ACTIN BUDDY SCHEME recognises the complex challenges faced by these children and adolescents including cultural adaptation, language barriers, and social integration. ACTIN, with its focus on harnessing the strengths of diverse European communities, equips NGOs, and local organisations universities, to deliver an ACTIN Buddy Scheme intervention that is practical and transformative.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.actintegration.eu



In developing this **ACTIN BUDDY SCHEME and GUIDELINE**, our partners were keen to understand the current context and obstacles faced by migrant and refugee children, adolescents and their families. This is an essential step to ensure our Buddy Scheme is responsive, relevant, and effectively tailored to meet the specific needs of these groups.

By comprehensively assessing the challenges, we are better equipped to design interventions that foster an environment of mutual respect and learning.

Integration Challenges

Migrant and refugee children, adolescents and their families often encounter significant obstacles when integrating into new cultures. These

challenges, which include language proficiency, educational attainment, cultural differences, social isolation, and mental health issues, can severely impact their development and ability to thrive in a new environment. Without adequate support structures, these challenges can collectively lead to the marginalisation of migrant and refugee children and adolescents.

Living on the fringes of society impacts their access to essential services and opportunities for personal and academic development.

This marginalisation affects their current well-being but can also have long-lasting effects on their future prospects, perpetuating cycles of poverty and exclusion.

Integration Challenges

01 -- Country of Origin

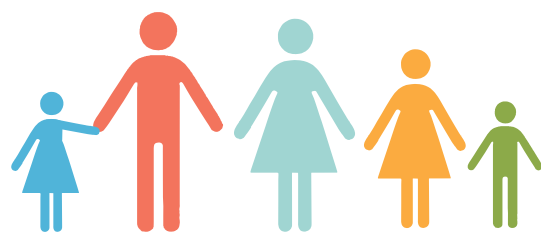
The country of origin of migrant and refugee children, adolescents and their families often provides important clues as to the social, cultural, political and familial values that a young person may possess. However, it is essential to remember that each country has enormous diversity—in terms of language, faith, morals, values and political conflicts among and within groups.

02 -- Language Proficiency

For children, adolescents and their families, mastering the language of their new country is often the most immediate barrier. Language skills are essential for daily interactions and making friends but also crucial for succeeding in school and communities. Without adequate language proficiency, young migrants, refugees and their families can feel disconnected, struggle academically, and find it hard to express their needs or understand their rights in the broader community.

03 -- Adjustment

A child's adjustment is influenced by the ease or difficulty of their parents' adjustment; they may feel responsible for helping their parents cope with language and other challenges.



Integration Challenges

04 Educational Attainment Challenges

Young migrants and refugees often face difficulties in integrating into local schools and adapting to different educational systems, which may have varying curricula, teaching styles, and expectations from what they are accustomed to. Rhodes (2005) states that many recent immigrant families settle in communities with low-performing schools, and limited social services. Depending on the resources of the education system in their host country, there can be a lack of adequate additional academic support to help them catch up and keep up with their local peers, especially if they are also grappling with a new language. Recognition of previous education can also be an issue. Many young migrants face issues with the recognition of their prior schooling, which can affect their educational progression and self-esteem.

They may also have attendance problems due to their role as interpreters or child care providers for the family. Older children in particular may face greater difficulty in school due to a shorter time frame in which to assimilate and to learn English. Children of immigrants may be the target of negative stereotyping, race or culture-based discrimination, and bullying by other children. This may negatively impact school attendance and performance as well as lead to stress, depression and conflicting feelings about their cultural background.

05 Traumatic Experiences

Refugee children and adolescents, in particular, may have had traumatic experiences related to situations such as war, famine and the death of family members or friends.

06 Cultural Differences

Understanding and adapting to the norms and etiquette of a new country can be particularly challenging for children and adolescents. Schools and playgrounds are often microcosms of broader societal norms where cultural misunderstandings can lead to social exclusion, the reinforcement of negative stereotypes and even bullying. This can make it difficult for young migrants and refugees to integrate comfortably and fully into their new environment. This extends to their wider family in wider society.

07 Stress Related to Poverty and Separation

Due to limited financial resources, many new migrants often live in areas of intense poverty and may experience increased levels of anxiety, depression and juvenile delinquency (Luther, 1999; Rhodes, 2005). Separation from parents or other family members is common for short or long periods during the immigration and resettlement process. These separations may create feelings of cultural dislocation and instability and increase stress levels, making the child's adjustment more difficult. Even when the family is able to stay together, the parents may be "absent".

08 Social Isolation

Social integration is crucial for the mental and emotional development of children and adolescents. Being 'othered' or excluded due to linguistic, cultural, or religious differences can lead to significant social isolation. This isolation is often compounded for young people who may not have the social skills or confidence to bridge these gaps on their own, leading to loneliness and potentially mental health issues.

Integration Challenges

09 Mental Health Challenges

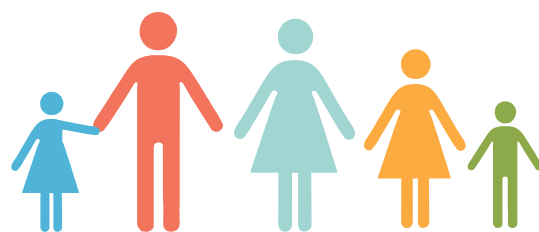
The psychological impact of migration is often more pronounced in children and adolescents. Many have experienced traumatic events such as war, loss, and displacement. Adapting to a new environment while processing past traumas can be overwhelming and may manifest in behavioural issues, anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns.



In addition, to all these challenges, older family members may also face employment barriers. Entering the workforce can be a significant hurdle. Migrants and refugees frequently encounter obstacles such as recognition of foreign qualifications, navigating job markets, and local employment practices.

These challenges are compounded by language barriers and can result in underemployment or employment in informal sectors where work is unstable, and rights may be limited.

Each of these challenges underscores the need for dynamic integration programmes, like the ACTIN Buddy Scheme, to empower migrants and refugees to thrive in their new communities.



ACTIN Buddy Scheme Framework

3.1 Definition of the Buddy Scheme in the ACTIN Context

The ACTIN Buddy Scheme aims to create supportive, educational (non-formal), and reciprocal relationships between migrants, refugees and locals, fostering an environment where both groups can thrive.

By facilitating interactions that encompass language learning, cultural exchange, and community involvement, the scheme works to address both immediate and ongoing challenges faced by migrants

and refugees, dually empowering them through enhanced community bonds and educational opportunities in informal settings.

The key to success is mutual growth and understanding so that the ACTIN Buddy Scheme supports the integration of migrants and refugees AND enriches the lives of local participants.



01 — For Migrants and Refugees

- Acquire practical language skills essential for everyday interactions and professional environments.
- Gain insights into the local culture, easing their integration process.
- Build a supportive network that can assist with navigating life challenges in a new country.

02 — For Locals

- Opportunity to learn about new cultures, languages, and perspectives, enhancing personal and professional development.
- Develop key skills in language tutoring but also empathy, communication, and cultural sensitivity.
- Contribute to a stronger, more cohesive community by playing an active role in the integration of new members.

As we will see later in the next section, there are many structures and approaches open to the operation of a Buddy Scheme. But first, some aspects to think about. We will provide guidance on these areas in Section 05.

How

- At the heart of the buddy interactions are **Flexible Pairing Mechanisms**. Migrants and refugees are paired with local volunteers based on proficiency levels, shared interests and specific integration goals, allowing for personalized and effective interactions.
- **Importance of Initiation Training**. The Buddy Scheme begins with initial training for the local buddy, focusing on communication skills, cultural sensitivity, and educational methods to maximize the effectiveness of the interactions.
- **Pairings** include one-on-one, family-to-family, or small group formats or thematic formats to accommodate different social dynamics and needs.
- **Regular language practice sessions** to enhance language skills providing migrants and refugees with the linguistic tools needed for daily life and broader societal integration.

Where

- **Diverse Activity Settings**: The scheme operates in informal educational settings such as community centres, libraries, and cafes (as the case in the University of Geneva), offering welcoming environments for language practice and cultural activities.
- **Continuous Engagement and Support**: Regularly scheduled sessions ensure ongoing support and progress tracking.
- **Encouragement**: Ways to encourage the sharing and appreciation of diverse cultural backgrounds, enabling migrants and locals to explore and understand each other's traditions, values, and societal norms.
- **Connecting migrants and refugees** within local communities, creating support networks that help reduce isolation, foster belonging, and promote civic participation.





3.2 Models of Engagement

To respond to the complexities of migrant and refugee experiences, including significant displacement and the accompanying emotional and psychological challenges, the ACTIN Buddy Scheme can be implemented through five Models of

Engagement appropriate to different age groups and dynamics. Each model is designed to address specific needs and facilitate integration in a supportive and inclusive manner.

- 3.2.1 One-to-One Adolescent Pairings
- 3.2.2 Child Friendly Group Language Sessions
- 3.2.3 Family-to-Family Connections
- 3.2.4 Inter-Generational Activities
- 3.2.5 Special Interest Pairings



3.2.1 One-to-One Adolescent Pairings

One-to-one adolescent Pairings are designed to provide personalised support to migrant and refugee adolescent youth, who often face profound challenges such as displacement, loss, and cultural disorientation. This Buddy Scheme approach facilitates a safe space for them to connect, share, and learn with local similar age group peers in their local community who are keen to understand and assist in their integration journey.

This pairing provides a much-needed sense of stability and belonging.

Adolescents often adapt more quickly to new environments and languages due to their schooling and social interactions. By engaging them first, the ACTIN Buddy Scheme can leverage their natural curiosity and flexibility.

Benefits for Both Buddies

- Adolescent migrants and refugees can receive support in navigating new social norms and are given a platform to express and process their experiences and traumas with peers in a supportive environment. Adolescents may also feel more motivated to form new friendships and explore different cultures, making them ideal initial participants in the ACTIN buddy scheme with a focus on language and culture and social inclusion.
- Local adolescents gain a profound understanding of the migrant experience, fostering empathy and social responsibility. They learn how to support their peers through challenges and become advocates for inclusivity and understanding within their communities.



EXAMPLE:

Sara and Darya

Sara, originally from Iran but raised in Berlin, is paired with Darya, a recent refugee from Iran.

Both speak Farsi and share a deep connection with their Iranian heritage. Sara, having navigated the challenges of integrating into German society as a child, is well-placed to help Darya with her transition.

They share recipes, celebrate Norooz (Persian New Year), and discuss their favourite Iranian poets, which helps Darya feel less isolated and more connected to her new environment.

Sara's understanding of the cultural nuances of both Germany and Iran provides Darya with a unique support system that greatly eases her cultural adaptation.

