Housing & Migration

RESEARCH BRIEFING

Vol. 2 of the Series
'Housing in the Post-2020 EU'

**HOUSING
EUROPE
OBSERVATORY**

Abstract

In recent years, Europe has seen a large influx of forced migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. As large-scale migration towards and within Europe is becoming a norm, cities, local government and relevant stakeholders like providers of social and affordable housing in many countries are already offering solutions towards the welcoming and inclusion of refugees.

The EC Action Plan on Integration of Third Country Nationals highlights "access to adequate and affordable housing is crucial for third-country nationals", however, this has proven to be one of the most complex issues for newcomers, especially in the context of tight housing markets and increasing house prices. Moreover, beyond providing accommodation, part of the daily job of social housing providers is to understand tenants' needs and offer early support: from employment and skills training to advice and care provision, in cooperation with a range of stakeholders. This can contribute to inclusion and benefit the local community overall. This briefing seeks to answer the following questions: What are the most successful examples in this field and how can they be supported? What level of partnership and cooperation is required between providers of different services? What are the necessary elements of meaningful inclusion?

Introduction

Historically, Europe has been a major hub of emigration - a departure point for merchants, explorers, colonisers, religious followers and economic and political refugees. The 20th century saw trends such as the establishment of the principle of freedom of movement within Europe, migration *into* Europe, a result of e.g. labour recruitment and de-colonisation, as well as European countries offering a safe-haven to survivors of major wars.

In 2015, over a million people crossed the Mediterranean, attempting to reach the shores of Europe.[1] In response, many local and national governments put in place emergency measures and procedures, and large numbers of people mobilised in order to provide support, including legal advice, accommodation and resources. Cities were at the forefront, acting as first points of arrival, transit hubs and ultimate destinations. Indeed, **refugee-friendly** or **sanctuary cities** such as Glasgow, Brighton, Galway, Barcelona, Gdansk and Mechelen are committed to welcoming asylum-seekers and refugees.

Reception and housing policies and practices vary across EU member states, though **commonalities** exist including: initial accommodation in reception centres (which can vary from purposely built blocks, converted containers, repurposed hotels and hostels, ad-hoc tent camps), immediate attention being given to

unaccompanied minors and particularly vulnerable groups, varying degrees of supplementary or complementary assistance from charities and NGOs, difficulties sourcing accommodation once being granted residency permission.

The limited, often inappropriate options for shelter, numerous legal processes, can mean that newcomers are left in a type of limbo for extended periods, waiting in camps or reception centres with no access to work or education (Rettman 2017). Often, this short-term accommodation becomes long-term (Home Affairs Committee 2017).

Why do people migrate?

war & conflict	famine
extreme poverty	demographic change
climate change	landgrabbing
drought	socio–economic forces

Once granted **residential status**, newcomers can subsequently apply for social benefits and social housing allocation through the waiting list system, be linked up with a social landlord or given rental subsidies. Most often, newcomers attempt to secure their own accommodation within the **private rental sector**, sometimes with the assistance of the local authority as in Sweden and Norway (AIDA 2018, IMDi 2018) or dedicated charities or organisations. Levels of home-ownership remain low (EWSI 2016).

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[1]Since then, fewer people are attempting this crossing: 364,000 people in 2016, (https://bit.ly/2LhpZmi), and 171,635 in 2017 (https://bit.ly/2Lhqj4u). Population of the EU is 512 million, with 34 million migrants (both EU to EU and third-country nationals).

The European political environment is changing. Threat of losing votes to nationalist parties is influencing the political narrative, contributing to the uncertainty for long-term investments in social and public housing. Some might argue that, in the context of an already stagnant housing stock and existing housing issues e.g. increasing homelessness, rising rents and prices, increasing levels of people in mortgage-arrears (Housing Europe 2017b), it is politically controversial and socially counter-productive to adopt measures that prioritise housing for refugees, leaving other groups behind and feeding into *"us vs. them"* narratives.

However, much broader consensus could be built by adopting **more general housing measures** that will benefit larger segments of the population. This can help with the inclusion of refugees and solve the housing shortages that are affecting people from a variety of backgrounds.

