



Profint

EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL TEAMS
FOR SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION
OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The PROFINT model

The PROFINT project is a strategic partnership in adult education training set up by :



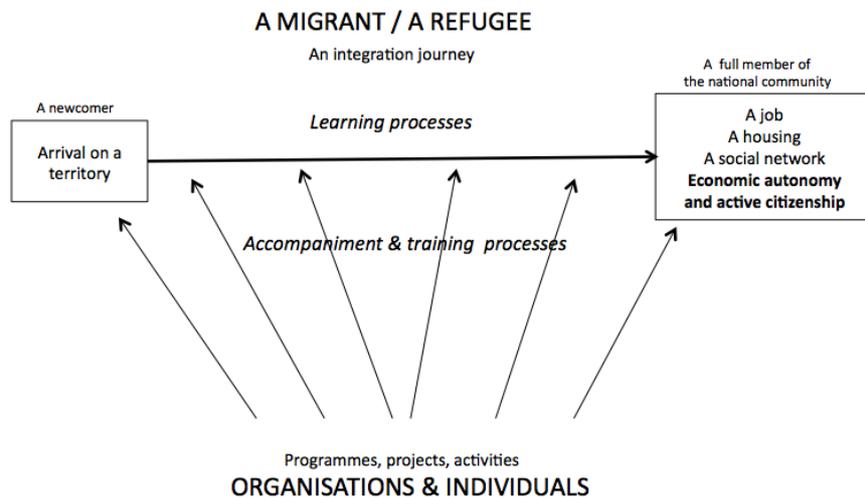
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Objective and target

Migrants and refugees arriving in a country/on a territory is enrolled in a series of devices and activities (compulsory or not) set up and implemented by different kind of actors (together or in parallel/independently) to support different steps of their journey toward full integration.



The integration journey of a migrant/refugee after arriving on a territory

The PROFINT-model and the competence resource that will ground on it aim to contribute to the professionalization of these different actors i.e. give them elements to work with successful integration journeys, whatever their initiatives and level of intervening.

With successful integration journeys, we mean that they make newcomers become full members of the hosting national community in getting a job, a housing and a social network leading them to economic autonomy and active citizenship.

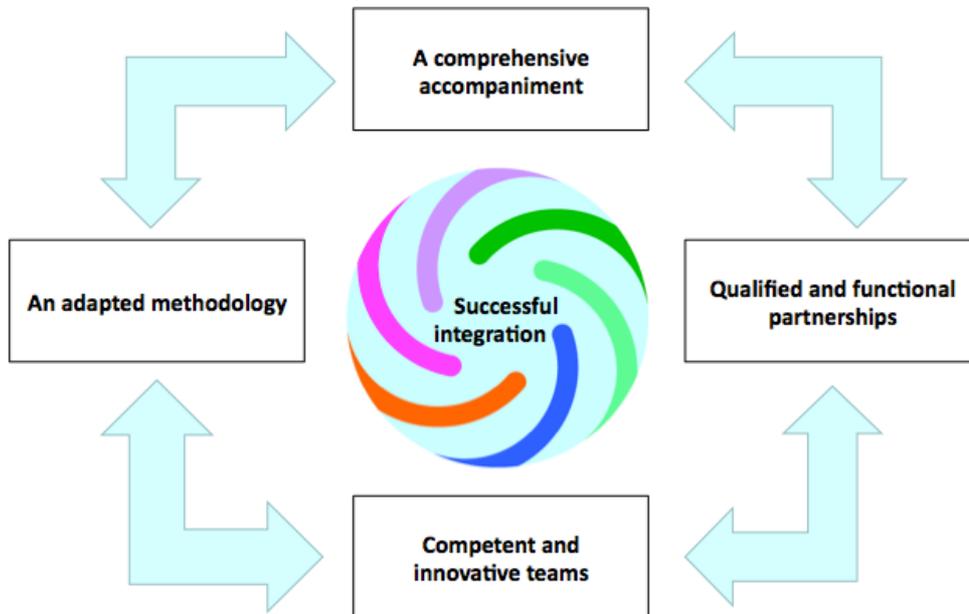
The model is thought to be most useful for teams and partner organisations setting up and implementing structured accompaniment and/or training projects for supporting the socio-professional integration of newcomers, as it is the case for the PROFINT partners. However,

- . institutions financing and coordinating different integration programmes,
- . actors in the social, employment, training, ..., sectors implementing or contributing to diverse integration projects or activities targeted on newcomers,
- . as well as voluntary individuals involved in these projects and activities,

will all be able to find elements in this practical framework to better situate their actions and to become more effective in contributing to the integration of migrants and refugees on their different territories.

