



TOOLKIT FOR EQUALITY: The Local Level

ECCAR's practical guide on the implementation of effective policies against racial discrimination

May 2016

Chapter 6 – WELCOME SERVICE FOR NEW RESIDENTS



Toolkit for Equality 1.0 is supported by the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR), Open Society Foundation - At Home in Europe, and the cities of Berlin, Bern, Bologna, Ghent, Graz, Potsdam, Rotterdam, Toulouse, Vienna, and Zurich.

Researched and compiled by Paul Lappalainen, Isabella Meier, Ingrid Nicoletti, Klaus Starl.

Since 2016 the Toolkit for Equality is supported by the European Commission – DG JUST under the project ADPOLIS - JUST/2014/RDIS/AG/DISC/8084.

Release 1.0 May 2016

Cities as service providers:

WELCOME SERVICE FOR NEW CITY RESIDENTS

WELCOME SERVICE FOR NEW CITY RESIDENTS	5
Context information	5
WHY IS IT NECESSARY AND WHO BENEFITS?	5
How does the city benefit?	6
How do newly arrived migrants benefit?	6
When is a start coaching useful?	7
Limitations - What cannot be achieved?	7
WHAT YOU NEED – Preconditions and Requirements	8
FOUNDATION	8
Planning and Engaging Stakeholders	8
STEP 1 Political support	8
STEP 2 Council decision	9
STEP 3 Appoint a coordinator	9
STEP 4 Brainstorming session	9
STEP 5 Working group	10
Preparing the Concept	11
STEP 6 Develop the concept	11
STEP 7 Identify the relevant topics for the information modules	12
STEP 8 Define the content of the information brochure	12
STEP 9 Locations	13
STEP 10 Calculate the budget	13
PUTTING INTO PRACTICE	15
Set Up the Infrastructure for the Service	15
STEP 11 Create a website	15
STEP 12 Produce the welcome brochures	15
STEP 13 Create a pool of native speaking experts	15
STEP 14 Contract and train staff for the start coaching	15
STEP 15 Set up the start coaching facilities	16
STEP 16 Design and print 'passports' and vouchers	16
STEP 17 Database	16
STEP 18 Kick-off	17
DAILY WORK	18
Workload	18
FOLLOW UP	19

KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS	19
IMPACT	20
Outcome indicators	20
RESOURCES AND INSPIRING PATTERNS	21

Get active in Action 4 ► More Participation and better informed City Dwellers Cities as service providers:

WELCOME SERVICE FOR NEW CITY RESIDENTS

Welcome services are can be provided to newly arrived migrants. They consist of an individual orientation counselling shortly after arrival and a module-programme of group coaching as well as individual coaching on various issues conducted in the migrants' native language. Participation in the coaching is rewarded with vouchers for language courses.

Welcome services aim at promoting **participation** in order to **prevent** discrimination in the enjoyment of fundamental rights.

Context information

The following chapter was developed through a number of interviews with civil servants and politicians responsible for the implementation of a start coaching service for new city residents in the city of Vienna (Austria) and complemented with information provided by the cities of Graz (Austria) and Zurich (Switzerland).

City characteristics relevant to the research results: Vienna is a city of 1.8 million inhabitants and about 50.000 new immigrants (from non-German speaking countries) settle per year. Vienna is at the same time a city, a federal State and the national capital of Austria. The immigration office where newly arrived migrants receive their residence permit is located in the city's administrative service. A national regulation obliges third country immigrants to obtain a language certificate within two years.

WHY IS IT NECESSARY AND WHO BENEFITS?

Newly arrived immigrants are confronted with an unfamiliar system, complex legal regulations and a new language. The welcome service provides information and advice for new residents. The staff is specialized in answering questions which arise when people arrive from abroad. The counselling provided supports new residents in making their way to developing a livelihood. It therefore contributes to their integration and participation in the city's society.

How does the city benefit?

