
BREAKING NEW GROUND

TEN IDEAS TO REVAMP INTEGRATION POLICY IN EUROPE

Integration Futures Working Group



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For more on the Integration Futures Working Group, visit: www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/integration-futures-working-group.

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CONTENTS

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY1**

- I. INTRODUCTION.....3**

- II. TEN IDEAS TO REVAMP INTEGRATION POLICY4**
 - 1. Encourage immigrant integration from the ground up..... 4*
 - 2. Help workers adapt to labour-market change 6*
 - 3. Rethink social protection systems to support workers in the gig economy 7*
 - 4. Think more creatively about how newcomers can contribute 8*
 - 5. Educate the citizens of tomorrow 9*
 - 6. Use technology to help bridge education gaps 11*
 - 7. Helping everyone build the skills to live in superdiverse societies..... 12*
 - 8. Explore ways to ‘nudge’ social cohesion..... 14*
 - 9. Teach common values with carrots, not sticks 15*
 - 10. Create a space for difficult conversations on immigration and integration .. 17*

- III.CONCLUSION: INJECTING INNOVATION INTO
INTEGRATION POLICY..... 19**

- WORKS CITED 20**

- ABOUT THE AUTHORS 24**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

European policymakers have long used the term ‘immigration integration’ to describe the mutual adaptation of newcomers and receiving communities. This has traditionally been conceptualised as a two-way process, but it is fast becoming clear that more multifaceted dynamics are at play. Numerous social challenges intersect with—but extend much further than—integration, complicating questions about how to support newcomers as they settle in to European societies. Support for nativist populist movements and political polarisation are on the rise at a time when governments are grappling with the impact of large-scale spontaneous migration for community cohesion as well as flagging public trust in politicians and the media. Automation, digitisation, and artificial intelligence are reshaping European labour markets and displacing low- and middle-skilled workers, making it even more challenging for many newcomers to find work as their skills are out of sync with the evolving demands of local employers. And schools are facing the challenge of educating increasingly diverse future citizens for a world of intense social, economic, and cultural change.

Governments must ensure that public services are universally adapted to diversity of all kinds.

Integration solutions must be equally far-reaching and take account of these broader shifts. For instance, in addition to providing newly arrived immigrants with guidance on what it means to be a member of their new society, European countries must engage in deeper conversations about the nature of identity and belonging in a changing world—and how and to what extent newcomers and long-standing residents adapt to each other’s values. Integration policymakers must work with their counterparts in employment and education policy to ensure that mainstream services are equipped to help career-changers of all kinds, not just newly arrived immigrants. And instead of simply supporting integration programmes within schools, hospitals, and libraries in areas with a concentration of migrant-background residents, governments must ensure that public services are universally adapted to diversity of all kinds.

To craft an ambitious, far-reaching approach to integration, policymakers will need to import the smartest ideas from other policy portfolios and begin to speak and think differently about what constitutes successful integration. These opportunities were explored as part of the Migration Policy Institute Europe’s multiyear Integration Futures project, including at working group meetings and a series of related reports. The most promising ideas include:

- 1. Build partnerships to further a collaborative approach to integration.** In recent years, a host of new actors—from tech start-ups to volunteer organisations—have shown an eagerness to engage on refugee and immigrant integration issues. This has injected new energy and perspectives into integration debates, but led to mixed results as some initiatives prove unsustainable. To capitalise on this expanded set of integration stakeholders, governments need to pursue lasting partnerships. These could take the form of social impact bonds (a financing tool that encourages innovation in public services) or new approaches to corporate social responsibility. Involving communities in designing and delivering integration services can also help them feel they have a stake in receiving and settling newcomers.
- 2. Support all workers in gaining the skills to navigate changing labour markets.** Workers displaced by technology share a number of support needs with newly arrived immigrants seeking work in an unfamiliar context, notably the need to have their credentials recognised and to retrain for local jobs. As a result, broader reforms to employment systems to address these needs could benefit everyone. For instance, public employment services could be upgraded to offer tailored, forward-looking advice about which occupations will see future growth instead of focusing on which jobs exist at the present moment.

- 3. Rethink social protection systems to support workers in the gig economy.** The flexibility of work in the gig economy can create a speedy pathway to self-sufficiency for newcomers. But these forms of work are often more precarious and offer fewer opportunities for advancement. These workers need support to maintain a reliable income, access health insurance, and receive training to reduce the risk of social exclusion, economic marginalisation, and exploitation.
- 4. Think more creatively about how newcomers can contribute to society.** Not all newcomers will realistically be able to find work in Europe’s high-skilled knowledge economies. But there are other ways to help them develop social ties and self-esteem, including volunteering and community service—avenues that could also offer significant value for receiving communities. To work, these initiatives need to be embedded into mainstream integration programming instead of treated as a back-up option that kicks in only when labour-market integration ‘fails’.
- 5. Expand the remit of civic education to nurture the citizens of tomorrow.** Civic education can nurture a sense of shared identity in diverse societies, but the devil is in the detail: instruction that focuses on historical events and government systems is unlikely to motivate students to be engaged citizens, while learning about societal values that diverge from students’ lived experience can seem disingenuous (e.g., learning about equality while experiencing regular discrimination). Civic education should encourage dialogue and debate, and acknowledge when societies do not live up to their ideals.
- 6. Employ education technology smartly to help bridge gaps and amplify strengths.** More than three years after the onset of the 2015–16 European migration crisis, education systems are still struggling to expand school places to meet rising needs and to equip teachers to serve more diverse student populations. While critical structural reforms, such as ensuring all teachers are trained to support multilingual classrooms, take time, technology could be used to address pressing needs in the meantime—for instance, by allowing students more flexibility to set their own pace, access language supports unavailable in the mainstream classroom, or engage in more independent learning.
- 7. Help everyone develop the skills they need to live in superdiverse societies.** Traditional integration policy is orientated towards outcomes, but thinking about integration as a set of skills that everyone should constantly be working to refine could help all members of a society live amidst superdiversity and weather change. These include so-called 21st-century skills such as grit and resilience, alongside emotional intelligence and the ability to work together in a group to solve common problems. New innovations in social policy are also exploring the possibility of teaching skills to reduce prejudice and promote empathy.
- 8. Experiment with ‘nudging’ integration and social cohesion.** Behavioural insights—an interdisciplinary approach to policymaking based on psychology, behavioural economics, and other research disciplines—recommend small changes, initially as part of a pilot, that can have a big impact at scale. This approach has been used to increase the representation of minorities in public services, reduce aspirational barriers among university applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds, and motivate jobseekers to look for work.
- 9. Use carrots, not sticks, to teach common values.** Educating newcomers on what it means to play by the rules of liberal democratic societies can help boost their sense of belonging and preserve core institutions, from the rule of law to the welfare system. But heavy-handed policies to teach values, especially where these are accompanied by restrictions to minority cultural practices seen as contravening national values, can easily backfire. Given that values are constantly evolving, conversations about them should form part of a dynamic community-building process that all can join.
- 10. Create space for difficult conversations on immigration and integration.** Governments need to open and sustain constructive conversations on the future of society—and the role of immigration within it. To a certain extent, conflict is a natural part of the integration process, so governments

should not shy away from debates and from letting members of the public express their concerns. However, they walk a fine line when it comes to understanding when to acknowledge clashes and how to do so without further inflaming them.

The toolbox available to integration policymakers has expanded. Governments can benefit from a plethora of new approaches—for instance, strategies to plan for challenges around the corner, bring in private funding, understand the social value of their investments, and create a whole-of-government approach to integration policy. But to take advantage of these innovations, policymakers need a shift in mindset and greater peer-to-peer learning. While the task facing them may seem immense, some of the most promising solutions could have positive spillover effects for not only immigrants but entire communities. Efforts to strengthen public services to meet the needs of all users, not just ‘average’ ones, will ensure that these services are resistant to the pressures of demographic, social, and economic change for the years to come.