Indeed, in the context of a Europe facing an ageing population and declining birth-rate, migration can help alleviate concerns about so-called **shrinking cities** and labour shortages. Europe is projected to remain the most aged region in the coming decades, with 34% of the population aged 60 or over by 2050 (United Nations 2014). In Germany, a national debate questioned the refugee allocation process, whether larger or smaller areas should host the most refugees, and the "Riace model" (allocating refugees in areas with shrinking populations) has been replicated elsewhere e.g. Messina, Italy and Lessebo, Sweden (EWSI 2018 and Eurozine 2017).

The average vacancy rate in Europe, which includes vacant housing and secondary residences, is about 18% (FEANTSA and Abbé Pierre Foundation 2015). Policy measures can be enacted to speed up access to these properties, for homeless people, people on social housing waiting lists, and refugee newcomers. Worries of competition for access to social housing are unfounded, as evidence shows that refugees do not receive greater access or are given higher priority (Phillimore 2014).

94,035
Number of people in "initial reception" centres in Germany

15,000
Number of people in camps & reception centres in Greece

5,096
Number of people in Direct Provision centres in Ireland

Source: Asylum Information Database, The Irish Times.

After the initial provision of temporary accommodation, focus should be placed on long-term accommodation and meaningful inclusion, emphasising how this inclusion is a "two-way process" and a multidimensional concept, one in which numerous actors use a joined-up and partnership-based approach.

Inclusion is context-dependent i.e. wrapped up in **cultural** and **regional** identities and a two-way process built on positive, friendly, continuous **relationships** with the pre-existing community (not merely "tolerance") and **connections** to structures and institutions e.g. municipal/governmental supports, services and facilities.

Countries hosting the most refugees

Source: UNHCR 2018.

With regards to housing and community, this can be realised through ensuring social mix in neighbourhoods, community work facilitating dialogue and exchange, as well as through the provision of language classes, cultural classes, volunteering opportunities, and access to education, employment, social assistance and healthcare.

Attempts made to involve inhabitants of an area including migrant newcomers and vulnerable people in participating in self-management of their housing estate, in the life of their community or neighbourhood, and even in the design and implementation of new housing initiatives (European Commission 2016) can (re)instil a sense of agency and dignity.

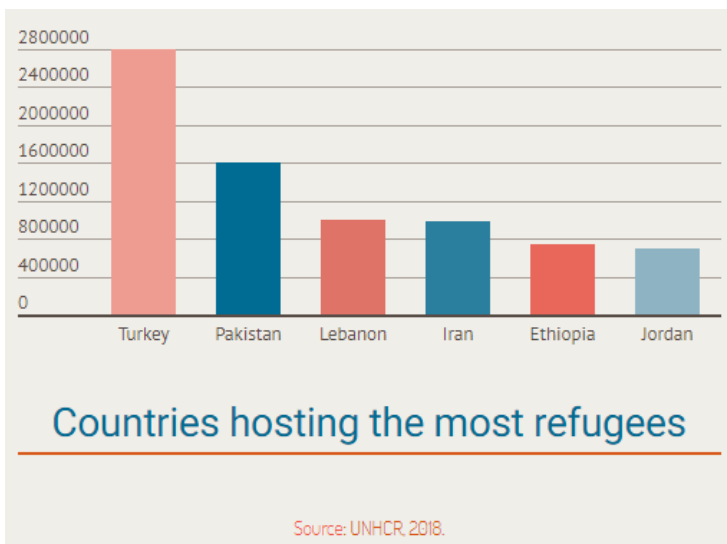## Bottlenecks in housing at the national and local level

Lack of housing in appealing areas and/or empty houses in "unattractive areas": Europe builds less since the beginning of the crisis in 2008, regardless of the sector (private, public, cooperative), with the sole exception of Germany. Rising construction costs make it even more difficult for most countries to keep up with demand.

In Southern and Eastern Europe, a significant part of the housing stock is empty, mainly due to economic downturn and demographic evolution. In Portugal, vacant dwellings make 12.5% of the total housing stock. In Germany, while there is strong demand-side pressure in metropolitan areas, the population is decreasing in other areas resulting in costly structural vacancy in the housing stock (Housing Europe 2017a).

Information gap and lack of administrative capacity to allocate housing: Language barriers, unawareness of and/or inaccessibility to relevant information and services hamper the ability of newcomers in accessing housing. Transparency and communication are key and social workers should be trained in providing informed advice and assistance (Partnership for the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees 2018).

When looking at the allocation of housing we can distinguish a difference between closed and open systems. Some countries will tie the delivery of a residence permit to a certain city that will have a dwelling ready for that person. Other countries deliver a permit without a housing solution or sometimes a housing allowance.

