



IN2PREV

Law enforcement and community cooperation
and training approach to prevent radicalisation
by ensuring refugees' successful inclusion

Preventive Mechanisms for LEAs' working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers:

A Practical Handbook of Collaborative and Cooperative Practices



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Revision Control

Version	Date	Comments
v1	16/07/2024	First version of the handbook was sent to partners' feedback.
v2	31/07/2024	Second version of the handbook, incorporating partners' feedback (including new good practices).

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Introduction

Rationale for the development of the handbook

This practical handbook was developed based on research done in the context of the IN2PREV project. This research includes an evaluation of current cooperative mechanisms in place, done using an online survey ($N = 30$), semi-structured interviews done with practitioners in Europe ($N = 21$), and desk research. The survey and interviews provided a hands-on perspective of practitioners' work in what concerns cooperation and collaboration mechanisms in place. The desk research was used to search for practices that were not identified by the practitioners and to strengthen the identified practices with data from empirical research. A total of 26 good practices were identified.

This handbook aims to contribute to IN2PREV's specific objective 1 - foster the cooperation and collaboration between public entities (e.g., Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs)), community organisations, and refugees and asylum seekers' representatives, and 5 - enhance competencies of frontline practitioners, such as LEAs and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (in order to guarantee the proper support to the individual to mitigate any initially screened vulnerability risk factors), to ensure a longitudinal and cross-sectoral intervention.

This handbook will be organised considering the mechanisms currently in place in European countries that aim to:

- i) prevent (and intervene in) conflicts that may occur amongst migrants and between migrants and citizens of the host country;
- ii) facilitate the interaction of LEAs with potential offenders and victims (from the general population or refugees/asylum seekers); and
- iii) enhance the communication/cooperation between LEAs and community organisations, civil society representatives, and the migrant community.

Thus, based on good practices identified during the desk research, survey and interviews, the current handbook shares the challenges and good practices identified, providing relevant material for the development of the training course foreseen in Activity 5.1.

The interviews that were done allowed the authors to identify several collaborative and cooperative practices and best practices, as well as some issues that arise and can be

improved. In general, cross-sectoral interventions targeting migrants have the following advantages:

- Improved **problem-solving** capabilities on issues related to migration and public safety;
- Improved **coordination, efficiency and resource optimization**, reducing the duplication of efforts;
- Enhanced **data and information sharing**, allowing a better identification of vulnerabilities and response to migration and public safety trends;
- Provide **tailored solutions** to the specific needs that affect the migrant population;
- Early **identification and prevention** of potential crisis;
- **Cohesion and trust** as a result of local and migrant communities' involvement and feedback;
- **Legal alignment** as a result of a comprehensive understanding by NGOs, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and migrant communities of legal aspects reducing potential conflicts that came from misunderstandings or lack of/poor legal advice.
- Involvement of international and transnational organisations in **international cooperation**, aligning the efforts of different organisation and institutions.

Before addressing the good practices that were identified, it is important to note that, in recent years, the number of immigrants increased in Europe. As stated by the United Nations Refugee Agency, the number of refugees went from 7 million at the end of 2021 to 12.4 million at the end of 2022 (UNHCR, n.d.). Those seeking asylum in EU countries surpassed one million just in 2023 (Eurostat, 2024). This population faces difficulties in their integration process, as it is visible in their access to the labour market where they are concentrated in lower skilled occupations. In the case of migrant women, their participation in the labour market is particularly low (Employment and Social Development in Europe, 2023). Other indicators include poverty and social exclusion (affects 45.5% of non-EU citizens), living in overcrowded homes, lower median income, and lower educational attainment. Only in self-perceived health their values are on par with when compared with EU citizens (Eurostat, n.d.).

Good practices identified

Conflict prevention amongst migrants and between communities

Conflicts between migrant communities, and specially between migrant and host communities are likely to occur and increase as immigration increases. Host communities tend to perceive immigration as a threat to status, well-being, and cultural identity (Martínez et al., 2017), since there is the perception that both communities (the autochthonous and the immigrant) are competing for the same (limited) resources, such as employment and social benefits (Martínez & García, 2018). Therefore, it is important to identify good practices that have worked as measures to prevent conflict amongst the migrant's community and the host country and migrant community.

Good practice 1: Frequent contact and activities involving LEAs and migrant communities.