The PROFINT-model gives a practical framework for all these actors. It is based on *success factors* identified from the mapping and analysis that PROFINT operational partners made of their accompaniment devices and processes and that they refined on the basis of interviews and surveys made in each country with beneficiaries and actors involved in the accompaniment and training of migrants and refugees.

The PROFINT model



A comprehensive accompaniment

- . Work and integration: The main objective of the journey
- . Consider the all three domains of learning
- . Reinforce intertwined Learning processes
- . Anchor the projects in the territory

An adapted methodology

- . Consider the specificities of the beneficiaries
- . Take care of the sourcing, recruitment and exit of the beneficiaries
- . Consider the importance of collective activities
- . Organise an intensive and close individual accompaniment
- . Promote practice and a participatory approach

Qualified and functional partners

- . Identify the relevant network of partners
- . Establish and organize functional partnerships
- . Institutionalize partnerships

Competent and innovative teams

- . To know and master the situation of migrants and refugees
- . Constitute and organize vigilant and reactive teams
- . Inform - Communicate

A comprehensive accompaniment

Work and integration: The main objective of the journey

Ensuring that newcomers enter the labour market as quickly as possible is a stated objective of any host country, thus minimizing the time of economic dependence and reducing the costs associated with the integration of migrant people. Finding a job or continuing their education for the realisation of their professional project, is also one of the main objectives, if not the main one, for most migrants and refugees accompanied and / or interviewed by the PROFINT-partners. The partners' experience is even that, most often and with regard to the objective of finding a job, migrants and refugees are more motivated than other people who are far from employment and accompanied in their research efforts.

But accessing to employment is not just a matter of acquiring job search techniques, training, finding an internship, etc ... It is also bringing together and dealing with a whole series of "peripheral" conditions that can as well be a springboard or become a barrier to the final acquisition of a job.

And before all, getting a job doesn't necessarily means to be integrated in the host society.

In other words, a successful integration journey is an intricate process that therefore demands a *comprehensive accompaniment*. With this concept we thus mean that the different actors working with initiatives targeted on migrants/refugees have in mind the all journey that migrants/refugees have to make until *their full integration* and that they apprehend *all the issues* migrants/refugees have to deal with along this journey.

Consider the all three domains of learning

From the trainers and accompanying actors point of view, the integration journey concerns three domains of knowledge and skill acquisition:

- *Linguistic*: Learning the host country language to be progressively able to speak, understand, read and write this language in daily and in professional situations.
- *Professional*: Acquiring the necessary professional skills (knowledge, know how and know how to be) in order to formalise a professional project, to search, to get and to keep a job.
- *Socio-cultural*: It is the most intricate domain of learning. It concerns:
 - . Basic civic education i.e. learning the rights and duties of a citizen in the host country and knowing the institutions, rules and laws that govern and serve them.
 - . Learning and acquiring an understanding of the social rules and norms governing daily life in the host country.
 - . Learning and appropriating the cultural habits and other cultural heritage of the host country, understanding the values that underlie this culture, grasping the cultural differences with an open mind and considering how these differences can be positive for the migrant/refugee and for the host society.

The linguistic training to migrants/refugees is a domain that is very well developed and methodologically supported by countries and Europe. The professional accompaniment is often taken in charge by number of actors experimented in accompanying people far from employment.

But the socio-cultural issue is, apart from basic civic education, a less formalised domain of learning, although it is particularly important for full integration of people that today are mostly coming from cultures that are very different from European culture. And it is today on this dimension that many host countries fail to ensure a real integration of the welcomed migrants and refugees.

It is therefore important to pay attention to this socio-cultural learning dimension in planning and implementing different activities and devices targeted on migrants / refugees.

Reinforce intertwined learning processes

The training and support offered along the integration journey of the migrants is normally stepwise fragmented. The national or regional integration programmes normally start with language training to continue with civic education and professional accompaniment that most often run in parallel with different levels of language training. But the newcomers, like any person, do not learn in compartments. The different learning processes interact with each other and our experience shows that they can reinforce each other in the frame of a training/an accompaniment taking in account and following up all these different learning dimensions.

This has to be kept in mind when planning / leading a device or even a specific activity: Each device and each programmed activity offers a range of possible learning - learning of the language, socialization, culture and professional integration – to which it is important to reflect in order to exploit it as fully as possible and thus reinforce the progress of the beneficiaries.

