

# WELDI

BUILDING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES  
FOR MIGRANTS

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URBACT



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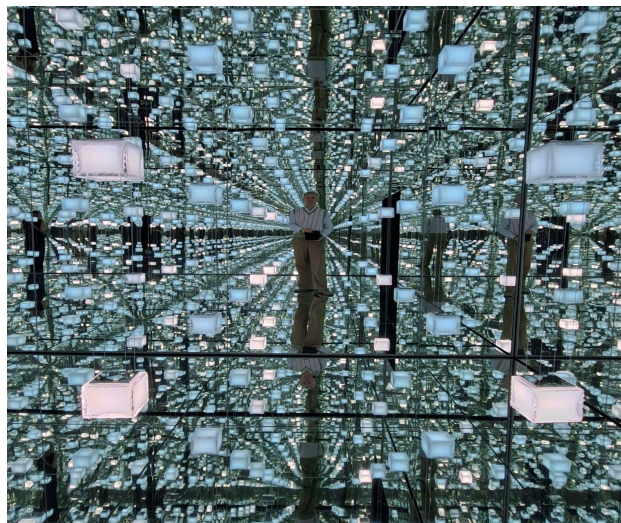


ACCUEILLIR  
EN SEINE-SAINT-DENIS  
PLAN D'ACTION INTEGRÉ (PAI)

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## Editorial: WELDI; setting stages for localising human right - by Hans Sakkers (City of Utrecht)



As the WELDI project nears its conclusion, we find ourselves not at the end, but at a powerful inflection point. Over the past two and a half years, ten cities - Albacete, Cluj-Napoca, Fundão, Lampedusa, Liège, Osijek, Seine-Saint-Denis, Sosnowiec, Timisoara, and Utrecht - created together a European woven fabric of courage, care, and commitment to human rights in migrant and refugee reception.

But together, we have confronted systemic obstacles and crafted integrated action plans that place dignity, inclusion, and local agency at the heart of reception and integration. The five journals published throughout our journey - and now this sixth - bear witness to the richness of this collaboration: dense with insight, vibrant with local stories, and bold in their vision for change.

### Why local matters matter even more

When WELDI began, the idea that migrant and refugee reception should be locally anchored was already urgent. Today, it is indispensable. In

a time of shifting borders and rising hostility, cities remain the most immediate and humane spaces of welcome. They are where rights are lived, where solidarity is practiced, and where the future of Europe is quietly being shaped - street by street, policy by policy, handshake by handshake.

Our shared experiences have deepened into a collective wisdom and new actions. We have learned that reception is not just a technical task, but a moral commitment. That integration is not a checklist, but a relationship. And that human rights are not abstract ideals, but daily practices rooted in local realities.

### A final conference, a forward-looking agenda

On 10, 11, and 12 December 2025, we will gather in Utrecht for WELDI's final conference. Elected representatives from our cities, civil society organisations, and EU institutions will come together to reflect, advocate, and co-create. Our agenda is clear and urgent:

- **Protect human rights** in reception models amid top-down politics and hostile environments
- **Ensure dignity and inclusion** for migrant workers
- **Shape a fair and realistic discourse** on migration
- **Secure direct access** for cities to EU integration funding
- **Empower local authorities** in the relocation and accommodation of asylum seekers

- **Promote the relocation** of asylum seekers and refugees based on local pledges

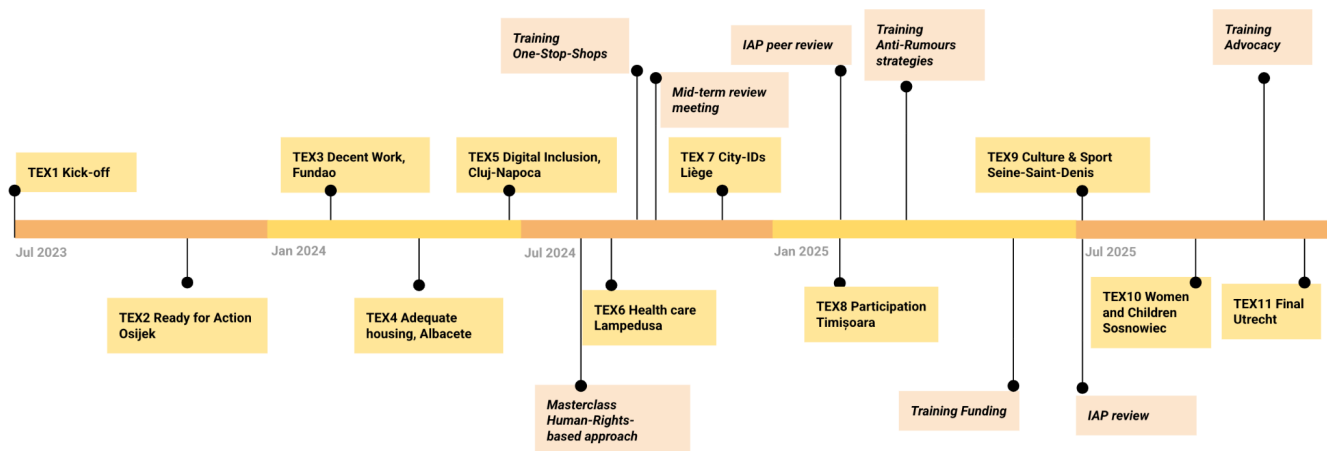
This is not a closing ceremony. It is a call to action.

