



# BRIDGES HANDBOOK



This document was co-funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund





# BRIDGES

PROMOTING  
INCLUSIVE  
COMMUNITIES

# ACROSS EUROPE

EVERYONE CAN PLAY A ROLE IN THE CREATION OF AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

## BRIDGES HANDBOOK

on how to activate, engage and support  
the creation of inclusive communities

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CMS, ANTIGONE, UCEC, Municipality of  
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[www.bridges-project.eu](http://www.bridges-project.eu)

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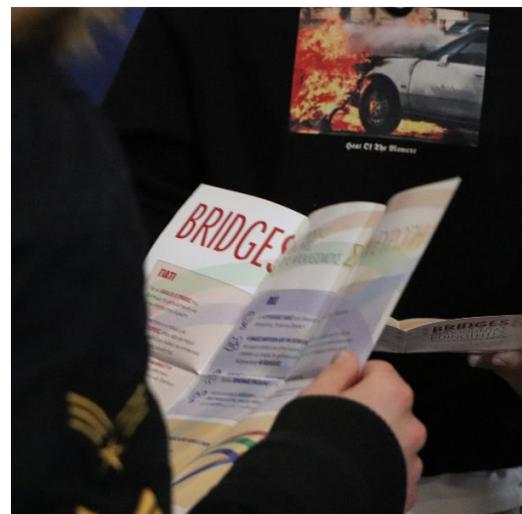
BRIDGES aim and vision	2
The codesign process	5
Phase 1 Discover	6
Phase 2 Define	8
Phase 3 Design	11
Phase 4 Deliver	14
BRIDGES in numbers	18
BRIDGES keywords	23

## BRIDGES aim and vision

BRIDGES is an AMIF funded project experimenting with collaborative integration practices to strengthen local communities. BRIDGES brings together 9 partners in 5 European countries to challenge xenophobia, cultural barriers and social divisions through codesign, sports, culture and community services. From 2019 to 2021, in 4 very diverse European cities (Florence, Thessaloniki, Tortosa and Zagreb) local networks of host and third country nationals with different backgrounds and stories, have used codesign to ideate, plan and actively organize integration initiatives focusing on sports, cultural activities, community services and much more.

**We act to promote common values of inclusion and solidarity in Europe.** Promoting inclusive communities means first of all recognizing that some individuals and groups confront barriers that prevent them from fully participating in political, economic, and social life. Despite the fact that European societies are increasingly diverse, third country nationals across the EU continue to fare worse than EU citizens in terms of employment, education and social inclusion outcomes. These barriers can be the complex product of culture and language, but also of stigma, stereotypes and discriminatory behaviour. Ensuring that everyone can participate and contribute is not only essential for the future well-being of Europe, but is also an issue of justice and equity of the societies we are building.

**Meaningful dialogue and active collaboration of third country and host country nationals can create more inclusive and cohesive communities.** To promote inclusive communities we have to **work on the system of relations between locals and third country nationals - regardless of their length of stay.** Create the conditions for old and new residents of our neighborhoods and our cities to benefit from safe spaces to learn from each other, exchange and find shared solutions to local needs. Spaces in which individuals and groups feel welcomed and allowed to express their potential and to increase their opportunity to lead a better life. This is why in our actions we did not engage exclusively Third Country Nationals, but also groups and organizations that are well integrated in the fabric of society, as well as groups of nationals at risk of or suffering from social exclusion, such as the Roma community, NEETs and other at risk local youth.



Sports, cultural and social activities are the language that can bring us closer. Taking part in everyday activities is a key aspect of social inclusion. As the European Commission clearly indicates: “integration is not just about learning the language, finding a house or getting a job. It is also about playing an active role in one’s local, regional and national community, about developing and sustaining real people-to-people contacts through social, cultural and sports activities, and even even political engagement. (...) **Promoting exchanges with the receiving society through volunteering, sports and culture activity from the very beginning facilitates dialogue and mutual understanding.**” (EC, Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals, 2016)

Everyone can play a role in the creation of inclusive communities in their cities and in their neighborhoods. We believe in the direct involvement of Third Country Nationals and of local residents in the design and implementation of activities. Ultimately, it is only through inclusive and active participation that we can promote **communities where everyone, no matter where they come from, can contribute with their talents and skills, to change the way we talk about migration in Europe.**

BRIDGES is based on the conviction that “when confronted with new problems, human beings tend to use their innate creativity and design capacity to invent and realize something new: they innovate.” In a changing and interconnected world, individuals constantly “design” solutions that can be enhanced through collaboration with others and can be supported to generate unprecedented solutions, converge on common goals and realize larger transformations. (Manzini, Ezio, Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation, Mit Press, 2015)

**This is why we experimented with the methods and worldview of codesign.** Codesign is a wide range approach with application in fields such as urban planning, public services, community building, that enables all stakeholders, from experts to end users, to participate in the creation or innovation of services, products, projects and activities in order to meet their needs. Everyone can take part in generating ideas, actively deciding what to do and how, and in implementing activities on the ground, learning from each other and contributing with what they wish and can.