Experience shows for example that it's possible and effective to prepare professional integration by the acquisition of postures and norms (for example in the frame of communication exercises, practical activities, etc..) from the very beginning of the accompaniment of new arrivals - at a welcome centre or in the frame of activities having basic language learning as a main objective.

One important issue is the relations or even the coordination that can be established between language trainers and the actors accompanying the professional and/or socio-cultural integration of the newcomers. These supports are too often more or less disconnected, while experience shows that newcomers become more rapidly employable and socialised

- if they have the opportunity to practice their theoretical language acquisition in the context of professional and/or socio-cultural accompaniment
- as well as if they acquire in language lessons the terminology required by their professional project and used in their future professional environment.

Anchor the projects in the territory

A global accompaniment as apprehended above supposes necessarily that trainers and accompanying actors develop a good knowledge of their territory and anchor their projects in the local environment.

It is first a matter of preparing newcomers to meet the basic demands of local employers and to adapt to the jobs that the territory offers.

It is also a matter of making newcomers experience meetings and make them create links with people, starting with the inhabitants and all the services of the local environment.

It is finally a question of exploiting the cultural heritage of the territory (from the gastronomy to the architectural heritage while passing the natural and popular patrimony) in order to familiarize the newcomers with the culture of the host country.

For the training and accompaniment actors, to contribute to a comprehensive accompaniment as defined above, requires

- to know existing initiatives on the territory with which to coordinate / be a complement / exchange practices
- to rely on the local organizations that have useful complementary skills for the accompaniment and to the institutions that frame and sustain the integration journey at the local level .

An adapted methodology

Consider the specificities of the beneficiaries

The situation of migrants/refugees has its specificities that often create barriers to their integration path but also may be a lever for their progresses. These specificities will constrain the way of approaching and accompanying newcomers - as well as they will create competence development needs on the training and accompanying teams.

Newcomers do not have any *knowledge of the labour market and the business world* in the host country. Many youth often have *neither education nor work experience*. Those having an education or even a profession may often have a bad idea of the opportunities they have in the host country and consequently have inadequate, *often too high expectations* about their integration.

Newcomers come from *different cultures*, today often far removed from European culture. Some cultural elements (social behaviour, religious habits, relations men and women, family models, etc...) directly conflict with the citizen principles and values that underpin the culture of the host country. Others are able to significantly enrich its cultural heritage.

Working with newcomers in group most often means working with a *high diversity of*

- levels of knowledge and professional know how,
- of cultures and of cultural openness,
- of native language and of mastery of the language of the host country,
- of private situations and peripheral constrains.

A very important specificity of the newcomers to take in account, is their *"vulnerability"*, i.e. the greater risk that they run to be prevented in their integration path, especially their professional integration, and to drop out from the accompaniment they benefit from. In all countries, the social environment is never unanimously positive to migrants and refugees and it can set barriers or, in some cases, be harmful. Moreover, securing their integration journey is administratively and practically complex and the slightest incident can stop the whole process and drag them into a negative spiral. A factor enforcing this vulnerability is *the relative social isolation* in which many newcomers are, at least at the first period of their integration journey.

A specificity that may balance all these barriers and make a lever to their integration is *their relative high motivation* to get a job and to be integrated as a full member of the national community. As mentioned above, the experience of the PROFINT partners is that refugees and migrants often are among the most motivated beneficiaries they accompany toward employment.

Take care of the sourcing, recruitment and exit of the beneficiaries

Sourcing

Regarding the diversity of situations of the migrants/refugees arriving on a territory, it's important for the success of their integration *to target well* the beneficiaries from an activity or a project.

Authorities and diverse institutions financing and structuring integration programmes must reflect on the influence they have on how newcomers will be oriented to/welcomed on diverse devices, when setting financing criteria and when distributing responsibilities for taking in charge the different parts of a financed project and of the integration paths in general.

For the accompanying actors, the targeting and sourcing issues might be very different depending for example on whether they develop a device or activity that is only targeted at migrants in a more or less well-defined context/program or they decide to position migrants on a well-run device of their own. In all cases the fundamental questions to ask are:

- Which main issue do we want to meet regarding newcomers and which objective do we have with our project/our activity?
- Which beneficiaries do we want to reach? Which level of homogeneity/heterogeneity in a group do we aim/accept and along which criteria?
- Which organisations/which actors are in contact with or have an access to the potential beneficiaries?