I. INTRODUCTION

Increased spontaneous migration to Europe from 2015 onwards cast both new and existing integration challenges into the spotlight. Among these are a lack of preparedness in communities unused to receiving immigrants and refugees; poorly funded integration programmes, many of which suffered budget cuts in response to the economic crisis that began in 2007; and existing deficiencies among mainstream services. These pressures were felt especially keenly by areas experiencing a sluggish economic recovery, and those that have only recently begun to think about how to adjust public services to meet the needs of diverse populations.

It may be more helpful to view integration not as a linear process of inserting people with an immigrant background into a host society, but as a dynamic and continuous process of creating links between multiple, complex moving parts.

But the 2015–16 European refugee and migration crisis also fed into more seismic social shifts, including dramatic political polarisation and demographic, social, and economic changes. European populations are aging rapidly, putting pressure on health-care and social-security systems. Economic inequalities are widening in many countries, and jobs are becoming more fragmented. Many routine positions are at risk of disappearing due to automation and digitisation. Meanwhile, middle- and high-skilled jobs are becoming more flexible as traditional employer-employee relationships become less common. And growing support for populist and nonmainstream parties is fragmenting the political landscape, in some places reflecting deep public distrust of governments’ ability to manage immigration and related social changes.

As societies become more diverse linguistically, culturally, and economically, successful immigrant integration is a moving target. The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union, adopted in 2004, define integration as a two-way process through which newcomers and their new communities adjust to one another.¹ This definition now seems somewhat simplistic. Newcomers are heterogeneous in their characteristics and needs, and host societies are hardly harmonious monoliths. There is often little agreement over how and how much each group should adjust. As European societies are undergoing dramatic changes, it may be more helpful to view integration not as a linear process of inserting people with an immigrant background into a host society, but as a dynamic and continuous process of creating links between multiple, complex moving parts.

¹ Council of the European Union, ‘Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union’ (press release, 19 November 2004), <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/common-basic-principles-for-immigrant-integration-policy-in-the-eu>.

Between October 2016 and June 2018, integration policymakers from across Europe, along with subject matter experts, private-sector representatives, social enterprises, and civil society, gathered for eight Integration Futures Working Group meetings, organised by the Migration Policy Institute Europe. At these meetings, stakeholders discussed the future of integration policy in Europe. Though it would be impossible to capture the wealth of insights and bright ideas that blossomed out of these meetings and other associated events and publications, this report highlights the top ten promising ideas in integration policy that could help move the field forward.

II. TEN IDEAS TO REVAMP INTEGRATION POLICY

In seeking to address the integration and social cohesion challenges of the next decade, European policymakers will need to broaden the tools and strategies they use to solve them. To move these ideas forward, integration policymakers will need to be creative and ambitious, working with numerous actors within and outside government to deliver more than their often-tight budgets might otherwise allow. They will also need to equip ordinary citizens with the tools, knowledge, and support to weather change and uncertainty—social, economic, cultural, and political—and to play a meaningful role in crafting a new and inclusive language of togetherness.

1. *Encourage immigrant integration from the ground up*

In recent years, numerous new actors have become interested in the project of refugee and immigrant integration, from social enterprises and tech start-ups to large private companies.² Volunteering also reached a peak during the European migration crisis in places like Germany.³ This engagement has been a mixed blessing, with integration policymakers gaining access to diverse perspectives and new resources, but also forced to manage more complex partnerships amid an expanded array of stakeholders, not all of whom understand or share their commitment to ethics, data privacy, and security.⁴ If policymakers can strengthen their ability to manage these partnerships—and mitigate the risks—it could help receiving communities feel they have both a stake and a say in the integration process.

Involving communities and businesses in supporting newcomers can bring in new perspectives and give them a stake in integration at a time when public confidence is low.

One especially promising tool is community-based programming. In Canada, community sponsorship of refugees—a model that enlists individuals or community groups to support refugees financially after arrival and help them arrange housing, training, and job support—has long been used to get community buy-in for

2 This section draws on participant discussion during the ‘Rethinking Integration Governance: Leadership and Skills to Manage Complex Integration Portfolios’ meeting of the Integration Futures Working Group, organised by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI Europe) and hosted by the Swedish Permanent Representation to the European Union, Brussels, 5 March 2018.

3 Almost half the population was engaged in supporting refugees. See Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung (GfK) and Deutscher Spendenrat e.V., ‘Bilanz des Helfens 2016’ (presentation, GfK, Berlin, 1 March 2016), www.spendenrat.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Bilanz_des_Helfens_2016.pdf.

4 Meghan Benton and Alex Glennie, *Digital Humanitarianism: How Tech Entrepreneurs Are Supporting Refugee Integration* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/digital-humanitarianism-how-tech-entrepreneurs-are-supporting-refugee-integration.

refugee resettlement. Other countries have experimented with elements of this model, such as the United Kingdom, which matches refugees with community groups who assume responsibility for aspects of their integration and support.⁵ And elsewhere in Europe, house shares, such as those organised through the platforms Refugees Welcome and Comme à la Maison (CALM) match people with refugee housemates to build social ties and help newcomers settle in.⁶ Interest in these initiatives waned as the number of asylum seekers arriving in Europe fell, but with government backing they could realise their promise as both more personal and often more cost-effective alternatives to government services.

Involving new actors in social policy does not always solve problems, but it can provide new perspectives on them. While the wave of tech start-ups that emerged in the wake of the 2015–16 migration crisis came with great ideas, most initiatives failed to get off the ground. For instance, numerous tech companies designed ‘one-stop apps’ to help newcomers navigate services by consolidating information in one place and making it available in multiple languages. Yet the sheer proliferation of similar initiatives and the fact that they were not systematically updated undermined their goal of becoming the go-to guide, and in some cases left vulnerable newcomers reliant on out-of-date information.⁷ However, even in their failure, they cast important light on a noteworthy problem: the difficulties asylum seekers and other migrants face in accessing accurate information. Some governments have responded by making their websites easier to use and available in multiple formats and languages.⁸ Thus, policymakers can benefit from applying more minds to problem-solving, even if the new players don’t on their own solve the problem.

One promising opportunity for governments is in bringing together companies at the city level to encourage them to pool a portion of their corporate social responsibility budgets and invest in projects that are of strategic local importance.

To deliver greater impact and realise the multiplier effects of partnerships, governments will need to pursue more sustainable and effective forms of collaboration. Since 2015, many more businesses have sought to be involved in refugee issues, including through offering gifts in kind (from Airbnb rooms to access to Coursera learning services⁹). But companies are often unsure of how to have impact, and their investments can end up being somewhat tokenistic. One promising opportunity for governments is in bringing together companies at the city level to encourage them to pool a portion of their corporate social responsibility budgets and invest in projects that are of strategic local importance, including refugee integration. This approach is being trialled by the City of Bristol in the United Kingdom.¹⁰

Finally, policymakers could explore the potential of more strategic funding partnerships, such as social impact bonds. These partnership models bring together nonprofits to provide services, private companies to provide investment, independent evaluators to track whether programmes have achieved their goals, and government—which only pays if certain outcomes are achieved. This model takes the risk out of investing in preventative policies, such as helping refugees retrain for high-growth occupations, for which policymakers can find it diffi-

5 For a discussion of the different models, see Susan Fratzke, *Engaging Communities in Refugee Protection: The Potential of Private Sponsorship in Europe* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2017), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/engaging-communities-refugee-protection-potential-private-sponsorship-europe.

6 Benton and Glennie, *Digital Humanitarianism*.

7 Ibid.

8 For instance, Recognition in Germany, the German government’s credential recognition portal, is available in 11 languages. See German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, ‘Recognition in Germany’, accessed 13 January 2019, www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/.