## BRIDGES STORY

## Sport, fun and socialising in Zagreb

Implementing partner: Centre for Peace Studies

The Centre for Peace Studies (CMS) held the first BRIDGES initiative in Zagreb together with the Zagreb 041 football club. It was a football tournament with mixed teams, organised in the Dugave district. The teams consisted of men, women and children. The main goal of the tournament was to spend an active day in the sun, to do sports, have fun and hang out together! The tournament took place on the home field of FC041 and lasted all day long until late in the evening. Besides football, there were many other games for children and a culinary team that made sure that nobody stayed hungry! The tournament was attended by a large group of different supporters of the football club, locals from the neighbourhood and people from the nearby reception centre for asylum seekers.

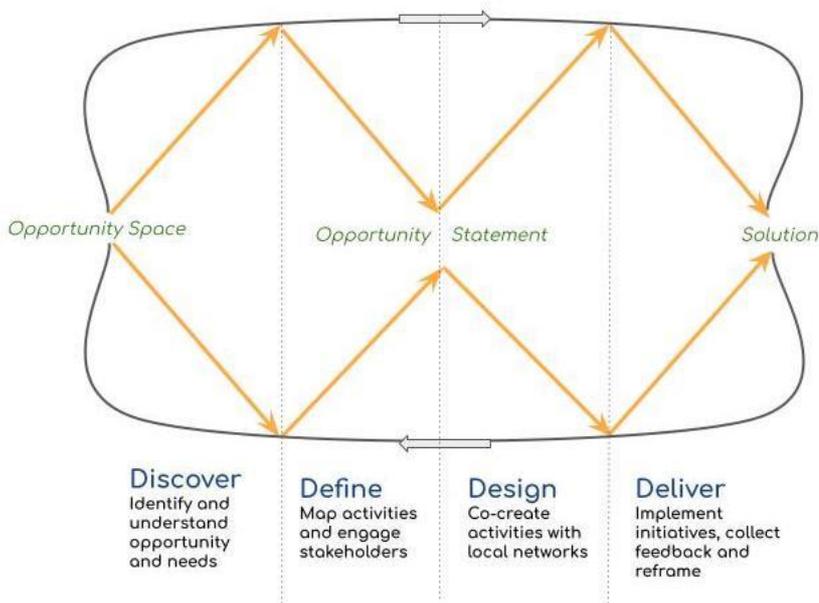
Ten teams competed in the tournament: Are you Syrious?, a team of AYS volunteers, women players of FC041 and refugees, CMS team consisting of workers and volunteers of CMS as well as refugees, Bicpop team of bike repair volunteers, FPZG, a team of political science students, MAZ, team consisting of members of Antifascist Network Zagreb, Klinici 041, a team consisting of refugee kids of the junior team of FC041, as well as Hanan, NUP, Motka and WAZ. In the preliminary round the teams were divided into two groups, which all competed against each other, after which the two best teams from each group reached the semi-finals. In the final, Hanan and FPZG met each other.

The very dynamic game ended in a 2-2 draw and was decided by a penalty shoot-out. Hanan was the better team and won the tournament! The event was full of a positive atmosphere that brought together locals from the neighbourhood, asylum seekers, refugees, football fans and club members who are active in the Dugave neighbourhood. They spent a casual day together, ate well and cheered each other on! After the tournament the main question was: *"When will we do this again? Hopefully very soon!"*

Story from the [BRIDGES magazine](#) created and published by CSIT.



## The codesign process



**BRIDGES codesign process** adapted a wide range of tools and methodologies from human-centered design, collaborative practices and design thinking, to facilitate active engagement, to foster co-creation and to ensure capacity building of local communities.

The process followed 4 main phases inspired by the 4Ds of Design Innovation:

**DISCOVER:** Assess and frame the characteristics of the local context, needs of target population and opportunities presented by local actors.

**DEFINE:** Establish local networks and generate ideas that can respond to local needs.

**DESIGN:** Co-create locally attuned activities with local networks and target population.

**DELIVER:** Implement integration initiatives to build inclusive communities.

The methodology shared in the [BRIDGES Guidelines](#) and during a [BRIDGES codesign training for community organizers](#), was a strong component of the project, allowing to develop the skills for community organizers at the local level but also providing flexibility at the transnational level. Each partner adapted tools and methods to the local contexts, but the methodology remained the *trait d'union*: it allowed organizations to address local emerging needs in times of uncertainty while pursuing common objectives at the transnational level.





## PHASE 1 DISCOVER

The Discover phase helps organisations explore and understand the local context to uncover the needs of target population and to identify the pilot location for project activities. The Discover activity can be done through many different activities, such as interviews with key stakeholders, desk research, immersion in the local context and much more.

### Why is it important?

- Helps you understand the needs of users and communities.
- Deepens your knowledge of the local context.
- Allows you to find the right opportunity space to intervene.