- The welcome service explains to the new resident administrative procedures and therefore makes it easier for both administrative staff and the newly arrived persons.
- The coordinated programme bundles already existing services.
- The coaching in group module is a cost-efficient way to provide the target group with important information. In one 2-hour information module you can reach 20-50 people.
- A "passport" documents the courses and information modules a person has participated in. City employees at service desks can see which information a person has already received, which language course he/she has already completed etc. This makes the coordination of services easier.
- The welcome service explains to the new resident where to go for which matter, which means they can avoid going to the wrong institutions and therefore prevents frustration on both sides of the counter.
- The information provided on language courses, combined with vouchers, is a positive way of helping increase the motivation to learn the local language.
- The welcome service contributes to a faster recognition of qualifications acquired abroad and access to a relevant job. The city profits from the migrant's qualifications.
- The service is a welcoming gesture that can encourage identification with and participation in the city.
- To explain to newcomers local rules like common house rules (e.g. on separating the trash, not being loud on Sundays etc.) can help prevent neighbourhood conflicts.

How do newly arrived migrants benefit?

- A new resident receives information and can ask questions in his/her mother tongue or a language he/she feels comfortable with.
- Newly arrived migrants quickly receive information on pressing issues, for example on how to find housing, medical care or schooling. They do not depend on (potentially inaccurate) information from friends, family or the community but have access to official information.
- The welcome service staff is familiar with the range of language courses available and can help finding the course best suited to a person's needs (educational level, course location etc.).

- The welcome service staff is familiar with the facilities, services and associations available that can make it easier for a new resident to live and work in the city (having qualifications recognized, finding employment etc.).
- Information modules are offered for various topics, e.g. housing, the health care system, the labour market, the right to residence, the education system, entrepreneurship, and can be chosen according to one's needs and interests. Child care is offered during these information modules.
- Participation in the information modules is rewarded with vouchers for language courses. An individual follow-up coaching is offered after two years of residence, to discuss issues and ask questions that have occurred in the meantime.

When is a start coaching useful?

A start coaching is useful in a city if

- there is a considerable number of newly arrived migrants
- a certain number of newly arrived migrants share a language which makes it possible to offer information events for groups

Limitations - What cannot be achieved?

A main challenge is pushing forward the recognition of qualifications gained abroad.

The start coaching is a positive signal from the city that can create positive identification. However, immigrants have often had negative experiences with national authorities and legal regulations which may thwart the city's positive signal.

Not every individual is attracted to the program design. The start coaching cannot reach everyone.

WHAT YOU NEED – Preconditions and Requirements

Preconditions:

- A certain number of immigrants arriving in the city every year
- A political agreement that allows for the implementation of a start coaching service
- A range of institutions experienced in counselling on various matters (chamber of labour, chamber of commerce, public employment service, migrant organisations, NGOs experienced in counselling, language course providers etc.)
- · Native speakers with experiences in counselling
- Financial resources
- That all immigrants receive their residence permit at the same office, so that there is one point of contact to the target group

Functional requirements:

- A city department that takes responsibility for the coordination
- An information desk/start coaching office
- Native speaking staff experienced in counselling clients in a wide range of languages
- Native speaking trainers on relevant topics in a wide range of languages
- Network of partner organisations to cover all elements of the service

Operational requirements

- Printed welcome brochures with the most relevant information
- Printed 'passports' to document participation in information modules
- Printed vouchers for language courses
- A clearly structured information website
- A database with the basic personal data of service users

FOUNDATION

Planning and Engaging Stakeholders

STEP 1 Political support

Gather political support with the arguments mentioned above.

STEP 2 Council decision

Milestones

- The start coaching services are based on a local council decision
- The service is considered in annual budgetary planning

STEP 3 Appoint a coordinator

One municipal entity with a committed political head of department takes on the responsibility for the coordination.

STEP 4 Brainstorming session

Organize a brainstorming session with

- politicians,
- municipal authorities (integration, public transport, health, housing, public employment service, migrants' council etc.),
- public or private institutions (representatives of employees, representatives of the self-employed, interpreter services etc.),
- NGOs such as migrant organisations and others.

