Overview report on
social planning and welcoming projects

Deliverable T1.1.2

Contents

Figures

1. Introduction

This report presents an explorative and comparative analysis of case studies regarding the integration of newcomers in the territories cooperating in the PlurAlps project. It offers information tackling different experiences in the field and includes insights concerning their initial phase of implementation and general context and specific motivation, the experiences gained during their exploitation and in some examples also a foresight to future prospects and development of the initiative based on a reflected self-evaluation.

To set the picture, an initial overview tackling the general background context of each territory included in the project is presented to the reader by making use of the information offered by the involved case study partners by means of their factsheets (Chapter 2). Successively, the various case studies forming part of the sample analysis are shortly illustrated and put in relation with each other in accordance to their target groups and specific key issues. Chapter 3 describes the data collection and analysis approach. The core of the report, Chapter 4, contains the case studies' abstracts and an indication of their respective main target groups and key issues. An evaluation of each case study and a comparison among the samples with a special reference to their target groups and key issues made it possible to identify several key themes and commonalities among the various case studies that are described.

Finally, similarities, patterns, challenges as well as opportunities exposed by the case study partners in the factsheet's evaluation section – which 29 samples out of 34 filled in – are briefly discussed and put in relation with future prospects and policy recommendations aiming at promoting and developing a welcoming culture that takes into account a pluralistic integration approach in the Alpine area (Chapter 5).

2. Overview of the territorial context for background analysis

The following descriptions regarding the situation of the country context has been retrieved from the case studies' factsheets and allow to gain insight into the different socio-cultural settings in which the integration projects and initiatives are carried out.

AUSTRIA

As in other European countries, in 2015 many refugees came to Austria. Through quota rules many refugees came to Vorarlberg, some to Alberschwende. According to the Dublin Regulation, most of them, especially people from Syria, were threatened to be sent back to Hungary (first EU country they entered) where at that time they might have been abused, treated badly and imprisoned (again). Asylum procedures often take a long time and during this period, asylum seekers are not allowed to do regular work in most of the cases, even if they would like to settle down and to integrate with the local society. Most of the migrants come to the agglomerations in the Rhine valley, whereas the rural areas receive only few migrants. Today, there are about 200 asylum seekers and 200 recognized refugees living in the Bregenzerwald. The regional development association for the Bregenzerwald has set up an office for flight, asylum and integration with the aim of fostering a quick integration of migrants through German language courses and jobs, while increasing the contact with the local population. In Vorarlberg, there are similar coordination offices in all cities and regions, 12 in total. Questions of integration policy face not only the province government and the five cities but also many smaller communities in Vorarlberg that host migrants. The view that immigration and the related pluralization of today's society are not transitional

phenomena but will indeed characterize western industrial societies in the coming decades, demands a new policy of structuring the social processes involved.

The Provincial Government of Styria, the European Union (European Refugees Fund) and the City of Kapfenberg have identified language barriers as main reason for conflict situations between immigrants and locals in the territory of Kapfenberg. Upper Austria is a region with a strong and high developed economy but it is confronted with rural depopulation and a lack of skilled workers.

GERMANY

Freiburg im Breisgau accounts for a region with a highly developed and powerful economy. However, companies in the region struggle to find enough skilled workers in the territory, which could end up with endangering the good economic situation in future. The federal state Baden-Württemberg has a powerful economy. The Ministry of Finance and Economy of the state founded the so-called "Fachkräfteallianz" (Alliance for skilled workers) in 2011. Partners are for example the job center, trade unions and the chamber of trade in Baden-Württemberg. The aim is to guarantee that there are enough skilled workers in the state to safeguard the economic success. One measure was to establish eleven Welcome Centers in the state to recruit skilled workers from abroad, especially for smaller companies. One of them is the Welcome Center Freiburg-Oberrhein.

SLOVENIA

The ethnical structure of Slovenian Istria is historically associated with different cultures. In addition to the constitutionally recognized Italian national community, many other ethnic communities live here, among which the most numerous national minorities are the ones from former Yugoslavia.

After Slovenia gained independence, the members of local national groups from former Yugoslavia were faced with a situation of unregulated systemic status. Since they are not recognized as official minorities they are facing challenges, which hinder their proactive participation in decision-making processes in the Slovenian society and their general participation to civic life. Hate speech was widely present in Slovenian media space during the refugee crisis, accompanied by discrimination of refugees and immigrants, and conspiracy theories.

There are little opportunities for young people who do not live in the capital or bigger cities to get in touch with people from different background, sexual orientation or religion. Due to that there are strong prejudices still existing in such areas and there are not many opportunities to fight them.

ITALY

Due to the establishment of migrant families in the Piedmont Region, on one hand, and the arrival of refugees, on the other, local services are called to deal with an increasing ethnic and cultural heterogeneity of the local population. Furthermore, the field of migration is concerned by frequent legislative modifications. This situation requires a continuous updating of social workers' knowledge, skills and competences about migration phenomena. In Piedmont, the resident foreign citizens are 422.027 of which 252.735 are Third Country Nationals (Istat, 01.01.2016). Among the main challenges for the territory is the integration of children with a migration background enrolled in schools (75.786 in the school year 2014/2015, equal to 12,8 % of total pupils). They show higher rates of school dropout and lower school performances compared to their native peers due to low proficiency in Italian language, teachers'

difficulties in analyzing children's needs and adopting approaches which value cultural differences and families' difficulties in taking advantage of the available support and mediation services.

Another challenge concerns the barriers faced by migrants in accessing social services due to communication problems and persisting difficulties in the coordination between local actors, both public and private, with the consequent adoption of heterogeneous approaches, tools and actions across the region. Finally, migrants' involvement in public and civil society's arenas is still weak and should be strengthened through a development of communication tools and the support to foreigners' active participation. There is a general effort of the Piedmont Region to fight discrimination in all its forms in collaboration with public and private local actors within the framework of the Regional Law 5/2016.

Regarding the Region of South Tyrol, the social situation of the refugees seems to be difficult. They are mainly employed in short time or seasonal jobs that do not allow to manage their daily life requirements because of the low remuneration/financial support. Most of the times the inclusion in the job market is done through intermediation with the help of volunteers since it results less successful when refugees themselves try to contacting employers. Courses and elements of education raise the chance of integration into the job market, which needs to be standardized and further developed.

