The Indicators of Integration Framework

I4 indicators that represent what is needed for displaced people to live up to their potential in their new country

The <u>indicators of integration framework</u> (Strang, 2019) is an evidence based model on integration that was developed in the United Kingdom and has been adapted and enriched by <u>OpenEmbassy</u> to the Dutch and bro1ader European context.

The Framework was first developed in 2008 and based on hundreds of interviews with people with a (forced) migration background and practitioners in the field of migration and integration. With the indicators and an extensive open source dataset, it helps to design, govern, develop, measure and evaluate integration policies. Both on a local and national level. The framework has been updated for years, making the evidence and datasets more and more robust and trustworthy.

According to the framework, integration happens simultaneously in the different indicators. Having work stimulates social connections and knowledge of language and culture. Having social bridges enables access to work, housing and education. The role of both the receiving communities and the new communities are acknowledged, making it a framework that enables both policy makers and practitioners to adapt it in their ever dynamic and specific local context.

In the exceptional context of the war in Ukraine, the framework can support states and its governmental actors to design *local* policies on integration while making sure that on European level there is a shared toolbox on governance, implementation and evaluation.

Introduction of the 14 indicators

The following definitions of the indicators are taken from the <u>original IOI framework</u>

The 14 indicators are divided over 4 categories:
1. Markers and means of integration: these indicators can both mark integration and identify the most important contexts of society in which integration takes place.
2. Social connections: these indicators relate to the importance of 3 different kind of relationships.
3. Facilitators: these indicators help individuals to reach integration.
4. Foundation: this is what the creators of the framework see as the basis on which the other indicators can take place.

Markers and means

Work

Employment provides a mechanism for income generation and economic independence and possibly advancement; as such, it is a key factor supporting integration. Work can also be valuable in (re)establishing valued social roles, developing language and broader cultural competence and establishing social connections. Voluntary work provides valuable work experience and the opportunity to practice language and communication skills and build social connections for those with or without the right to paid employment. For those with the right to employment it can provide a pathway to paid work.

Education

Access to, and progress within, the education system serves as a significant integration marker, and as a major means towards this goal. Education creates significant opportunities for employment, for wider social connection, and mixing for language learning and cultural exchange.

Housing

Housing structures much of an individual's experience of integration. Housing conditions impact on a community's sense of security and stability, opportunities for social connection, and access to healthcare, education and employment.

Health and social care

The key issues here are equity of access to health and social services and responsiveness of such services to the specific needs of the individual. Good health enables greater social participation and engagement in employment and education activities.

Leisure

Leisure activities can help individuals learn more about the culture of a country or local area, and can provide opportunities to establish social connections, practice language skills and improve overall individual health and wellbeing.

Social connections
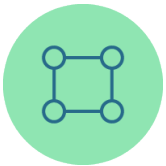
Social bonds - with those you share a sense of identity

Supportive relationships with people who share many of your values and expectations about life (norms) are crucial for mental health and wellbeing and therefore underpin integration. Such relationships are generally – but not always – formed with family members and people from the same cultural background. Familiar people, language, cultural practices and shared religious faith can all contribute to a sense of belonging.

Social bridges – with people from different backgrounds

Establishing social connections with those perceived to be of other backgrounds such as language, ethnicity, religion and sexuality is essential to establish the 'two-way' interaction at the heart of many definitions of integration. Creating bridges to other communities supports social cohesion and opens up opportunities for broadening cultural understanding, and widening educational and economic opportunities.

Social Links - with institutions

Social links refer to engagement with the institutions of society, such as local governmental and non-governmental services, civic duties and political processes, and demonstrates a further set of social connections supporting integration. Social links exist where a person is able to both receive the benefits provided by the institutions of society as well as contribute to decision-making and delivery. Linkage into such activities provides a further dimension of social connection.

Facilitators

Language and communication

The ability to communicate is essential for all social connections including, crucially, with other communities and with state and voluntary agencies such as local government and non-government services, political processes and being able to perform civic duties.

Culture

An understanding of others' cultural values, practices and beliefs promotes integration between people of different backgrounds. Such knowledge includes very practical information for daily living (e.g. regarding transport, utilities, benefits) as well as customs and social expectations. Mutual knowledge of one another's values, cultures and practices promotes the developing of social connections between people of diverse backgrounds.

Digital skills

Familiarity and confidence in using information communication technology can help facilitate social connections and is increasingly crucial in accessing rights and services.

Safety

A sense of safety provides an essential foundation to forming relationships with people and society, enabling progress through education and/or employment and participating in leisure pursuits. Community safety is a common concern amongst minority groups and within the broader communities in which they live. Racial harassment and hate crime erodes confidence, constrains engagement in social connection and distorts cultural knowledge.

Stability

Individuals benefit from a sense of stability in their lives, such as a stable routine in their work, education, living circumstances and access to services. Stability is necessary for sustainable engagement with employment or education and other services. Mobility disrupts social networks, whereas stability supports social connections and can help to improve individual's perceptions of the area in which they live.

Foundation

Rights and responsibilities

This domain addresses the extent to which members of minority groups are provided with the basis for full and equal engagement within society (which may lead to a formal application for citizenship). It assesses the existence and awareness of rights and responsibilities as well as the enablement of these rights and fulfilment of responsibilities.

Want to learn more?
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