Present the idea and its purpose. Discuss which needs of the target group can be addressed by these services. Identify the relevant stakeholders to conceptualize a comprehensive program. Engage partners to contribute in the working group (see Step 5).

Tip! Build on existing structures when developing the concept. Gain an overview concerning which institutions already offer what kinds of services for newly arrived migrants and discuss the options to integrate and extend these services.

Risks, challenges	Measures to mitigate
Stakeholders are unfamiliar with the idea	Approach each partner separately, this will
and skeptical to participate	contribute to information sharing and
	creating a working basis.

STEP 5 Working group

Invite the relevant stakeholders to form a working group that refines the concept and clarifies questions on the requirements (resources, premises etc.).

Tip! Invite the immigration office that issues first residence permits to the new city residents to the working group. It is crucial that the initial individual coaching is offered at the location where the newly arrived person receives his/her residence permit. Otherwise the coaching offer turns into an additional burden and people will not make use of the service.

Milestones

- A committed department takes on the responsibility to coordinate the conceptualization and implementation of the start coaching
- Relevant departments, local institutions, NGOs and associations have been identified
- The relevant actors have been invited to participate in the working group
- A working group is established and holds meetings
- The relevant actors send a qualified person to the working group meeting

Risks, Challenges	Measures to mitigate risks
The immigration office is reluctant to	Argue that it takes the burdens off the
participate	employees if new-comers receive better
	guidance on where to turn for help on
	specific matters as well as information about
	administrative procedures
The working group is not made up of the	Carefully select the relevant stakeholders:
adequate stakeholders/individuals	Include NGOs experienced in consulting
	migrants, immigrant services, relevant
	actors in the systems e.g. the local
	employment agency, migrant association
	and other locally relevant stakeholders
Particularly large and well established	Be patient, send information repeatedly,
organisations are difficult to motivate	show up in person there, talk and provide
concerning cooperation	information about your idea and the
	importance of cooperation; try to find
	individuals in favour of the idea
Participating organisations send a different	The coordinators should request the
person to every working group meeting.	participating institutions to select one

representative who will attend the meetings. If the person sends a substitute to a meeting, he/she should ensure good internal communication

Discussions in the meetings are not constructive;

Participants have no intrinsic motivation, they only attend because they were required to do so by their superiors The working group should neither be too small nor too large. Make sure that the whole range of relevant stakeholders (big institutions such as the employment agency as well as small NGOs) is represented but request that every institution send only one or in exceptional cases two persons to the meetings.

If the working atmosphere is negatively affected due to one person, ask the institution to send someone else.

Preparing the Concept

STEP 6 Develop the concept

Build on already existing services and expertise in your city! Discuss the concept details and requirements in the working group.

A start coaching is recommended to contain the following elements:

- 1. Personal mother-tongue counselling offered at the time and place where a person receives his/her first residence permit.
- 2. A program of information modules for groups, for topics of general interest, offered in various languages
- 3. A small number of modules for individuals, offered in their mother-tongue, for specific topics such as the recognition of a person's qualifications
- 4. An information desk that can provide additional information or for making an appointment for personal follow-up counselling after a certain time period.

Additional elements are

- Welcome brochure: A brochure that contains most relevant information on living in the city, including contact information of authorities and support services. Availability in different languages is important.
- Vouchers for language courses: Participation in at least one information module validates one voucher for a language course. The voucher should be usable to pay for the course directly (not a reimbursement system). The value of the voucher can differ for a person who is obliged by residence law to take a language certificate and a person who is not. A second voucher is issued after participation in a certain number of information modules. All vouchers need to be non-transferable.
- A "passport": to document attendance at group information modules, in order to validate vouchers for language courses. All passports need to be non-transferable.
- Website: A multi-lingual website that gives the necessary information on the program and provides contact details for access to further information in the respective languages.