9 Airbnb, ‘Open Homes’, accessed 15 January 2019, www.airbnb.com/openhomes; Coursera, ‘Coursera for Refugees’, accessed 15 January 2019, www.coursera.org/refugees.

10 Susan Fratzke, MPI Policy Analyst, interview with Ed Rowberry, Chief Executive, Bristol and Bath Regional Capital CIC, 12 April 2017.

cult to attract the necessary political and financial capital.¹¹ A collaborative approach to integration could thus deliver critical services at a lower price point, all while engaging communities at a time when migration-related issues have become highly divisive.

2. Help workers adapt to labour-market change

Newly arrived immigrants often struggle to use their existing skills and experience, and many face the prospect of either retraining from scratch or ending up un- or underemployed.¹² In some respects, this mirrors the challenge faced by other career-changers who find that their skills do not match the jobs on offer—whether a veteran transitioning to civilian life, or an experienced manufacturing worker looking to move into the digital health industry. Both groups need help translating their skills and experience for new opportunities. Reforms to education and training systems to help jobseekers retrain for high-skilled jobs will benefit everyone, not just newly arrived migrants.

Public employment services could play a greater role in helping newcomers and other workers displaced by technology, but to do so, they need to be more ambitious in scope.

The first challenge will be improving the recognition of credentials. Innovations that are tested to help immigrants gain recognition for degrees and experience earned in another country could be scaled to help recognise skills across borders of all kinds: occupational, sectoral, and geographical. For instance, in Germany, the Federal Employment Agency is developing computer-based competence tests for 30 professions, in close cooperation with industry experts.¹³ But broader adaptations are also essential. A renewed role for public employment services—which are currently orientated towards administering benefits or slotting people into low-skilled jobs—could see them offering bespoke intensive advice on retraining for growth opportunities to jobseekers of all skill levels. Given high levels of animosity towards migrants, adaptations that benefit everyone, not just newcomers, could prevent such programmes from fuelling public resentment on integration spending.

People out of work will also need to quickly retrain for local jobs. There is resistance in some European countries to ‘fast-track’ alternatives that help people train more rapidly for certain occupations than is possible through traditional education pathways, because it is seen as diluting training quality. But these fast-track schemes have gained significant traction in Sweden, where they are being used for in-demand jobs such as butchers and chefs, in part because of buy-in from social partners and unions.¹⁴ An alternative way to win over key stakeholders is to make them competitive; in the United Kingdom, programmes to rapidly train high-flying graduates for public sector roles such as the police, teaching, and social work attract prestige.¹⁵ Similarly, fast-track coding schools, such as those pioneered in Germany,

11 Meghan Benton and Alexandra Embiricos, *Doing More with Less: A New Toolkit for Integration Policy* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2019), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/toolkit-integration-policy.

12 This section draws on Meghan Benton and Liam Patuzzi, *Jobs in 2028: How Will Changing Labour Markets Affect Immigrant Integration in Europe?* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2018), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/jobs-2028-changing-labour-markets-immigrant-integration-europe; participant discussion during the ‘Economic and Social Integration in a Changing World of Work’ meeting of the Integration Futures Working Group, organised by MPI Europe and hosted by La Caixa Foundation, Barcelona, 18 September 2017.

13 European Commission, ‘MYSKILLS – Recognising Professional Competencies’ (fact sheet, European Commission, Brussels, September 2017), <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18693&langId=en>.

14 Government Offices of Sweden, ‘Fast Track – A Quicker Introduction of Newly Arrived Immigrants’, updated 10 June 2016, www.government.se/articles/2015/12/fast-track--a-quicker-introduction-of-newly-arrived-immigrants/.

15 These UK programmes have not targeted immigrant graduates specifically, but they are a promising model that could be adapted to other contexts and populations. See Caoimhe Udom, ‘The Role of Graduate Programmes in Transforming Public Services’, Institute for Government, 31 May 2016, www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/role-graduate-programmes-transforming-public-services.

could offer considerable potential in a booming industry if they can be scaled.¹⁶ The most promising models go beyond teaching technical competences to address the holistic needs of participants, from creating opportunities to build a professional networking to shedding light on the hidden social norms of local labour markets.

Where there is a mismatch between where jobs are available and where jobseekers live, encouraging internal mobility could benefit both employers and individuals looking for work. The Austrian government has partnered with business chambers and the public employment service to run Project B Mobile, which trains young refugees in Vienna and then sends them to regions where there are skills shortages to complete apprenticeships as bricklayers and chefs.¹⁷ Tapping into migrants' and refugees' willingness to move for work could help lubricate static labour markets in countries where many workers prefer to stay put.

In the future, more and more workers face the prospect of becoming career-changers at some point, and adaptation will be the key to labour-market access. Employment and integration policymakers should act now to ensure that all workers are equipped for these changes.

3. Rethink social protection systems to support workers in the gig economy

Immigrants are overrepresented in precarious work and in the short-term jobs embodied by the 'gig economy'. While flexible jobs can offer a crucial fast-track to self-sufficiency, they can also hold workers back over the long term if workers have no pathways to advancement. Instead of over-regulating these jobs, governments should focus on helping all freelance workers upgrade their skills, plan for retirement, and protect themselves against the unexpected. Tech companies should be key partners in this regard.¹⁸

Governments need to work with tech companies and others to ensure the gig economy remains a valuable lifeline to migrants without setting them on a permanent path of precarious work.

While flexible jobs can offer a crucial fast-track to self-sufficiency, they can also hold workers back over the long term if workers have no pathways to advancement.

Gig-economy jobs can be a boon for new arrivals. With no traditional employer to impress, language barriers to overcome, or costly labour regulations to navigate, driving for a ride-sharing company or delivering takeaway food through a digital platform can help newcomers gain self-sufficiency—a process usually littered with obstacles. Gig jobs can also be slotted around other commitments, including education or caring for family members. But this flexibility is a double-edged sword. Earnings from freelance work are erratic and unpredictable, and workers are unprotected against time out of work, whether for sickness, pregnancy, or other reasons. Opportunities for upward progression are also limited, and 'employers'—in this case, large tech companies—have almost zero incentive to offer training or help workers save for retirement. As a result, there may be significant social costs to having newcomers rely

¹⁶ Ben Mason, *Tech Jobs for Refugees: Assessing the Potential of Coding Schools for Refugee Integration in Germany* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2018), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/tech-jobs-coding-schools-refugee-integration-germany.

¹⁷ Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, 'b.mobile—Fachkräftepotenzial nutzen' (fact sheet, June 2017), www.wko.at/site/fachkraeftepotenzial/b.mobile-Deutsch-06.2017.pdf.

¹⁸ This section draws from Benton and Patuzzi, *Jobs in 2028*; participant discussion during the 'Economic and Social Integration in a Changing World of Work' meeting.

on these jobs, namely their increased risk of poverty, more limited changes to learn the host-country language, and greater risk of isolation as these workers almost always work alone.

European countries could do much more to protect workers in untraditional employment situations. Several countries are considering strengthening worker protections so that self-employed gig workers become eligible for contracts after a certain length of time with a company, or by extending benefit entitlements to ‘contingent’ workers.¹⁹ They could provide all residents, including self-employed workers and those in between positions, with access to health-care, maternity, old-age, and work-based accident coverage. Or they could offer an unconditional basic income, taking the risk out of untraditional pursuits. Both options would be costly. A cheaper approach could see policymakers adapt efforts to support flexible workers in purchasing health, dental, life, disability, and liability insurance or in maintaining a steady income, as done by the service SMart EU in Belgium and several other EU countries.²⁰

Alternatively, they could engage the support of the major winners of these labour-market shifts: tech companies. Some of these firms are already showing interest in worker training and refugee integration. For instance, the ride-sharing platform, Lyft, announced in 2017 that it was working with the education company Guild to offer drivers access to tuition assistance and financial aid.²¹ Tech firms could be enlisted to offer financial inclusion training, advice on immigration and housing issues, or insurance options to protect drivers against illness and income variation. All of this would be cheaper for these tech firms than labour regulations, which are currently being contemplated by many national and local governments that have antagonistic relationships with these firms, and would help make gig work as a smoother pathway to self-sufficiency and long-term integration for newcomers.

