

Welcoming the migrant

Integration is a two-way process between newcomers and the host community, which implies to involve both in participation in the life of the community.

It's important that the services' providers facilitate migrant integration and a proper welcoming is a start point. Some migrants/asylum seekers/refugees (for now on, migrants and/or users) struggle to access to and use certain services and some professionals also can experience difficulties in engaging with migrant service users.

It is important to assume that some migrants:

- probably won't master the hosting language and have communication difficulties,
- doesn't trust service providers,
- may feel intimidated and, most likely they won't know what is doing there,
- have suffered discrimination.

It's also important that services' providers commit to overcome barriers they face as lack of knowledge about new arrivals, need of developing communication skills, intercultural skills, etc.

When accessing to our services, how can we make they feel comfortable and safe and also engage them to deliver a proper intervention? Following, there's a general approach with some steps and tips.

Preparation of physical welcome area and resources

Professionals must ensure a set of structural conditions as having:

- A reception area to welcome users and address them to the appropriate service according to their needs.
- A place/meeting room for carrying out an interview with the user that guarantees his/her privacy.
- Signalling areas about the services provided. It could be very helpful to have a panel of resource information with some materials developed as posters, leaflet, pictures, information about offers, processes, requirements, briefing, contact persons, schedule, etc.
- If necessary, computers with full internet connection.
- Copy of materials ready for each user.

Providing information

It is important to have all materials ready. Welcome packs/welcome kits are a good way of providing information to new arrivals.

- Depending on the services, they will receive information about: employment, education, mobility, health/care, housing assessment and recognition processes of competences, development and improvement of skills, language, volunteerism.
- Prepare materials informing the new users of our available services, the conditions, schedule, contacts, general information and practical tips about living and working in the welcoming country.
- It could be very helpful to prepare a flyer/leaflet about our services: what type of support is she/he will receive after registration, which are the conditions.
- Take into account the already existing services within the local community to adapt your service and intervention.

The use of examples and testimonial can contribute to a better understanding.

- Employ different methodologies as video trainings, mobile applications, learning games, online form filing, etc. to adapt the information and services to the individuals.
- It's very important to be inclusive and to count with the opinion of prior users, in order to make him/her aware of the possibilities.

Registration of the user

Service providers are encouraged to prepare a registration form to formally begin the intervention process and services with the user. It should be clear, not too long, with not intimidating questions, with several available options, etc.

The registration form should be adapted when necessary. It may provide:

- Initial personal data. Biographic information.
- Contextualization of educational, professional and personal background.
- Information about skills/competences acquired.
- Information about family situation (single/married, dependents, familiar reunification).
- Boosting awareness about expectations, doubts, fears, desires, goals and needs.
- Reflection of past and current situation and definition of path to improve skills, mobility and employability.
- Motivation and availability to start any process and service.
- Others.

See BREFE Registration Form Template

Communication

Make an appropriate use of interpreting and translation services when the host country language is not migrants' first language.

- It is not practical or appropriate to translate all service information into every language. It could be useful to make a Translation Checklist with the essential materials to be translated.
- Use consultation mechanisms with migrant to engage them. It's also a further way of developing accessible services.
- Some professionals feel anxious when interacting directly with migrants for fears 'getting it wrong' around issues such as different attitudes to gender, eye contact, and dress. Being honest, asking questions and doing some background research is a good place to begin. Try to be aware of issues concerning to migrants and receive continuous training to improve your intervention.

Resources

- *Lighthouse Registration form*. Lighthouse project. Retrieved on 11th March 2019.
- *Migrant-friendly services*. The Introduction to Migration (2015). Retrieved on 11th March 2019.



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