The contact between LEAs and migrant communities is seen as a key practice to increase trust between them, and for community actors to recognise and trust police services. In the interview done by the project partners, a good practice was identified in Spain, where the Guardia Civil, a public security force, created the EDATI (Equipos de Atención al Migrante). These teams assist migrants in various ways, orienting and informing them about their rights, the activities that promote their integration and ensuring that they do not become victims of crime due to their special vulnerability. They operate in those areas of Spain with the highest volume of migrants employed in activities associated with primary economy. This good practice, identified in our analysis of practitioners' interviews, coincides with the literature. For example, Sandhu et al. (2013) state some practical implications regarding the mental health treatment of immigrants. The authors consider that working with local immigrant communities and other organisations will help in the engagement and development of trusting relationships between service providers and immigrant populations. A practical example is reported in the UNHCR and Migration Policy Group (2021) effective inclusion of refugees' handbook. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the vice-mayor of Oslo (Norway) had weekly virtual meeting with representatives of NGOs supporting vulnerable minorities. This example, with specific goals during a challenging time, can be replicated by LEAs'

representatives. In the Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force (LEITF) and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) report, it is stressed the importance of building relationships with trusty community leaders and attending community events showing that LEA personnel is available to the community. Therefore, we can state that contact between LEAs but also other entities from the host countries (e.g., health services, education services) with immigrant communities will help building trusting relationships and improve the inclusion of these populations.

Good practices 2: Inform migrants about their rights and procedures.

Having access to information is a right protected by international and regional instruments. Being informed about their rights and the procedures they need to follow in the host country is a step forward in ensuring the rights of refugees and asylum seeker communities. Providing information to migrants on their rights is decisive in multiple aspects, which include seeking medical and humanitarian services, and resolving legal aspects (e.g., filling asylum claims), but is also important to promote their empowerment, autonomy and ultimately their successful integration (European Network of National Human Rights Institutions, 2017).

Good practice 3: Use a procedurally just approach.

Procedural justice implies that a certain process is fair and understood as fair by the different parties. When working with refugees and asylum seekers, LEA practitioners can put procedural justice into practice through the implementation of four key principles: **voice** (give voice to refugees so they can tell their stories); **neutrality** (explain the reasons behind decisions and that authorities took decisions that are neutral and based on transparent principles); **respect** (make a conscious effort to be approachable and polite, so that the person understands that their issues are being taken seriously); and **trustworthy motives** (show that your motives are trustworthy, that you are sincere, and that you try to do what is right for everyone involved) (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2020).

Good practice 4: Train on and use of de-escalation techniques to minimise conflict during interactions.

Training on de-escalation has shown some evidence as a strategy to prevent, manage and reduce aggression, conflict, injuries, and violence. However, Engel et al.'s (2020) systematic

review found no studies testing the effect of this training in the criminal justice sector. More recent research by White et al. (2023), however, concluded that police officers that received de-escalation training were more likely to use procedural justice and de-escalation and leave citizens more satisfied with how they were treated and how the situation was resolved.

LEAs' interaction with potential offenders and victims

Law Enforcement Agencies work encompasses frequent interaction with potential victims and offenders from the general population or refugees/asylum seekers. When dealing with these populations, some soft skills are key to ensure the success of operations. The following practices were identified during our desk research and previous research:

Good practices 5: Adopt and implement clear communication procedures.

The college of policing in England and Wales recognises the importance of effective communication, in particular when dealing with victims and vulnerable individuals (College of Policing, 2021). Communication was recognised by practitioners as an important factor “when developing a relationship with the victim and encouraging the disclosure of abuse or harm” (College of Policing, 2021). While several practical examples are presented, we would highlight those that seem particularly relevant when dealing with refugees and asylum seekers, namely:

- Using plain language, adapted to the person and the situation: this implies avoiding jargon and slang, as well as paraphrasing, and check if the person understood the message.
- Employ active listening skills: pay attention to the message not only content wise but also in terms of form. Let the individual know that the message was received and well understood.
- Show empathy and compassion. Demonstrate interest using open questions to encourage conversation.
- Be aware of own and interlocutor body language.

Good practice 6: Recognise experiences of trauma among refugees and asylum seekers; Support officers training on a trauma-informed approach to interactions.