STEP 7 Identify the relevant topics for the information modules

Ask your city's migrant council to summarize migrants' needs and suggestions for the start coaching services. What information do newcomers need? What are topics of common interest, what are topics for specific groups?

Alternatively: Consult the migrant communities in your city. Conduct a mother-tongue survey among a sample of newly arrived immigrants. (Former) members of the target group are experts on their needs.

Possible topics for *group information modules*: housing, the health care system, employment, residence law, the educational system, entrepreneurship, "soft skill" topics such as discussing people's experiences in the city, cultural misunderstandings.

STEP 8 Define the content of the information brochure

The brochure should summarize most important information in a short, well structured way and easy to read language. Provide addresses of the competent authorities and counselling services in each text segment.

The brochure should be made available in a number of languages.

Tip! Include people with a migrant background into the formulation of the content.

It is suggested that the following topics are covered:

- New in the city (registering residence, issuance of an ID card, birth certificate etc.)
- Housing (renting options, electricity bills, neighbourhood mediation etc.)
- Working (job search, work permits, recognition of qualifications, insurance etc.)
- Transport (public transport, bicycles, driving licence etc.)
- Social Affairs (marriage, paperwork after birth of a child, family allowance etc.)
- Children (rights and obligations (custody, youth protection), child care etc.)
- Education (compulsory school, schools for children with special needs etc.)
- Health Care (health insurance, emergency service, prescription charges etc.)
- Integration & Migration (residence titles, settlement permits, interpreter services etc.)
- Non-discrimination (equal rights, support in cases of discrimination etc.)
- Leisure (theatres, sport facilities, music schools, entrance fee reductions etc.)
- Senior Citizens (care benefits, care options, apartments etc.)
- Help in Emergency Situations (ambulance, police, fire fighters, crisis intervention etc.)

Tip! Conceptualize the welcome brochure to be distributed to all new city residents, also country nationals. The information is useful for everyone.

STEP 9 Locations

Decide on the location for the information desk/the start coaching office.

Tip! Cooperate with the immigration office to establish an information desk at their office.

Cooperate with course providers and/or educational facilities to decide on locations for group information modules. Pay attention that course locations are easily accessible with public transport. Cooperate with district branches of course providers in areas with a high share of newly arriving migrants.

Tip! Provide for child care during the information events

STEP 10 Calculate the budget

A comprehensive offer, containing personal welcome couching and a range of information modules in different languages was calculated by interviewees to cost about 1.6€ per inhabitant or 60-70€ per new resident a year (in this city's case € 3-3.5 million per year to

cover all costs). This amount includes wages for internal and external personnel, vouchers for migrants, fees for speakers and trainers, handouts and other information material translated into a number of languages, a multi-lingual website, supervision for employees, trainings for the trainers, etc.

The production of a welcome information brochure, including conceptualization, layout, translations, printing of 10,000 copies and marketing was calculated by interviewees with a total of 50,000€.

Risks, Challenges	Measures to mitigate risks
The program does not contain the certain	Involve migrant communities and
topics that highly important for newly	experienced NGOs in your city into the
arrived migrants	conceptualization; conduct a survey among
	migrants in which you ask them: what do
	you/did you need most when arriving in the
	country? Instruct native speaking
	interviewees to take positions at e.g. the
	immigration authority, where everybody
	needs to pass in order to receive the
	residence permit; Carry out workshops with
	practitioners in migrant counselling
The concept does not take into account the	Schedule information events on Saturdays.
schedules of persons having a job, child care	Provide for child care during the information
responsibilities etc.	events.

Milestones:

- The concept is developed: there is consensus on the purpose, objective and content of the start coaching services
- Cooperation partners for the services are identified
- Tasks and responsibilities (which partner is responsible for which module, language etc.) are defined and clearly distributed
- The topics for the information modules are decided on
- The range of languages and availability of native speaking personnel is defined
- Budgeting is completed

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Set Up the Infrastructure for the Service

STEP 11 Create a website

The website explains how the start coaching works in several, easy to follow, languages. Provide contact details (mail and telephone) for further questions and scheduling appointments in the available languages.