Targeting and sourcing beneficiaries is thus the first step of an accompanying device that supposes *a good knowledge of the local organisational environment* as noted above.

It supposes then to develop *adapted communication on the device and its objectives*

- toward the sourcing/orienting organisations,
- toward the persons in the own organisation who welcome beneficiaries coming on their own,
- and finally towards the potential beneficiaries.

This communication must be adapted to each of these targets in its form (direct or indirect) and its content. Regardless of the importance of the organization responsible for the device or the action, it is thus important to the success of initiative *to think, even informally, about a communication plan encompassing all these targets.*

Recruitment

Recruitment refers to the process that the accompanying actors set up for selecting the sourced newcomers who will finally benefit from the implemented device. These processes may be more or less developed for different devices, and sometimes out of the control of the accompaniment actors. It is however a fundamental step to insure the success of the device and to prevent drops out and negative spirals in the process of integration that may follow.

When not having the control of the selection, to directly inform on the device and its objectives the persons in charge of this selection is fundamental.

In any case, the selection of migrants and refugees cannot be based on current knowledge and skills criteria but on the basis of what leverage the success of their integration, namely *their motivation*. Implementing participatory registration procedures or a stepwise process of building and introducing cohorts of beneficiaries can be a means of testing and / or insuring the motivation of the potential beneficiaries.

Exit

The conditions by which the beneficiaries leave an accompaniment device are as important as those by which they enter it.

The integration path is a long one and even if the accompaniment and training end with the acquisition of a job, the integration journey may still not be secured. Each accompaniment / training device has to include exit procedures that give the beneficiaries the best possible conditions to pursue the journey with success. That might be:

- to give a formal recognition of acquired competences during the accompaniment path
- to connect the beneficiary to an organization / a referent that takes over the follow-up in a form adapted to the situation of the exiting beneficiary
- to give a network / contacts to the exiting beneficiary in order to find work if they have not found one or to fill any learning gaps
- to organize the possibility for exiting beneficiaries to return to their actual referent in the event of problems or questions
- to set up procedures for following up former beneficiaries
- etc...

The exit of a cohort must also be the opportunity *to evaluate*:

- the progresses of the exiting beneficiaries along the all three dimensions of their integration journey
- the device by asking beneficiaries and intervening partners in order to develop and refine the accompaniment and training processes.

Consider the importance of collective activities

The experience shows that a successful integration device must include *both collective and individual accompaniment and training*.

At the beginning of an accompanying path, a period of collective activities allows the constitution of group dynamic, solidarity and mutual assistance among beneficiaries. This is particularly important for refugees / migrants who are often isolated and deprived of external support. The group can be the first place where they actively train to express and exchange in the host language, where they train to communicate constructively with interlocutors from another culture, manage social disagreements and take their place in a collective activity, before needing to do it in the new social environment.

Intensive collective activities at the beginning of a device – i.e. everyday group activities during at least a few weeks - give time to the beneficiaries to reveal themselves and give the accompanying teams the possibility to know better their individual specificities, their strengths and difficulties in different situation.

To plan collective sessions during the path when beneficiaries are scattered in individual training or practical training give them opportunities to exchange experience and to reveal success or failures that they don't think to speak about in an individual contact with their referent.

Collective activities offer a larger learning potential - professional, cultural, social and linguistic – that must be taken in account, even more so at an early stage of the integration journey. They also create more opportunities for involving different external partners (professionals, tutors, sponsors, etc...) in the accompaniment of beneficiaries, thus reinforcing the process of progressive socialization and acculturation of newcomers.

Organize an intensive and close individual accompaniment

Migrants and refugees need an intensive and close individual accompaniment under a long time . This accompaniment must meet several conditions

- The accompaniment must be *very close* and *accurate* regarding the very different situations and objectives of the beneficiaries. Concretely, this means very regular and formalised contacts, preparing and evaluating each step done by the beneficiary in searching work, accessing to and making practice, training, etc...

- The trainer/attendant must always *stand at attention* and *be reactive* in case of incidents and peripheral barriers (social, administrative, regarding housing, health, economy, family, etc...) that may rapidly threat the well running of a path and put the beneficiary in a negative spiral.

- *Individual and unique referents who has the responsibility of following the whole path of each beneficiary* in the device, is a necessity to ensure this intensive support that migrants and refugees ask for. *Internal tutors* - like language tutors - and *voluntary sponsors* can support and reinforce the individual accompaniment but not substitute for an individual professional referent.