Key Considerations

- 1. Age-Appropriate Pairings - Importance of Age Alignment:**
Age-appropriate pairings with participants who are at similar developmental stages can enhance understanding and empathy between buddies. Adolescents might share common interests and challenges which can foster a stronger connection and more relevant exchanges.
- 2. Gender Sensitivity in Pairings - Respecting Boundaries, Cultural and Religious Considerations:**
In many cultures, interactions between different genders can be restricted or viewed differently. To respect these norms and ensure comfort for all participants, it may be necessary to pair individuals of the same gender, especially when dealing with conservative communities or specific religious groups. Creating safe spaces and same-gender pairings can sometimes provide a safer and more relaxed environment for young participants to express themselves, especially on topics that might be sensitive or personal.
- 3. Cultural Compatibility - Shared Cultural Backgrounds:**
While cross-cultural pairings can be enriching, it's also valuable to consider pairing migrants with locals who have a similar cultural background or understanding. This can ease communication and cultural exchange, as they may share common languages, traditions, or experiences.
- 4. Emotional Maturity and Psychological Considerations - Addressing Emotional Needs:**
Adolescents, especially those who have experienced displacement or trauma, may have different emotional support needs. Pairings should consider the emotional maturity and psychological resilience of the participants.

Key to Implementation Strategies:

- 1. Sensitive Matching Process:**
The matching process carefully considers the emotional states and backgrounds of the participants, pairing individuals who can offer mutual understanding and support.
- 2. Training Focused on Empathy and Cultural Competence:**
Both buddies undergo age-appropriate training that emphasises emotional intelligence, active listening, and cultural sensitivity to ensure that interactions are respectful and supportive.
- 3. Regular Monitoring and Support:**
For many migrant and refugee adolescents, the ability to communicate their experiences and emotions in a new language can be a crucial step in their psychological healing process. Coordinators /facilitators need to regularly check in with pairs to guide/support the development of the relationship and provide psychological support, ensuring it remains a positive and healing experience for both participants.
- 4. Role as Catalysts:**
As adolescents engage with their Actin buddies, they improve their language skills and become conduits for cultural exchange within their own families. They can share new words, phrases, and cultural insights gained from their buddies with their family members. Their enthusiasm and positive experiences can pique the interest of other family members, encouraging them to participate in and support the language learning journey.



3.2.2 Family-to-Family Connections

Key to Implementation Strategies:

In language, culture and inclusion buddy programmes like the ACTIN Buddy Scheme, starting with adolescents as primary participants and then progressively involving their family members can be a strategic approach to maximize engagement and expand the impact of the initiative. This dynamic offers a unique pathway for broader cultural integration and language learning that benefits not just the adolescent but their entire family.

1. Comprehensive Family Assessment

Conduct a thorough assessment to understand the specific needs, preferences, and dynamics of each family. This should cover aspects of language proficiency, cultural background, interests, and availability.

2. Tailored Matching

Use the information collected to match migrant and refugee families with local families who have similar characteristics or potentially complementary traits, ensuring that the pairing is likely to be mutually beneficial.

3. Cultural Sensitivity Training

All participants would benefit from cultural sensitivity training to cover basic dos and don'ts, common cultural misunderstandings, and practical tips for respectful interaction. This needs to include all staff and volunteers involved in facilitating Family-to-Family Connections so they are culturally competent to manage and support these interactions effectively.

4. Gradual Introduction:

Gradually introduce family members into the programme. Begin with less formal, low-commitment activities that encourage participation without overwhelming the families. Then introduce activities designed for broader family participation. This might include group cultural events, family days, or joint projects that require collaborative effort from both families. See our [Guide to Extra Curricula Activities](#). Family-to-family meetups can be organised around shared interests or communal activities, such as cooking sessions featuring dishes from both cultures, joint outings to cultural sites, or sports events.

Key to Family Engagement:

1. **Language Practice Together:** With multiple family members learning new linguistic elements, the home environment can transform into a rich language learning setting, where members casually practice with one another, enhancing fluency and retention.

2. **Broader Cultural Understanding:** Involving the whole family can lead to a deeper and more comprehensive cultural exchange. It provides a fuller perspective of the other culture, reinforcing inclusivity and mutual respect.

3. **Enhanced Social Support:** Engaging entire families builds a more robust support network. Families can share experiences, challenges, and achievements, fostering a supportive community that extends beyond individual friendships.

Opportunities for Community Integration:

1. **Community Events:** As families become more involved, they can participate in larger community events, which further promotes integration. These events could be cultural festivals, school functions, or local sports days, where they can interact with a broader spectrum of the community.

2. **Volunteer Opportunities:** Families can volunteer together in community services or school events, which not only helps in practising the language but also in strengthening community bonds.

Challenges & Considerations:

1. **Managing Diverse Expectations:** Different family members might have varying expectations or comfort levels with engagement. Tailored approaches to address individual needs and preferences are crucial.
2. **Balancing Schedules:** Coordinating activities that fit into the busy lives of multiple family members requires careful planning and flexibility, ensuring that program participation is a rewarding, not burdensome, experience. By leveraging the initial engagement of adolescents and gradually involving their families, language buddy programs can create a more dynamic and inclusive platform for language learning and cultural integration. This approach not only accelerates language proficiency across the family but also fosters a deeper sense of community connection and mutual understanding.

Family Matching Criteria for the ACTIN Buddy Scheme

1. **Family Composition:**

Age of Family Members: Align families that have children of similar ages or adults with comparable life stages (e.g., families with teenagers, families with toddlers, or empty nesters).

Similar Family Structures: Pairing families with similar compositions (e.g., families with young children, single-parent households, or families with elderly members) can enhance empathy and understanding, providing relevant support and shared experiences.
2. **Holistic Integration:** This approach involves all family members, from children to adults, allowing for interactions that accommodate different age groups and interests. Such engagements enable entire families to experience and learn from each other's cultural practices, traditions, and daily life routines.
3. **Shared Activities:** Families might participate in joint outings, communal meals, and celebrations of national or religious holidays, fostering an environment where natural social exchanges can occur.





Challenges of Family-to-Family Connections:

1. **Logistical Coordination:** Aligning the schedules of two families, considering their various commitments and lifestyles, can be challenging. Organizing activities that suit all family members requires flexibility and thoughtful planning.
2. **Varying Expectations:** Each family might have different expectations from the engagement, which can lead to misunderstandings or dissatisfaction if not properly managed through clear communication and initial goal-setting.
3. **Cultural Misunderstandings:** Interactions between families from diverse cultural backgrounds can sometimes lead to conflicts or misunderstandings, especially if cultural sensitivities are not adequately addressed or understood by both parties.

Benefits of Family-to-Family Connections:

1. **Comprehensive Cultural Exchange:** These connections allow families to immerse themselves in each other's cultures in a profound and personal way, learning about different lifestyles, values, and traditions through direct experience.
2. **Support Network:** Building relationships between families creates a support network that can provide emotional and practical assistance during the integration process. It's particularly beneficial for children and spouses who might feel isolated or overwhelmed in a new environment.
3. **Enhanced Language Learning:** Language practice becomes a part of daily interactions in a natural setting, helping all family members, especially children, to improve their language skills through regular, informal use.
4. **Intergenerational Learning:** These connections offer unique opportunities for intergenerational interaction and learning, where younger and older members can engage and share knowledge, from language to life lessons. We look at this in greater detail in 3.2.3 (page 16).

Implementation Strategies:

1. **Thorough Matching Process:** Families are carefully matched based on similar interests, family dynamics, and cultural or linguistic needs to ensure compatibility and to maximize the potential for successful, meaningful interactions.
2. **Pre-Engagement Orientation:** Families receive orientation to understand the structure of the buddy scheme, set realistic expectations, and learn cultural nuances that might be crucial for harmonious interactions.
3. **Ongoing Support and Mediation:** Regular check-ins by program coordinators can help address any issues that arise and provide continuous support to ensure the relationship develops positively.

Handling challenges effectively in a family-to-family connection or language buddy program requires a proactive, sensitive, and structured approach to ensure positive outcomes for all participants. Here are some **strategies** to address and **manage potential challenges in the buddy scheme**:

1. Managing Diverse Expectations

Strategies:

- **Initial Assessments:** Conduct thorough initial assessments to understand the expectations, needs, and goals of each family member. This helps in tailoring the program to meet these diverse expectations.
- **Clear Communication:** Establish clear communication channels and protocols. Provide families with detailed information about what the program involves, the expected commitments, and the benefits.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement regular feedback mechanisms to capture the experiences and evolving expectations of participants, allowing adjustments to be made in real-time.

2. Balancing Schedules

Strategies:

- **Flexible Scheduling:** Offer flexible scheduling options to accommodate the different daily routines of families. Consider weekend and evening activities to ensure higher participation rates.
- **Advance Planning:** Provide schedules well in advance to allow families to plan their participation without disrupting their routine commitments.
- **Virtual Integration:** Utilize virtual meetings and digital platforms for some interactions to reduce travel and time constraints, making participation more convenient.

3. Cultural Misunderstandings

Strategies:

- **Cultural Sensitivity Training:** Offer comprehensive cultural sensitivity training for all participants, focusing on understanding and respecting different cultures, traditions, and practices.
- **Mediation Support:** Have a mediation plan in place, with trained staff ready to intervene in case of misunderstandings or conflicts. This should include conflict resolution strategies tailored to cultural nuances.
- **Cultural Liaisons:** Use cultural liaisons or community leaders who can bridge cultural divides and facilitate smoother interactions between families.

4. Language Barriers

Strategies:

- **Language Support Tools:** Provide access to language translation tools and bilingual resources to facilitate clearer communication.
- **Language Classes:** Offer language classes or workshops as part of the program to help families improve their language skills, which in turn can reduce barriers and foster better interactions.
- **Bilingual Coordinators:** Employ bilingual program coordinators who can assist in communications and ensure that language barriers are minimally disruptive.

5. Varying Levels of Engagement

Strategies:

- **Personalized Engagement Plans:** Develop personalized engagement plans that cater to the interests and engagement levels of different family members, ensuring that activities are relevant and engaging for everyone.
- **Incentives for Participation:** Provide incentives for regular participation, such as recognition awards, certificates, or small gifts to acknowledge the commitment of families.
- **Regular Motivational Activities:** Incorporate motivational activities that remind participants of the benefits of their involvement, reinforcing the value and enjoyment of the program.

3.2.3 Inter-Generational Match ups

An intergenerational match-up in the context of the ACTIN Buddy Scheme involves pairing or grouping individuals from distinctly different generations to foster relationships that bridge the age gap. This setup encourages mutual learning, cultural exchange, and support across different life stages, enhancing understanding and cohesion within a diverse community.

Characteristics of an Intergenerational Match-up

1. **Diverse Age Groups:** Typically, such pairings might involve an older adult and a younger person, such as a senior citizen paired with a teenager, or a young adult matched with a child. The broad age difference allows each participant to bring a different perspective and set of experiences to the relationship.
2. **Mutual Learning Opportunities:** The core idea is for each individual to both teach and learn. Older adults can share life experiences, wisdom, cultural history, and traditional skills, while younger participants can introduce fresh ideas, new technology skills, and contemporary cultural trends.
3. **Structured Interaction:** Activities and interactions are designed to be mutually beneficial and engaging for all participants, considering their different interests and capabilities. These might include shared hobbies, educational projects, or simply regular conversations that enrich both parties' lives.