Difficulty to maintain and improve building standards: Poor or inadequate housing implies a risk associated to health and safety. Accommodating 6-10 peoples in a hostel room should not be an option even for a short period. The question of how that has an impact on housing allowances can be raised. Regarding the newly built houses, the issue lies in ensuring the quality requirements which involves not only high building costs but also long procedures to get a building permit. Thirdly, the problem of empty buildings being awaited for future use (ex. former offices) should be tackled as well.

More vulnerable peoples on waiting lists: from 2009 to 2012, the waiting list increased in Belgium from 140 000 to 186 000, in Italy from 600,000 to 650,000 and in France from 1.2 million to 1.7 million (Housing Europe 2015). Homelessness is also on the rise across the continent. The situation of the most vulnerable keeps getting worse and phenomena of social exclusion become more intense. The social housing sector needs to be supported to address this issue, at times when the state retreats from the social housing sector and hands over a big share of responsibility to private initiatives

Insecurity of tenure → homelessness: There is a clear link between migrants and eviction, as a disproportionate number of those evicted in Europe are third country nationals, which in turn leads to a disproportionate number of homeless third country nationals (FEANTSA and Abbé Pierre Foundation 2017).

Discrimination and anti-migrant sentiment: While Member States are strengthening anti-discrimination legislation, third-country nationals are still confronted with exclusion. Refugees and asylum-seekers are often met with hospitality, but also with hostility. This can come in many forms, such as the outright denial of accommodation by private landlords; existence of restrictive conditions or criteria limiting access into publicly supported accommodation; and opposition from neighbours (Harrison, Law and Phillips 2005) potentially leading to unsafe, overcrowded, low-quality housing.

Socio-spatial segregation: Socio-spatial segregation in this context refers to the physical and social concentration of refugees in specific neighbourhoods and communities, as a result of numerous factors including limited housing options, discrimination on the housing market and limited access to social housing. This can lead to isolation from "mainstream" society (European Commission 2018).

Particularly vulnerable groups: Unaccompanied minors should be immediately attended to and brought into safe-spaces. Women face a particular set of challenges, including trauma as a result of gender-based violence, specific

requirements related to privacy and security. LGBTQIA+ groups and people from religious and ethnic minorities also face the risk of discrimination, and require safe spaces and supports. People with disabilities and older people require specific housing needs related to accessibility and use. Measures should be taken to ensure that particularly vulnerable groups receive the appropriate, customised assistance that they need. Further, an intersectional approach that takes into consideration the multiple forms of discrimination and oppression that people can experience should be pursued (ENAR 2018).

Budgetary issues: Cities do not have enough budget capacity to house and assist no/low income groups due to budgetary cuts and recruitment freezes (EUROCITIES 2016). Furthermore, cities get very little financial support from national or regional governments compared to the given responsibilities. Like that, the cities lack upfront funding to local service providers which can hamper both reception and integration services for refugees. One practical example is the lack of skills and personnel to integrate, train and teach new refugee households. Some service providers on the ground can offer provisions without any clear commitment to be reimbursed, which can be problematic especially for smaller organisations.

Access to labour market, education, healthcare and housing: essential components of social inclusion

Stakeholders within refugee protection advocate for the inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees into the **labour market**, and without delay. EU Member States must ensure that applicants for asylum have access to the labour market no later than 9 months from the application date; and with regard to refugees, legislation already provides full and immediate access to the labour market. However, this is not always the practice in reality.

For many in modern society, the workplace is where most time is spent, and where social bonds and connections are formed. Exclusion from the workplace can have detrimental effects on the mental, physical, social, economic health of an individual. **Some housing providers are already supporting migrants' access and inclusion into the labour market by providing language classes, work experience, courses, IT literacy and employment supports (CV writing, job clubs).**
* See Wohnungsbauaktiengesellschaft - GewoBag (Berlin, Germany)

For the youth, education is clearly necessary for self-development and discovery, socialisation, meeting peers and making friends, learning about the host culture, the pursuit of knowledge. The school also acts as place of contact for parents and families,

where social bonds and connections to the community are made. (Ager and Strang 2008).

For adults, access to education is clearly a benefit to self-development, inclusion into the cultural and intellectual life of their host country, and employability e.g. tertiary educated refugees and other migrants of working age have employment rates that are about 25 percent higher than those of refugees and other migrants with primary education (Eurostat 2014). In modern society, access to the labour market has become highly dependent on educational background.