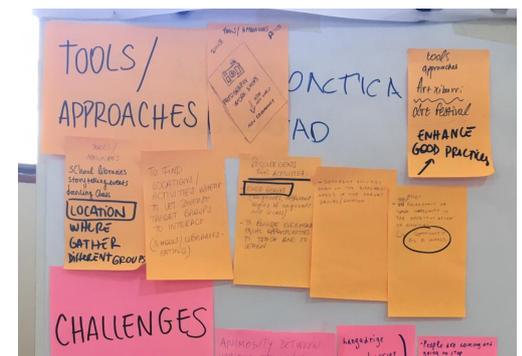
### Tools and methods

A [Needs assessment template](#) is a tool to collectively analyse and understand the local context, existing initiatives and organizations, local population, pilot areas and target groups. Three adjectives that can guide in drafting a needs assessment:

**Brief:** we are aware that a brief document presents the risk of oversimplifying complex issues, but in this kind of assessment activity, where you will need to go back to the information during the life of a project, less can truly be more.

**Focused:** identify the key insights, what truly matters to you and your target groups, prefer the drafting of some *ad hoc* bullet points rather than long paragraphs that you don't really subscribe.

**Participatory:** don't worry about providing the most sophisticated information and percentages, what is interesting is that you address your questions through meetings, interviews and exchanges with partners, local authorities, representatives of grassroots organizations, NGOs and CSOs working in the field, native and migrant citizens.



## Tips and tricks

A needs assessment should be:

**A work in progress:** the understanding of the context might change during the course of the project. Embrace these changes in perception and allow them to enrich the initial assessment and to foster learning throughout the project life.

**An opportunity to build your network:** local actors are the people you will work with and that will help you make the project happen. They are the ones you should contact and with whom your assessment should be conducted.

**A way to get inspired:** past projects or successful activities are a source of inspiration and learning that can help you identify success factors of an innovative approach and derive lessons learned. Identify good practices carried out by you or other partners that you find particularly effective.

**Participatory:** formulate and answer questions through meetings, interviews and exchanges with partners, local authorities, representatives of grassroots organizations, NGOs and CSOs working in the field, native and migrant citizens.



## What we learned from BRIDGES

The needs assessment was designed to support partners in reflecting on some of the issues that are relevant to the project and in doing it with local actors and partners. The tool was not designed as **an opportunity for them to reflect on where, why and what to do through the project.**

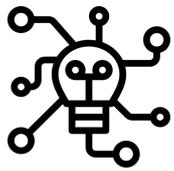
Partners agreed that the needs assessment was a **good starting point for the project.** Having worked on the document helped partners include new team members and share information with other local partners.

*“Without the information we gathered with the needs assessment, we would have realized a very different project.”* (AICS)

Some outlined that the tool could have been more useful if they had the occasion to collect more qualitative information through interviews with local partners and participants as *“we could have gone deeper with the assessment by involving more people in it: we had the numbers and the information, but maybe we could have known more about the real problems behind these numbers.”* (UCEC and Tortosa City Council).

Most went back to the needs assessment at the outbreak of the pandemic, to rethink their choices, actions and tools through a rapid assessment, and then again at the end thus confirming the importance of having not just data, but a living document with *“relevant questions to ask in order to support a dialogue with partner organisations.”* (AICS)





## PHASE 2 DEFINE

The Define phase helps you frame the challenge ahead by using the information gathered through the Discover phase and feeding in into a process of collective reflection. In order to do it, the **establishment of local networks** composed of both local and third country nationals is essential in grounding the process in the local context.

### Why is it important?

- Helps identify allies among local actors to frame issues and challenges.
- Allows locals and Third Country Nationals to establish a dialogue around needs and opportunities.
- Creates the basis for fruitful and sustainable collaboration.

### Tools and methods

To define with team members and partners an outreach strategy for local networks you can use many different tools, including board games such as the one we used in [BRIDGES international training on codesign for community organizers](#). Each square of the board had a question to address together in order to create the final **“outreach strategy”**: target audience, key actors, commitment required, resources needed, inclusion and diversity, dissemination tools. Participants working in national teams had the chance to exchange and share with other teams to maximize cooperation.



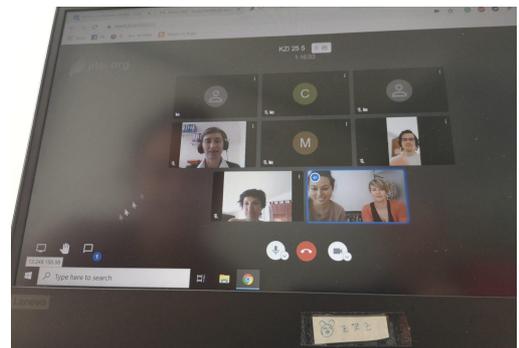
<p><b>MEETINGS</b></p> <p>Each local network of community champions will meet to design the activities (the project says 4-6 meetings in each country for each network)</p> <p>What are we asking them to do? What is their needed commitment? Where/when is the best time to meet?</p>	<p><b>TARGET GROUPS</b></p> <p>The local networks are composed of national residents and TCNs (local authorities, migrants associations, grassroots organizations, active citizens, migrants, refugees)</p> <p>Who are you trying to reach with this call and how can we motivate them?</p>	 <p>The people you invite to the call for community champions might not see the benefit of dedicating time to the project.</p> <p>What can you offer them? How can you motivate them to take part in the project?</p>	 <p>After launching the call you see that the people answering are all country nationals</p> <p>What can we do to make the local network more diverse and inclusive?</p>
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## Tips and tricks