Types of Activities in Intergenerational Match-ups

1. **Storytelling and Oral Histories:** Older participants share stories from their past, providing historical and cultural insights, while younger participants might share current trends and new cultural movements.
2. **Skill Exchange Workshops:** Sessions where skills are exchanged, such as cooking traditional recipes taught by older adults, and digital literacy or social media skills taught by the younger participants.
3. **Joint Community Service:** Both age groups participate in community service projects and learning from each other.
4. **Arts and Crafts:** Engaging in art projects that draw on the strengths and creative ideas of different generations, like creating a community mural that depicts historical themes combined with modern elements.
5. **Cultural Continuity:** These interactions help preserve and pass on cultural traditions and histories from older generations to younger ones, ensuring that cultural identity remains strong across generations.
6. **Reduced Ageism:** By fostering understanding and respect between generations, these match-ups help reduce stereotypes and ageism, showing the value and capability of each age group.
7. **Enhanced Community Bonds:** Such relationships strengthen the social fabric of the community, creating bonds that transcend the typical peer-group interactions and contribute to a more cohesive communities.



Challenges of Inter-Generational Match ups

1. Communication Barriers

- **Language and Jargon:** Differences in language usage, including generational slang or terminology, can hinder effective communication. Older generations might use more formal language, while younger individuals might use contemporary slang and digital communication styles.
- **Technological Proficiency:** There is often a digital divide between generations. Younger people are typically more adept at using technology, which can alienate older participants who may not be as comfortable with digital communication tools.

2. Differing Interests and Energy Levels

- **Activity Preferences:** There can be a significant gap in the types of activities that interest different age groups. Younger individuals might prefer more physically active or technologically driven activities, whereas older participants might favor more sedate, traditional pastimes.
- **Physical Limitations:** Older adults may have physical limitations that prevent them from participating in more active pursuits, which need to be considered when planning activities.

3. Cultural Misunderstandings

- **Generational Cultural Norms:** Each generation grows up with its own set of cultural norms and societal expectations, which can lead to misunderstandings or misconceptions. For instance, views on social issues and life choices can vary widely between older and younger generations.
- **Respecting Boundaries:** Different comfort levels with personal space, conversation topics, and humour can lead to discomfort if not navigated sensitively.

Implementation Strategies:

1. Facilitated Introduction Sessions:

- Organise orientation sessions with ice-breakers to ease initial interactions.

2. Customised Communication Training:

- Conduct digital literacy workshops for older participants.
- Provide interpersonal communication seminars for younger participants

3. Plan around Interests and Ability-Based Activity Planning

- Survey participants for interests and physical capabilities.
- Design adaptable activities (e.g., art projects, gardening, digital storytelling).

4. Flexible Scheduling Solution

- Offer sessions at various times, including weekends and evenings.

5. Celebration and Recognition Events

- Organise events to showcase projects and share experiences
- Provide certificates and awards for participation and outstanding contributions. If you have permission, share success with local media.

6. Ongoing Support and Mediation:

- Establish regular check-ins to address issues and provide advice. Utilise simple feedback mechanisms like printed surveys.



3.2.4 Child-Friendly | Adult Group Language Sessions

A group dynamic for multicultural language sessions can foster a vibrant and inclusive environment where participants from diverse backgrounds can collaboratively enhance their linguistic proficiency and deeper intercultural connections. They can also bring much-needed fun into the dynamic of the lives of migrants and refugees. It can be run as adult or child-focused where children from diverse backgrounds can play and learn together, enhancing their language skills and understanding of different cultures.

Characteristics of Group Language Sessions

Interactive and Collaborative

- **Hands-On Interaction:** Sessions encourage active participation, where learners are not passive recipients but active participants in their language learning journey.
- **Peer Support:** The format leverages the strengths of group dynamics, where participants can learn from each other through conversation, correction, and mutual encouragement in a supportive setting. Being less formal is excellent for those reticent about attending.
- **Real-Time Feedback:** Immediate feedback from peers and facilitators helps correct mistakes and refine language skills and cultural understanding on the spot, which is crucial for effective learning.

Diverse Participation

- **Cross-Cultural Engagement:** We can be more open to participants from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds coming together, bringing diverse experiences and perspectives that enrich the learning environment.
- **Inclusivity:** Facilitator should make every possible effort to foster a welcoming atmosphere where all participants, regardless of their language proficiency or cultural background, feel valued and included.
- **Dynamic Exchange:** The diversity in the group facilitates a lively exchange of cultural and linguistic nuances, which enhances understanding and appreciation among participants. The focus can be more on practical language usage, directly applicable to everyday situations such as ordering food, casual conversations about daily events, or discussing local news.
- **Contextual Learning:** Language is taught within the context of relevant cultural and societal norms, which aids in more than just linguistic proficiency but also helps participants understand and navigate the local culture more effectively.
- **Social Integration:** Very importantly for the ACTIN project, group sessions are a tangible way to integrate individuals into the community, helping them build networks and friendships that support their broader integration into society.





Consider a Language Café Format

A café approach to group language sessions brings a powerful dynamic of an informal, relaxed setting to facilitate language learning and cultural exchange. This method mimics natural language use in everyday scenarios, making learning both enjoyable and practical. A café approach makes learning more relevant and less intimidating and integrates it into

the pleasant, everyday experience of enjoying a coffee, thereby enhancing the practical use of language skills and deepening cultural understanding. Such sessions are pivotal in helping participants feel more at home in their new environment, building confidence in their language abilities and cultural knowledge.

Characteristics of the Cafe Approach:

- **Casual Environment:** Sessions are held in cafes or similar settings that naturally encourage conversation and interaction, reducing the pressure often felt in more formal educational environments.
- **Real-Life Context:** Language practice is integrated into real-life activities such as ordering food, discussing menu items, or simply chatting about daily life, which helps solidify language skills in a practical context.
- **Community Building:** The cafe setting fosters a sense of community and belonging, making it easier for participants to form friendships and networks that extend beyond the sessions.

Example of a Group Language Session in a Cafe Setting:

Coffee Chat: Navigating Daily Life in Our City

- **Objective:** To improve conversational skills and local cultural understanding among new migrants and refugees.
- **Location:** Local community cafe known for its welcoming atmosphere and diverse clientele.
- **Participants:** A mix of local volunteers, recent migrants, and refugees with varying levels of proficiency in the local language.

Structure of the Session:

- **Warm-Up Activity:** Participants introduce themselves and share a favourite coffee or tea beverage, explaining why they like it.
- **Guided Discussion:** The facilitator introduces topics related to daily life in the city, such as public transportation, local attractions, and useful services. Participants discuss these topics in small groups, practising relevant vocabulary and phrases.
- **Role-Playing:** Participants engage in role-playing exercises, such as asking for directions, making a purchase, or handling a common issue like a lost item. This activity uses the cafe environment to simulate real-life interactions.
- **Cultural Exchange:** The session concludes with a discussion or a walkabout exploring local customs, festivals, and unspoken social rules, guided by local participants who share insights and answer questions from migrants and refugees.
- **Feedback and Social Time:** Participants provide feedback on the session and are encouraged to socialize, fostering relationships that support language practice outside of structured activities

Materials Provided:

- **Free refreshments** – of course !
- **Vocabulary lists** relevant to daily activities. Use pictures and make this engaging
- **Cultural information** that outlines key cultural dos and don'ts.
- **Contact cards** to facilitate networking among participants.

3.2.5 Special Interest Pairings

Special interest pairings are an interesting ACTIN Buddy Scheme approach based on aligning individuals based on shared interests and passions. Such pairings tap into the intrinsic motivation of enjoying that shared interest and, as a result, making the learning process more engaging and enjoyable. Migrants and refugees often experience a disconnection from their personal interests and hobbies due to the upheavals in their lives. This disconnection can contribute to feelings of loss and alienation as they adjust to new environments. By reintroducing and nurturing these interests through special interest pairings, the ACTIN Buddy Scheme helps restore a sense of normalcy and joy to the lives of participants.

Characteristics of Special Interest Pairings

- **Interest-Based Matching:** Participants are paired based on shared hobbies or interests, such as sports, arts, technology, or cooking, enhancing engagement and motivation. Engaging deeply with a hobby or interest can spark enthusiasm and provide a safe space for self-expression and social interaction.
- **Targeted Interaction:** The sessions focus on specific activities that both participants enjoy, which facilitates more natural and meaningful interactions.
- **Adaptable Structure:** The format can be adapted to various settings and age groups, whether one-on-one or small groups, depending on the activity and interest level.

Types of Activities

- **Recreational Activities:** Informal gatherings such as hiking, bird watching, or sports games, which provide a relaxed environment for language practice and cultural exchange.
- **Niche Interests:** Joint projects like building a model aeroplane, starting a garden, or creating a short film, which requires cooperation and sustained interaction.

Challenges of Special Interest Pairings

While special interest pairings offer substantial benefits, challenges can arise in implementing this approach effectively:

- Accurately identifying and matching individuals based on true shared interests requires a deep understanding of each participant's passions and hobbies. Misalignment can lead to disengagement.
- Sometimes a need for specialist equipment
- Navigating cultural misunderstandings that might arise during activities, especially when interests involve cultural nuances.
- Coordinating schedules and locations that fit all involved parties, especially for activities that require specific settings or timing.



Be inspired by kulturgrenzenlos, Kiel, Germany

kulturgrenzenlos in Kiel, Germany enables encounters between people from different cultures who might not otherwise meet. In this way, they want to break down prejudices and inhibitions and enable understanding and friendships. In the long term, they are making a contribution to an open society and peaceful and respectful coexistence in Kiel and beyond.

Their buddy scheme is called Tandems, and it is inspirational. Meet Dania and Friederike Interview August 2023,

[Dania and Friederike | culture without borders eV \(kulturgrenzenlos.de\)](#)



These are Dania and Friedi. The two have been a tandem for 9 months now. Friedi is studying at the university of applied sciences and became aware of kulturgrenzenlos eV in 2021, but only signed up for the tandem project the following year because time didn't allow it before. *"But now it's become such a part of everyday life,"* she says with a smile. Dania got to know about the tandem project through her brother, who also took part in it.

The two of them like to go for a tandem walk along the Kiellinie, *"go for coffee or tea and just chat,"* says Friedi. *"You've also been to lunch with me once and once for Ramadan,"* says Dania happily. When the two met for the first time in our tandem introductory meeting, Friedi was thoughtful: *"We are not super similar, but rather super different, which is not a bad thing, but that's why I didn't know if it would work, whether we*

would understand each other." She continues: *"We are also super different, but we still have the same vibe."* The two have already been able to learn a lot from each other.

For example, Friedi tells us how wonderful and impressive she finds it that Dania has the courage to visit cafés and new places alone. *"Sometimes it's good to do things on your own, although of course this is also about doing a lot together and we enjoy that too,"* she adds with a laugh.

In the future, Friedi would like to learn more Arabic from Dania and Dania would like to offer a workshop. Perhaps on the topic of cooking, but that hasn't been decided yet.

Many more Tandem examples will inspire....

[Tandem project | kulturgrenzenlos eV](#)

And watch this excellent video on the Tandemproject

**Kulturgrenzenlos invite us to IMAGINE
This is the future we are working towards**



Imagine: Kiel is a city where no one has to feel alone. There are countless opportunities to come into contact with other people. It is completely normal for people from all over the world, from different cultures, to come together here in Kiel. No person is excluded from public life because they do not speak a language. On the contrary: it is completely normal to switch between different languages. Kiel has become a city of lived diversity in all areas of life. Many different languages, cultures, traditions, gender identities, perspectives, leisure activities and food cultures are lived. Coexistence is characterized by respect and openness towards everything new. People trust each other and are not judged by their origins, but only by their humanity. People will experience an open, respectful and friendly coexistence in Kiel and carry this with them.