SWITZERLAND

An important part of integration is taking place in every-day life and is well established: in schools and vocational training or at the job and in the health care for example. However, there are also cases where migrants do not have access to these established measures. In these cases, there is the application of the so-called specific integration programs of different levels of the government. The cities of Wolhufen, Willisau, Hochdorf and Luzern are engaged in trying to overcome the existing barriers that hinder the participation in society and politics for migrants. In the mutual exchange and with an intensive involvement of the target group and the local authority the municipalities have developed tailor-made projects. During the project development it arose that informal and voluntary engagement also had to face unexpected barriers of access. One of the problems the cities were facing was to find suitable associations, in which both Swiss citizens and migrants were engaged and which could collaborate. Based on this experience, a strategy for future participation has been developed.

Integration is mainly taking place at local level, so the municipalities are the key to a successful promotion towards integration. The regional and national governments together want to take new actions towards new challenges, caused by growing migration. They consider it important to start integration at an early stage: adult migrants should get an information paper shortly after they arrive; children with a migratory background should – in case of need – receive a special promotion before the school starts.

3. Approach

3.1. Data collection through factsheets

This report finds its roots in the data previously collected by means of a tailor-made factsheet (see Annex). The information requested by this template included a brief description of the situation that the projects addresses, an abstract description of the

project summarizing the objective, main activities, main outputs/outcomes, the key issues that are/were addressed and potentially solved by the project, the target group and the overall project's outreach, the stakeholder involvement and their collaboration and last but not least a self-evaluation. This last section concerning the self-evaluation asked for a reflection on how well the project addressed and solved the issue, whether it succeeded in addressing the issue, where it failed to do so and why. It also attempts to elaborate whether the project addressed issues that had not originally been planned and on the lessons learned. Most importantly, this section aims at detecting whether the initiatives are transferable to other contexts or issues and whether some innovative actions have been developed during its implementation. It gives insight also to aspects that yet need to be addressed in future investigations and optimized with regard to networking, stakeholder engagement and policy support.

Eurac Research, leader of work package "WP T1 Project Environment" distributed the factsheet among the various partners of the project consortium who were then in charge to follow up the dissemination throughout their respective territory by reaching out to the most suitable local case studies and interlocutors. In this way, during the initial project phase of PlurAlps, a set of data referring to 34 case studies[1] was collected from the various territories of investigation (Figure 1). The factsheets were scrutinized, partially translated from the original language into English and organized for the internal project's filing system[2].

The data set and sample of case studies presents the ground for analysis and further discussion. It helps to trace common traits, while also giving hints about challenges and potential future prospects that unite the different actors, be it private organizations or public institutions, distributed throughout the Alpine area, which pursue the unfolding of a genuine, effective and sustainable "welcoming culture".
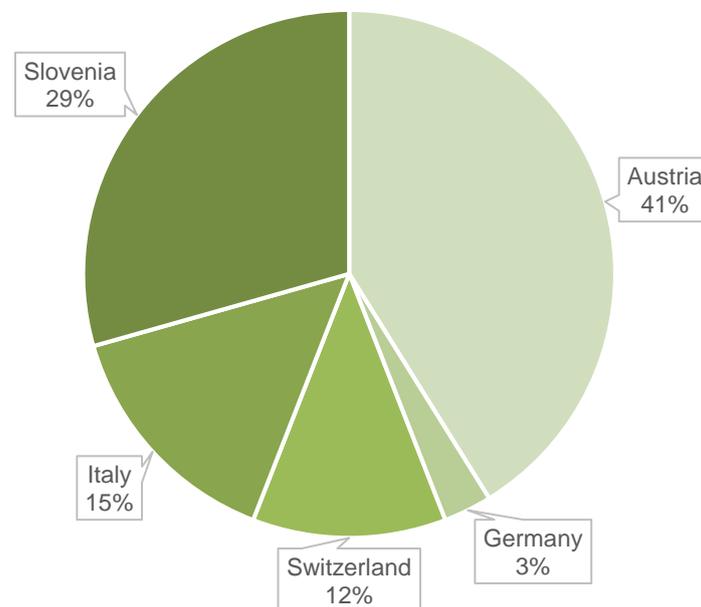
Figure 1: Territory of analysis, share of project per Alpine country (Source: Eurac Research)

---

[1] Number of case studies per country: Austria (14), Germany (1), Switzerland (4), Italy (5) and Slovenia (10)

[2] Additionally, an internal document presenting an English synopsis of all case studies was set up as basis for the project's general records. A separate database was set up to prepare for the web-based dissemination of all case studies under analysis (PlurAlps Deliverable T1.1.1) and combined with a collection of other inspiring practices related to the topic and territory.

3.2. Identifying the data matrix

In order to facilitate the evaluation of the collected data, a matrix based on the target group, on one side, and on the "key issues", on the other side, was set up to be able to bundle the samples and create a first common ground of discussion.

At first instance the criteria of target groups and key issues tackled by the various case studies resulted in a conundrum of aspects serving to describe them (Figure 2). The collection of these aspects reflects very well the complex task of categorizing "target groups" involved in the integration processes and initiatives as well as identifying "key issues" of projects aimed at establishing a welcoming culture.

Criteria 1: Target groups

Citizens of host community, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, skilled workers and returnees, **public institutions of host community**, organisations of host community, **business sector of host community**, schools, international policy makers, **women/girls immigrants**, administrations of the host community, local youth, **operators of the creative and cultural sector**, private training agencies and independent trainers, **tourism offices and municipalities**, **local authorities and member of minority groups**, NGOs related to human rights, theaters, researchers, **volunteers**, media operators, unaccompanied minors, **social workers, intercultural mediators, public institutions, public employees**, operators from the sports sector, parish and youth clubs, trade unione, civic society, business representatives, **political municipal authorities,**