To build local networks you should:

- **be inclusive:** use different channels for different types of participants: if some community champions respond well to the launch of a public call for active participants, others need to be sought out, called on the phone, invited personally and convinced.
- **be experimental:** design fun and informal public community events in public spaces can help you raise interest in those that live in the area and allow them to find out about the initiative.
- **be humble:** ask for help from other organisations and NGOs that work with target groups in specific areas (schools, places of worship, markets, playgrounds, reception centers for refugees and asylum seekers). This will allow you to reach the right people and to be credible.



## What we learned from BRIDGES

In line with the collaborative and participatory approach of the project, each partner implementing a pilot was asked to do it in close collaboration with a local network of stakeholders, including representatives of local organizations, CSOs, local authorities, community champions both local and third country national. **Instrumental to the sustainability of the actions on the ground, local networks have been nurtured and engaged by all partners**, albeit with some differences in composition and functioning, connected to the local context and the existing network of the organisation.

Those that were already active in the pilot locations, worked towards the creation of local networks tapping into their professional networks of organisations and institutions mapped through the needs assessment and through the contacts of their organisation.

Those that were new to the area *“had to build a local network from scratch, the Municipal immigration department works with individuals, not with groups and communities. We had to find and contact local TCNs organisations one by one.”* This activity required *“a lot of time and planning...We made endless calls, meetings, exchanges to map and engage local organisations from the start. We kept track of meetings and information about the organisations on a form, we truly mapped them and created the best possible conditions to start working together.”*

Once activated, partners all join in sharing that local networks in their different forms, whether larger collaborative meetings or smaller meetings, were places of co-creation where ideas and activities emerged.



## BRIDGES STORY

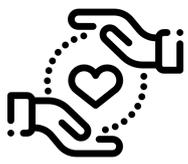
## Community event at the volunteering festival at Villa Pallini, Florence

Implementing partner: AICS

A Community public event held in Florence brought together Italian and foreign children and provided the perfect opportunity for BRIDGES to present itself to the city. The volunteer festival took place at Villa Pallini, the headquarters of District 5 in Florence, bringing together more than 27 non-profit organisations. BRIDGES had a stand that became a “showcase” for foreign associations that had joined the project to brighten the festival with cultural and sports initiatives. The workshop “Leyendo pinto” by “Colombia ES”, for example, was designed to teach Spanish to neighbourhood children by drawing and by reading Colombian stories. Having the children experience the workshop was a way for the accompanying parents to interact with other families and engage. Visitors were very interested in the colours and shapes of the carnival masks that their children drew and wore. Each mask had a meaning to be discovered in Colombian culture and a Spanish word to be used. A Colombian family and an Italian child with his mother and grandparents were particularly involved: It turned out that the children came from the same school, but it was the first time that both families spent their free time together! Colours, paper, tables, some basic Spanish words and a garden were the simple ingredients of an activity that enabled the involvement of a large number of people in a fun interactive exhibition.

Story from the [BRIDGES magazine](#) created and published by CSIT.





## PHASE 3 DESIGN

The Design phase allows you to work with local networks and communities to host conversations that matter to them, share their needs, reinforce collaboration and help them generate ideas that can become locally attuned solutions for the challenges identified together.

### Why is it important?

- Creates safe and hospitable spaces where both third country nationals and locals can have conversations about what matters to them.
- Harvests ideas that come from these conversations.
- Connect ideas with available resources and help them become concrete initiatives.

### Tools and methods

Bridges partners organized **participatory codesign meetings** as events meant to bring together representatives of local networks to identify needs and design integration initiatives on the ground. These meetings were held periodically (from 4 to 6 in each partner country) throughout the duration of the project in order to keep the community involved and to strengthen links between participants.

The formats that we shared in our [BRIDGES guidelines](#) and in [BRIDGES international codesign training for community organizers](#) were that of the [World Cafè](#) and of the [Pro-action cafè](#), methods that create spaces for creative and action oriented conversations where participants are invited to bring their ideas to cross-pollinate and offer each other new insights.

Experimenting with this methods is useful to develop skills for community organizers, such as active listening, empathy and facilitating community dialogue. For these methods to work, it is relevant to dedicate some of your time to setting the space so that people can sit in a circle and move around freely, and to make an effort to provide a good start and to create the conditions in which the group diversity is truly celebrated. The first minutes of a meeting are crucial to setting the tone, making everyone feel included and encouraging contributions.