Implementation Strategies



Recruiting and selecting local volunteers, migrants, and refugees for the ACTIN Buddy Scheme is the best approach in a structured process.

There are 10 steps involved...



1. **Define Participant Profiles and Requirements**
Determine specific attributes needed such as language skills, availability, and motivation.
2. **Develop Targeted Outreach Strategies**
Create and distribute outreach materials through various channels to target specific groups.
3. **Host Informative Workshops and Webinars**
Conduct sessions to provide detailed program information and gather initial interest.
4. **Utilize Online Registration and Screening Tools**
Set up an accessible online application process with screening questions to ensure suitability.
5. **Conduct Interviews**
Interview potential participants to assess their compatibility and commitment to the Buddy Schemes goals.
6. **Organize Matching Workshops**
Facilitate interactive sessions for potential buddies to meet and establish rapport.
7. **Provide Detailed Orientations**
Offer comprehensive orientation about the program's expectations, support available, and participant responsibilities.
8. **Implement a Trial Period**
Allow a trial period for initial pairings to confirm compatibility and make adjustments as necessary.
9. **Gather and Act on Feedback**
Regularly collect and analyze participant feedback to refine the recruitment process and program execution.
10. **Offer Continuous Training and Support**
Provide ongoing training and support to enhance participant engagement and program effectiveness.



4.2 Training of Buddies

Buddies play a vital role in the ACTIN Buddy Scheme. They serve as a bridge between migrants and local communities, offering guidance, friendship, and practical assistance. The role is not limited to simply offering help but extends to actively participating in creating a welcoming and supportive environment for migrants and refugees. As such, buddies require training and ongoing support.

4.2.1 Introduction to the ACTIN Buddy Scheme

The ACTIN Buddy Scheme is designed to create lasting, reciprocal relationships between migrants, refugees, and local community members. The primary aim is to foster meaningful connections that support the integration of migrants and refugees into local communities, particularly young people and adolescents. By promoting language acquisition, cultural exchange, and social inclusion, the scheme contributes to the development of more cohesive and inclusive communities. Through these relationships, both participants (buddies and migrants) benefit from shared experiences, learning, and support. The scheme is built around informal educational settings, where activities are designed and tested to encourage engagement between both groups. Buddies play an essential role in supporting migrants and refugees in navigating their new environments, contributing to their social inclusion and personal development.



For those participating in the ACTIN Buddy Scheme, the experience offers several benefits:

- **Personal Development:** Buddies gain valuable interpersonal skills, cultural understanding, and enhanced communication abilities through their interactions with migrants and refugees.
- **Fostering Empathy:** Buddies are given the opportunity to build empathy by stepping into the shoes of migrants, appreciating their challenges, and supporting them on their integration journey.
- **Cultural Exchange:** The scheme promotes a two-way learning process, where both buddies and migrants gain a deeper appreciation for each other's cultures, enriching their perspectives.

However, being a buddy also comes with its challenges:

- **Emotional Demands:** Supporting migrants and refugees, particularly those who have experienced trauma, can be emotionally taxing. Buddies must be prepared to navigate sensitive situations and offer support when necessary.
- **Commitment and Consistency:** The success of the scheme relies on the long-term commitment and regular engagement of the buddies. The programme is built on trust and continuity, making sustained involvement essential.

Cultural sensitivity and awareness training is fundamental to the success of the ACTIN Buddy Scheme. Migrants and refugees come from diverse backgrounds, and without proper understanding, cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings or unintended disrespect. By providing buddies with the skills to navigate these differences, we foster an environment of respect, trust, and openness. This kind of training is essential because:

- It helps buddies understand and respect cultural differences, making it easier to build meaningful and lasting relationships.
- It supports the social inclusion of migrants by ensuring they feel their cultural identity is recognised and respected.
- It prevents misunderstandings that could arise from differing social norms or communication styles.
- It promotes a positive atmosphere where both buddies and migrants can thrive and learn from each other.

Along with understanding cultural differences, training on anti-discrimination is vital. Discrimination, whether overt or subtle, can alienate migrants and hinder their integration. Buddies need to be equipped with the knowledge to identify discriminatory practices and challenge them, both within the buddy relationship and in their broader social circles.

EU Resources for Cultural Sensitivity and Anti-Discrimination Training

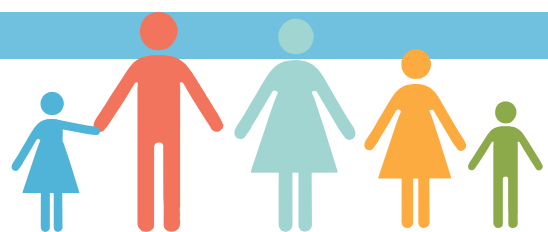
To ensure comprehensive coverage of these essential topics, the ACTIN Buddy Scheme draws on a range of reputable EU resources designed to help both locals and migrants engage more effectively and respectfully with each other.

EU resources that buddies can refer to are:

The **"Mentoring Refugees: A Handbook for Volunteers"** provides practical advice for volunteers working with refugees, covering topics like cultural sensitivity, mentoring strategies, and supporting refugees in their integration journey. [Access the Handbook here](#)



The **"Refugees: Welcome"** resource from the British Red Cross helps young people (ages 14-16) understand the refugee crisis through empathy-building activities. It includes lesson plans that cover the humanitarian impact of the crisis, the role of language in shaping perspectives, and how a warm welcome can positively affect refugees. The activities involve discussions, drama exercises, and creative tasks like poetry writing, aimed at encouraging learners to think about practical ways to make refugees feel welcome. [Access the resource here](#)





Strong communication skills are essential for building trust, fostering empathy, and creating meaningful connections between buddies and migrants. Communication involves much more than just speaking clearly; it includes active listening, understanding non-verbal cues, and being respectful of cultural differences. When both verbal and non-verbal communication align, buddies can create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere that encourages openness and reduces the risk of misunderstandings.

Equipping buddies with these skills helps them navigate language barriers, respond with empathy, and ensure that interactions are respectful and effective.

Tips for Effective Communication Between Migrants and Buddies

Use Simple and Clear Language: Avoid jargon or idiomatic expressions that could confuse someone unfamiliar with the language. Stick to simple words and concise sentences.

Practice Active Listening: Show you are fully engaged by making eye contact, nodding, and responding thoughtfully. Give migrants time to express themselves without interruption.

Be Mindful of Non-verbal Cues: Understand that body language varies between cultures. Be open to learning and adjusting your non-verbal communication to show respect and understanding.

Ask Open-ended Questions: Encourage more in-depth conversations by asking questions that require more than a yes/no answer. This builds trust and opens dialogue.

Check Understanding: Frequently ensure that both sides understand the conversation by summarising key points or asking follow-up questions. This prevents miscommunication and reinforces clarity.

Patience and Empathy: Be patient when migrants face language barriers or emotional challenges. Practice empathy by acknowledging their experiences and offering support without judgment.

Use Visuals or Gestures: When words fail, don't hesitate to use gestures, drawings, or other visual aids to clarify meanings, particularly when navigating language differences.

Create a Safe Space for Conversations: Ensure that migrants feel comfortable and safe to express their thoughts and concerns. Respect their pace and avoid pushing them into discussions they aren't ready for.

EU resources that buddies can refer to are:

This practical guide is aimed at youth workers but is relevant to anyone working in multicultural settings. It offers communication strategies, activities, and tools designed to help people from different cultures connect more effectively. [Access the Guide here](#)



Effective communication is crucial in the ACTIN Buddy Scheme, but language barriers can make interactions difficult. To help overcome this, it's important to offer buddies basic language training in the primary language spoken by the participants. This training should focus on simple, everyday vocabulary and phrases that buddies can use to navigate daily interactions, rather than complex grammar or academic language.

Even a basic understanding of the language can help buddies build rapport, reduce misunderstandings, and make migrants feel more comfortable.



Language Teaching Techniques

To support informal language learning, buddies can use a variety of simple and engaging techniques. These methods should prioritise practical language use over formal grammar:

Conversational Practice: Encourage buddies to engage in casual, everyday conversations with migrants, focusing on frequently used words and phrases.

Visual Aids and Gestures: Use visuals like flashcards, drawings, or gestures to explain meanings, which can help when words fall short.

Repetition and Reinforcement: Repeating key words and phrases during different conversations reinforces learning and helps develop fluency.

Real-life Scenarios: Role-playing activities like ordering at a café or asking for directions can provide practical language experience in everyday situations.

Positive Reinforcement: Encourage and celebrate progress, no matter how small, to boost confidence and motivation in learning.

Translation Tools

Translation tools can be invaluable for buddies working with migrants by bridging language barriers and facilitating clearer communication. Whether through real-time conversations or text translation, they help buddies and migrants understand each other better, making interactions smoother and more inclusive. Some of the most used translation tools are:

1. Google Translate

Google Translate is versatile, offering translation for text, voice, and images. Its real-time conversation mode allows buddies to have smooth exchanges, even in different languages. With over 100 languages available, it's highly practical for quick translations and voice-based interactions. [Google Translate](#)

2. Microsoft Translator

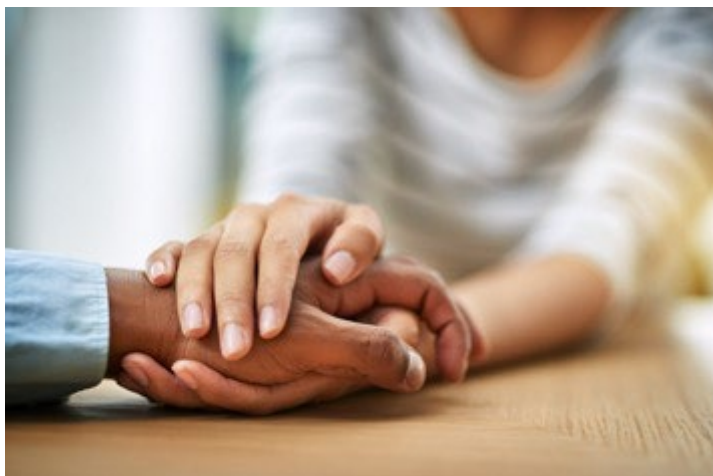
Microsoft Translator excels in conversation mode, enabling seamless two-way communication with real-time voice translation. It also offers offline translations, making it a great option in areas with limited internet access. [Microsoft Translator](#)

3. DeepL Translator

Known for its accuracy and nuanced translations, DeepL is especially helpful for written communication. It's ideal for more detailed exchanges, as it captures context and idiomatic expressions better than many alternatives. [DeepL Translator](#)

4. iTranslate

iTranslate supports text, voice, and website translation in over 100 languages, with a handy offline mode. It is especially useful for everyday conversations and basic interactions between buddies and migrants. [iTranslate](#)



Supporting migrants and refugees involves more than meeting their practical needs—it's also about being aware of their mental and emotional well-being. Many migrants have experienced trauma, loss, or isolation, which can lead to mental distress. Buddies should be trained to recognise signs of anxiety, depression, or PTSD. It's essential to create a safe space for migrants to share their experiences.