Housing providers are already working on this by providing classes, courses, training, homework clubs, after-school and extra-curricular activities, assistance and individual supports.

* See Ashley Community Housing Association (Bristol, Birmingham and Wolverhampton, UK)

The stresses and worries that come with the process of moving to a new country, can create or add to poor **health**. As a result, refugee newcomers are more likely to suffer from mental health issues such as anxiety or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and poor physical health than the general population (WHO 2015).
It is vital that newcomers are properly acquainted and familiarised with the **healthcare system** that exists in their host country. Language barriers, difficulty in accessing information or facilities, can contribute to exclusion from necessary medical or psycho-social supports (Ager and Strang 2008).
Housing providers are already working on this by working with local health providers, municipalities, and other relevant actors.
* See Accelair programme (France) and Horton Housing Association (Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and North Yorkshire, UK)

Housing providers' work for communities that include and support

 "**A demographic mix**"
   Startblok (Amsterdam, Netherlands) - Startblok is a joint housing project by social enterprise Socius Wonen, the Municipality of Amsterdam and housing organisation De Key. It is geared towards young refugees who have recently received resident status and for young persons from the Netherlands, all between the ages of 18 and 28.
The Startblok estate consists of 463 studios and 102 rooms in multi-person apartments. The studios are about 23m^2 and have their own facilities such as a small kitchen, bathroom and

*Residents at the annual Startblok Summer Festival.*

toilet. Each floor also has a communal living space for social activities and there are two large outside areas with communal spaces The Clubhouse and The Treehouse, surrounded by green spaces.

The project is organised on different principles, including self-management, in which tenants can join a social management team that focuses on community and social cohesion and maintaining a comfortable, safe, clean and liveable environment, or a general management team that is responsible for recruiting and selecting new tenants,managing social media, email and maintenance requests, and coordinating social initiatives, activities and events.

An example of one of their new initiatives is "Queer at Startblok", a group for the LGBTQIA+ residents and community, to provide a safe-space, raise awareness and understanding, and to organise events and activities. The mission and motto of Startblok is "Building a future together". A second project is currently underway.

www.startblok.amsterdam/en
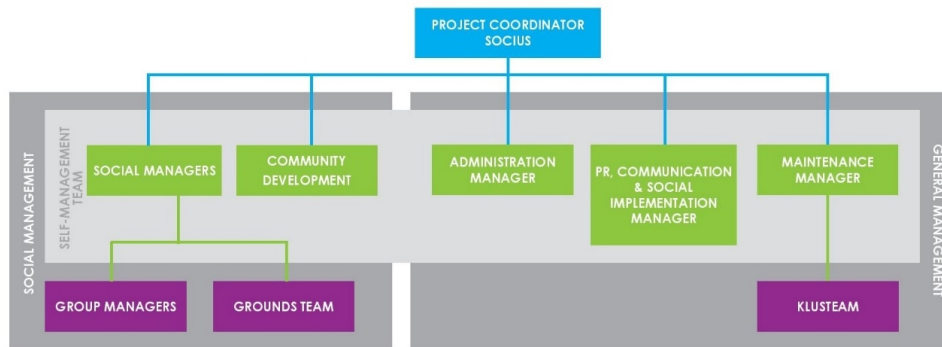
Self-management & self-governance at Startblok.

DAR=CASA's ViVi Voltri project (Barona, Italy) - The ViVi Voltri project is run by not-for-profit co-operative Dar=Casa and provides affordable homes to people and families who are excluded from the private rental sector, specifically young families and migrants, with the aim of promoting social inclusion and cohesion in the neighbourhood and broader community.

The 113 apartments are made up of a social mix: tenants come from different income levels and family composition, coming from 19 different countries including Italy. The majority of flats are allocated to households with children.

Children at Vivi Voltri homework club.

Services and supports include: property, facility and community management, technical, administrative and social assistance, as well community events and activities, language classes and homework clubs, conflict mediation and resolution, and rental assistance when necessary.

DAR=CASA work with tenants to involve them more closely in tackling their needs. Tenants are encouraged to self-manage the common room and a "dialogue process" has been launched to encourage tenants to define common objectives and rules in order to increase their bond to the place where they live and to each other.