Criteria 2: Key issues

language, awareness raising at perception/cognitive leve (inequality/diversity issues), **cultural events and performing arts a tools**, focus on political-legal measures, focus on social-political strategies, **inclusion in society**, integrations in the ambit of culture and customs, **community activation and participative methods**, promoting personal and social competences, **focus on labour market integration**, **training of employees dealing with immigrants**, integration to the school system, **focus on amplifying housing capacity**, tools and frameworks dedicated to **Welcoming Culture**
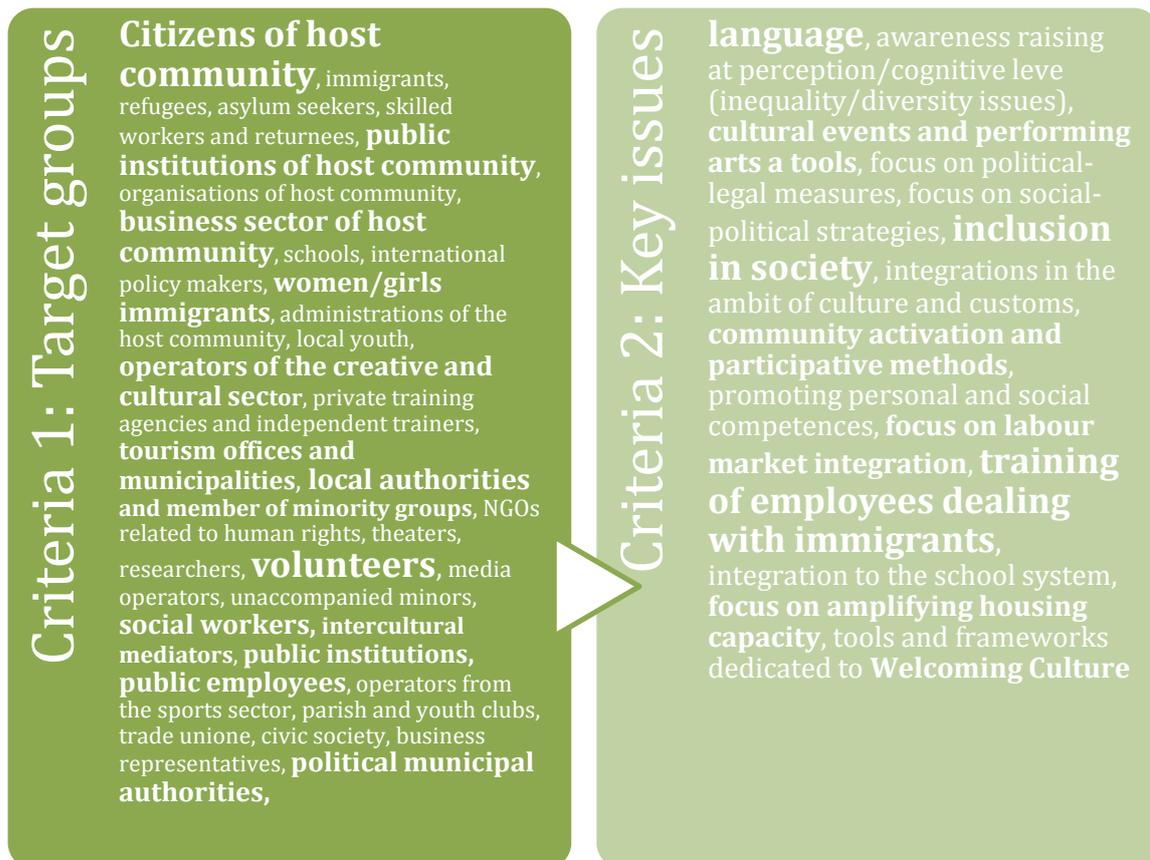
Figure 2: Conundrum of aspects concerning target groups and key issues tackled by the case studies under analysis (Source: Eurac Research)

By comparing the 34 case studies and besides taking into account their relationships and commonalities regarding their main target groups and key issues, it can be noticed that most of the measures adopted in the projects answer to the need to establishing and maintaining a balance between hosting community and newcomers as target groups.

As the data show, the activities offered throughout the territories of investigation are to a certain extent linked to the cultural background and socio-economic context of the hosting community. However, a trend can be recognized among the samples as for giving special attention to the perception level and for trying to enforce a common ground of trust between the hosting community and newcomers in general.

4. Comparative and explorative analysis

On the following pages, the case studies collected for the analysis are briefly outlined. Their target groups are indicated and they are organized in the following way: they are put in groups of case studies and set in relation with each other based on determined shared (key) issues that resulted to be the most significant for the further elaboration of tools and measures with the aim to promote and improve the welcoming culture and related practices in the Alps.

4.1. Integration from a multiple perspective

Target groups: Hosting community and immigrants
Key issues: Labour market integration, community involvement and interaction, social inclusion, fostering personal and social competences, raising awareness

Another set of case studies of the sample mainly focuses on promoting the inclusion process through labour market integration involving the local civic society and immigrants (Figure 3). The migrant groups can though differ from case to case according to their status, which again is strongly dependent on the country's migration policy and regulation.

Support to newcomers	Hosting community & immigrants	Support to host community
• Salewa Garten • Revealed hands • Wir sind aktiv	• Labour market integration • Community involvement & activation • Language	• Welcome Center Freiburg Oberrhein • We are all migrants • Dolmetsch- & Vermittlungsdienst der Stadt Kapfenberg

Figure 3: Key issues addressed and respective projects (Source: Eurac Research)

The **"Welcome Center Freiburg-Oberrhein" (Welcome Center Freiburg-Upper Rhine)** based in Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany) is dedicated to involve citizens and immigrants with the purpose of promoting inclusion in the labour market. Also the project **"We are all migrants"** (Istria, Maribor and Ljubljana, Slovenia) involves the receiving community and immigrants conjunctly in its activities. In this case, however, the intervention focuses on cultural events and performing arts as an effective tool, while at the same time stressing political- and legal measures linked to integration. The **„Dolmetsch- und Vermittlerdienst der Stadt Kapfenberg"** (Translator- and Mediator service of Kapfenberg) based in Kapfenberg (Austria), while reaching out to the exact same target group, puts the main focus of its activities on tackling the language issue. Following this line of thought and by taking a closer look at the traits of each of the collected inspiring practices, it is possible to draw a first distribution pattern of the sample items according to their target group and key issues tackled through their activities.

The **"Salewa Garten"** based in South Tyrol (Italy) is dedicated to enforce measures of social integration by promoting personal and social competences which as a consequence also help towards inclusion in the labour market. In this case, the

target group is however more specifically oriented towards refugees and citizens who get sensitized to integration issues through the promotion activity of the Salewa brand and enterprise. Another inspiring practice example that brings together the host community, the business sector and immigrants and in this case specifically targeting immigrant women and girls is called **"Revealed hands"** (Razkrite roke) based in Jesenice and Ljubljana (Slovenia). Also here the focus is on labour market integration. **"Wir sind aktiv"** (We are active) based in Alberschwende, Bregenzerwald, Vorarlberg (Austria) focuses on language as means to inclusion in society, on integration initiatives through the ambit of culture and customs, on awareness raising at a cognitive level to overcome inequality and diversity issues, as well as on measures for social integration to promote personal and social competences. Yet, as a main tool to achieve this, the project emphasizes motivating refugees towards private supporting activities organized by themselves. As can be derived from the project's experience, this approach has led to – and at the same time was only possibly thanks to – synergies within the project's target groups including refugees, citizens of the receiving community, public administration and the local business sector.

The same stakeholders as so far mentioned are involved also in the **"Integrationstätigkeiten"** (integration activities) based in Vorarlberg (Austria) whereby inclusion in society is promoted through measures of social integration and the fostering of personal and social competences by means of a "service voucher" (Dienstleistungsscheck). At the same time private persons with social needs can benefit from the asylum seekers' support through specific integration projects (Table 1).