## Tips and tricks

To codesign with your local networks, some advice adapted from ©CREATIVE REACTION LAB, Art of Hosting and Circle Practice includes:

- **Ensure all voices are heard:** use a variety of activities and break the large group in smaller groups to create more comfortable settings.
- **Speak with intention:** speak with your mind and heart honestly. Don't hold the floor more than necessary and encourage others to do the same.
- **Listen with attention:** don't interrupt if it's not necessary, ask questions that help participants them find their inner truths ("What is important for you? Why?")
- **Use "I" statements:** remember that you cannot speak for others, only your own experiences and opinions.
- **Lean into discomfort:** acknowledge difficult or tense moments, address the issue, not the person.
- **Respect differences in opinions:** don't assume everyone has the same beliefs and understandings as yourself.
- **Encourage ownership:** everyone should care for the group you created. What emerges is a shared responsibility of all.



## What we learned from BRIDGES

Participatory codesign meetings were instrumental in the success of local integration initiatives. All partners held them through the project, albeit in different formats: *"Some of the meetings did not manage to gather all the stakeholders, so we often did a series of smaller meetings. It takes time because you have to explain things three times instead of one, but it was worth it. All was done with a codesign approach despite not all activities were big codesign workshops."*

Agency and visibility of civil society organisations, both local and third country national, was built during these meetings: *"both local and TCNs organisations took part in the meetings. They understood the importance of the organisation's participation in the project and sent different volunteers to attend. It was also very important to acknowledge the role of the group, so for each integration initiative we created a big poster introducing all the co-designers of the event. It was a symbolic gesture but important to show that each person's contribution is valuable."*

*"The co-design meetings allowed us to bring together a wide range of ideas regarding possible activities. Designing activities together allowed us to overcome difficulties arising in the implementation phase, as well as to distribute tasks between different participants."*



## BRIDGES STORY

## Decide, plan and act together

Implementing partners: Usb and ANTIGONE

*USB trainee Vasilias Tsampouri took part in a codesign meeting at the 12 Vocational School in Thessaloniki and wrote down her experience.*

Before this meeting, I never seriously considered volunteering anywhere. After my studies I started looking for a suitable internship and USB accepted my application. I was asked to attend a meeting of BRIDGES, but I didn't think that I would do anything special. In the end, it was more than just special.

We drove to the school, which did not seem like a school at all. An old building, without enough windows to let light into the rooms, and without a courtyard to spend breaks. It was clear that together we had to create an environment that would change this atmosphere. Somewhere there I understood how important our project was and what we could do on that day. Because with our small contribution these children would have the opportunity for a change in their everyday life.

We started to decorate the room with pictures and made boxes with the names of the activities on which the children showed what they liked with stickers. Children started to build confidence. One of them sang and told us that he liked writing songs in his spare time, after work or school. I talked to a teenager named George who helped us distribute food. He has been working since he was 14, and now at 17 he could not imagine what life without work would be like. It was more important for him to work than to study. Later, Ahmed, who timidly tried to teach others cricket, explained that it was a popular sport in his country, but that he had not been able to practice it since he arrived in Greece. As he explained, he began to feel more and more comfortable and the children watched him with interest and applauded to encourage him. When he was finished, he just sat there and smiled.

Story from the [BRIDGES magazine](#) created and published by CSIT.





## PHASE 4 DELIVER

In this phase, you move from the ideas developed in the Design phase to actual initiatives that foster integration, dialogue and inclusion in local communities. This means deciding together what you will do first, who does what, which resources you have and which you need to find, who can help you find them, etc. A lot of time and energy is required to develop initiatives as the product of a collective endeavour and it is very helpful to work with a prototype approach, trying activities on the ground to test their impact before moving on to the next initiative.



### Why is it important?

- Makes initiatives visible on a small and public scale.
- Builds confidence and show that change is possible.
- Shows what works and what does not and allows to use this knowledge to develop the next round of initiatives.



### Tools and methods

Once identified which activity is more consistent with your community goal, it can be useful to fill an Activity Matrix such as the one provided in [BRIDGES Guidelines](#) that helps to define your idea and find the resources to implement it. The matrix can be compiled as a group activity where responsibility and competences are shared.

#### ACTIVITY MATRIX

**Type of activity** (Provide a short description)

**Who is in the core team** (Indicate at least two people)

**Who do I wish to engage** (Indicate your target group)

**Who can help me reach them** (Please indicate names of key people and who contacts them)

**When is it going to happen** (Identify date/timing allowing your target's participation)

**Where is it going to happen** (Give indication of available spaces private or public)

**Which resources do we need/ which do we already have** (materials, skills, support, etc)

**How are we going to communicate about it** (Design key supports and communication activities)

## Tips and tricks

When developing initiatives codesigned together, be sure to:

- **Focus on what people are keen and willing to do.** This means allowing personal talents and skills to emerge and encouraging simple direct action. (What do you do best? How could we integrate this in the initiative?)
- **Be a facilitator of connections.** Nurturing relationships is part of the process and creates an opportunity to plan and do together. (Who can help him/her do this?)
- **Acknowledge contributions.** Encourage people to play a role, however simple, in the initiative and celebrate their involvement as an essential part of the collective effort.