Buddies should learn to offer emotional support, listen empathetically, and know when to refer participants to professional mental health services if needed.

Self-care for Buddies

Supporting others can take a toll on buddies' own mental health. Training should also include self-care strategies to help buddies manage stress, avoid burnout, and maintain their well-being. Encouraging regular check-ins, taking breaks, and seeking support when necessary are key to ensuring that buddies can continue offering meaningful assistance without becoming overwhelmed. Buddies can practice self-care by:

Setting boundaries: Establishing clear emotional and time boundaries helps prevent burnout and maintain personal well-being.

Taking regular breaks: Scheduling breaks after challenging interactions provides mental rest and renewal.

Seeking support: Reaching out to peers or mentors allows buddies to share their experiences and reduce emotional strain.

Engaging in relaxation: Practising mindfulness, physical activities, or hobbies relieves stress and enhances emotional resilience.

Monitoring emotional health: Regularly checking in with oneself helps identify early signs of emotional fatigue and stress.

EU resources that buddies can refer to are:

UNHCR – Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Refugees: Offers practical guidance on identifying and addressing mental health issues in refugee populations. [Access the resource here](#)

WHO – Mental Health Considerations for Migrants: A framework designed to help identify mental health needs and support displaced persons in a way that respects their cultural and emotional needs. [Access the resource here](#)





Ensuring the safety of both buddies and participants during physical meetings and activities is essential. Buddies should follow safety protocols designed to maintain secure environments during all interactions.

This includes meeting in public or pre-approved locations, avoiding secluded areas, and always informing someone (such as the buddy scheme coordinator) of their meeting times and places. In case of emergencies, buddies must know how to contact the ACTIN partners or coordinators for immediate support.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Buddies are also responsible for respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. This means handling sensitive information (such as personal stories, contact details, or health issues) with the utmost care. Buddies must never share any information about the migrants or refugees with third parties unless it is necessary for their safety or as part of a referral to professional services.

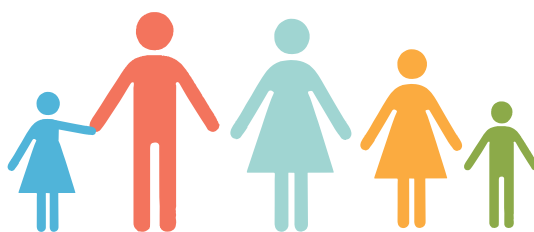
Engaging with the ACTIN Partners

A clear mechanism for communication between buddies and the ACTIN partners or buddy scheme coordinators is critical and will be enabled at the start of the buddy programme. Buddies should have a direct point of contact for any concerns, safety issues, or situations where further guidance is needed. This could involve regular check-ins, feedback forms, or an emergency contact system in case urgent support is required. Knowing who to approach and how to report concerns ensures that buddies feel supported and empowered while participating in the scheme.

Key Safety Protocols

- Meet in safe, public locations: Always choose well-lit, populated areas for meetings.
- Inform coordinators: Notify the scheme coordinator of meeting times and locations in advance.
- Emergency contacts: Have a clear plan for emergencies, including access to coordinators.
- Maintain confidentiality: Keep sensitive participant information private and secure.
- Follow referral processes: When participants need professional help, follow the proper referral protocols to connect them to the right services.

By adhering to these safety and confidentiality guidelines, buddies can ensure a secure and supportive experience for both themselves and the participants.



To ensure that the buddy scheme runs effectively, it's important for buddies to regularly monitor the progress of their pairings. Buddies should be taught how to observe key indicators of growth, such as improved communication, increased confidence, or better social integration of their participants. Constructive feedback is essential in maintaining a positive dynamic; buddies should learn how to provide thoughtful, non-critical feedback that encourages development and addresses any challenges that arise.

Use of Feedback Tools

Buddies should also be trained in using the feedback tools and platforms provided by the ACTIN Buddy Scheme. These tools, which may include online forms, regular check-ins, or digital platforms, help buddies report progress and flag any issues that need attention. Regular feedback not only helps the scheme coordinators monitor the programme's effectiveness but also contributes to continuous improvement, ensuring that both participants and buddies have a positive and impactful experience.



Key Monitoring and Feedback Guidelines

- Regular check-ins: Encourage buddies to check in consistently with their migrant/refugee participants to gauge their progress.
- Use feedback platforms: Train buddies on how to use online tools or forms to report their experiences and suggest improvements.
- Provide constructive feedback: Emphasise the importance of framing feedback in a supportive and developmental way, focusing on areas of growth and addressing challenges respectfully.
- Track key indicators: Guide buddies in observing improvements in communication, confidence, and social integration.

By tracking progress and utilising feedback tools effectively, the ACTIN Buddy Scheme can evolve and provide better support for both participants and buddies.

Buddies play a key role in connecting participants to vital educational materials and community services. To ensure the integration process goes smoothly, buddies should know where to find resources such as:

Educational Resources: Encourage the use of online language tools, like Duolingo or Babbel, which can help participants improve their language skills. Local libraries and community centres also provide free educational materials.

Community Services: Buddies should familiarise themselves with local services that can assist with housing, healthcare, legal advice, and job placement. This could include local government services or NGOs dedicated to migrant support. Knowing how to refer participants to these services is crucial in helping them settle into the community.

Tip: ACTIN partners should work with buddies to compile a resource directory that you and your participant can refer to during the programme, ensuring you both have access to all available help.



Technology Use

Digital tools offer practical ways to facilitate communication, learning, and progress tracking:

- **Learning Platforms:** Buddies can introduce participants to online learning platforms, such as Coursera or Khan Academy, that offer free courses on various subjects, helping them build skills for education or employment.
- **Communication Tools:** Apps like WhatsApp, Zoom, or Google Meet can enable regular and easy communication between buddies and participants, especially when face-to-face meetings aren't possible.
- **Translation Apps:** Tools like Google Translate or Microsoft Translator help overcome language barriers during interactions, allowing for more seamless communication.

Role-playing exercises are a powerful tool to help buddies practice the skills they have learned. By acting out different scenarios, such as introducing themselves to a participant or assisting with navigating public services, buddies can build confidence and improve their communication. These exercises allow them to test new approaches, receive feedback, and refine their techniques in a low-stakes environment.



Real-Life Simulations

Simulating real-life situations that buddies may encounter prepares them to handle challenges effectively. Scenarios might include helping a participant navigate a healthcare appointment, dealing with cultural misunderstandings, or managing emotional distress. These simulations provide buddies with hands-on experience, ensuring they are well-equipped to manage difficult or sensitive situations during their interactions with participants.

Upon successfully completing the buddy training, participants should receive a certification acknowledging their dedication, preparedness, and commitment to the programme. This certification can serve as a formal recognition of their newly acquired skills and experiences, valuable both personally and professionally.

Ongoing Training Opportunities

Buddies should be offered continued opportunities for growth through advanced courses, refresher workshops, and seminars. Ongoing training ensures that buddies stay updated on best practices, enhancing their ability to support migrants and refugees effectively throughout the buddy scheme.

4.3 Matching Mechanisms and Criteria

Content:

1. **Emotionally Attuned Language Learning:** The program prioritises empathetic engagement and supports migrants in learning the language through interactions that are mindful of their emotional and psychological states.
2. **Cultural and Emotional Integration:** Pairings are designed to help migrants navigate not just the physical aspects of their new environment but also the emotional landscapes, helping them deal with feelings of loss, displacement, and identity reshaping.
3. **Skill Building for Resilience:** Beyond language and cultural knowledge, the pairings focus on developing resilience, coping mechanisms, and adaptability—skills that are crucial for those who have experienced significant upheaval.

Perspectives:

1. **From the Migrant Adolescent:** This model provides a secure and understanding environment where migrant youths can express their fears, challenges, and aspirations. It's a space for them to gain confidence, not only linguistically but also in their ability to navigate a new cultural context.
2. **From the Local Adolescent:** Local youths learn to become sensitive and effective communicators and allies. They gain firsthand insight into the challenges faced by migrants and develop a profound appreciation for diversity and inclusion, which fosters a deeper sense of global citizenship.

Implementation Strategies:

1. **Sensitive Matching Process:** Pairings are meticulously crafted to consider psychological compatibility and emotional resilience, ensuring that relationships are supportive and growth-oriented.
2. **Training Focused on Empathy and Support:** Both migrants and locals receive training that includes understanding trauma, cultural sensitivity, and emotional support strategies to ensure meaningful and supportive interactions.
3. **Robust Monitoring and Support System:** Ongoing support from coordinators and access to psychological resources ensure that the pairings remain beneficial and are adjusted as needed to respond to the evolving emotional needs of the participants.

Benefits:

1. **Enhanced Emotional and Psychological Well-being:** The scheme facilitates emotional healing and psychological stability through regular, supportive interactions, helping participants to feel less isolated and more connected to their new community.
2. **Deep Cultural Understanding and Empathy:** By sharing personal experiences and vulnerabilities, participants foster a profound mutual understanding and empathy, bridging cultural divides.
3. **Strong, Supportive Relationships:** These one-on-one interactions often lead to lasting friendships that provide emotional support and enhance the quality of life for both parties.



4.4 Activity Planning and Facilitation of Participants

Effective activity planning and facilitation are crucial components of any successful program that involves group interactions and learning. Whether it's for educational workshops, cultural exchange sessions, or language learning events, well-structured activities and skilled facilitation can significantly enhance participant engagement and achievement of program objectives. This involves meticulous preparation, understanding the diverse needs and

dynamics of the participants, and employing adaptive facilitation techniques to ensure that each session is inclusive, productive, and enjoyable for all attendees. The goal is to create an environment where participants feel valued and motivated to actively contribute, fostering a collaborative and supportive space that enhances learning and interaction.



4.4.1 Language Practice Sessions

Language practice sessions are vital in any language learning programme, designed to reinforce new language skills and increase fluency through practical application. These sessions provide a supportive environment where learners can experiment with and practice their new language abilities in a variety of contexts, from casual conversation to more structured activities.

Components of Effective Language Practice Sessions

01

Interactive Conversations

Structure: Sessions are structured around specific themes or everyday situations to guide conversation and ensure relevance.

Goal: To help participants use the language in practical scenarios, improving their conversational skills and building confidence.

02

Role-Playing Exercises

Structure: Participants engage in role-plays that mimic real-life interactions, such as shopping, dining out, or professional meetings.

Goal: To enhance verbal fluency and comprehension, and to familiarize participants with cultural nuances and appropriate responses.

03

Peer Feedback and Group Discussions

Structure: After conversational exercises, participants give and receive feedback in small groups.

Goal: To refine language skills, correct common errors, and discuss alternative expressions or cultural points noted during conversations.



Components of Effective Language Practice Sessions

04

Vocabulary and Grammar Drills

Structure: Focused sessions on specific areas of vocabulary or grammar challenges identified by participants or facilitators.

Goal: To solidify understanding of language structures and expand vocabulary usage.

05

Listening and Comprehension Activities

Structure: Activities include listening to native speakers through audio recordings or videos followed by comprehension questions.

Goal: To improve listening skills and understand various dialects or accents.