Table 1: Key issues addressed and respective projects (Source: Eurac Research)

Key issues	Projects
▪ **Inclusion in society** ▪ **Fostering personal & social competences** ▪ **Awareness raising**	Flucht, Asyl und Integration im Bregenzerwald
	Integrationstätigkeiten Vorarlberg
	Vorankommen Vorarlberg
	Okay.zusammen leben

Similarly to **"Vorankommen"** (getting ahead) – Developing a welcoming culture in rural villages in collaboration with five municipalities in Northern Vorarlberg (Austria) (Bezau, Bizau, Mellau, Reuthe, Schnepfau) there is also the project **"Flucht, Asyl und Integration im Bregenzerwald"** (office for flight, asylum and integration in the Bregenzerwald). Latter project combines 24 municipalities of the Bregenzerwald (Northern Vorarlberg, Austria) and both initiatives encourage the promotion of personal and social competences besides tackling integration also through activities concerning the school system and related measures for social integration. The offices "Flucht, Asyl und Integration im Bregenzerwald" were established thanks to this initiative and coordinate activities such as intercultural meetings for special target groups (e.g. girls or women) as well as language and alphabetization courses for children and adults in cooperation with schools and associations, job orientation workshops. It is important to highlight at this point, that in this project the various activities are open for all persons with foreign mother language, not only for refugees and asylum seekers. Thus, the offices also function as information hub and provide migrants – and all other citizens – with information material and contacts of other institutions and associations.

As a matter of fact, there are certain regions where the main group of immigrants does not consist of low-skilled from non-EU countries but skilled workers with a migratory background from, mainly, Eastern Europe countries (EU), who require a different type of support and service when talking about labour market integration and welcoming culture due to different underlying legal regulations.

„**okay.zusammen leben**" (okay.living together) based in Vorarlberg (Austria) dedicates its services to skilled workers and involves citizens of the host community, its public institutions and organizations as well as international policy makers. It presents itself as an information and advisory center for immigration and integration issues. It aims mainly at awareness raising among society as a whole by looking at integration issues from a socio-political point of view, which reaches across all levels and sub-systems of society.

4.2. Labour market integration from the receiving community's services' perspective

<u>Target groups</u>: public or private employers, mediators and social workers, volunteers, schools and universities, operators from the sports sector, parish and youth clubs, trade unions, public institutions, organizations, citizens of the hosting community, unaccompanied minors, municipal authorities

<u>Key issues</u>: Social and professional competences; intercultural skills, integration in the ambit of culture and customs, community activation and participative approaches. promoting tools and frameworks dedicated to Welcoming Culture, social inclusion. awareness raising at the perception- or cognitive level to overcome inequality/diversity issues, language

Social competences and intercultural skills turn crucial also when seen from the other point of view that is for public or private employers, mediators or social worker. They are in contact and exchange with immigrants on a daily basis and accordingly need to be prepared and supported in their duty and performance in order to contribute to the development and maintenance of an effective and sustainable welcoming culture. Some case studies promote the role of individual mediators to facilitate the interaction among the receiving community and immigrants (Figure 4), other case studies promote territorial measures linked to policy frameworks (Figure 5).

The **"Piano Integrato degli Interventi in Materia di Inserimento Lavorativo e di Integrazione Sociale dei Migranti – Integrated Plan in the field of Migrants' Social Integration and Inclusion in the Labour Market"** based in Piedmont (Italy) targets unaccompanied minors, immigrants but also, and especially, social workers and intercultural mediators. In fact, their intervention tackles integration in the field of culture and customs and of community activation by adopting participative methods. The project aims furthermore at promoting personal and social competences in order to facilitate labour market integration by means of training of employees dealing with immigrants, especially for the local service institutions.

Remaining in the same geographical area, there are further initiatives that follow a similar approach. One of them is **"Ve.S.T.A – Verso Servizi Territoriali Accoglienti"** based in Piedmont (Italy) that focuses on the training of employees dealing with immigrants – again especially of local service institutions – while promoting tools and frameworks dedicated to Welcoming Culture. They are based on activities like legal, anthropological and social training which help addressing social workers and intercultural mediators, as well as leveraging the information dissemination through an online portal which includes a specific forum for peer-to-peer exchange of information and good practices.

In the case of **"Piemonte contro Le Discriminazioni**" (Piedmont against Discrimination) based in the Piedmont Region the target group of the training initiatives includes public employees and immigrants besides social workers and intercultural mediators employed in local services, volunteers, schools and universities, operators from the sports sector, parish- and youth clubs as well as trade unions. The activity field builds onto a regional network and onto local sub-networks of actors who fight against racial discrimination and for raising awareness while providing information to Third Country Nationals and public employees. The main outputs of this project include the establishment of a series of local reference points and information points.

Within the system and landscape of integration projects throughout the territory of analysis, it results that physical sites or points of references are crucial to facilitate the process of encounter and information exchange, on both sides, for locals as well immigrants.

Another inspiring case study from Italy but this time based in the region of South Tyrol, is the **"Pilot project Jobcoach"** in Malles/Mals. Its activities aim at training employees dealing with immigrants and developing tools and frameworks dedicated to welcoming culture. Also in this case an important focus is put on promoting personal and social competences to enforce the inclusion in the labour market and not only immigrants are trained but also social workers, intercultural mediators employed in local services, volunteers and researchers who help shape the profile of the so called "Jobcoach". The Jobcoach, a volunteer, has the task to instigate the job inclusion and helping with advice and support on site. For the **"Gemeinsam in der Gemeinde – Communes sympa"** (Together in the municipality) based in the Swiss Canton Freiburg/Fribourg this role of being a sort of "ambassador" in charge of linking the parish and the local population to the newcomers is assigned to a whole group of so-called "networkers". The municipality and the canton offer the population a free schooling including coaching and a guided exchange of experience in order to become "networkers".