STEP 12 Produce the welcome brochures

Discuss the finalized version with interpreters before ordering translation. Translate the brochure.

Order graphic and layout.

Print the brochure.

Tip! Give away the information material in a bag. It is easier to transport and can be reused, which promotes the visibility of the service.

Risks, challenges	Measures to mitigate
Especially in smaller cities, the number and	Organise translators early enough to avoid
capacity of good translators might be limited	delays in translations and excessive pricing

STEP 13 Create a pool of native speaking experts

In a surveyed city with about 50,000 newcomers a year, this pool is made up of 60 experts.

STEP 14 Contract and train staff for the start coaching

Requirements for staff at information desk and personal coaching:

- Native speakers (it was mentioned as an important asset that a native speaker does not only speak the new resident's language but also has a better understanding for the context the person is coming from and therefore for his/her questions)
- Experience in counseling on questions that arise after arrival from abroad
- Good general knowledge of the city's services, facilities, organizations and course offerings as well as the educational system, health system etc.

Requirements for trainers in information modules:

- Native speakers
- Experienced trainers, experienced in developing and holding information events
- Expert knowledge in the respective field

Tip! Cooperate with NGOs and migrant organizations in contracting staff.

STEP 15 Set up the start coaching facilities

Set up the information desk.

Employees at the immigration office who issue the residence permits should be instructed to inform migrants about the possibility of mother-tongue counselling. Provide an information sheet in the different languages that invites to use this service.

Native speaking consultants for the most common languages should be permanently available at the information desk. For other languages an appointment may be requested.

STEP 16 Design and print 'passports' and vouchers

Make sure that language course carriers are informed about the vouchers. Agree on an invoice procedure.

STEP 17 Database

The establishment of a database on the service users simplifies coordinating of services and controlling the issuance of the non-transferable vouchers. Consider sharing basic data about the service users between the immigration office and the department responsible for the start coaching; it helps to tailor the start coaching according to the user's needs (e.g. if the prolongation of a resident permit is going to be conditioned on passing a language test). A person's consent to documenting basic data, such as name, address, citizenship, date of birth, voucher already received or not, is required for receiving the start coaching services. Additional data, such as a person's educational level should be optional but it helps to provide advice to the service user that are relevant to his/her needs (e.g. choosing the right level for a language course).

Measures to mitigate
Make use of legal counselling in your city
administration or cooperate closely with the
legal department. Define what personal
information is indispensable to provide the
service (e.g. name, date of birth, EU/third
country nationality). A person who wants to
make use of the start coaching will be asked
to sign consent forms.
Issue the voucher in the name of the person
and instruct course carriers to ask for an
identification card.
Cooperate with associations and NGOs, who
already offer counselling and training
services to migrants
A directive from the political head of
department requesting everyone to
department requesting everyone to participate, from the IT persons, employees

Milestones

- The multi-lingual website is online
- The database is ready to use
- Native speaking personnel, experienced in counselling, are available for all languages needed
- Cooperation with the immigration office desk where migrants receive their residence permits is established. Employees are instructed to tell clients about the counselling service
- Language course carriers are familiar with the vouchers

STEP 18 Kick-off

Present the start coaching service at a press conference or a kick-off event available to the public.

DAILY WORK

- Offer the individual coaching at the start as well as the information modules in a wide range of languages by native speaking personnel. The mother-tongue counselling is the key element of the start coaching service.
- Provide for a balanced offer of group information modules and individual coaching on specific issues. Be flexible and adjust/integrate additional information topics according to the expressed needs.
- Offer a second individual coaching after two years of residence. Questions may arise only
 after a certain period of residence in the city.
- Make child care available during the information modules and the coaching sessions.
- Prepare handouts for the participants, summarising the most important information and contact addresses.