## What we learned from BRIDGES

The participatory nature of the project is reflected in the conscious choice of not identifying the activities beforehand but of leaving them to be designed by the local communities through the tool of the participatory codesign meetings, among a wide range of possible activities, including football, training courses, graphic art labs, drawing and murals; language classes, providing assistance to marginalized groups; organizing and implementing community services.

*“Integration initiatives worked well because they were designed with organisations in touch with target groups and responded to specific needs. The ones we organized in September and October 2020 addressed the need to renew socialization in presence and it was moving to see kids engaging in outdoor activities such as bicycles tours and graffiti after all the time spent indoors” (COSPE)*

The role of local networks and of the codesign process is stressed as essential in the implementation of integration initiatives: *“TCNs and local organisations were essential in making these big initiatives happen. they did everything, from organizing activities, to providing volunteers to ensure that covid regulations were respected. Without the involvement of these organisations, these initiatives would not have taken place.” (AICS)*

Another relevant element emerging is that of the difference in the format chosen for the integration initiatives.

*“We think that one of the strengths of our initiatives was the workshop format: meeting the same people every week allowed participants to get to know each other, establish relationships, and break down stereotypes associated with different cultures.” (UCEC and Tortosa City Council)*



## BRIDGES STORY

## Rap music workshop in Tortosa

Implementing partners: UCEC and Municipality of Tortosa

The production of an anti-racist RAP song was a project of BRIDGES in Tortosa. The workshop was interrupted due to the Covid 19 pandemic but was resumed immediately after opening at the end of June to finish recording the song written by the participants and to shoot a music video clip. It was a very successful project, and the participants were eager to finish the work they had started.

Anti-racism was the key message on which the participants wanted to build their song. A message that is common to them all. On an individual level, many participants said that the experience of being able to express themselves helped them to express feelings and sensations that they would not have been able to express otherwise.

*"We dedicated the first sessions to generating mutual support because all the participants came to Tortosa under different circumstances and for different reasons. We decided that this was essential, and we learned to express this before we started writing the lyrics of the rap song,"* explains Aidan, one of the workshop participants. We are all the same – whether black or white.

During the lockdown, the group remained in close contact and continued to practice and rehearse the song through a WhatsApp group. "I am a person, not an identity number," is the title of one line of the song. "The song has a message for everyone to show that we are all equal, whether a person is black or white. Discrimination has no place in our society," says Aidan. Another participant, Imad, explains that writing this song has helped the anti-racism message reach more people and make them aware that we are all equal and that we can all learn from each other.

The day before the video was filmed, the BRIDGES rappers recorded the song under the direction of Joel, who led the workshop and set up a temporary recording studio in the Centre Civic social centre in Tortosa so that everyone could sing the lyrics assigned to them. Both Aidan and Imad agree that taking part in the workshop helped them to learn to listen to other people and to put prejudices aside.



*"When you write a song about racism, you have to set a good example. The song offers a different view of society than the reality we face, and this can help us to improve things".*

Story from the [BRIDGES magazine](#) created and published by CSIT.



**4**  
cities

## BRIDGES IN numbers

**8**  
local  
networks



**26**  
codesign  
meetings



**500+**  
participants



*Designing activities together allowed us to overcome difficulties arising in the implementation phase, as well as to distribute tasks between different participants.*

**47**  
integration  
initiatives



**3000+**  
participants



**47**  
Stories



*Integration initiatives worked well because they were designed with organisations in touch with target groups and responded to specific needs.*

**2k**  
brochures



**111+**  
social media  
posts



For a comprehensive report of results and impact: [BRIDGES evaluation of integration practices](#)

**44**  
videos



**33k+**  
likes, shares  
and views

## BRIDGES STORY

## Assistance for vulnerable citizens

implementing partner: COSPE

“Parlamondo” is a service activated by COSPE to assist access to economic subsidies and various local support services, following the announcement by the Italian government of some emergency economic measures. COSPE thus supported vulnerable households affected by the closure of non-essential activities due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Parlamondo was set up following a specific needs assessment and implemented in cooperation with a number of local grassroots organizations and civil society organizations (Accoglienza Non Governativa, Comunità delle Piagge, Le Curandaie, etc.). It was run by volunteers providing information and practical assistance in the procedure for accessing the economic subsidies provided by the Italian Government (such as income support, rent subsidies, meal vouchers, etc.) and other various support services offered at grassroots and local level. To this end, a telephone number and e-mail have been activated both for civil society and grassroots organizations which have direct relations with the final beneficiaries, and for individuals and families.