4. Think more creatively about how newcomers can contribute

Integration policies rightly focus on work as the quickest way for newcomers to support their families, create value for receiving communities, and build social ties. But many vulnerable migrants and refugees, including those who arrive with mental-health problems and/or have experienced trauma, are unlikely to find work quickly. It is important that they are supported in finding alternative ways to participate, for instance through volunteering and community service. The best programmes help participants build networks and reduce social isolation, and create positive incentives to participate rather than threatening loss of benefits for those who do not.

Not all newcomers will be able to find jobs quickly; initiatives that allow them to engage with and contribute to society through other means should become core programming, not an afterthought.

Volunteering has long been used as an integration tool to help newcomers without experience working in the host country create professional networks. For instance, Sweden has extensive subsidised work experience programmes. More recently, Austria adopted the *Integration Year Act*, which requires out-of-

19 Most recently, the United Kingdom. See Pippa Crerar, ‘Gig Economy Workers’ Rights to Be Given Boost in Overhaul’, *The Guardian*, 8 November 2018, www.theguardian.com/business/2018/nov/08/gig-economy-workers-rights-to-be-given-boost-in-overhaul.

20 SMart EU now has 90,000 members in Belgium (and more in another eight European countries). This social enterprise offers a mutualised salary guarantee fund, meaning it pays its users within a few days of their work, regardless of when the client pays, thus ensuring they have a reliable cashflow. See Kevin Stark, ‘How the European Social Enterprise SMart Is Creating a Safety Net for Freelancers’, Shareable, 4 December 2017, www.shareable.net/blog/how-the-european-social-enterprise-smart-is-creating-a-safety-net-for-freelancers.

21 Lyft, ‘Lyft x Guild: Supporting Drivers’ Education’, updated 11 December 2017, <https://blog.lyft.com/posts/2017/12/8/lyft-guild-supporting-drivers-education>.

work newcomers to volunteer with a charity for a year.²² But because these are designed as a first step to finding work, their primary goal is to provide host-country work experience rather than create social ties with people from other backgrounds. This limitation can be seen in criticisms of Sweden’s subsidised jobs, which charge that newcomers were often offered positions by people from within the same immigrant community, thus failing to fulfil the goal of fostering ties across different groups.²³

An alternative approach would be to promote volunteering is a valid alternative to work, rather than a stepping stone. Some programmes have been developed to support women to be voluntary care assistants.²⁴ These programmes can help new arrivals make friends, learn the local language, reduce social isolation, and build a sense of self-worth. Importantly, they offer an alternative source of social value at a time when there is heightened public scrutiny of the costs associated with immigration.

However, countries will have to embrace a shift in mindset if they are to see these programmes as genuine alternatives instead of back-up options when labour-market integration ‘fails’. One question to be answered is where they fit on the trajectory of integration policies; for instance, whether they are offered as an alternative to labour-market-focused programming from the get-go, or only after general integration programmes have failed. Introduction programmes currently tend to follow a one-size-fits-all model, so customisation would be required in order to better connect with those who are far from the labour market and give them different types of support.

Another question is whether people should be compelled to participate. So-called ‘workfare’ programmes, common in the United States and United Kingdom in particular, have been criticised for being exploitative of vulnerable groups, who can face the threat of losing benefits if they do not do jobs for which they are nominated.²⁵ While participation in integration programming is important, if key goals are for people to meet others from different backgrounds and gain a sense of purpose, policymakers should be mindful that both aims risk being undermined by lack of choice.

5. *Educate the citizens of tomorrow*

With European societies becoming more diverse, schools are under more pressure than ever to nurture and train responsible citizens. Schools are the main locus for developing the cognitive, interpersonal, and practical skills to live among and engage with difference. Terrorist attacks committed in France and elsewhere in 2015 revealed a home-grown rather than external threat, as the perpetrators were largely men born and raised in European communities. This has spurred renewed interest in schools as stewards of national and

Civic education in schools can lead to more active and cohesive societies—but it must be based on better evidence as to what works, otherwise it may do more harm than good.

22 Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration, and Foreign Affairs, ‘Integration Law Approved by Austrian Council of Ministers’ (press release, Vienna, 28 March 2017), www.bmeia.gv.at/en/the-ministry/press/announcements/2017/03/integration-law-approved-by-austrian-council-of-ministers/.

23 Henrik Emilsson, *No Quick Fix: Policies to Support the Labor Market Integration of New Arrivals in Sweden* (Washington, DC and Geneva: MPI and International Labour Office, 2014), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/no-quick-fix-policies-support-labor-market-integration-new-arrivals-sweden.

24 For instance, the project Step by Step in Sweden supports refugees in rural municipalities, including by encouraging women to provide informal elder care. See Liam Patuzzi and Alexandra Embiricos, *Social Innovation for Refugee Inclusion Conference Report: Maintaining Momentum and Creating Lasting Change* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2018), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/social-innovation-refugee-inclusion-conference-report.

25 Julia Griggs and Martin Evans, *A Review of Benefit Sanctions* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2010), www.jrf.org.uk/report/review-benefit-sanctions. Vulnerable groups may find it difficult to fulfil conditionality requirements or may trigger sanctions because they do not understand how the system works or what is required of them.

European values and identity.²⁶ But civic education is often somewhat muddled, and each approach has delicate tradeoffs in terms of which cognitive skills, formal knowledge, and behaviours are emphasised.

Civic education comes in many forms.²⁷ Some countries focus on teaching societal values (such as equality of opportunity, gender equality, and secularism); others on individual virtues (such as tolerance, altruism, and resilience). Some emphasise shared identity (such as history and culture or multicultural pride in diversity), while others centre on cognitive aspects (such as knowledge of political and administrative institutions). But insufficient attention has been paid to which instructional models lead to which results, and how. An encyclopaedic knowledge of political institutions might not be effective in promoting democracy and participation, for example. At its worst, civic education may do more harm than good, particularly where programmes are perceived as targeting migrant and minority students, which can be stigmatising. A further problem is when students are made to learn about an idyllic version of society and its shared values that dramatically diverge from their lived experiences, as in the case of students who learn about tolerance and equality but face routine discrimination.

At its worst, civic education may do more harm than good, particularly where programmes are perceived as targeting migrant and minority students.

Another approach for equipping students with the skills they need to thrive in the European societies of tomorrow is to go beyond the classroom and into the household. As one of the few institutions that can penetrate difficult-to-reach communities, and often a first point of contact for newly arrived immigrant families, schools have enormous potential to foster parental engagement and family learning. Making schools into hubs for families to develop social ties and access integration services can improve the support individual pupils receive at home and also create multipliers for integration in the broader community. There are a number of successful models across Europe, such as Mama Lernt Deutsch (Mum Learns German) in Vienna, and an annual one-day open house event in France called Dispositif Ouvrir l'École aux parents pour la réussite des enfants (Opening the School to Parents for Children's Success) that aims to engage migrant parents in their children's education.²⁸ Some such initiatives have also been developed by communities themselves. One example is the 132nd Primary School in Athens, Greece, where, following consultation with parents, students, and teachers, an after-hours Greek language class for parents and mother-tongue instruction for students were introduced. The project led to improved student performance and even a decrease in racist bullying.²⁹

To adequately satisfy these increasing societal demands, schools need more—and more consistent—support. Tapping into volunteer networks and civil-society organisations in local communities by appointing community ambassadors and creating opportunities to convene and exchange can help meet these growing needs while also teaching students a valuable lesson: communities are stronger when they work together.