Issues
Social and professional competences, intercultural skills, integration in the ambit of culture and customs, **community activation** and participative approaches, **promoting tools and frameworks** dedicated to Welcoming Culture, **social inclusion**. **awareness raising at the perception or cognitive level** to overcome inequality/diversity issues

Projects
_Piano Integrato degli Interventi in Materia di Inserimento Lavorativo e di Integrazione Sociale dei Migranti

_Ve.S.T.A - Verso Servizi Territoriali Accoglienti

_Gemeinsam in der Gemeinde – Communes sympa

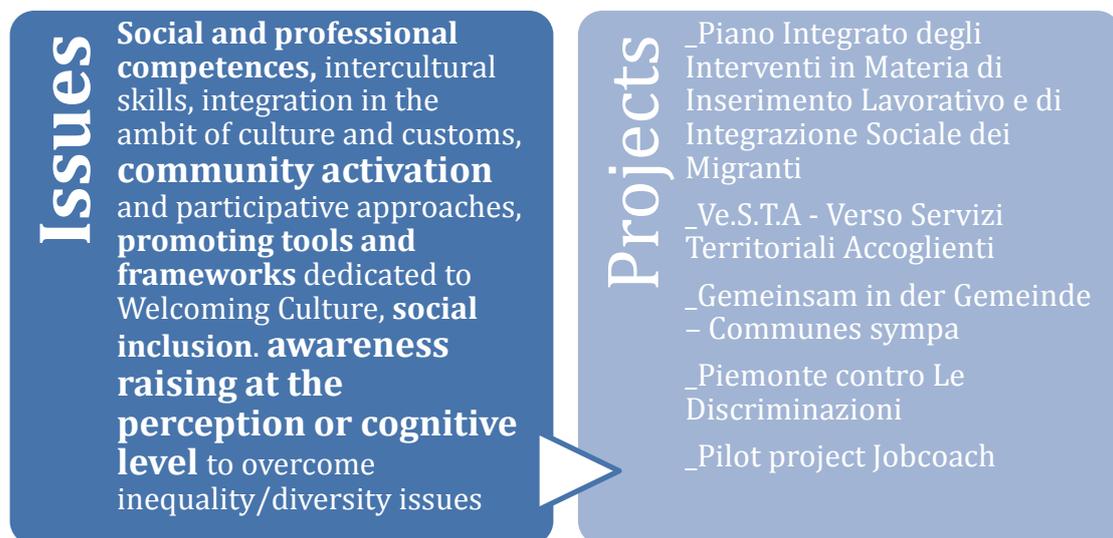_Piemonte contro Le Discriminazioni

_Pilot project Jobcoach

Figure 4: Key issues addressed and respective projects (Source: Eurac Research)

For the Swiss territory as a whole, a milestone in terms of integration has been reached through the **"Kantonale Integrationsprogramme (KIP)"** (integration programs for Cantons). They foresee the involvement of all cantons (Switzerland) and provide strategic goals (organized per area of integration) which are set bindingly as well as the respective measures to achieve them. All the needed measures of

promotion towards integration for each specifically defined area of intervention are included in a database and shall serve immigrants, social workers and intercultural mediators employed in local services, volunteers as well as political municipal authorities.

The **"Toolbox – Integration für Gemeinden"** (Integration for municipalities), an initiative based in Graubünden (Switzerland), has a similar approach regarding the collection of the data that the municipality provides by visualizing and publishing them in order for migrants to have access. Since the general context varies from municipality to municipality according to its geographical condition, size and structure of the population, a tailored approach of intervention is needed. Thanks to the toolbox provided by the unit Graubünden, the project helps to support the municipalities in their integration and information tasks, offering recommendations and welcoming brochures in 17 languages.

"Engagiert sein (Be engaged) – Increasing and supporting civil engagement through volunteer coordinators and engaged persons in municipalities" brings together 18 municipalities in rural valleys of northern Vorarlberg (Austria) and its targets include citizens of the receiving community, public institutions and organizations and focuses also on schools. Awareness raising at the perception or cognitive level to overcome inequality/diversity issues, as well as community activation and participative methods add to promoting personal and social competences. The key issues the project is tackling are engagement of volunteers, improving societal and socio-economic framework conditions, strengthening regional stakeholder networks and enhancing the migrants' willingness to integrate into the receiving community and to improve their inclusion at school.

Supportive tools for labour market integration for regional and municipal institutions		
Kantonale Integrations-programme	Toolbox - Integration für Gemeinden	Engagiert sein

Figure 5: Tools offered to regional and municipal institutions aimed at labour market integration (Source: Eurac Research)

4.3. Social and cultural integration through school and education

Target groups: immigrants, administration of host community, local youth and schools, intercultural mediation, public and private employees, social workers

Key issues: Language, awareness raising at the perception- and cognitive level to handle inequality- and diversity issues, focus on social-political strategies, promoting personal and social competences, social housing, focus on culture and performing arts as tools

With regard to the involvement of schools, there are several case studies that stress the relevance of interrelation to the educational system and institutions of the receiving territory (Figure 6).

Language, awareness raising at the perception and cognitive level to handle inequality and diversity issues are for instance the key issues tackled by the initiative of **"Začetna integracija priseljencev (ZIP) / Initial integration of immigrants programme"** based in Slovenia. The project can be described as a publicly valid educational program for learning the Slovene language for adult immigrants, which includes content from life and work in Slovenia and targets immigrants and at the same time administrations of the host community. Also the project **"Young ambassadors of intercultural dialogue (YAID)"** in Konjice (Slovenia), which reaches out to local youth and schools, highlights the importance of selecting and involving "young ambassadors of intercultural dialogue". The project provides along these lines for educational modules, "Hours of intercultural dialogue", on the theme Roma, Islam, LGBT community and migrants.

"PETRARCA 5 – Piano regionale per la formazione civico-linguistica dei cittadini di Paesi terzi – Regional Plan for civic-linguistic training of Third Country Nationals" based in Piedmont (Italy) focuses its intervention on language and on the school system while tackling also social-political strategies and promoting personal and social competences. The project offers Italian language courses free of charge addressing regular migrants, teachers' training modules and the support to developing a governance structure based on local networks.

Another initiative that follows a similar line and goes even beyond is **"InterAzioni in Piemonte – Piano d'intervento regionale per l'integrazione dei cittadini di Paesi terzi – Regional Plan for the Integration of Third Country Nationals"** in Piedmont (Italy). It adopts a cross-sector approach and involves both public and private actors and different levels of government offering school and extra-school laboratories, intercultural mediation activities, working groups engaging social workers and pilot actions on social housing, while coordinating an online platform on 'Regional Observatory on Migration'. Among the key activities is focusing on migrant children's school performance as well as migrants' access to social services and the respective communication.