06

Pronunciation Practice

Structure: Sessions dedicated to the nuances of pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm of the target language.

Goal: To help learners speak more naturally and be easily understood by native speakers.

07

Components of Effective Language Practice sessions

Structure: Effective language practice sessions are structured around interactive activities that promote both structured and spontaneous use of the target language, ensuring a balanced approach that caters to varying skill levels.

Goal: Enhance fluency and comprehension by providing real-life conversational practice that builds confidence and linguistic proficiency in a supportive environment.

08

Challenge:
Participant hesitation or discomfort with speaking.

Solution: Create a supportive and non-judgmental environment. Use ice-breakers and pair learners with supportive partners or in small, comfortable groups.

Goal: Increase participant engagement and comfort to practice language skills actively and freely, accelerating their learning and confidence in using the new language

09

Challenge:
Varied proficiency levels among participants.

Solution: Group participants with similar proficiency levels together, or design activities that allow for different roles that accommodate varying levels of language skill.

Goal: Adapt teaching methods to accommodate all learners effectively, enhancing each participant's ability to engage and progress

10

Challenge:
Maintaining engagement over time.

Solution: Regularly introduce new topics and activities to keep sessions dynamic and interesting. Incorporate elements of culture and real-life application to enhance relevance.

Goal: Capture and retain learners' interest, motivating sustained participation and active engagement throughout the learning process.

Components of Effective Language Practice Sessions

11. Benefits of Regular Language Practice Sessions

Regular language practice sessions significantly enhance linguistic fluency and comprehension, fostering greater cultural integration and personal confidence in real-world interactions.

12. Improved Fluency and Confidence:

Regular practice helps learners become more fluent and confident in using the language in different contexts.

13. Enhanced Cultural Competence:

Continuous exposure to cultural contexts and norms through language practice aids in developing a deeper cultural understanding.

14. Community and Relationship Building:

Sessions foster a sense of community among participants, encouraging networking and friendships that can provide further language practice opportunities outside of the structured sessions.



4.4.2 Language Buddy Events

Language Buddy Events are structured gatherings designed to facilitate language learning and cultural exchange in a social and informal setting. These events are excellent for promoting linguistic skills and fostering interpersonal connections between language learners and native speakers.

Here's how to structure and enrich these events:

Overview of Language Buddy Events

1. **Purpose:** To improve language proficiency in a relaxed, social environment while promoting cultural understanding and friendship among participants.
2. **Participants:** Language learners paired with native speakers or individuals fluent in the language of interest.

Event Structure

01

Warm-Up Session

1. **Activity:** Ice-breaker games that require basic language use, such as "Two Truths and a Lie" or simple introduction rounds.
2. **Goal:** To reduce initial nervousness and encourage participants to start interacting.

02

Themed Conversations

1. **Activity:** Discussing predetermined topics that are of common interest to the group, such as local customs, popular films, or current events.
2. **Goal:** To provide a focused framework for conversation that can help guide the language practice.

03

Role-Playing Activities

1. **Activity:** Simulating real-life scenarios like ordering in a restaurant, asking for directions, or job interviewing.
2. **Goal:** To give participants practical language practice that they can use in everyday situations.

04

Interactive Language Games

1. **Activity:** Language games that reinforce vocabulary and grammar, such as charades, Pictionary, or language-based trivia.
2. **Goal:** To make learning fun and engaging, reinforcing language skills in an enjoyable way.

05

Cultural Exchange

1. **Activity:** Each language buddy shares something unique about their culture, which could be a traditional dance, a song, or a typical dish.
2. **Goal:** To deepen understanding of each other's backgrounds and build appreciation for different cultures.

Challenges and Solutions

Challenge:

Differences in language proficiency levels may intimidate less fluent speakers.

- **Solution:** Group participants into pairs or small groups based on similar proficiency levels and encourage supportive and positive interactions.

Challenge:

Ensuring everyone is actively participating.

- **Solution:** Facilitators actively engage with attendees, encourage shy participants, and rotate groups to mix dynamics.

Benefits

- **Enhanced Language Skills:** Regular conversation practice helps improve fluency and comprehension in a real-world context.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Participants gain insights into cultural nuances, fostering global awareness and tolerance.
- **Networking and Friendships:** These events often lead to lasting friendships and useful professional connections.
- **Implementation Strategies**
- **Regular Scheduling:** Host these events regularly to maintain language skills and build a community of learners.
- **Diverse Formats:** Rotate between different activities and themes to keep the events fresh and engaging.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Collect feedback after each event to continually adapt and improve the experience based on participants' preferences.
- **Language Buddy Events** are an effective way to practice languages in a supportive community setting, enhancing both linguistic abilities and cultural competencies.



4.4.3 Cultural Sharing and Learning Activities

For effective and enjoyable cultural sharing and learning activities, here are some real-life examples and ideas that have been successfully implemented by various programmes:

Examples:

01

Language Learning

- Incorporating basic language lessons relevant to the participants' cultural backgrounds into regular sessions, enhancing communication skills and deepening cultural understanding.

02

Cultural Exchange Workshops

1. **Workshops** such as cooking classes where participants prepare and share traditional dishes from their cultures. Food has always been a powerful tool for bringing people together. Across cultures and throughout history, the act of sharing a meal has been a way to foster connections, build relationships, and promote inclusivity. In today's increasingly diverse world, the cultural significance of food in promoting inclusivity cannot be overstated. Food is a universal language that transcends barriers of language, race, and religion. It is a tangible expression of culture, and by sharing our culinary traditions, we can gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for one another.
2. Arts and crafts sessions focusing on traditional crafts. See our Guide to Extra Curricular Activities for lots of suggestions.

03

Cultural Simulations and Role-Playing

1. **Simulations** that allow participants to experience scenarios from different cultural perspectives can be powerful in building empathy and understanding.



Cultural Mosaic: Building a Multicultural Community

Overview:

Cultural Mosaic is a simulation designed to celebrate diversity and promote integration within a multicultural setting. This activity encourages participants to share their cultural backgrounds and collaboratively create a community that values each unique contribution.

How it works:

- **Participants:** Players are divided into mixed groups, with each individual representing a different cultural background.
- **Activity:** Each group is tasked with creating a 'cultural mosaic'—a collective piece of art or a presentation that incorporates elements from each participant's culture, such as symbols, traditions, languages, or values.
- **Collaboration:** Participants discuss and explore each other's cultures, then decide how to integrate these elements into a cohesive representation that honours all contributions.

Materials Needed:

- **Art supplies** like coloured paper, markers, fabric, and glue for a physical mosaic.
- **Digital tools** like presentation software if opting for a digital project.

Debrief:

- Hold a discussion session where participants reflect on what they learned about each other's cultures.
- Discuss the importance of integration and how bringing diverse cultural elements together can enrich a community.

Implementation:

- **Setup:** Provide materials and brief participants on the objective.
- **Activity Execution:** Allow time for discussion, planning, and creation of the mosaic.
- **Presentation:** Each group presents their mosaic to the larger group, explaining the significance of the elements they chose and how they represent their cultures.

Educational Value:

This activity helps foster a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and the value of integrating these differences to enrich a community. Participants learn to appreciate and celebrate diversity, promoting a more inclusive environment.

Examples:

04

Community-Connected Projects

- Projects that involve participants in local community initiatives, helping them apply their cultural knowledge and language skills in real-world contexts

Cultural Storytelling

Overview:

- Sessions where individuals share stories from their childhood or significant cultural narratives, fostering a deeper personal connection and cultural appreciation among participants.
- “Picture-Based Storytelling Circle” is a cultural storytelling activity designed to bridge language barriers using visual aids. This activity allows participants to share stories from their cultures or personal experiences without relying heavily on verbal communication.

How it works:

- **Participants:** Individuals from various cultural backgrounds, particularly those with limited language proficiency.
- **Activity:** Each participant selects pictures, images, or symbols that represent a story or tradition from their culture.

Materials Needed:

- A collection of pictures, photographs, or illustrations that participants can choose from, or they can bring their own.
- Large poster boards or digital presentation tools if the session is virtual.

Implementation:

- **Setup:** Prepare a comfortable space with all the pictures spread out or displayed. Each participant selects one or more pictures that resonate with their story.
- **Story Sharing:** One by one, participants present their selected pictures to the group and use them to share their story. They can use simple words, gestures, or any form of expression they are comfortable with.
- **Assistance:** Facilitators or interpreters can assist by providing keywords or phrases in the participants' languages to help explain the pictures if needed.

Debrief:

- Facilitate a discussion where participants can ask questions about the stories, express feelings or thoughts, and discuss common themes or emotions depicted in the stories.
- Encourage participants to express what they learned or found interesting about other cultures through the stories.
- **Educational Value:** This activity enhances cultural awareness and empathy by allowing participants to express themselves and share significant cultural narratives visually. It promotes listening skills and non-verbal understanding among participants, fostering a deeper sense of connection and respect for diverse backgrounds.
- Picture-Based Storytelling Circle is ideal for settings like community centers, language learning classes, or integration programs where participants have varying levels of language proficiency. It allows everyone to participate equally and share meaningful aspects of their culture, facilitating a rich exchange of experiences and fostering a welcoming community environment.

4.5 Effective Promotional Approaches

Effective promotional approaches are essential to ensure the success of initiatives like the ACTIN Buddy Scheme by engaging the community, attracting the right participants, and securing support from stakeholders.

Here are key strategies to effectively promote

01

Targeted Messaging Audience Specific:

- **Tailor messages** to resonate with different groups such as potential volunteers, migrants, refugees, and community partners.
- **Highlight the specific benefits and opportunities** for each group.
- **Clear and Concise Communication:** Use simple, clear language that conveys the program's goals and benefits without overwhelming the audience with too much information at once

02

Multichannel Marketing Social Media Campaigns:

- **Utilize platforms** like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to reach a broad audience. Share stories, testimonials, and live updates to engage followers.
- **Email Marketing:** Send regular newsletters to subscribers to keep them informed about program updates, success stories, and ways to get involved.
- **Community Outreach:** Participate in community events, fairs, and meetings to promote the program directly to potential participants and volunteers.

03

Partnerships and Collaborations

- **Local Businesses and NGOs:** Partner with local businesses, schools, and NGOs to reach a wider audience and gain credibility. These partners can help distribute promotional materials and host joint events.
- **Media Outreach:** Establish relationships with local media outlets to get coverage for the program, highlighting its impact and success stories.

04

Interactive and Engaging Content

- **Videos and Testimonials:** Create engaging video content that showcases the ACTIN Buddy Scheme's impact, featuring testimonials from past and current buddy participants
- **Infographics and Visuals:** Develop eye-catching infographics and visuals that explain the ACTIN Buddy Scheme's processes and benefits at a glance

05

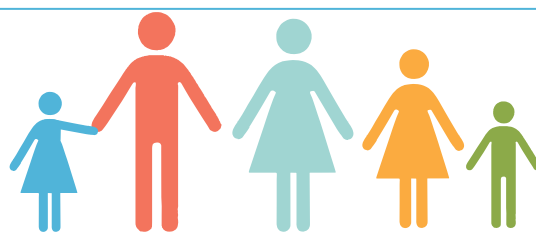
Incentives and Recognition

- **Referrals:** Encourage current participants and volunteers to refer others by offering incentives for each successful referral.
- **Recognition:** Publicly recognize and reward active buddies/participants and outstanding volunteers, which can also serve as content for promotional materials

06

Educational Workshops and Seminars

- **Free Sessions:** Offer free workshops or seminars that provide value to the community while also introducing the program and its benefits.
- **Expert Talks:** Host talks by experts on topics related to migration, cultural integration, and community building to draw interest and associate the ACTIN Buddy Scheme with thought leadership.