26 Following a series of terrorist attacks, EU ministers of education and the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport issued a declaration on citizenship. See Informal Meeting of the European Union Education Ministers, 'Declaration on Promoting Citizenship and the Common Values of Freedom, Tolerance, and Nondiscrimination through Education' (declaration, Europe Union, Paris, 17 March 2015), http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/01-janvier/79/4/declaration_on_promoting_citizenship_527794.pdf.

27 For a summary of the different models and their relative strengths, see Per Mouritsen and Astrid Jaeger, *Designing Civic Education for Diverse Societies: Models, Tradeoffs, and Outcomes* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2018), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/designing-civic-education-diverse-societies-models-tradeoffs-and-outcomes.

28 City of Vienna, 'Deutschkurse und Basisbildung für Frauen: „Mama lernt Deutsch!“ —Für Frauen und Mütter', accessed 1 June 2017, www.wien.gv.at/menschen/integration/deutsch-lernen/frauen/; French National Ministry of Education, 'Dispositif Ouvrir l'École aux parents pour la réussite des enfants au titre de l'année scolaire 2017', updated 3 April 2017, www.education.gouv.fr/pid285/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=115286.

29 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Together in the EU: Promoting the Participation of Migrants and Their Descendants* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2017), <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/migrant-participation>.

6. Use technology to help bridge education gaps

The 2015–16 migration crisis threw existing deficiencies in how European education systems into sharp relief.³⁰ During the peak of the crisis, many school systems were caught off guard by a dramatic rise in demand for school places and a rapid diversification of student needs among newcomers with different levels of prior education, literacy and language proficiencies, and psychosocial needs. These challenges laid bare existing limitations in how schools support multilingual and mixed-ability classrooms, such as a shortage of teachers trained in instructional methods for such groups.

Translation and personalised learning technologies can help teachers overwhelmed by the pressures of multilingual and mixed-ability classrooms, but broader structural reforms are needed to fully capitalise on their promise.

While structural reforms are necessary to ensure that all teachers are equipped to support diverse student populations, technological innovations may go some way towards narrowing inequalities between students with and without a migrant background. In the hands of trained teachers, technology can help students learn at their own pace, give those with limited host-country language proficiency tools to keep up, and free up teacher time to help those in need of extra support.

In the highly diverse Ørestad Gymnasium in Denmark, for example, an online learning platform with instructional videos allows more advanced or linguistically proficient students to continue learning independently while teachers identify and focus attention on those who need more help or who have recently arrived.³¹ In Portugal, a pilot project called Ciberescola da Língua Portuguesa provides newly arrived pupils in primary and secondary schools with a blended online Portuguese language learning platform. Supported by an in-person teacher, students benefit from extensive online resources, exercises, and video lessons that help bridge the gap between their learning needs and the support available in their schools.³² Where technology allows students to use translation and transcription software to get more out of mainstream lessons, it can work especially well for teachers supporting multilingual and mixed-ability groups.

Access to online content can also expand schools' capacity to deliver in-demand subjects. In Israel, for example, the Ministry of Education trialed an integrated massive open online course (MOOC) model, with support from in-person teachers, to teach twelve courses on topics such as coding and robotics to 1,200 students.³³ MOOCs can also give newcomer students the flexibility to learn at their own pace and as soon as possible, potentially even before they enter the formal education system in a new country. While purely online courses are characterised by low levels of completion, coupling high-quality digital instruction with in-person support can lower the dropout rate.³⁴

Yet technological innovation is not a silver bullet. There is even a risk that ed tech could reinforce rather than narrow existing inequalities. The incentives for ed-tech companies to develop online learning platforms and

- 30 This section draws from Aliyyah Ahad and Meghan Benton, *Mainstreaming 2.0: How Europe's Education Systems Can Boost Migrant Inclusion* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2018), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/mainstreaming-how-europes-education-systems-can-boost-migrant-inclusion; participant discussion during the 'Future Schools for Future Citizens' meeting of the Integration Futures Working Group, organised by MPI Europe and hosted by the Robert Bosch Foundation, Berlin, 19 June 2017.
- 31 Comments by Allan Kjær Andersen, Principal, Ørestad Gymnasium, during the 'Future Schools for Future Citizens' meeting.
- 32 Carla Barros Lourenço and Ana Sousa Martins, 'Online Courses of Portuguese as a Second Language: Closing the Gap with Blended Learning in Mainstream Education', in *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Computer Supported Education* (Lisbon: Science and Technology Publications, 2015): 380–85.
- 33 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Innovating Education and Educating for Innovation: The Power of Digital Technologies and Skills* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2016), https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/innovating-education-and-educating-for-innovation_9789264265097-en-page1.
- 34 MOOC-Maker, 'Construction of Management Capacities of MOOCs in Higher Education—Attrition and Retention Aspects in MOOC Environments' (working paper D1.6, MOOC-Maker, n.p., 20 August 2016), www.mooc-maker.org/wp-content/files/WPD1.6_INGLES.pdf.

digital content, for example, may be skewed towards meeting the needs of more affluent students or communities. Governments can tip these scales in favour of the most disadvantaged learners by allocating more funding to schools with struggling students and sponsoring pilot projects with strong feedback loops from teachers and students.

Both new and existing teachers—and general education as well as language teachers—need to be supported in developing the skills to manage mixed-ability and multilingual classrooms.

Adapting schools for diversity will also require deeper structural reforms. While there is a sizable body of evidence on what works for immigrant pupils—such as lengthening the school day, lottery-based enrolment to take pressure off parents unfamiliar with how to navigate school systems, and delayed ‘tracking’ into academic and vocational streams—educational reforms are a slow process.³⁵ In some cases, needed reforms were also hindered by cuts to educational spending after the 2008 recession and are only recently beginning to pick up pace again. At the same time, it has become clear that supporting students with migrant backgrounds can no longer be an afterthought or a niche topic. Both new and existing teachers—and general education as well as language teachers—need to be supported in developing the skills to manage mixed-ability and multilingual classrooms. This will require concerted efforts at all levels of government.

7. Helping everyone build the skills to live in superdiverse societies

Integration policy has traditionally been focused on outcomes. The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy describe a process of mutual adaptation through which immigrants and newcomers adjust to one another, and though European countries and the European Union itself have long been committed to the idea that integration is a ‘two-way street’, the focus of many European integration programmes is on helping newcomers settle in and reach a certain end point of being ‘integrated’.

Rather than focusing solely on outcomes, policymakers should treat integration as a social muscle that needs constant strengthening.

This way of thinking may be limited. All residents of future European societies will need to navigate an increasingly complex set of social challenges—from rising segregation and hypermobility, to ageing populations, demographic shifts, and labour-market changes. As a result, people will have to plan lives in a landscape where long-term planning itself has become more difficult. Instead of sticking to traditional ‘life plans’ or planning a single career path from scratch, young people will need to become comfortable with short-term projects and be flexible enough to adapt to and pursue opportunities as they arise.³⁶

To help everyone weather change, governments could focus more on the skills that individuals need to develop—and the capabilities that communities need to strengthen—to meet emerging challenges head on. In other words, instead of focusing on ‘immigrant’ integration and helping newcomers settle in, integration

35 See, for example, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Together in the EU*; Ivana Katsarova, ‘Integration of Migrants: The Education Dimension’ (briefing paper, European Parliamentary Research Service, Brussels, June 2016), [www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI\(2016\)583847](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2016)583847).