🌐 www.darcasa.org/portfolio/vivi-voltri-2

Globaler Hof and Sozialbau (Vienna, Austria) - In 2000, the limited-profit housing association Sozialbau, developed an "interethnic neighbourhood housing model" using an interdisciplinary and participatory process, and built the well-known Globaler Hof apartment block.

The focus was on design and architectural qualities, promoting a communal character through a flexible layout of the flats, shared facilities, formal and informal communication zones as well as the offer of professional mediation in the case of conflict.

Vivi Voltri.

Courtyard in Globaler Hof.

Two guiding principles were defined to secure a mixed neighbourhood: the share of 50:50 between Austrian and foreign tenants and the principle that no single ethnic group should become the majority.

Since then, many of the "lessons learnt" have been transferred to other, new housing estates, making the "interethnic neighbourhood housing model" a part of the current mainstream planning standard of Sozialbau.

🌐 www.globaler-hof.at

Wonen Limburg (Limburg, the Netherlands) - Social housing company Wonen Limburg believes that housing refugees with residential status is a core task and they work on providing alternative, long-term as well as temporary accommodation.

Due to the fact that the number of affordable, available rented dwellings is limited, Wonen Limburg combine the housing of refugees with the assignment of available homes to other people with an urgent status.

Further, Wonen Limburg advocate that social housing organisations should think less traditionally by developing and building temporary living concepts in unconventional spaces (e.g. vacant, unused healthcare complexes) for specific periods of time (e.g. twenty years).

www.wonenlimburg.nl

"Welcoming communities"

SABO's the Portal (Norrköping, Sweden) – In 2011, municipal housing company Hyresbostäder joined the City of Norrköping, the liberal education association ABF, the vocational training school Marieborg and the Swedish church and together launched "The Portal".

As well as a residential facility, there is also the provision of language courses, workplace training, educational opportunities, internships and guidance to newly arrived refugees, recognising that a major obstacle for newcomers is a lack of networks. Another main guiding principle is the intentional move away from the notion that certain people need to be "saved" by society. Instead, each individual is valued for their inherent humanity and potential. This type of "asset based community development" model is tailored to the needs of the person and based on their skills.

As of 2017, more than 1,000 people have been in contact with "The Portal" and roughly 233 people have gained employment or started studies. One of the founders Tomas Lindqvist claims that the major issue today is the lack of resources, "We have a long queue and many people who want to become residents".

Today, "The Portal" also cooperates with local companies and sporting associations, with 15 partnership agreements, and they are **supported by 70-100 volunteers.**

Hageby is now home to over 8,000 inhabitants of almost 100 different nationalities. "The Portal" has been replicated in another district, with plans of more establishments to come.

www.portalennorrkoping.se

Finding Places project (Hamburg, Germany) – The arrival of tens of thousands of refugees prompted the city of Hamburg to collaborate with the University of Hamburg in facilitating a series of public meetings and workshops intended to discuss the coordination of refugee housing allocation.

The Finding Places project took place over the course of three months, using a Human Computer Interaction tool, Cityscope, in order to encourage participation and decision-making in mapping and identifying appropriate sites. 400 Hamburg neighbourhood residents were involved in

Finding Places CityScope tool.

the identification of 160 potential locations for new homes for refugees, of which, 44 were approved by the local authorities.

The project raised awareness of the issues, facilitated constructive discussion and interactions, and supported the Mayor's office, city administration, universities, local city wards and civil society towards pursuing a coordinated approach.

www.urbact.eu/finding-places

A New Home – from Syria to Portlaoise (Portlaoise, Ireland) – In 2014, not-for-profit housing provider Clúid Housing committed to sourcing, delivering and managing homes to 13 Syrian refugee families, a total of 54 people, in the Irish town of Portlaoise.

The units are dispersed across five different suburban estates, all within 2.3 km of Portlaoise town centre. Clúid Housing undertook a coordinated approach, working with a number of stakeholders, including Laois County Council, Department of Social Protection, the national Health Service, ETB (Education and Training Board), the local parish council, Treo Nua resource centre and NGO Doras Luimni.

The families spent time with representatives from Clúid Housing as preparation before their arrival to Portlaoise. Once moved into their homes, Clúid assisted the families with various tasks including utility bill set up and appliance operation.

The community came together to welcome the newcomers, with organisations like Safe Home Ireland (migrant support network) and Comhaltas (Irish Traditional Music organisation) coming in to provide specialised and unique supports. A Laois Integration Network was created in order to connect newcomers and local residents, for cultural exchanges, activities and events.