Here are key strategies to effectively promote

07

Community Meetings:

- **Hold open forums** where community members can learn about the ACTIN Buddy Scheme , ask questions, and provide input, fostering a sense of ownership and involvement.

08

Digital Marketing:

- Ensure that the ACTIN Buddy Scheme section on the website is **optimized** for search engines to improve visibility for those searching for related information.
- **Blog Posts:** Regularly publish blog posts that address relevant topics of interest to buddies, providing useful information while promoting the programme.
- Implementing these effective promotional approaches can significantly increase awareness, participation, and support for programs like the ACTIN Buddy Scheme, ensuring they reach their full potential in serving the community.



Support and Resources



5.1 Buddy Scheme Recruitment and Selection



The recruitment and selection process for an ACTIN Buddy Scheme is a critical stepping stone in creating a robust process that effectively supports the integration of migrants and refugees through personal interactions with local community members and language practice. To ensure its success, it is essential to

- Attract and choose volunteers who are not only motivated and empathetic but also possess the interpersonal skills necessary to form meaningful connections with diverse participants who are facing significant challenges. Thus, the recruitment strategy should focus on reaching out to potential volunteers through community networks, local organisations, and social media platforms, emphasising the scheme's goals and the personal and community benefits of participation. Additionally, providing clear information about the responsibilities and the nature of the commitment can help attract those who are genuinely interested and capable of making a positive impact.
- Once potential volunteers are identified, the selection process should involve a thorough screening that includes interviews, background checks, and, ideally, a matching process that aligns volunteers' skills and interests with participants' needs. Training sessions are also crucial, preparing volunteers with the necessary cultural competence, language skills, and interpersonal techniques to effectively assist their buddies. This meticulous approach ensures that the scheme supports the linguistic and cultural adaptation of migrants and refugees and fosters an environment of mutual respect and understanding, enriching the community as a whole.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

6.1 Challenges and Mitigation Strategies for Language Practice Buddy Sessions



01

Diverse Language Proficiency Levels

- **Challenge:** Participants have varying levels of language skills, which can make it difficult to conduct sessions that are equally engaging and beneficial for everyone.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Group participants by similar proficiency levels for more targeted instruction and practice. Alternatively, design activities that naturally allow for differentiated roles, enabling more advanced speakers to assist beginners.

02

Participant Hesitation or Anxiety

- **Challenge:** Some participants may feel nervous or self-conscious about making mistakes in front of others, which can inhibit their willingness to engage fully.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Foster a supportive and encouraging environment. Regularly emphasize the value of mistakes as learning opportunities. Incorporate ice-breakers and team-building exercises to reduce anxiety and build trust among participants.

03

Sustaining Engagement and Motivation

- **Challenge:** Keeping participants consistently engaged and motivated, especially in longer courses or sessions.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Vary the formats and activities of the sessions to keep them fresh and interesting. Use multimedia resources, real-life scenarios, and games to make learning more enjoyable and relatable. Provide regular feedback and celebrate progress to boost motivation.

04

Cultural Misunderstandings

- **Challenge:** Differences in cultural backgrounds among participants can lead to misunderstandings that complicate communication and learning.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Incorporate cultural education into the language sessions. Teach and discuss cultural norms and etiquettes of the languages being learned to enhance understanding and prevent miscommunication.



05

Resource Constraints

- **Challenge:** Limited resources such as insufficient teaching materials, lack of proper facilities, or restricted access to native speakers.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Leverage technology to access a broader range of materials and interaction opportunities, such as online language learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and language exchange apps. Collaborate with local libraries, community centers, or universities to share resources.

06

Instructor or Facilitator Limitations

- **Challenge:** Facilitators may not always be equipped to handle the diverse needs of a multilingual and multicultural classroom.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Provide ongoing professional development for instructors and facilitators. This could include training in ESL teaching strategies, cultural competency, and conflict resolution.

07

Measuring Progress

- **Challenge:** Effectively assessing the progress of participants in a way that is objective and consistent.
 - **Mitigation Strategy:** Develop clear, measurable learning objectives at the start and use a combination of formative and summative assessments to gauge progress. Utilize tools like language portfolios or regular proficiency tests to monitor improvements.
-

6.2 Challenges and Mitigation Strategies for Cultural Engagement Buddy Activities



Cultural engagement activities are essential for promoting understanding and integration among diverse groups. However, they often come with unique challenges that need to be effectively managed to maximize their positive impact. Here are some common challenges and their corresponding mitigation strategies

01

Cultural Sensitivity and Misunderstandings:

- **Challenge:** Activities may inadvertently reinforce stereotypes or cause cultural offenses due to a lack of deep understanding of the cultures represented.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Invest in thorough cultural research and consultations with cultural representatives before designing activities. Provide cultural sensitivity training for all organizers and participants. Encourage open dialogue and have cultural mediators to address and clarify potential misunderstandings.

02

Participant Discomfort or Reluctance:

- **Challenge:** Participants may feel uncomfortable or hesitant to engage in activities that expose them to unfamiliar cultural practices or discussions.
 - **Mitigation Strategy:** Create a welcoming and inclusive environment by clearly communicating the goals and benefits of participation. Start with less intensive activities to gradually build comfort and trust among participants. Offer anonymous feedback options to gauge comfort levels and adjust accordingly
-

03

Inequitable Participation

- **Challenge:** Some groups may dominate the activity while others remain passive, leading to an imbalance in engagement and benefits.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Structure activities to ensure equitable participation, possibly by using facilitated discussion groups, rotating leadership roles, or structured turn-taking. Regularly solicit feedback to ensure all voices are heard and valued

04

Resource Limitations

- **Challenge:** Limited resources can restrict the variety and scope of cultural activities, potentially leading to a less engaging or educative experience.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Leverage community resources, partnerships with cultural organizations, and digital tools to enhance activity offerings. Consider crowd-sourcing ideas and materials from participants themselves to foster a sense of ownership and creativity.

05

Scaling Activities for Larger Groups

- **Challenge:** Maintaining the effectiveness of cultural activities as participant numbers increase can be difficult.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Use breakout sessions or smaller discussion groups within larger events to maintain intimacy and engagement. Employ additional facilitators or cultural guides to manage group dynamics effectively

06

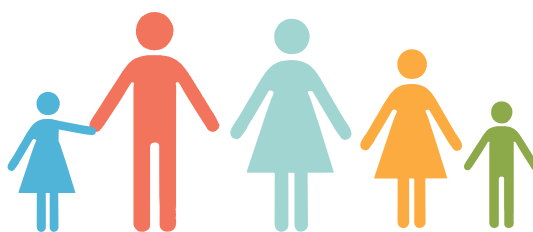
Measuring Impact

- **Challenge:** Quantifying the impact of cultural engagement activities can be challenging, making it hard to justify continued funding or support.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Develop clear, measurable objectives for cultural engagement activities. Use both qualitative (e.g., participant testimonials, case studies) and quantitative (e.g., surveys, participation rates) methods to assess and demonstrate their impact

07

Adapting to Virtual Settings

- **Challenge:** Translating cultural engagement activities to online formats can dilute their effectiveness and personal connection.
 - **Mitigation Strategy:** Utilize interactive online tools (e.g., virtual reality, interactive webinars, and collaborative platforms) to create immersive experiences. Train facilitators to effectively engage and energize virtual audiences. By addressing these challenges with thoughtful and proactive strategies, cultural engagement activities can more effectively promote cultural understanding and appreciation, leading to richer, more inclusive community interactions.
-



6.3 Challenges and Mitigation Strategies for Social Inclusion Buddy Activities

Social inclusion buddy activities are designed to facilitate integration and foster mutual understanding among participants from diverse backgrounds. However, organizing these activities presents several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure their success and effectiveness.

01

Mismatched Expectations

- **Challenge:** Participants may have different expectations about the purpose or outcomes of buddy activities, which can lead to dissatisfaction or disengagement.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Clearly communicate the goals and structure of the buddy activities during initial orientations. Regularly check in with participants to align and readjust expectations as necessary.

02

Cultural and Language Barriers

- **Challenge:** Differences in language and cultural backgrounds can hinder effective communication and interaction between buddies.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Provide language support where necessary and incorporate cultural exchange as a component of the activities to facilitate understanding. Encourage the use of simple, clear language and non-verbal communication methods.

03

Lack of Engagement

- **Challenge:** Ensuring consistent engagement from all participants can be difficult, especially if some feel less included or if the activities do not meet their interests.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Design activities that are relevant and interesting to all participants, possibly using interest surveys to tailor activities. Use a variety of activity formats to cater to different preferences and learning styles.

04

Difficulty Building Trust

- **Challenge:** Building trust between participants from different backgrounds takes time and can be hindered by preconceptions or past experiences.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Include team-building exercises and shared goals in early sessions to foster a sense of unity and cooperation. Highlight commonalities between participants alongside celebrating diversity.



05

Logistic Complications

- **Challenge:** Coordinating schedules, locations, and resources for buddy activities can be complex, especially when trying to accommodate diverse needs.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Utilize flexible scheduling and multiple venues, including virtual options, to maximize participation. Provide clear, frequent communications and updates to ensure all logistics are well understood

06

Monitoring Progress and Feedback

- **Challenge:** Continuously monitoring progress and obtaining feedback in a non-intrusive way can be challenging but is essential for the adaptation and success of the program.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Implement regular, informal feedback mechanisms such as digital surveys, suggestion boxes, and casual conversations. Consider periodic formal reviews to assess and document progress and areas for improvement

07

Ensuring Safety and Comfort

- **Challenge:** Ensuring that all activities are safe and that participants feel comfortable, especially in mixed groups.
 - **Mitigation Strategy:** Establish clear guidelines and a code of conduct for all activities. Train facilitators in safety protocols and conflict resolution. Provide a clear, accessible process for participants to report concerns or issues. By proactively addressing these challenges with effective strategies, social inclusion buddy activities can be more impactful, fostering an environment where all participants feel valued, included, and engaged
-



Case Studies and Best Practices



Uni-R program, University of Geneva

1. Most students signed up for Uni-R through the interfaculty course "Regard Interdisciplinaire sur la migration forcée" by J. Franck during the fall 2023 semester.
2. Uni-R program integrated 50% migrants from Academic Horizon and 50% from outside the University.
3. 34 groups were formed based on criteria like mixed gender, language levels, age, and specific requests.
4. Groups consisted of 11 pairs, 20 trinomials, and 3 quadrimomials.
5. Despite late registrations, efforts were made to accommodate Academic Horizon migrants in groups of 3 or 4.

Participant profile

A total of 98 participants, including 44 students and 54 migrants, exceeded the initial ceiling of 40 students and 40 migrants. Over half of the participants had previous experience working with migrants.