36 Darren Dalcher, a professor of project management, talks about ‘liquid life’, the need to splice together numerous short-term projects and episodes instead of having time to adjust to patterns and institutions. See Darren Dalcher, ‘Beyond Knowledge: Growing Capability for an Uncertain Future’, *Cutter Business Technology Journal*, 24 March 2014, www.cutter.com/article/beyond-knowledge-growing-capability-uncertain-future-417471.

policy should be about helping individuals of all backgrounds adapt to change, be it social, economic, demographic, and cultural.

Several skills and competences stand out as particularly important in this context. Individuals will need resilience above all else, made up of a mix of persistence/grit, social intelligence (including the ability to form relationships with people from other backgrounds), and media literacy (including how to communicate through different platforms and identify ‘fake news’).³⁷ Critically, many of these skills emphasise working collaboratively with people from different backgrounds. For instance, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) global competence framework includes the ability to ‘engage in appropriate and effective interactions across cultures’ and ‘understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others’.³⁸ Good practices to cultivate these skills include mindfulness training³⁹ and creative group tasks such as digital making (creating technology or digital games), entrepreneurship, and collaborative problem-solving.⁴⁰

A more ambitious vision could take this approach one step further by teaching skills and strategies designed to help people live harmoniously in diverse societies and resist prejudice. Evidence suggests that teaching young people a ‘growth mindset’—that they and others can change and develop in response to adversity—can help them deal with provocation and aggression from peers.⁴¹ It may also be helpful to nurture skills such as perspective-taking and empathy, based on evidence that such techniques can help reduce stereotypes.⁴² Examples include perspective-taking exercises in which participants are asked to talk about a time when they have been judged negatively for being different, and then to think about others’ similar experiences. These ‘character skills’ and their role in fostering social cohesion are being investigated by behavioural researchers (see Idea 8).

A similar approach to nurturing skills and capabilities could be taken to supporting the development of communities as a whole. Countries may find it beneficial to shift the focus away from making communities ‘welcoming’ and ‘cohesive’—a model often grounded in one particular conception of what it means to be a good community—and instead towards developing their capabilities to weather change. For instance, the Welcoming America model used in some parts of the United States focuses on building local coalitions around the goal of economic development rather than integration, including by involving some actors less

37 Many of these skills bring both social and economic benefits. Emerging evidence suggests that ‘grit’ or traits such as discipline, self-motivation, and perseverance yields positive academic and social outcomes. See Angela Duckworth, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* (New York: Scribner, 2016). Similarly, collaborative problem-solving—working with others in a team to pursue a common goal—may be worth the equivalent of five months additional schooling. See Rose Luckin, Ed Baines, Mutlu Cukurova, and Wayne Holmes, *Solved! Making the Case for Collaborative Problem-Solving* (London: Nesta, 2017), 16, <https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/solved-making-case-collaborative-problem-solving.pdf>.

38 OECD, ‘PISA 2018 Global Competence’, accessed 13 January 2019, www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2018-global-competence.htm.

39 For instance, 5,000 teachers have been trained to use mindfulness, a relaxation technique associated with benefits including increased wellbeing and resilience, in classrooms. See BBC News, ‘Mindfulness to Help Children’s Mental Well-Being in Schools’, BBC News, 24 February 2017, www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-39082415/mindfulness-to-help-children-s-mental-well-being-in-schools.

40 For instance, the SPRinG Programme developed classroom practices and pupil skills training using techniques such as organising classrooms and groups to stimulate collaboration, developing pupils’ group-work skills, and creating challenging tasks. See Luckin, Baines, Cukurova, and Holmes, *Solved!*

41 For instance, a randomised controlled trial found that teaching students to think of human intelligence and attributes as malleable helped reduce aggression and retaliation when they were provoked by peers. See David Scott Yeager, Kali H. Trzesniewski, and Carol S. Dweck, ‘An Implicit Theories of Personality Intervention Reduces Adolescent Aggression in Response to Victimization and Exclusion’, *Child Development* 84, no. 3 (May 2013): 970–88.

42 For instance, a study in the United States that involved using perspective-taking techniques during door-to-door canvassing substantially reduced levels of transphobia and increased support for nondiscriminatory laws. See David Broockman and Joshua Kalla, ‘Durably Reducing Transphobia: A Field Experiment on Door-to-Door Canvassing’, *Science* 352, no. 6282 (2016): 220–24.

commonly involved in integration efforts such as meatpacking plants, police officers, and religious leaders.⁴³ Other elements of community resilience include giving communities a sense of stake in receiving and integrating newcomers, for instance through community sponsorship of refugees or programmes that match local residents who have spare rooms in their houses with newly arrived refugees (see Idea 1).

Thinking about integration as a muscle for the whole of society to strengthen instead of an end point that can and must be accomplished is less stigmatising to minorities and vulnerable groups, and better reflects the types of challenges that are often bundled under the banner of ‘integration’.

8. Explore ways to ‘nudge’ social cohesion

Traditional efforts to promote social cohesion focus on aligning the norms and values of newcomers and of long-term residents. A promising new approach focuses on fostering more meaningful and regular interactions among different groups through ‘nudges’ to behaviour. A variety of experiments are underway to explore ways to reduce prejudice and promote empathy and cooperation among school children. For instance, assigning sports teams based on a random characteristic, such as shirt colour, could encourage bonds among multiethnic groups. Perspective-taking exercises in which children imagine other people’s lives or use virtual reality to gain insight into what it’s like to be a migrant or refugee could reduce prejudice. And rewarding children for sitting with peers they don’t know at lunch could help foster relationships between different groups.⁴⁴

Behavioural insights could offer creative and low-cost ways to foster social mixing and reduce gaps between migrants and the native born, but such initiatives need more piloting and testing.

Behavioural insights or ‘nudge approaches’ have been used to great effect in areas such as tax policy, health care, and energy conservation.

These ideas are based on behavioural insights—an interdisciplinary approach to policymaking based on evidence from psychology, behavioural economics, and anthropology that seeks to understand how people behave and encourage them to make better choices for themselves and the societies in which they live. Behavioural insights or ‘nudge approaches’ have been used to great effect in areas such as tax policy, health care, and energy conservation. They recommend small changes, initially as part of a pilot, that are rigorously tested (ideally through randomised controlled trials) and then scaled up if they work. Even small effects, such as a 5 to 7 per cent improvement, can represent big government savings at a large scale.

43 Welcoming America, ‘About Us’, accessed 13 January 2019, www.welcomingamerica.org/about/who-we-are. See also Amy Pope, *Building More Resilient Communities: Responding to Irregular Migration Flows* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2017), www.atlanticcouncil.org/events/upcoming-events/detail/building-more-resilient-communities-responding-to-irregular-migration-flows.

44 This section draws from Meghan Benton, Antonio Silva, and Will Somerville, *Applying Behavioural Insights to Support Immigrant Integration and Social Cohesion* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2018), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/behavioral-insights-immigrant-integration-social-cohesion; participant discussion during the ‘Rethinking Integration Governance’ meeting.

Several areas related to immigrant integration, including education and employment, have already used behavioural insights to reduce gaps between groups. For instance, mentoring,⁴⁵ tailored messaging,⁴⁶ and peer support⁴⁷ have all been shown to help break down aspiration barriers that prevent disadvantaged students from applying to top universities. In one UK police force, rewording test instructions given to job applicants and asking them to consider what becoming a police officer would mean to them and their community increased pass rates for minorities, effectively closing the gap between White and minority candidates.⁴⁸ And work with jobseekers who are dealing with a high ‘cognitive load’—pressure stemming from the stress of meeting urgent daily needs that can exhaust mental processing and make long-term decision-making difficult—suggests ways to engage vulnerable groups that could work better than sanctions. For instance, refugees, who are often dealing with multiple stressors (e.g., trauma and the challenges of learning their new country’s language and norms), may need a more holistic form of employment counselling than the average jobseeker to help them plan for the long term. These and similar behavioural insights could help policymakers design more effective employment and education services that narrow the gap between native-born/majority and migrant/minority groups.