The impact of the closure mainly affected low paid workers and workers in the informal sector, including young people and women, who are often in precarious or temporary jobs and have no access to support in case of loss of earnings. In this respect, migrants are particularly vulnerable due to language barriers, social isolation and poor living and working conditions, as well as the lack of legal, regulatory and practical barriers to access public services. Foreign families have great difficulty in understanding the requirements, content or modalities of access to government benefits. The services provided by COSPE usually included the translation of official guidelines and other important information related to the economic measures taken by the government. To this end, two mapping exercises have been carried out to collect the available information in relation to the services available. One in relation to the services available on the territory of Greater Florence to support families in need (such as information services, provision of shopping vouchers or food banks, etc.). Another in relation to the arrangements for allocating government economic subsidies intended for households and persons in economic difficulty. This activity responded concretely to the most urgent needs of migrants in a crisis and made it possible to establish a direct relationship between people who support each other. An important step towards strengthening community ties and solidarity.

Story from the [BRIDGES magazine](#) created and published by CSIT.

## in Florence

1125+  
participants

8  
codesign  
meetings

11  
integration  
initiatives



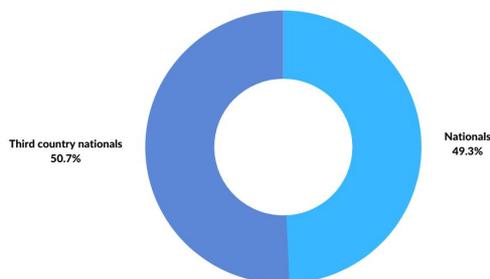
[Click to watch BRIDGES in Florence](#)

Photography class / Carnival Festival / Bike tours / Street art lab / Dances and games from around the world / Children summer camps / Aperimovie / Help with homeworks / Language courses



### Diversity

(nationalities engaged)



### Inclusion

(nationals /TCN ratio)



53% women / 47% men

### Gender Equality

(female /male ratio)



Under 18  
42,4%

19-39  
22%

40-55  
22,3%

56-64  
8,3%

65+  
5%

### Intergenerational dialogue

(engagement by age groups)

Implementing  
partners



## in Thessaloniki

478+  
participants

7  
codesign  
meetings

11  
integration  
initiatives

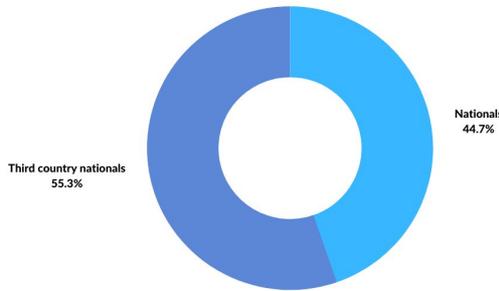


[Click to watch BRIDGES in Thessaloniki](#)

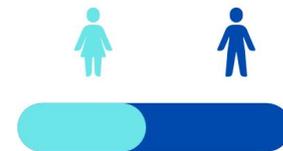
Football / Photography /  
Chess games / Language  
lessons / Online workshops /  
Cleaning the beach / Games /  
Online workout sessions / After  
school activities



**Diversity**  
(nationalities engaged)



**Inclusion**  
(nationals /TCN ratio)



**Gender Equality**  
(female /male ratio)



Under 18  
46,8%



18-39  
42,8%



40-55  
10,4%

**Intergenerational dialogue**  
(engagement by age groups)

## in Tortosa

537+ participants

6 codesign meetings

12 integration initiatives



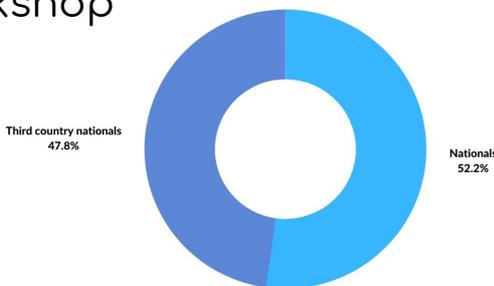
[Click to watch BRIDGES in Tortosa](#)

Futsal / Rowing on Ebro river + nordic walking / Climbing / Invertebrate animal study / Rap workshop / Summer camp volunteering / Cultural bike rides / Wall painting Plant native flora / Boat trip along the Ebro river / First AID workshop



### Diversity

(nationalities engaged)



### Inclusion

(nationals /TCN ratio)



45,3% women / 54,7% men

### Gender Equality

(female /male ratio)



Under 18  
62,4%



19-39  
30,2%



40-55  
6,8%



65+  
0,6%

### Intergenerational dialogue

(engagement by age groups)

# BRIDGES in Zagreb



928+  
participants

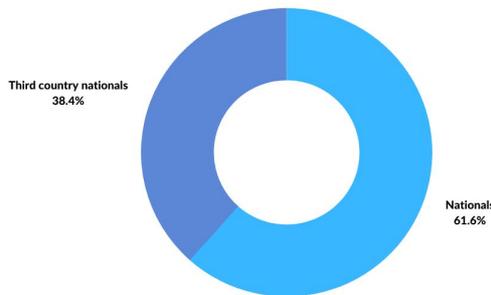
8  
codesign  
meetings

13  
integration  
initiatives



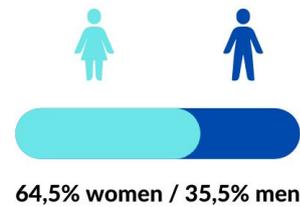
[Click to watch BRIDGES in Zagreb](#)