Another example from Slovenia, this time from Maribor and entitled **"Where are borders?"**, is focused on local youth and schools and tackles integration in the ambit of culture and customs through cultural events and performing arts as tools and through community activation and participative methods. **"Through the Refugee's Eyes"** (Slovenia) an additional focus is set on cultural events and performing arts as tools. Still, the main target group includes local youth, immigrants and schools. This time, however, the activities offered through the education context comprises an interactive, experiential theatre play that gives first-hand experience on how people on the run are feeling and it aims at transforming the beliefs of the local host community regarding immigrants and refugees by raising awareness and acceptance.
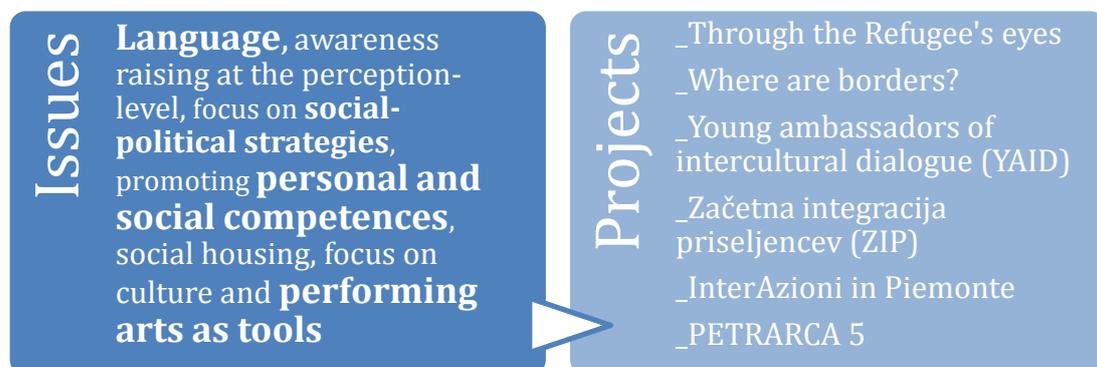
Issues: **Language,** awareness raising at the perception-level, focus on **social-political strategies**, promoting **personal and social competences**, social housing, focus on culture and **performing arts as tools**

Projects: _Through the Refugee's eyes, _Where are borders?, _Young ambassadors of intercultural dialogue (YAID), _Začetna integracija priseljencev (ZIP), _InterAzioni in Piemonte, _PETRARCA 5

Figure 6: Key issues addressed and respective projects (Source: Eurac Research)

4.4. Social and cultural integration through performing arts and culture

<u>Target groups</u>: citizens of the hosting community, local organizations, local youth, immigrants, operators from the creative and cultural sector, local municipalities, tourism office, local authorities, members of minority groups, NGOs related to human rights, researchers

<u>Key issues</u>: performing arts and culture as tools, intercultural mediation, citizen activation, social inclusion, awareness raising at the perception level, participative methods, social and professional competences, tools and frameworks dedicated to welcoming culture, political-legal measures, social-political strategies

The example of some case studies shows that culture and the arts, especially performing arts, are a helpful tool to overcome distance, to create images and to discuss about sensitive topics without using any formal language.

"DRAMA – Dancing to Raise Awareness towards iMmigrAtion" based in Trentino Alto Adige (Erasmus+ program) involves the local community as well as local organizations in a non-formal educational experience. Through the elaboration of a dance performance on the theme of immigration and the respective training program the initiative facilitates group activities and role plays on intercultural topics.

"Gledam širše, vidim več" (Looking wider, seeing more) based in Ljubljana (Slovenia) tackles inclusion in society and integration in the ambit of culture and customs by offering the possibility to immigrants to learn about photography and to express themselves by its means. Through the stories of immigrants, the city of Ljubljana finds a way to rediscover and reinvent itself every time anew and while the photographs are presented in an urban exhibition, there is also space for informal debate and workshops, which are especially interesting for local youth, immigrants as well as operators from the creative and cultural sector. Another examples of using arts and culture as integration tool is presented by the project **"INTER-KUL-TUR-ISTRA: Training for the inclusion of cultural heritage and the creativity potential of Slovenian Istria"** which involves a number of Istrian municipalities including Koper, Izola, Piran and Ankaran in Slovenia. The initiative targets immigrants, cultural operators and trainers but also tourism offices and municipalities and focuses on cultural heritage and the creativity potential of Slovenian Istria by developing a training, through which the participants acquire practical and theoretical knowledge about sustainable cultural and creative tourism. The aim is to enhance the employability of ethnic communities and immigrants in the valorisation field and multi-ethnic cultural heritage. This allows to foster their social inclusion through raising awareness about the genesis of heterogeneous cultural identity of the area.

Besides photography, performing arts and activities linked to the hosting community's cultural heritage, there are also initiatives that focus on creative ways to facilitate communication. It is the case of **"The Radio programme Migrant Frequency" / "Migrantska frekvenca"** based in Ljubljana (Slovenia) that tackles inclusion in society, awareness raising at the perception and cognitive level as well as inequality and diversity issues through community activation and participative methods by means of radio broadcast. Immigrants, especially asylum seekers, work together with media operators to show the difficulties that migrants are facing through their experiences and to give them useful information. At the same time the special radio show helps to raise awareness for refugees' challenges and to promote inclusion among society by also including interviews of representatives from various local institutions.
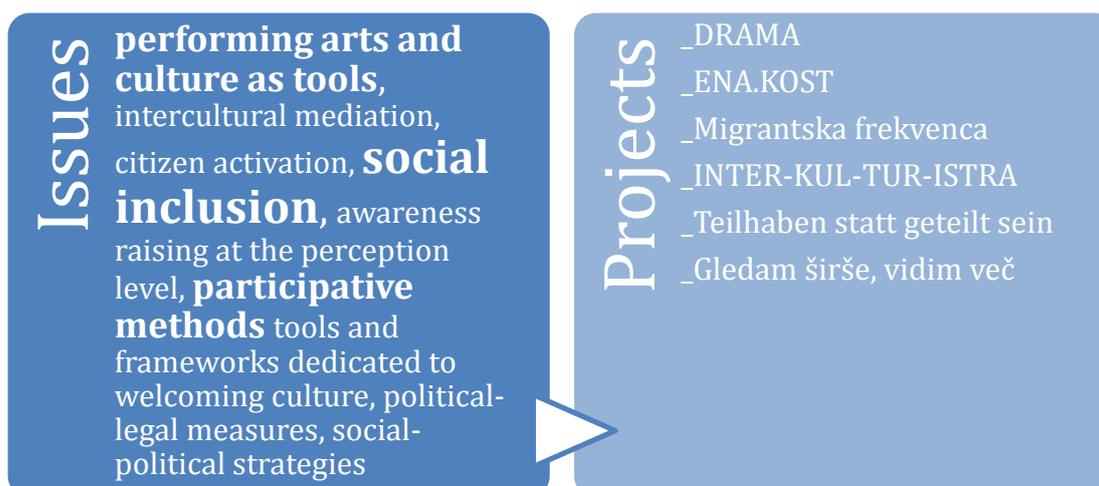
Figure 7: Key issues addressed and respective projects (Source: Eurac Research)

"Teil-haben statt Geteilt sein – (be a part of instead of be parted)", an initiative organized by Wolhusen, Willisau, Hochdorf und Luzern of the Kanton Luzern (Switzerland) also focuses on community activation and participative methods, while at the same time elaborating tools and frameworks dedicated to welcoming culture by involving immigrants, political municipal authorities, civil society, communities as well as associations. The project focuses on how to motivate migrants to participate in the municipal community life and builds on creating and expressing positive images through people with a migration background who are already engaged in volunteer work in order to involve also new immigrants.