It is important that practitioners working with refugees and asylum seekers as well as those vulnerable to involvement in violent extremism follow a trauma-informed approach (Oberget et

al., 2023). We highlight the following key principles identified in our desk research (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 2023):

1. take a trauma lens (recognise trauma, its impact - at behavioural, cognitive and emotional level – and respond accordingly);
2. avoid re-traumatisation (through the recognition and awareness that services can create further traumatisation);
3. ensure safety of refugees and asylum seekers (to prevent harm and re-traumatisation through the creation of a supportive environment and ways of working that do not mirror past trauma);
4. strengths-based approach (promote individuals’ empowerment and strengths building);
5. build trust (needed to support positive relationships between officers and refugees/asylum seekers as service users);
6. cultural, historical, and gender contexts (the experience of trauma may vary between gender, culture, ethnic groups, developmental stage, among other factors that should be acknowledged by authorities working with refugees and asylum seekers).

Good practice 7: Promote cultural competence of LEAs officers.

Human resources professionals are key in developing policies and applying procedures to ensure cultural competence among LEAs’ officers (Fletcher, 2014). Cultural competence skills can be assessed during the recruitment phase and can also be later developed through training. As mentioned by an interviewee from Portugal, institutions are struggling to have new officers, in particular younger ones with a different perspective regarding cultural tolerance. Therefore, invest in recruitment might be a solution to promote cultural competence among LEAs. However, there is no guarantee that those with higher cultural competence will perform better in specific recruitment tests. Therefore, work should be done in the promotion of the current workforce cultural competence skills. In addition, “mentoring programmes that encourage people from diverse backgrounds to pursue a career in law enforcement” is also seen as a valid strategy to increase LEAs cultural competence (Fletcher, 2014, p. 35).

Communication/cooperation between LEAs and community organisations, civil society representatives, and the migrant community

Cooperating with others is a key principle when working with refugees and migrants. This allows practitioners from different organisations to learn from each other, avoiding overlap of services as well as leaving gaps (Ventevogel et al., 2015). Cooperation can occur between different agencies. In this handbook, considering our focus on LEAs, we will consider examples of cooperation between different LEAs, and between LEAs and NGOs, CSOs, migrant communities, policy makers, and other organisation (e.g., universities, trade unions, local health departments).

Cooperation between different LEAs

Good practices 8: Identification of individuals linked to terrorism, and victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

This practice was identified in an interview with a LEA representative from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through multi-sectoral cooperation and cooperation with international partners, this LEA was able to identify 5 individuals linked to terrorism. After the successful identification, they were separated from the refugee community and removed from the country. This action, as a results of cooperation between different LEAs, is of key importance to ensure safety of refugee communities, and society in general, and avoid the stigmatisation of refugees, which would likely occur in the case of terrorist attacks perpetrated by terrorists infiltrated in refugee communities. This example also illustrates the importance of actual cooperation and a culture of multi-disciplinary and multi-level cooperation, considered as key for the assessment of potential threats and as a basis of a counter-terrorism policy as stated in the EU Counter-Terrorism Agenda (European Commission, 2020), in particular in the first pillar (anticipate).

In addition, the cooperation between two LEAs (The Service for Foreigners' Affairs and the border police of Bosnia and Herzegovina) allowed the detention of the perpetrators of human trafficking and the protection of victims.

Good practice 9: Creation of special units specialised in informal contacts with migrant communities.

This good practice encompasses the creation of specialised units within LEA to face an issue identified in the previous research, that is, the limited communication with refugees. These units will promote a proximity approach where informal contacts with representatives from the refugee/asylum seeker community are seen as key to increase knowledge on the community and potential responses. This informal contact might also be beneficial when it comes to communicating with those that speak rare dialects and creating openness to the use of solutions such as videoconferencing and interpreters.

Good practice 10: Use of European Union Agency for Asylum¹ resources.

This good practice was mentioned during an interview with a LEA representative in Romania. In this case, working with a group of interpreters and with the support of the European Union Agency for Asylum, the LEA has 6 interpreters available 8h per day. This cooperation is key to facilitate the communication between practitioners and asylum seekers in situations where no common language exists. Access to interpreters via videoconferencing is also possible.

Cooperation between LEAs and NGOs

Good practice 11: Collaboration between LEAs and NGOs

The cooperation between LEAs and NGOs is key to ensure a proper response to several needs, including:

- 1) humanitarian support: NGOs can support in the provision of food and basic supplies to migrants that are not in detention centres;
- 2) intercultural assistance: NGOs can provide intercultural skills training to LEAs so officers can better assistance migrants;
- 3) assistance of undocumented migrants: assistance provided by LEAs in these cases is often limited and can thus be complemented by NGOs.

¹ <https://euaa.europa.eu/>

- 4) staff training: LEAs and NGOs can assist each other providing training in their key areas.