Football club/ African mask-making and West African dance/ Refugee week / Living atelier women collective / street city festival/ Home guests choir



**Inclusion**  
(nationals /TCN ratio)

**Diversity**  
(nationalities engaged)



**Gender Equality**  
(female /male ratio)



Under 18  
23,8%

18-39  
30,01%

40-55  
25,31%

56-64  
16,14%

65+  
4,65%

**Intergenerational dialogue**  
(engagement by age groups)

Implementing  
partner



# BRIDGES keywords

Keywords are words that serve as keys: they unlock doors and allow you to access new meanings, explore learnings and discover insights and new solutions. We collected BRIDGES keywords from project partners, as lessons-learned and “friendly advice” for those wishing to promote inclusive communities.

**CODESIGN** Codesign is at the core of our approach. We may use different terms, different methods and even different paths to get there, but at the heart of this kind of work is the shared understanding that project activities need to be designed together with the people you work for to address the actual needs of the communities you are aiming to have an impact on.

**COMMITMENT** It takes a lot of work and energy to implement this kind of project. If you focus only on what you see from the outside, the language class, the community party, the boat trip, it is beautiful and meaningful, but you will miss out on the process of organising, engaging, codesigning and reflecting that has led us there.

**COMMUNITY** A project like this is all about community building. At different stages of the project, communities have been created among the volunteers working together to implement the activities on the ground, among the local networks of organisations that have designed the activities, among different services and sectors of a municipality or of an institution that have found themselves working together to address complex challenges through a cross-sectoral approach.

**COMPANIONSHIP** Companionship is both a need and the substance of what we do: people want to spend time together and be human. It is not always about having something to do. Often it is just about keeping each other company.

**COMMUNICATION** Communication ultimately is about making visible how you can enrich a community and the whole city by creating and nurturing relations through taking part in a sporting event, drawing a mural, going on a boat trip on the river. Being present on social media allows others to see the importance of intercultural interactions, encourages people to get to know those that are unfamiliar and to collaborate to create a more diverse and rich city.

**EMPOWERMENT** The communities we try to reach are made vulnerable by the systems of inequality we live in. We cannot address inclusion and social cohesion without working on individual and collective empowerment.

**ENGAGEMENT** To enable everyone to play a role to change the community they live in, it is essential to start with what is already there (organisations, initiatives, groups), to develop the capacity of community organisers in your staff to reach out to them, and to adopt an engagement methodology that encourages cooperation to pursue common objectives and serve the community as a whole.





**EXTROVERSION** Whenever we reach out to people across personal, cultural and social boundaries, we are surprised in a very positive way. Doing it helps us realize how big the need is for communicating and that there is always room for more people to join in.

**FLEXIBILITY** You should always encourage a group or community to work on what really interests them, to have the freedom to choose what they really want to do. And you should design projects to ensure that your activities are not predetermined from the start but are codesigned with the communities you engage. A project should be an enabling infrastructure, not a cage.

**FUN** Never forget that to do it well, you need to enjoy what you are doing. A lot of what works has to do with having fun with your community. Playing together is an important part of what we did.

**HOPE** Breaking a situation of forced isolation, having something to look forward to and being part of a group was essential for everyone to deal with the impact of the pandemic. This was particularly true for newcomers from foreign countries. “I was going crazy, locked inside without a job and nothing to do” they told us before joining the activities.

**INCLUSION** Inclusion is also a matter of doing things together and of communicating. Learning together something such as the local language is crucial to really get in touch. Being able to express how we feel is empowering.

**INTERCULTURALITY** A project like this allows you to truly get in touch with other cultures, to understand our differences and similarities and to make apparent that embracing difference as a resource brings wealth and ultimately breaks stereotypes.

**NETWORKING** Networks are essential to maximise your efforts to serve the community with your project. It is essential to engage from the start local institutions and organisations (locals and TCN) to map needs and opportunities, and it is essential to bring them together to co-design, co-manage and co-evaluate activities that address common challenges and open space for future initiatives.

**RETHINK** A project like this requires constant talking, discussing, changing, evaluating, rethinking, collaborating. It is essential to factor in enough space to look at what we do, why we do it and how to improve it.

**SHARE** Sharing is a word that participants in our activities use often: sharing a space, sharing learnings from different cultures, sharing common experiences as inhabitants of the same city. It is through these shared moments that bonds of friendship are created among people that in different circumstances might have looked at each other with suspicion when crossing paths on the sidewalk.

**SOLIDARITY** Sometimes to express solidarity you just need to give people the chance to bring about their ideas and their active involvement in the community will come.



# BRIDGES HANDBOOK



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