In 2017, the project won the Irish Council for Social Housing's Award for Community Integration in Housing.

www.cluid.ie

Staudenhof Project for Housing and Communication (Potsdam, Germany) - is a project which sources accommodation for newly arrived refugees in the city of Potsdam.

ProPotsdam is an urban renewal and residential developer and manager. They created a dedicated agency to help find 30 flats for 77 residents, and collaborated with a variety of stakeholders, including the City of Potsdam, local universities, artists and ateliers, sports clubs, civil society organisations, volunteers and residents, in the preparation, design and implementation of the project.

Community garden.

The guidance principles are: in their own flats, alongside local German neighbours, with easy access to facilities and the opportunity to meet in groups to practice their religion or cultural traditions. These community spaces should also allow for education, language courses and individual counselling.

The partnership organised open development meetings, training course for employees, open day for tenants and neighbours, two-month long city festival, set up a community centre and community garden.

Today, this project is regarded as an example of good practice – many national and international organisations reach out for knowledge and skill sharing purposes.

www.propotsdam.de

 Helsingborg (Helsingborg, Sweden) - In response to approximately 1,500 refugees moving into the city in 2016, the city of Helsingborg decided to build three modular constructed apartment blocks that complemented the ordinary housing stock. Helsingborgshem, the municipal housing company, built the small-scale apartment blocks in socio-economically advantaged areas. At first, this announcement was met with negativity – residents protested and the media sensationalised.

Volunteers and residents attend a meeting.

A process of dialogue began, with open meetings for the relevant residents, attended by representatives from the local authorities as well as politicians from all political parties, with a focus on transparency and information sharing.

A volunteer group was formed, given financial and personnel support, with the purpose of welcoming each of the refugee families, e.g. welcome baskets containing essential items, collecting and distributing necessary furniture, organising language lessons, city tours, festivities, as well as offering practical advice, meeting families on-on-one, and assistance with building social and professional networks.

This project shows the commitment of the local population who chose to break down the barrier of fear, to "talk to each other, not about each other" and to help newcomers with their basic needs, as well as illustrating the point that a welcoming local community can help accelerate the process of inclusion.

The Majid/Ibrahim family with neighbours Eva and Terese.

Helsingborgshem believe that the decision of establishing apartment blocks in "socio-economically strong" neighbourhoods was crucial for success, this way avoiding further strain on already socially challenged areas as well as drawing advantages regarding strong residents with the ability to form volunteer initiatives and turn a negative discussion of fear and prejudice around.

www.helsingborgshem.se

"Housing at the foundation of employment, training and good health"

GewoBag – Wohnungsbauaktiengesellschaft (Berlin, Germany) - in Berlin in 2015, municipality housing organisation Wohnungsbauaktiengesellschaft set up a project with the central goal of the successful inclusion of refugees through individual development of vocational and professional qualifications.

Taking a multi-stakeholder approach involving local authorities, employees, students and media, the program includes the provision of internships from 6 to 12 months, mentorship, language courses and diversity training.

Recognising that learning the language is an essential part of inclusion as well as the need for opportunities to speak the language in everyday life, Gewobag created the roles of patrons and mentors. Employees are invited to play an active role in shaping the inclusion process, thereby increasing the acceptance rate while promoting innovations that can enhance the project.

Guiding motto: "die ganze Viefault Berlins", i.e. "All the Diversity of Berlin".

www.gewobag.de/gewobag-571.html

ARHAG (London, UK) - Starting off as a campaign group in 1979, ARHAG (African Refugees Housing Action Group) responded to an urgent need for housing and social supports for the fast-growing communities of refugees and migrants in Britain.

After building partnerships with local authorities and other associations, ARHAG began to build and manage homes for a broader segment of society still including refugee and migrant communities who themselves were active in shaping and developing the organisation.

Today, ARHAG manages 900 properties across 14 London boroughs. ARHAG recently introduced an Employment Programme RISE, which consists of six weeks of job training (CV writing, etc.), followed by four weeks of work experience.

ARHAG are currently developing a new space: a "one-stop-shop" for tenants to access employment services, a community hub, office, training room and meeting spaces, research and consultancy centre and health clinic.