In what concerns the training that can be provided to LEAs officers as a result of this cooperation, it is important to note that recent research found that officers themselves (from New Zealand Community Police) “identified a serious need for cultural training and refugee background knowledge” (Tohill, 2021, p.17) since the current knowledge they have was self-sourced. This is in line with a statement from a practitioner interviewed in the IN2PREV project, saying that no multiculturalism or cultural competency training is available. As a result, collaboration between LEAs and NGOs can include an agreement on bilateral training provision. That is, NGOs can provide training to LEAs officers (for example, on cultural competencies), and trainers from LEAs can provide training to NGOs representatives (for example, on legal frameworks).

Good practices 12: Organisation of “passing over” meetings between LEAs and NGOs.

These “passing over” meetings can be organised between LEAs and NGOs to ensure long-term successful inclusion. The idea behind these meetings is that the LEA shares refugee-related information with the NGO or other organisation that is about to support the person in a new place or after an initial amount of time under the support of the LEA, avoiding another evaluation process.

Cooperation between LEAs and CSOs

Good practice 13: Involve human rights organisations in intersectoral interventions targeting refugees and asylum seekers.

The main advantage of this practice is the possibility to monitor and ensure human rights (e.g., right to a fair trial; access to essential services) among refugees and asylum seekers.

Cooperation between LEAs and Migrant Communities

Good practice 14: Presence of translators in the contacts established between LEAs and migrant communities.

The presence of translators or the use of interpretation services is seen as a good practice to overcome communication barriers. This good practice identified in the interviews is in line with a previous report by the LEITF and the PERF. In the report, three main strategies to overcome language barriers are mentioned:

- 1) the use of machine translation services, such as Google Translate, that allow officers to communicate more efficiently with community members that do not speak the local language (in this case, English);
- 2) use of over-the-phone interpretation services, such as LanguageLine that offers 24/7 interpretation services in more than 240 languages;
- 3) hiring bilingual officers and/or support costs associated with training in new language.

Good practice 15: Increase communication with migrant communities to clarify immigration policies of the host country and solutions to migrants' needs.

Improve and increase the communication between LEAs and migrant communities is key to solve an issue identified in the previous research, that is, tensions or misunderstandings between LEAs and migrant communities due to immigration policies.

Good practice 16: Promotion of a community policing approach.

Investing in community policing activities seems to bring several advantages, such as strengthening the population's sense of civic engagement (The International Organization for Migration, 2023). In one of the interviews done in IN2PREV project, the example of the Malta police force, with the heavy investment in community police teams was highlighted as an approach that made a difference. In fact, current research states that when Police is seen as a tool for justice, true collaboration and relationship building with migrant communities may be compromised (Tohill, 2021). However, when (community) police officer engage with community groups and participate in community activities – and, in particular, when they are out of uniform - opportunities are built for personal connections and for refugees' communities to see officers beyond their law enforcement role (Tohill, 2021).

Cooperation between LEAs and policy makers

Good practice 17: Promotion of knowledge exchange meetings between LEAs and policy makers.

Considering the restructuring of an Immigration and Border Service as an example, a practitioner shared this good practice. During the restructuring of the service, meetings, conferences, and seminars were organized between LEAs, policy makers, and other stakeholders, to leverage knowledge and experience sharing in an attempt to innovate with the new service and suppress existing problems and gaps. The communication and cooperation between LEAs and policy makers in what concerns refugees and asylum seekers is also important considering that they operate at different stages and with different roles. While policy makers may suffer the pressure from citizens' demands to admit more refugees or to refuse their admission (Gerver, 2021), LEAs officers can share a different, frontline perspective, on the challenges of immigration and borders services' teams on managing refugees and asylum seekers.

Cooperation between LEAs and other organisations

Good practice 18: Collaboration between LEAs and local health departments.

An example shared by an interviewee was the better protection of LEA officers considering the health issues of migrants (e.g., poor hygiene and communicable diseases) that arrived at the host/transit country in an extremely fragile health state. In addition, the collaboration between the LEA and the local health departments also allowed the training of LEA officers on first aid, which is an essential skill for LEA officers to have so they can provide immediate response to safeguard refugees' health.

An example of collaboration between LEAs and other organisations is presented in a WHO (2023) report. Namely, in Moldova, the General Inspectorate of Boarder Police worked together with the National Tuberculosis Programme, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Interior, to increase their understanding of tuberculosis infection, in particular among women migrants. In this project, educational materials were developed and placed in strategic points (e.g., airports, border crossing points), and also broadcasted on TV and radio to raise awareness among migrant women on the symptoms of this communicable disease and available support.