Framing

Throughout the semester, students had the opportunity to contact program coordinators and attend 4 coaching sessions. Attendance figures for sessions have hovered around 50%. Communication improvement is needed for future sessions. One student did not answer the faculty question. Vista Eskandari was unable to attend a session. Each participant received a certificate of participation.

Overall program evaluation

This section discusses the evaluation of the Uni-R program based on a questionnaire, focusing on the 5 cardinal principles of psychosocial intervention. It analyzes the program's impact on participants' sense of security, soothing, personal and community effectiveness, social connectivity, and feeling of hope.

- A total of 33 students and 22 migrants completed the survey.
- Majority of students prefer 3-4 person groups, while migrants prefer groups of 2.
- Over 80% of students and migrants find 2-hour weekly meetings adequate.
- Most meetings took place at cafés and universities, with good relationships within groups.
- Uni-R helped participants discover new cultures and share tips on Geneva.
- Participants felt safe, were able to share personal stories, and discuss difficulties.
- Uni-R enhanced language skills, self-confidence, and community effectiveness.
- The program fostered social connectivity, a sense of belonging, and optimism for the future.

To be taken into account

Suggestions for improvement of the program.

- Some participants dropped out, including one student and one migrant.
- Suggestions for improvement include more organized activities, mixing groups, and workshops on migration.
- Emphasis on the importance of clear communication and contacting the support team.
- Recommendations for better monitoring of pairs and increasing participation in coaching sessions.



Legal and Ethical Considerations



Ethical Guidelines and Participant Safety

1. All volunteers/employees of NGOs/organisations/universities etc should be trained on child protection and child safeguarding and follow the suggested by the NGO/org/uni Code of Conduct.
2. The same should apply to a mentor/volunteer.
3. In general, the "Do no harm" rule is basic and should serve as a basic principle of all actions of all programs implemented.
4. Mentors and mentees should be informed at the beginning of their relationship of the ways available to report any difficulties in the relationship, who their focal person would be, and be assured on the confidentiality aspect.



Guidelines for Code of Ethics in Mentoring (M4M project)



Mentors in the Mentoring Process should abide by the following principles:

1. **Responsibility.** The Mentor must be aware of his/her behavior and its potential negative impact on the Mentee.
2. **Do no harm.** The Mentor must avoid any behavior that has the potential to harm the Mentee (for instance, any behavior that might be perceived as abandonment, exploitation, boundary violation or neglect). The Mentor must also be aware of any change in the Mentee's behavior.
3. **Set limits,** boundaries and roles. Although some professionals working in a mentoring relationship may develop friendship with their mentees over time, it is important to establish clear boundaries to avoid potentially harmful multiple roles. It is also important to discuss eventual overlapping roles to avoid misunderstandings and inappropriately personal behaviours. It is important to maintain confidentiality, objectivity and equal partnerships, and most important never enter a sexual relationship with a Mentee.
4. **Competence.** It is important that the mentor is aware of his/her level of mentoring competence and experience, in order to choose an appropriate approach during the mentoring process. Moreover, each time the conversation strays away from mentoring towards counselling, an appropriate approach would be to suggest to contact a competent professional for particular topics. Confidentiality of the identity of the person being mentored. Mentors and the Programme's Coordinator must preserve the identity of the Mentees. Moreover, both the Mentor and the Mentee must maintain the confidentiality of all information shared during the mentorship programme, especially regarding sensitive and personal information, except for dangerous and illegal information, in that case appropriate measure must be taken, after consulting the Coordinator of the Programme.
5. **Dealing with self-distractions.** Mentors must bear in mind that bias, preconceived ideas, initial impressions, opinions and stereotypes influence the ability to pay attention and to be present and focused on Mentees' needs. If the Mentor struggles to achieve such level of self-management, it would be appropriate for the Mentor to suggest that the Mentee work with another Mentor.
6. **Contracting.** The mentoring contract must include a clarity over length and frequency of the sessions, as well as an agreement regarding the location of the sessions and whether it is permissible to use email/telephone/text to contact Mentor/Mentee regarding any concern related to mentoring.
7. **Source:** University of Southampton (2021) retrieved from <Code of conduct for mentoring | Professional Development | University of Southampton> [07.09.2021].



**The ACTIN Buddy Scheme
benefits from access to the
proven SolidarityNow's Code
of Conduct & Ethics**

SOLIDARITYNOW

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK &

CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS

Contents

INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK.....	4
CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS.....	4
1. Purpose	4
2. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy	4
3. Harassment.....	5
4. Sexual exploitation and abuse	5
5. Alcohol and Drug Abuse	5
6. No Smoking Policy	5
7. Health & Safety.....	5
8. Compliance with Laws and Regulations	6
9. Compliance with Donor Requirements	6
10. Responsibilities of supervisors	6
11. Accuracy of Financial Accounting and Reporting.....	6
12. Fraud & Corruption Policy	7
13. No Bribery	7
14. Dealing with Government Officials.....	7
15. Conflict of Interest.....	7
16. SolidarityNow Grants.....	8
17. Service on Boards of Grantee Organizations	8
18. Gift Policy	9
19. Confidentiality.....	9
20. Speaking Engagements and Articles for Publication	10
21. Intellectual Property.....	11
22. Computer and Communication Resources	11
23. Social Media Guidelines	11
SOLIDARITYNOW POLICIES & PROCEDURES.....	12
1. Office Appearance.....	12
2. Dress Code Policy	12
3. Place of Work.....	12
4. Working Hours.....	13
5. Absenteeism	13
6. Leave Policy	13
7. Sickness Leave	13
Sickness reporting	14

Documentation.....	14
8. Compensation.....	14
9. Expenses	15
10. Using SolidarityNow Property	15
11. Personal Data.....	15
12. Changes in Personnel Data	15
13. Termination.....	16
14. Employee Complaint Procedure	16
15. Whistleblowing	16
How to raise your concern internally	17
How SolidarityNow will respond.....	17
Raising your concern externally (exceptional cases)	17
Raising the matter with the appropriate regulator	17
16. Misconduct	18
OTHER ENGAGEMENTS POLICY.....	18
1. Voluntary Activity	18
Serving on a Board.....	18
Fund-raising	18
Speaking.....	18
Politics	18
2. Political Activities.....	19
3. Employment, consultancies, private business activities and teaching assignments	19
4. Acceptance of Fees	19
Acknowledgement Form	20



**The ACTIN Buddy Scheme
benefits from access to the
proven SolidarityNow's Child
Safeguarding Policy &
Relevant Procedures**



SolidarityNow

Child Safeguarding Policy & Relevant Procedures

Description:

Policy and relevant procedures that set out SN's commitment to protecting children from harm and abuse

Target Audience:

SN staff members Board members Partners Interns & Volunteers

Contents

1. Introduction & Purpose:
2. Definitions:
3. Sources of Violence and/or Abuse that children may experience:
4. How to implement Child Safeguarding
5. Child Safeguarding -Prevention:
 - A. Human Resources
 - B. Programmes Dept
 - C. Media & Communications.
 - D. Site Visits.
6. Staff behaviour
7. Child Safeguarding – Response
8. Accountability, M & E & Review of the present policy



Measuring and Sharing Impact



To continuously improve and validate the effectiveness of the ACTIN Buddy Scheme, it is crucial to implement a robust mechanism for measuring and sharing its impact. This helps in assessing the success of the ACTIN Buddy Scheme but also in communicating these outcomes to stakeholders, funders, and the community, thereby reinforcing the value of the initiative

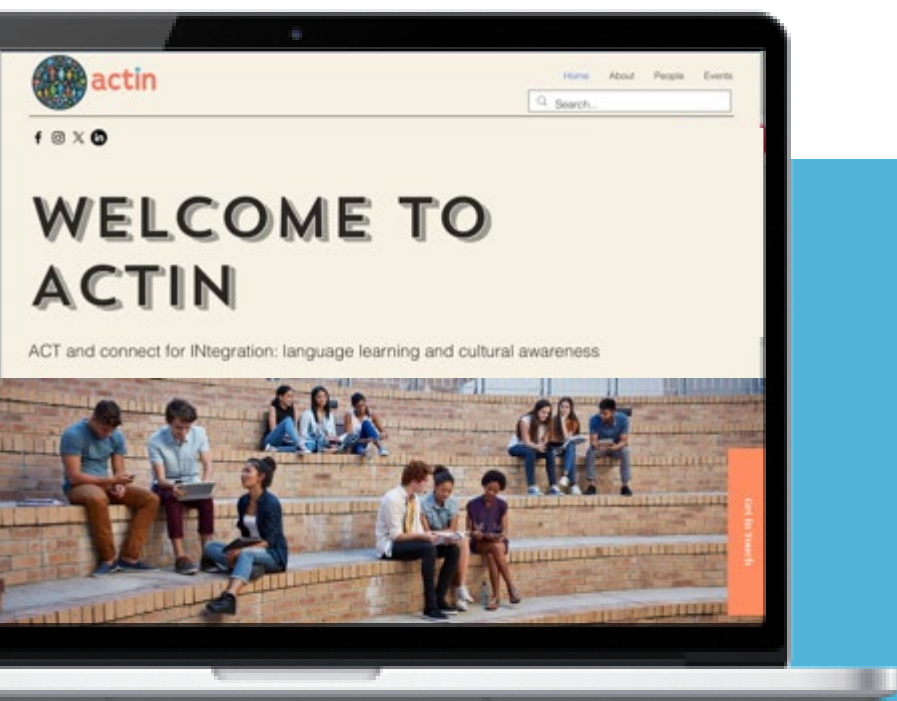
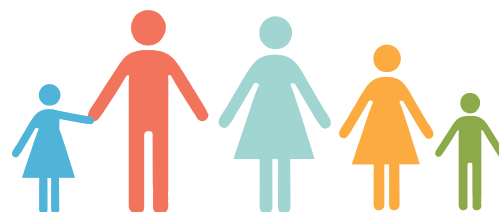
Impact Measurement Strategy:

- **Quantitative Metrics:** Develop clear, measurable indicators such as the number of buddy pairs established, language proficiency improvements, and integration markers. Regular assessments and surveys should be conducted to gather this data, providing concrete evidence of the scheme's effectiveness.
- **Qualitative Feedback:** Collect qualitative feedback through interviews and focus groups with participants and volunteers. This feedback should focus on language acquisition and improvement, personal growth, changes in cultural understanding, and overall satisfaction with the programme. Such narratives offer depth to the quantitative data, highlighting the human impact of the buddy scheme.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Establish a routine monitoring process that includes both short-term and long-term evaluations of the ACTIN Buddy Scheme. This will help identify immediate issues and adjustments as well as long-term trends and successes.

Sharing the Impact:

- **Impact Reports:** Compile the data and feedback into comprehensive impact reports. These reports should be made accessible to all stakeholders and the general public through the ACTIN website and at community level also. They should be visually engaging and easy to understand, using infographics and real stories to illustrate the program's achievements.
- Utilise various channels to disseminate the impact findings effectively. This includes presentations at community events, newsletters, social media posts, and press releases. Tailor the messaging to resonate with different audiences, from local community members to potential funders.

actin
ACT and connect for INtegration:
language learning & cultural awareness



Follow our journey



www.actintegration.eu



Co-funded by
the European Union

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.