Their vision is "to ensure every migrant and refugee in London has a good home, is empowered to safeguard their individual rights, have their voice heard and make a full contribution to their community".

www.arhag.co.uk

Ashley Community Housing Association (Bristol, Birmingham and Wolverhampton, UK) Established in 2008 as a social enterprise specialising in the economic, social and civic inclusion of refugees through accommodation and community based training support, Ashley Housing Association has resettled over 2,000 individuals from refugee backgrounds. ACH's first task is to provide safe, secure and comfortable housing, followed by a combination of culturally sensitive supports and employability skills

training. They focus on building up individual's resilience, up-skilling and supporting them into sustainable, higher level employment in order to develop independence and ease with inclusion into UK life.

Through the establishment of subsidiary training arm 'Himilo Training', ACH support refugees with work experience, courses, language training (ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages, with customised lessons and course on "Living in Britain"), IT literacy and employability skills (CV writing, skills health checks, drop-in job club).

Ashley's online campaign.

In 2015, ACH set up the #rethinkingrefugee campaign to counter negative language and narratives of "us" vs. "them" in the media and public. The campaign moved beyond awareness-raising and began working on changing the negative perceptions of refugees by private landlords, and actively locating landlords with an ethical outlook. ACH aim to communicate the positive contributions and social, cultural and economic benefits to communities that the inclusion of refugees can have.

www.ashleyhousing.com

Accelair programme (France) - The Accelair programme aims at fostering social and professional inclusion of refugees through a coordinated response which provides access to employment, training and housing. This is done in partnership with social housing providers, employment services and the association Forum Refugié.
The aim is to support beneficiaries through a long-term inclusion process, built on principles of ensuring faster access to employment and housing, the provision of specialised supports for a period of 6 – 18 months, an adaptable programme suited to the different regions, and the sharing of information.

It received funding in 2008 and 2013 from ESF (European Social Fund) and the ERF (European Funds for Refugees). Most recently the AMIF (Asylum Migration Integration Fund) has stepped in. Started in Lyon in 2002, the methodology has since been implemented in 20 other counties across France.

A particular feature of the Accelair programme is the development of specific practices to address obstacles in refugees' access to services, as well as offering training and specific supports for local actors in order for them to adapt their practices to the new migrant population.

https://bit.ly/1TCowBy

Horton Housing Association (Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and North Yorkshire, UK)

A partnership approach, working with Bradford Council and Bevan Healthcare CIC, to provide housing, healthcare and wrap-around support to help refugees settle into a new life in the UK.Not-for-profit housing provider Horton Housing offers humanitarian protection and prioritises help for survivors of torture and violence, women and children at risk, and those in need of medical care.

Clients receive support for up to 12 months to settle into the UK. This includes: housing-related support (e.g. help to manage a tenancy, set up bills), health screenings, ESOL assessments, education assessments,

The Aboosh family from Syria, now living in England.

individual needs assessments to develop support and inclusion plans, community engagement, welfare benefits advice, support into employment and Job Search advice.

By the end of their first year in the UK, the vast majority of clients are living independently but Horton Housing stays in touch and offers support through a twice a week drop-in.

www.hortonhousing.co.uk

"Temporary emergency accommodation"

Cooperative Housing Ireland and the Irish Red Cross (Ireland) – CHI is Ireland's national federation for the cooperative sector. The Irish Red Cross and CHI were tasked with the coordination, management and placement of refugees in publicly pledged accommodation across Ireland. Pledged accommodation is provided by private individuals and families who offer a room in their home to a refugee newcomer who needs it. IRC also sources and secures private rental accommodation, using governmental subsidies alongside creating links with other social housing options that might be available.

The initiative provides information to refugees in EROC's (Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres) through Housing Workshops and information bulletins. CHI supports the case

Crois Dhearg na hÉireann
Irish **Red Cross**

Put empty space to better use.

Pledge a room or a vacant property for a Syrian refugee today.

Search register of pledges or call us on **01 64 24 600**

"Pledge a room".

workers on a daily basis around housing legislation, policy and the operational aspects of housing support and the social housing application process. CHI also acts as an additional support to those individuals and families that have pledged accommodation and private landlords that are new to the sector.

By the end of 2017, and with the support of CHI, almost 70 individuals had left direct provision reception centres and moved into various forms of accommodation.

🌐 www.coopereativehousing.ie

Federcasa – emergency accommodation (Perugia, Italy) - In March 2017, the Umbria region was faced with the challenge of quickly accommodating a large number of refugees. They responded by working with public institutions, third sector organizations and civil society to create a working model based on concepts of cooperation and respect for diversity.