In other policy areas—notably, in reducing prejudice and fostering social mixing between groups—behavioural insights have yet to be fully applied, but could offer a promising new approach. These opportunities are being investigated by the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) in London, which has run a wide variety of pilots and experiments, including the perspective-taking exercise described above (see Idea 7). Cooperative learning programmes, in which students from segregated classrooms or schools are brought together to learn in collaboration, have been used to promote positive interethnic attitudes and foster intergroup friendships.⁴⁹ These and similar strategies could be explored more systematically by integration policymakers.

9. Teach common values with carrots, not sticks

In the aftermath of the 2015–16 European migration crisis, questions have been posed about the societal and cultural impacts of the arrival of thousands of migrants and refugees, many of whom come from countries with different religious and social customs, gender norms, and values.⁵⁰ Several European countries are seeking to promote common values in a more muscular way, including through integration contracts that require newcomers to pledge adherence to a set of national values; more robust introduction programmes to teach language and customs (sometimes even before arrival); and restrictions on cultural practices seen as contradicting common values.

Common values are at the heart of living together in societies of mutual obligation. But these must be defined collaboratively by members of a society, not imposed from above.

- 45 Antonio Silva, Michael Sanders, and Aisling Ni Chonaire, *Does the Heart Rule the Head? Economic and Emotional Incentives for University Attendance* (London: Behavioural Insights Team, 2016), <http://38r8om2xjhh125mw24492dir-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Raising-Aspiration---Changing-the-perceived-costs-and-benefits-of-going-to-university-May-16.pdf>.
- 46 Michael Sanders, Raj Chande, and Eliza Selley, *Encouraging People into University* (London: UK Department for Education, 2017), <http://38r8om2xjhh125mw24492dir-wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Encouraging-people-into-university.pdf>.
- 47 Scott Carrell and Bruce Sacerdote, ‘Why Do College-Going Interventions Work?’, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 9, no. 3 (2017): 124–51.
- 48 Simon Ruda, ‘Promoting Diversity in the Police’, Behavioural Insights Team, 24 July 2015, www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/trial-results/behavioural-insights-and-home-affairs/.
- 49 Marika Ginsburg-Block, Cynthia Rohrbeck, and John W. Fantuzzo, ‘A Meta-Analytic Review of Social, Self-Concept, and Behavioral Outcomes of Peer-Assisted Learning’, *Journal of Educational Psychology* 98, no. 4 (November 2006): 732–49.
- 50 This section draws from Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan and Meghan Benton, *In Search of Common Values amid Large-Scale Immigrant Integration Pressures* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2017), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/search-common-values-amid-large-scale-immigrant-integration-pressures; participant discussion during the ‘Debating Values: Immigrant Integration in a Time of Social Change’ meeting of the Integration Futures Working Group, organised by MPI Europe and hosted by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Immigration, and Foreign Affairs, Vienna, 24 January 2017.

Values often act as shorthand for something deeper: respect for the social contract that governs how members of a society live together. Countries rightly wish to educate newcomers on how to play by the rules of the liberal democratic society in which they now live, including by paying taxes, obeying the law, and adhering to social norms.⁵¹ A compelling social and economic rationale lies behind such programmes. Without a critical mass of people paying into the public purse, spending on pensions, health care, and welfare will become unsustainable—especially given the rising costs of ageing populations. Systems of law work only if people obey rules even when the risk of punishment for noncompliance is low, and thus general rule-following becomes a personal value for most residents. And the smooth functioning of public services, from health care to social housing, depends on people understanding and internalising the rules, which are not always clear. Public trust in integration can be eroded by visible transgressions to social norms, such as littering in societies that pride collective efforts to keep the streets clean, especially when they are attributed to equally visible minorities—even if this perception is mistaken, or such transgressions are unintentional.

Most attempts to promote or teach national values are premised on the idea that these are both widely known and fixed in stone. Yet values shift and evolve over time. Some European countries, unsure of exactly what their core values are, have turned to public polls and educational initiatives to foster a common understanding. For instance, a ‘crowdsourcing’ exercise to define Danish values picked *hygge* as the top national value—an elusive and difficult-to-translate feeling of cosiness.⁵² Similarly, a 2005 UK citizenship test asked newcomers what they would do if they spilled someone’s pint, suggesting that frequenting pubs was an essential element of being British.⁵³ In such exercises, countries face a choice between emphasising European or liberal democratic values, which can seem nebulous and may be difficult to sell to newcomers as unique to the country, and promoting values based on the majority culture that sketch an overly specific and inflexible view of nationality.

Instead, governments may find it more productive to focus on helping people understand what rules a society expects them to play by, while acknowledging that the edges of these rules are often fuzzy and up for debate. For instance, introduction and orientation programmes could promote dialogue and acknowledge conflicts over values, or explain that certain values such as equality are a work in progress. Countries should also practice what they preach. The value of free speech is best explained through open dialogue in the public sphere and the classroom. And gender equality could be better illustrated through a greater representation of minority (including Muslim) women in politics and public life.

Finally, countries should be sensitive to the body language of policies that curtail minority practices seen as clashing with national values. Restrictions on cultural practices such as wearing a burqa may be akin to using a sledgehammer to crack a nut: face-covering garments are only worn by a few hundred women in most European countries,⁵⁴ yet legislative bans send a powerful message to *all* newcomers that their welcome is conditional. They can also undermine the very integration they seek to promote by further marginalising vulnerable groups, such as women in more conservative Islamic households. Governments must therefore weigh the benefits of restricting certain practices against the (sometimes unintended) costs, especially where measures are largely symbolic and/or their benefits unclear.

51 For instance, one Austrian government official described the impetus behind the country’s new values course as ‘newcomers wanted to know where to integrate into’. Comments by Susanne Raab, Director-General for Integration, Austrian Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration, and Foreign Affairs during the 5th meeting of the European Integration Network, Vienna, 12–13 November 2018.

52 The exercise was based on 2,500 submissions to a survey asking for Danish society’s most important values. See The Local, ‘Danes Define Their National Values in Online Vote’, The Local, 12 December 2016, www.thelocal.dk/20161212/danes-define-their-national-values-in-online-vote.

53 BBC News, ‘Can You Pass a Citizenship Test?’, BBC News, 16 June 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/4099770.stm.

54 Shaira Nanwani, ‘The Burqa Ban: An Unreasonable Limitation on Religious Freedom or a Justifiable Restriction?’ *Emory International Law Review* 25, no. 3 (2011): 1431, <http://law.emory.edu/eilr/content/volume-25/issue-3/comments/burqa-ban-limitation-religious-freedom-restriction.html>.

10. Create a space for difficult conversations on immigration and integration

Governments need to open and sustain constructive conversations with members of the public about the future of society—and the role of immigration within it—without ceding those dialogues to the far right. In doing so, they could adopt professional communication strategies from other policy areas and from branches of psychology and sociology that build on understanding of human cognition and tailor communications to better resonate with different audiences.⁵⁵

Building public trust in government requires listening to people's legitimate concerns rather than whitewashing them, and understanding why people hold certain views.