- To organize and secure *a joint accompaniment* with tutors/business professionals/ training professionals during the time when beneficiaries are in professional training or in practical training is an absolute necessity. It secures quality of accompaniment but also *reinsures the employers and host companies* that might have reluctance to welcome people without experience and without perfect knowledge of the host language and of the norms of the business world.

Promote practice and a participatory approach

When concerning newcomers, training and accompaniment benefit of *promoting practice as a learning mode*.

- *Practice of language*: Speaking, hearing and listening to other people speaking, reading and writing in a variety of situations are necessary to make progress and integrate what is learned at language courses.

Especially at the earlier steps of the integration, it's important and effective to give newcomers the opportunity to practice the language out of the classroom and prevent them from just being relegated to home language in their community and/or family. This supposes, at the beginning, adapted methods, exercises and support resources to make the beneficiaries progressively express themselves, take part in conversations and appropriate what people explain or present. At this stage, experience shows that simple practical activities with groups of beneficiaries - i. e. when they produce something or/and enter in contact with other people - are those where they most express themselves, take the lead of the conversations and thereby make progresses in language - but also in other domains (socialisation, professionalization).

At a later stage of language mastering it's also important to make links between language learning and professional projects and to make beneficiaries practice the terminology in reference to a profession and to the business world.

- *Practice of social contacts and cultural exchanges*: Learning a language is more than learning words, grammar and syntactic rules. It is a matter of exchange and socialisation. Practicing language goes hand in hand with practicing social contacts and cultural exchanges with various people from the local environment

- *Practice of various production activities and professional situations*: Practicing different production activities and professional situations is an effective way to precise a professional project and /or to learn a job for migrants/refugees arriving on a new job market and work environments they have no experience of.

Practice, whatever its form and object, offers in fact learning opportunities on all three levels (language, socio-cultural, professional) that trainers and accompaniment actors have to exploit in order to strengthen the respective learning processes and make their accompaniment more effective.

As noted above if newcomers have many gaps of knowledge and experience they are not white pages but they have experiences, for a part of them even a profession, an education. This is therefore important to take in account these competences and experience by using as much as possible *participatory methods*. This means for example, to involve the beneficiaries in the preparation of different activities and even eventually in the construction of the program. It is also important to organize room for individual initiatives thus developing and promoting autonomy especially among younger beneficiaries.

Qualified and functional partnerships

Identify and mobilize the relevant network of partners

Any organisation accompanying and training migrants and refugees, that wants to be part of a comprehensive accompaniment approach must identify with care and mobilize actors on which to rely for successfully implementing its device.

It is a detailed and strategic approach in order *to engage significantly* public, private and voluntary actors in the device and the accompaniment processes – a commitment that makes them *partners of the device*.

Sourcing and recruitment

A relevant targeting and recruitment of motivated beneficiaries must rely on partners who can wisely guide newcomers to the device or who can facilitate contacts with potential beneficiaries in order to inform them about the device and its objectives. These may be institutional or associative actors receiving and giving first support to newcomers, language training actors or promoters of various initiatives targeted at migrants / refugees.

Peripheral issues

In the framework of a professional accompaniment device for newcomers, it is important to identify all *the actors who can concretely contribute to preventing or, when appropriate, resolving peripheral situations* that may hinder the beneficiaries' progress - be they social (housing, health, ...), administrative, financial or even linguistic.

It can be a competent and recognized actor in the social support of refugees with which to establish protocols of joint intervention in case of different problems; It can be different administrations and public services in which to identify qualified actors who may inform beneficiaries and / or assist them in specific situations; It may be language trainers and tutors with whom to coordinate and / or interact when accompanying and training the beneficiaries.

Socialisation and acculturation

It is also important to identify and mobilize a number of actors who, in the local environment, can *contribute to strengthening the process of socialization and acculturation of the beneficiaries*.

It may be all sorts of actors from the socio-cultural community, private or public, with whom to organize practical collective activities, visits, interventions and more generally to create opportunities of exchange that are both adapted to the level of knowledge of the concerned beneficiaries, stimulating and cognitively enriching for them.

Professional practice and employment

Businesses, employers as well as employment and vocational training actors constitute a group of actors to be approached and mobilized in a specific way. It's about identifying:

- Which companies offer jobs on the territory? Which ones can host visits or immersion times? Which of these have commitments in terms of social responsibility?
- Which training actors offer services that are particularly adapted to the needs of the beneficiaries?
- Which actors can intermediate a network of employers to contact? Which ones can guide towards / inform about practice and training opportunities?