"ENA.KOST: Equality of national communities of the nations of the former Yugoslavia and their members in the Slovenian Istra" brings together various Istrian municipalities including Koper, Izola, Piran and Ankaran (Slovenia) and facilitates inclusion in society and awareness raising at the perception and cognitive level by also putting a focus on political-legal measures and on socio-political strategies. Local authorities and members of minority groups, NGOs related to human rights as well as theatres and researchers belong to the target group of the initiatives, which aim at advocating, promoting and protecting the human rights of national communities from former Yugoslavia in the Slovenian Istra and giving them knowledge and skills to advocate for themselves. The activities reach from free legal aid and consulting in cooperation with The Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights in Piran, to workshops and interactive theatre forms as for instance the Theatre of the Oppressed (forum and legislative theatre). But it also includes the elaboration of reports about human rights violations of the target group together with researchers and experts in the field of minorities.

4.5. Integration through housing policies

Target groups: Immigrants, municipal authorities, civil society, local host communities, business representatives, volunteers, skilled workers, returnees, parish, politicians, teachers, media representatives, asylum seeking adolescents, architects, translators, asylum seekers, young couples and singles, architects, mayors, universities, institutes and associations

Key Issues: Focus on amplifying housing capacity, focus on political-legal measures awareness raising at the perception level, community activation, participative methods, tools and frameworks of welcoming culture, social cohesion, language, co-housing

An important issue that some of the analyzed case studies deal with concerns migrant housing situation and related policies, that, as we will see in the following examples (Figure 8), interrelate closely with other ambits supporting the unfolding of a sustainable welcoming culture.
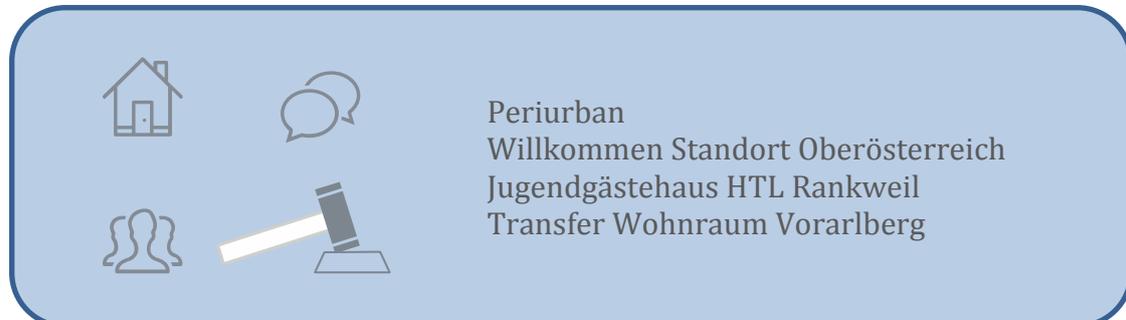

Periurban
Willkommen Standort Oberösterreich
Jugendgästehaus HTL Rankweil
Transfer Wohnraum Vorarlberg

Figure 8: Key issues regarding housing for migrants and related projects (Source: Eurac Research)

The project **"Periurban"** focuses on political-legal measures, awareness raising at the perception and cognitive level, on community activation and participative methods, as well as on measures of social integration through tools and frameworks dedicated to welcoming culture but it goes a step further to tackle also immigrant integration through measures focusing on amplifying housing capacity. Immigrants collaborate with municipal authorities, civil society, local host communities, business representatives and volunteers to spread the integration programs into regions that are not supported by the government and works towards social cohesion and especially towards the integration of migrants. The migrant's commission (Eidgenössische Migrationskommission/EKM) that leads the project wants to facilitate the development of integration practices and lays the ground to spread good examples of integration by enhancing the co-living of residents and briefly settled groups of population.

„Willkommen Standort Oberösterreich" (Welcome Upper Austria) based in Upper Austria also tackles the issue of language and aims at inclusion in society and the development of tools and frameworks to foster the welcoming culture by also including measures to amplify housing capacity. This initiative helps municipalities and companies through a so called "welcome check" based on an online questionnaire to evaluate and monitor how a municipality and the local companies integrate new employees and returnees into the social sphere beyond the workplace. The "welcome check" addresses the current welcome culture in municipalities and companies in nine categories. By focusing on existing structures and available possibilities and making use of them, it brings together the interests and necessities of the host community, immigrants, skilled workers as well as returnees, while at the same time leaving space for new ideas to be launched. , while at the same time giving advice to the various stakeholder in order to save the attractiveness of the region and counteract to rural depopulation.

"Jugendgästehaus HTL Rankweil" (Youth Guest House HTL Rankweil) based in Rankweil, Austria is a project that aimed at teaching asylum seeking adolescents about construction technology by involving them to jointly plan timber houses for other asylum-seeking adolescents of the Middle East. Around 15 adolescents from the war zones of Syria, Iran and Afghanistan attended a weeklong workshop at the Höhere Technische Lehranstalt (HTL, Higher Technical Education Institute). They continued working together to involve stakeholders that needed to be persuaded for the future planning, including public figures, members of the parish, politicians, the HTL's teachers, interested guests and the media. Experts of the business sector like wood constructors and architects but also stress analysts and

translators supported the adolescents. They organized interviews and social/community events to raise awareness, build on social cohesion and lay the ground for further tools and measures dedicated to welcoming culture with a specific attention towards housing policies.

"Transfer Wohnraum Vorarlberg" (Transfer Housing) involves five municipalities in Vorarlberg. It is an example that focuses on housing policies as important tool to facilitate integration. It promotes an integrative, socio-political concept to create affordable housing for refugees and young people seeking out for flats in Vorarlberg. In 2015/2016, around 3.700 asylum seekers arrived in Vorarlberg. Several hundreds of them obtained the right to stay and are in urgent need of housing. At the same time, there are 6.500 young residents looking for apartments in Vorarlberg, who had notified the municipalities of their basic need for housing years ago. The project developed a socio-political conception that allows affordable living for everyone. The project idea is applicable to other regions and belongs thus to the inspiring cases that can be presented at mayors' meetings, as well as to financers with an interest in social and sustainable solutions, universities, institutes, associations and councils. At the same time, at the construction sites, information sessions for construction property developers, building engineers, architects, parishes and municipalities are hosted on a regular basis giving also inspiration to the business sector and sensitive practitioners of the specific sector, too.