Effective communication is notoriously difficult on hot-button issues such as immigration, with publics often holding inaccurate or conflicting views. According to a 2017 Eurobarometer survey, for instance, nearly half of respondents believed there were at least as many irregular migrants as those legally present in their country; the inverse is true.⁵⁶ But people tend to overestimate what they worry about, and to worry about what they overestimate.⁵⁷ This emotional innumeracy can give inaccurate information an advantage if it resonates with their existing beliefs or view of the world. This means that myth-busting—a popular public communications strategy where incorrect information is displayed alongside correct information—is often doomed to failure. Readers who already hold strong views about immigration may misremember the false information as true, or they may become more entrenched in their views if they perceive them as under attack.⁵⁸

Instead of leading with raw data and facts, governments may find it more effective to convey information through narratives that appeal to deeply held values and that emphasise society-wide unity instead of singling immigrants out. Narratives hold a distinct advantage over other less discursive, logic-based communications in that they can communicate feelings as well as information,⁵⁹ and audiences are often less resistant to points entangled within a story than they would be to the same information presented in an essay.⁶⁰ However, storytelling is not without its challenges, as the same narrative can trigger different responses in different audiences. For example, stories that depict refugees as in need of support and protection may evoke sympathy from one segment of the public while contributing to another's fears that newcomers will overburden the welfare state. Rather than trying to rally support for integration or diversity in and of themselves (messages that may ring hollow and not hold up to the powerful narratives of nostalgia and fear of change that have bolstered support for the far right in recent years), policymakers could start by focusing on crafting stories that appeal to a particular audience's values, such as equality before the law, right to family life, patriotism, and responsibility to contribute to society. Yet values may be prioritised very differently on different sides of the political spectrum, making it even more essential to understand how a message will be received and understood by a target audience.

55 This section draws from Aliyyah Ahad and Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan, *Communicating Strategically about Immigrant Integration: Policymaker Perspectives* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2019), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/communicating-strategically-immigrant-integration; participant discussion during the 'Building Effective Narratives: Communicating for Integration' meeting of the Integration Futures Working Group, organised by MPI Europe and hosted by Swedish Permanent Representation to the European Union, Brussels, 19 June 2018.

56 European Commission, *Special Eurobarometer 469: Report: Integration of Immigrants in the European Union* (Brussels: European Commission, 2018), <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/82537>.

57 Bobby Duffy, 'Perils of Perception' (Ipsos Views brief no. 2, Ipsos, n.p., March 2016), 7, www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/publication/1970-01/ipsos-views-perils-of-perception-april-2016.pdf.

58 Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan, *When Facts Don't Matter: How to Communicate More Effectively about Immigration's Costs and Benefits* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2018), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/when-facts-dont-matter-immigration.

59 Michael F. Dahlstrom, 'Using Narratives and Storytelling to Communicate Science with Nonexpert Audiences', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111, no. 4 (2014): 13614.

60 Ibid.

To foster a more productive and fact-based public discourse, governments could also support initiatives to promote well-researched media coverage of migration. Journalists can face enormous pressure to publish click-worthy content in the shortest time possible. But most journalists are not experts in migration and may be unfamiliar with how policies affect particular groups, conditions in countries of origin, and the array of motivations that lead individuals to migrate. In recognition of these challenges, the Migration Media Award, jointly developed by EU and Maltese authorities, foundations, and international organisations rewards up to 48 published stories in video, print, and other media that demonstrate time-intensive, unsensationalised, in-depth reporting on migration-related issues.⁶¹

Fear-mongering over immigration may be an efficient way of catching attention at a time of migration scepticism, but it may limit the space for dialogue in the long run.

Policymakers also need to balance active messaging with effective listening. Conflict, at least to some degree, is a natural part of integration as differences collide and societies change. Governments and the media have a delicate balancing act when it comes to deciding how and when to acknowledge these clashes, and what tools to use to resolve them. Responses to incidents of conflict need to be careful to present the benefits and challenges of immigration transparently. Glossing over negative experiences—such as cases of violence or sexual assault—can further undermine trust in mainstream media and authorities.⁶² Overly positive messages may also be regarded with scepticism if they do not reflect an audience’s lived experiences or expectations, potentially even pushing them to look for other sources that do, even if those are less robust. At the same time, fear-mongering over immigration may be an efficient way of catching attention at a time of migration scepticism, but it may limit the space for dialogue in the long run and hinder productive policymaking.⁶³

For many local authorities, the key to resolving conflicts is providing a platform for residents to voice their concerns, and to see them taken seriously.⁶⁴ When well managed and mediated, such dialogues can create meaningful opportunities to question entrenched assumptions and prejudices, design solutions to reduce repeated clashes, and bring diverse groups together in pursuit of common aims. This approach has been used, among other things, to identify the preferred areas of the City of Hamburg in which to create refugee reception centres.⁶⁵ Without the conditions needed for this type of cooperative communication, however, conflicts may persist and can reinforce negative perceptions.⁶⁶

61 Migration Media Award, ‘Home’, accessed 9 November 2018, www.migration-media-award.eu/.

62 For example, when public broadcasters in Germany delayed reporting on sexual assaults perpetrated by immigrants in Cologne on New Year’s Eve 2015–16, this undermined trust in the neutrality of the media. See Derek Scally, ‘Media under Scrutiny over Slow Response to Cologne Attacks’, *The Irish Times*, 10 January 2016, www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/media-under-scrutiny-over-slow-response-to-cologne-attacks-1.2491711.

63 Banulescu-Bogdan, *When Facts Don’t Matter*.

64 Ahad and Banulescu-Bogdan, *Communicating Strategically about Immigrant Integration*.

65 For example, after public uproar over where to build a migrant reception centre in the City of Hamburg, city officials used a high-tech collaborative planning process that gave citizens access to all available data on possible locations and allowed them to help identify the best spots. See Ariel Noyman and Tobias Holtz, ‘Finding Places: HCI Platform for Public Participation in Refugees’ Accommodation Process’, *Procedia Computer Science* 112 (2017): 2463–72.

66 For example, contact theorists have found that contact and communication between antagonistic groups can reduce prejudice and intergroup tension, but only under certain conditions, such as when there is equality between the groups in the contact context, they have a common goal, interactions are cooperative, and they have support from authorities (such as schools, and NGOs), and there is potential for developing friendships between the groups. When contact does not meet these criteria, it may yield additional prejudices between the antagonistic groups. See Ifat Maoz, ‘Does Contact Work in Protracted Asymmetrical Conflict? Appraising 20 Years of Reconciliation-Aimed Encounters between Israeli Jews and Palestinians’, *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 1 (January 2011): 115–25.

III. CONCLUSION: INJECTING INNOVATION INTO INTEGRATION POLICY

Integration policy has gained a much higher profile in Europe in recent years, but it stills lags behind other policy areas when it comes to innovation. European governments need to refine their methods for predicting problems, segmenting individual needs, crafting a joined-up response to complex cross-cutting challenging, and engaging diverse partners to act as ‘force multipliers’.

One of the main challenges will be making the case for investments in integration amid a hostile political environment. Public animosity towards immigration issues heavily constrains the political and financial capital to make investments in immigrant-specific programmes, which in turn risks greater problems down the line should integration challenges go unaddressed. Governments need to make the case for preventative investments that will minimise long-term harm, at a time when the greatest appetite is for quick fixes.

Integration policymakers have numerous new tools at their disposal to address these challenges, many of which have been tried and tested in other policy areas. For instance, foresight methods such as horizon scanning and scenario planning could help integration policymakers work with their colleagues from other portfolios to plan for fluctuating spontaneous migrant arrivals in the future. And innovation financing models such as social impact bonds could provide valuable resources to test and scale projects with proven results.⁶⁷

To realise the ten ideas in this report, policymakers from across Europe, at the EU, national, and local levels, can support each other by evaluating and sharing good and—importantly—bad practices. This could save stretched authorities from falling into the same mistakes. Public authorities with limited resources could also maximise the impact of these funds by sponsoring shared research agendas. Ultimately, however, translating what works into new contexts will require not only robust evidence but also strong leadership and appropriate technical support, such as through peer-learning and exchange between policymakers and key stakeholders.

While the scale of the challenge facing European integration policymakers has grown, so too have the potential gains from finding the right solutions. Many of the most promising new ideas for integration policy will benefit not only newcomers but entire communities as they prepare to face the challenges of the future.

⁶⁷ Benton and Embiricos, *Doing More with Less*.

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