Good practice 19: Collaboration between LEAs and trade unions

This good practice was identified in our previous research. An interviewee mentioned that in an investigation of foreign workers' sexual abuse, collaboration between LEAs and a trade union was key to the identification of perpetrators, who were later arrested and sentenced. Published research also mentions the role of trade unions as facilitators of the integration process in French society (Duprez, 2009). Therefore, collaboration between LEAs and trade unions is important in several domains such as police investigations in cases of foreign workers exploitation, but also to protect these workers' rights and promote their integration in the labour market and in societies.

Good practice 20: Collaboration between LEAs and education, healthcare and social services' representatives.

This collaboration was seen by practitioners as an important aspect to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers' rights are protected. A practitioner from Portugal stated that when someone seeks asylum, representatives from the education, healthcare, and social services are the ones that implement the legal framework. These organisations, together with NGOs and CSOs, can provide social allowances (e.g., rent, food, job seeking support, training courses) and involve refugees in education (e.g., language courses), promoting their integration.

Good practice 21: Collaboration between LEAs, Universities, and NGOs.

This good practice is illustrated by a project in Spain, in the province of Cordoba. A LEA, together with a local NGO and the University of Cordoba worked together on a socio educational intervention project targeting unaccompanied foreign minors. During the implementation of the project, almost 1000 files were analysed to gain knowledge on the profile of the unaccompanied minors, their socio educational inclusion and their transition to adulthood. According to the interviewee, the project gave visibility to these minors and helped breaking stereotypes.

Good practice 22: Establishment of cross-sectoral teams.

The importance of creating cross-sectoral teams was highlighted by an interviewee from Malta. This practitioner stated that when problems related to migrants are identified, a team

composed of community leaders, police, town officials, and Ministry of Home Affairs representatives' is established to identify the problem and plan the needed actions to solve the issue in a preventative manner. This representatives from different sectors are brought together to create a safe space before action is taken by the LEA (if needed).

Other themes

The analysis of our desk research materials, survey results, and interviews, led to the signalling of other important themes and consequently to the creation of this additional section.

Good practice 23: Tackling hate crime towards refugees and asylum seekers.

Refugees and asylum seekers can be disproportionately affected by hate crimes (Van Kesteren, 2016), in particular when the large refugee inflows are combined with anti-refugee sentiment from the local population (Entorf & Lange, 2023). In order to protect people from hate crimes, the Guardia Civil, a public security force in Spain, implemented a hate crime response measure called REDO (Hate Crime Response) teams. The main responsibilities of these teams include: monitoring of hate behaviour; advice, guidance and supervision of other units of the Guardia Civil for possible hate incidents; investigation of reported incidents and complaints in order to provide a rapid response; training of Guardia Civil officers, and actions to raise awareness in society and dialogue with actors from vulnerable groups.

Good practice 24: Promote joint training of NGOs and LEAs professionals.

This good practice identified by an interviewee aims to reduce prejudice among NGOs working with migrants towards police forces. Through joint training, these professional from NGOs and LEAs, that play a complementary role in assisting refugees and asylum seekers, may know each other well and reinforce personal relationships.

Good practice 25: Provide introduction programmes to immigrants.

Available research in Nordic countries shows that workplace introduction programmes that are available to immigrants promote a transition from unemployment to work experience (Djuve & Kavli, 2019). These programmes can include language training, formal education, counselling, financial support, and active labour market programmes (e.g., supporting on-the-job training). In what concerns language training, the good practices identified are in line with current research. Tip et al. (2019) did longitudinal research in the U.K., showing that knowledge of the language increases contact with the host country population, which in turn contributes to increased well-being. The mere contact with the host country population was

not a predictor of language proficiency. Therefore, we can conclude that the involvement of refugees in education, and particularly in language courses, is key to promote refugees' integration, well-being and mental health. Thus, it is important that governments fund language courses to refugees, even if they are employed, since there is no guarantee that by being employed the person is in contact with the host country population and has proficiency in the language of the host country.

Good practice 26: Reduce caseworkers' workload.

Aiming to offer a personalised counselling experience in particular areas such as job-seeking, Djuve and Kavli (2019) argue that having less cases will help caseworkers performing their role as counsellors.

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Law enforcement and community cooperation and training approach to prevent radicalisation by ensuring refugees' successful inclusion

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