5. Conclusions

During the data evaluation, some links between the type of implemented integration activities and the respective target groups were identified, regardless of the territory in which these initiatives are taking place. Besides this, the collected case studies showed recurrent "key issues" which could in part be associated with a determined selection of target group but which – on the other hand – also showed that there are slight variations among case studies in their approach of addressing a specific key issue to a specific target group only.

The presented examples show that before being able to design any tailored measures to firstly identify the most crucial issues of each community and, secondly, to develop the most suitable measures by making use of already existing resources and enforcing or enlarging the network of supporters. The data show furthermore that organizers of the integration activities tend to include in their project's target group both immigrants and citizens of the hosting community alike and that they tend to follow a cross-sectoral approach enlacing private organizations and companies, cultural operators as well as municipalities and sometimes even public regional development institutions.

5.1. Food for thought

From the self-evaluation of the case studies some main issues emerged that show common traits and challenges faced by the operators who have been so far active in the field (Figure 9). They are here presented as food for thought and shall invite the reader to keep in mind for future projects while serving as a first hint for future investigations.

Labour market inclusion	Awareness for discrimination	Transferability
Language skills	Communication	Social services

Figure 9: Major issues recurring in the projects

Labour market inclusion

Labour market inclusion generally poses a challenge. Refugees with high qualifications in their home countries often do not "fit in" with regional needs and employment possibilities. This rift is a major source of disappointment and discouragement. One possible solution to this problem could be establishing a job coach that supports looking for reasonable jobs and language trainings, as one case study claims. As for the tourism sector, one initiative managed to include migrants through tailor-made job trainings and language courses into the labour market. However, its authors also concede that the interest and support of local tourist organizations is crucial to that end.

Awareness for discrimination

A number of initiatives aimed at raising awareness among the local population, with the superordinate goal to give refugees' life stories a face and reduce racial discrimination against the refugees and asylum seekers.

Transferability

Several case studies highlight the transferability of their initiatives to other regions or contexts, while stressing at the same time that regional adaptations might be necessary in order to render said initiatives most efficient. In addition, this transferability is not only limited to entire projects but also to specific elements and actions within these projects – for example, establishing multi-functional spaces. Others claim that while their projects' methods and tools (for example, dedicated migrant online platforms) are perfectly applicable to other contexts, their actual contents are not.

Language skills

The importance of fostering language skills of refugees and asylum seekers emerges from a wide range of case studies. In their self-evaluations, several factsheet authors mention that refugees' language skills were improved either through personal mentorships or through dedicated language courses. Ensuring these courses were tailored to the participants' backgrounds and needs is one factor that is not only innovative but a major factor of success. At the same time, one case study points out that at a regional level, it is unknown to which degree language training can be supplied, as many courses are essentially "out of the picture". On top of that, that same case study's author emphasizes that refugees constitute the lion's share of people in need of language training; nonetheless, it turned out difficult to reach them when they were working all day long. A possible solution to that situation could be offering dedicated

language training at their workplaces, while allowing them to attend said courses during their working hours. The improvement of language skills of job seekers results to be crucial and it can be challenging to map the language training supply at regional level as courses provided within vocational training programs or by different associations are not taken into account.

Communication

Mutual trust is created through interpersonal relationships and meetings. Generally, private stakeholders play an important role in supporting initiatives of integration by disseminating a positive discourse and by following a collaborative communication approach with public institutions. At the same time, local media can help the integration process by reporting about migration from a human and personal perspective giving special attention to personal stories. Also photographs based on testimonials can offer a practical way to explore the city through the eyes of immigrants. Inter-sectoral collaboration, cross-company discussion among SME and information sessions among different professionals involved in integration processes prove successful. Inter-municipal welcoming brochures lay the basis for an effective and continuous information exchange among newcomers, locals and stakeholders alike. Social media (e.g. through WhatsApp groups) can contribute to an efficient and swift communication with refugees and asylum seekers, too.

It is recommendable to make multilingual manuals accessible to public and available on the web. It is necessary to keep in mind that developing online platforms requires time and dedication. Such platforms should also be kept coherent for final users.

Social services

While one case study highlights that the social services providers' efforts are crucial to ensure refugees' integration, another one argues that training the social workers might face challenges in terms of lower levels of expertise and smaller staff in rural areas.

5.2. Final remarks

The more we look into the specific experiences of the various case studies the more we find out that there are many synergies that could be used in future and throughout the regions if information exchange is facilitated among actors within the ambit of integration, be it practitioners, policy makers as well as educational or social institutions.

For a genuine and sustainable development and unfolding of a welcoming culture, regardless of the specific territorial context and its implications, it is crucial to keep in mind that a hosting society needs the appropriate "hardware" (legal framework, public offices of references and competence, schools, media institutions) that set the political and legal framework for governance. Equally important is the fact that a welcoming society needs a suitable "software". That includes cultural "consciousness" and customs, an open attitude and behavior towards diversity and change requiring time to unfold but also, and especially, that needs to be encouraged and empowered from the public hand to reach the single individual citizen and community member (Kymlicka 2017)[3]. Sense of belonging, perception and interaction are to be nourished and accompanied from childhood to adulthood and need to reach newcomers as much as the members of the receiving community to lay the grounds for an enabling environment also with regard to welcoming culture and a pluralistic approach to integration.

---

[3] Kymlicka W (2017). The Hardware and Software of Pluralism. In: *Accounting for Change in Diverse Societies*, Global Centre for Pluralism, Ottawa.

Annex

Table 2: PlurAlps factsheet template used for data collection

Category	Description/details
Project name, duration and location	*(Abbreviation and full project name; start/end date; where is the project located – municipality, region, country etc.)*
Situation	*(Briefly describe the situation that the projects addresses)*
Content	*(Abstract description of the project summarizing the objective, main activities, main outputs/outcomes [if available yet]).*
Key issue	*(Which key issues are/were addressed/solved by the project?)*
Target group	*(Who is/are the target group/s? How many people did the project reach out to?)*
Stakeholder involvement	*(Which stakeholders are involved? How does the project improve the collaboration among stakeholders?)*
Evaluation	*(Think of the following questions when evaluating the project: How well does the project address/solve the issue(s)? Does it succeed in addressing the issues? Where does it fail to do so? Why? Does it address other issues than planned? Which ones? What are the lessons learned? In which aspects is the project transferable to other contexts? In which way is the project transferable to other issues? Which innovative actions did the project develop?)*
Contact	*(If available, please indicate a contact organization or person.)*
Source	*(Website link, document [PDF, Excel, Word, etc.])*
Project partner	*(Organization and name of the person who provided above information). If different from 'Contact'.*