Social housing provider ATER (Azienda Territoriale per l'Edilizia Residenziale della Regiona Umbria) Umbria designed the conversion of a student dormitory into a refugee accommodation centre, which has 28 housing units and a capacity of about 56 people, to be managed by the Perugia social cooperative in Perugia. Part of the reconstruction and renovation will be done by a working group composed of refugee inhabitants.

Similar projects which aim to provide quality emergency accommodation for refugees in coordination with municipalities are taking place in Trento, Turin and Florence.

🌐 www.federcasa.it

Accommodation centre in Perugia.

Conclusions and recommendations

Migration is becoming a norm within and towards Europe, as well as globally.

In 2016, almost 1 million people were granted EU citizenship (2018c). The next few years will see another European Parliamentary Elections and a post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

With housing at the foundation, and core principles of social mix, welcoming communities, participation and real access to essential services, this is an opportunity for committed actors with vision to build **strong, sustainable communities** with **enriching pluralisms.**

Below are a range of suggested options based on best practices arising from successful initiatives with which to guide this:

- Enable more cost-effective construction and invest in building affordable housing can help with dealing with the shortage in housing stock which strongly impacts migrants, especially in high-demand urban areas
- Investment in infrastructure and improving access to essential facilities and services: professional, educational, healthcare, social assistance, etc., by linking up with other relevant stakeholders and using a coordinated approach
- Guarantee that quality standards are met in the case of accommodation in temporary reception facilities and that beneficiaries are involved in the process
- Encourage social mix, by avoiding placement of refugees and asylum-seekers into segregated areas, and instead into demographically mixed urban and rural areas
- Opening up of housing allocation systems, in which refugees who have recently been granted residential status are able to choose which city or location they will live in
- Introduce diversity management tools such as intercultural awareness training and multilingual services
- Promotion of self-organisation and self-management by residents in their housing estates
- Inclusion of future residents in the design and planning of their housing, neighbourhoods and communities
- Encourage social inclusion and community building by facilitating the organisation of events, get-togethers and activities
- Involvement of local community: ensure local community are informed and aware, create the possibility for open dialogue, encourage welcoming committees and volunteer groups
- Combat negative perceptions and stereotypes of migrants, by linking up with community groups, NGOs and civil society organisations and getting involved with their campaigns; using early detection tools of discrimination
- Undertake an intersectionality review of equality policies to explore the extent to which policies address intersectional discrimination, by e.g. consulting affected groups and experts
- Combat discrimination and exploitation in the private rental market by strengthening and raising awareness of and accessibility to tenants' rights
- Assist with inclusion by providing language classes, cultural classes, skills training, employment services, work experience, volunteering opportunities, child care supports, mediation and conflict-resolution services.

The EU can help by:

- Reducing funding barriers and provide support with application and reporting for actors at the local level
- Recognising and support the increasing role of public, not for profit and cooperative housing providers in ensuring supply of affordable housing for migrants
- Investing in social inclusion of migrants including measures such as the provision of long-term housing, related social & care services as well as training & education
- Combining existing EU funding programs with EIB loans to give cities direct access to funding
- AMIF should go further and finance accommodation
- Relaxing rules on building renovation and transformation: Consider a fast track decision procedure for a (possible) relaxation of rules and regulations
- Peer to peer learning networks: To make available a knowledge exchange programme for professionals in the field
- A Covenant of Mayors: Set up a Covenant of Mayors on the inclusion of refugees and migrants. The Covenant is not only for big cities, but also for smaller cities and towns, as well as regions as a whole. Furthermore, the Covenant's website acts as a network portal and support structure for participating cities and citizens alike
- Creating a database for best practices: Create or improve an (existing) EU database that allows the sharing of best practices on different issues, including reception, housing and inclusion. Existing knowledge tools/institutes/platforms such as the European Website on Integration, Europa Decentraal, Housing Europa, and EUKN etc. should be involved
- Relaxing state aid rules and public procurement: It is suggested that EU rules become more flexible, mainly in terms of interpretation of exceptions in times of a crisis. The exceptions should be made in the EU sphere of competition and internal market for certain forms of housing for refugees
- Linking housing to employment: The EU should foster a better relationship between employment services and social housing providers to achieve more effective labour market integration.

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