Establish and organize functional partnerships

A partnership in the frame of an accompaniment device can only be implemented and become functional if there is a minimum of *common understanding* by the partners:

- of the situation of the refugees / migrants and their problems.

- of their respective skills
- of the objectives of the device and the role that everyone can and must play to achieve them

To establish this common understanding and reinforce it over time:

- It is important to give potential partners *a precise information on the device, its objectives and the "added value"* it brings to the beneficiaries' integration process.

It is about concretely showing to the potential partner how the device can serve the integration progresses of migrants/refugees, in what way and to what extent it responds to needs that the potential partner himself has identified and / or want to resolve.

It is about *building trust*, and in some cases (for example with companies offering professional practice to a migrant / refugee) *to reassure* about the conditions and the benefits of the partnership for the partner and the beneficiaries.

- It is advisable *to involve the partners directly in the activities and the accompaniment processes*, particularly in the context of collective sessions. It can be to make a partner intervene on a social, cultural or professional topic; to involve professional partners as trainers, coaches for a specific activity, tutors or simply sponsors of a promotion; etc ...

- It is important *to formalize collaborative routines and establish joint action protocols* that define the roles of each partner. These routines must include *moments of exchange, feedback and evaluation* of the collaboration in a perspective of both valorisation of the contributions of each partner and continuous improvement of the collaboration.

Institutionalize partnerships

Operational teams - and often some particularly committed individuals - bear a large part of the good functioning and added value of a partnership. However, a partnership, to be sustainable and effective, must not only rely on individuals and their ability to work well together or develop successful joint actions. It must be *validated, supported and valued* by the respective organizations to which the individuals who implement it belong.

- . The modes of collaboration of the partners must *be formalized and validated at the managerial and organizational levels*

- . The actions and partnership results of the operational actors must *be recognized and valued by their respective management and organizations*

- . Partnerships must be *jointly assessed at the institutional level*

- . The partnership and its added value must be *made visible in the socio-economic and institutional networks of the territory.*

Competent and innovative teams

To know and master the situation of migrants and refugees

Organizations and professionals who are on the initiative / implementing devices for accompanying and training migrants and refugees do so in general (as it is the case for the PROFINT project partners) on the basis of a good knowledge of people in exclusion, or in difficulty of insertion and remote from employment.

When it comes to applying this knowledge and skills to migrants and refugees, it is particularly important to take into account the particular *vulnerability* of this audience and to reinforce the ability of teams to *be vigilant and responsive* to situations that may hinder or obstruction of beneficiaries' progress on their integration path.

This assumes that the operational teams:

- have a good knowledge of the *national legislative and regulatory framework* concerning the integration and asylum system as well as the administrations concerned and their competences, in order to be able to guide the beneficiaries in all the administrative procedures necessary for their good progress or to possibly untie quickly any complex and blocking administrative situation.
- are aware of *the mechanisms of discrimination / rejection / mistrust* that may concern migrants and refugees and that they are able to argue / reassure the environment or partners, highlighting the skills brought by the beneficiaries and valuing them.
- are aware of *cultural differences* and sensitised on *management of cultural diversity* to apprehend the groups they accompany.

Constitute and organize the operational teams

In terms of setting up and organizing the operational teams, it is important to make every effort *to ensure close and continuous individual follow-up* of the beneficiaries along their path in the project / device. This can be done at least:

- by establishing unique referrals for each beneficiary, which means assigning to members of a team a portfolio of beneficiaries followed by them throughout the path
- by strengthening the professionals with voluntary resources (linguistic assistance, individual or collective sponsorship) and by clearly defining the roles of each along the path and towards the beneficiaries
- by formalizing the ways in which the operational team work with internal or external actors involved in different learning areas or step (formalization of joint support in periods of practice; articulation of linguistic and professional learning, ...)

Inform - Communicate

Beyond the accompanying team, four types of targets are to be taken into account in terms of information and communication around the device. It is important:

- to clearly identify the internal stakeholders of the system - reception staff / orientation of beneficiaries, administrative staff, ... - and to inform them about the system and its objectives, the recruitment criteria as well as the needs / specificities migrants and refugees
- to inform *potential partners* about the system, its objectives and its added value. *Effective partners* must also be continuously informed of the progress of collaborations and results achieved.
- to inform *the territorial stakeholders of the integration of refugees and migrants* of the results and the added value brought by the device, in the first place the financiers and the persons in charge of the territorial migration policy and the programs.
- to think about an information on the device and a communication strategy *adapted to migrants and refugees* considered as potential beneficiaries of the device