Workload

In a city with about 50,000 new residents a year, about 30 persons permanently work in the start coaching program, with a workload that ranges from 2 hours/month to 32 hours/week. One full-time position is needed for administration and coordination, with 3 colleagues helping out part time.

The pool of native speaking lecturers for the group information modules contains about 60 experts.

Risks, Challenges	Measures to mitigate
Your employees are unable to cope with the	Cooperate with a call centre which can
large amount of requests	respond to easy questions, refer to experts
	and coordinate appointments. Create a
	database of knowledge for this call centre on
	the needs of migrants, FAQs and a checklist
Employees have to deal with difficult	Provide for regular supervision for the
requests and situations	employees and supervision on demand
You do not know which topics to put into	Cooperate with experienced migrant
the program	counselling centres and associations
A lecturer gets ill	Conceptualize a back-up system (stand-by of
	a second trainer for each course)

A lack of resources	Offer more group counselling rather than
	individual coaching (new-comers share
	similar needs)

FOLLOW UP

Schedule regular working group meetings to talk about the services (two times a year are recommended).

Risks, Challenges	Measures to mitigate
Participation decreases	Talk to participants and NGOs, associations
	about possible reasons.
	Schedule information modules on Saturdays.
Circumstances change and make	Schedule regular working group meetings.
information offers outdated/ inadequate	Discuss questions like: What can be improved? Are there any new issues or needs among the target group? Are there any new immigration patterns (e.g. refugees)? Are there any new developments in the structure of the city's authority?

KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

Key factors for successful implementation as pointed out by the interviewed experts:

- Political will and sufficient budget
- A politically agreed integration concept, supported by the mayor, in which a start coaching service can be included
- A committed coordinator/coordinating department

- Qualified native speakers as counsellors (lower the threshold and assure high acceptance among the target group)
- Participation of migrant communities' representatives in the conceptualization
- Well-balanced working group, with committed members of the partner organisations
- Initial start coaching is provided at the time and place a new resident receives his/her residence permit
- Information modules offered on Saturdays, childcare provided
- Individual modules for specific issues and group modules for common issues
- Regular exchanges among partner organisations and ongoing reflections concerning improvements

IMPACT

The start coaching service reduces difficulties for newly arrived migrants in dealing with administrative procedures (for registration, documents etc.). The persons receive accurate information in a language well understandable for them and they therefore have a better knowledge on pre-schools, schools and the health system, on housing and the labour market and on topics of personal interest to them. Understanding of widespread habits and usual procedures in the new country of residence are increased.

(There is no data available if individuals who made use of the start coaching service were able to find job or apartment faster than others. Further evaluation was reported to be difficult because the service loses contact with clients after the services have been consumed (e.g. a trainer cannot investigate if a participant in a workshop later found a job) and because it is hardly possible to compare the integration process of persons who made use of the start coaching with those who did not.)

Outcome indicators

- An important percentage of newly arrived immigrants make use of the start coaching.
- Information modules are attended by a large number of people.
- The information desk is well known among migrants. (Survey among communities, associations)

- The service has a good reputation in migrant communities.
- Individuals that made use of the start coaching recommend it to friends.
- Service users are satisfied with the counselling they received.
- Service users believe that the counselling actually helped them.

RESOURCES AND INSPIRING PATTERNS

Start Coaching Vienna

www.startwien.at/cms/view/content?locale=en

New in Zurich

www.stadt-

<u>zuerich.ch/prd/de/index/stadtentwicklung/integrationsfoerderung/other_languages/en.htm</u>

Madrid Plan on Social and Intercultural Coexistence

http://www.madrid.es/UnidadesDescentralizadas/Inmigracion/EspInformativos/MadridConvive/Present/Ficheros/ResumINGLES%20PLAN%20Madrid-WEB-1.pdf

Welcome policies: the example of Barcelona

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/Newsletter/newsletter40/barcelonaen.asp

Graz Welcome Box

http://www.graz.at/cms/beitrag/10181277/4312043