## The journey continues

WELDI has never been just a project. It is a movement, a method, and a mindset. We are upbeat about what comes next: new forms of collaboration, supportive relationships, and fresh projects that build on the trust and momentum we've created.

Migration is not a crisis: it is a constant. It is the story of civilisation itself - also in Europe: of people seeking new destinies, surviving the journey, and ultimately, enjoying the company of new neighbours. WELDI has shown that when cities lead with empathy and courage, they can turn reception into renewal, and into new aspirations.

We - in WELDI - are not ready to stop. Because migration will continue - as it always has. Because the work of human rights is never truly finished. And because the future of Europe depends on the strength of its cities - and on the humanity and dignity with which we choose to welcome.



WELDI's 19 transnational exchanges over 30 months supported 10 partners in their actions to reflect human rights in migrant reception and integration policies.

# Women- and children-centred reception and integration policies. WELDI's 10th transnational meeting hosted by Sosnowiec. By ad-hoc expert Eva Valentová



On 23 September 2025, the WELDI network convened an online workshop hosted by the City of Sosnowiec (Poland) to discuss women- and children-sensitive local reception and integration policies. The objective was a practical exchange among partner cities on challenges and "lessons learned".

## Sosnowiec as a learning case

The workshop used the Sosnowiec experience as a starting point. The city strategically frames its integration work as a response to local demographic challenges, such as depopulation. Since 2022, Sosnowiec has supported a large influx of refugees from Ukraine—primarily women and children—alongside a growing population of economic migrants from other

countries. Today, the migrant population is approx. 6,500, of whom half are women and one-third are children. A recent city-wide survey underscored that a majority of newcomers wish to tie their long-term future to the city, making effective integration a key priority.

The panel with members of Sosnowiec's Urbact Local Group (ULG) highlighted key challenges shared across the city. These include language barriers, costly housing, and the difficulty of building trust with newcomers who are often prejudiced against state institutions. Key local solutions and practices presented in the panel included:

**City administration:** The language barrier and lack of accessible information are primary

challenges, which prompted the city to offer Polish language classes (mostly attended by women), online guidelines for refugees, and obligatory school workshops on recognising fake news about migrants. While costly housing remains a significant barrier, Sosnowiec is unique in having sufficient and affordable childcare capacities, a key enabler for women's integration.

**School integration:** With over 100 Ukrainian pupils (one-third of the student body), Sosnowiec's primary school no. 22 faces language barriers, and deep psychological needs of children affected by war. Their strategy focuses on creating a friendly atmosphere and fostering connections through joint cultural days, peer-support and mixed-group projects. The school also provides additional Polish language lessons several times per week to refugee children. A key element is the cultural assistant, who speaks the children's native language to help with adaptation, and build trust. This is combined with an intra-school support network where teachers, counsellors, the psychologist, and the cultural assistant collaborate to quickly address student needs.

**Social work (Municipal Social Welfare Centre - MOPS):** Social workers face significant hurdles in overcoming newcomers' prejudice against state institutions, some legal restrictions (e.g., family assistants can only be provided to Polish citizens), and the cultural differences in approaches to child-rearing. Their key practical solution lies in the creation of "Transformation Clubs", low-threshold, informal community spaces where newcomers and locals can access support from social workers, breaking down barriers organically. MOPS has also initiated Individual Integration Plans to provide structured, family-specific support to help newcomers navigate their new community.

**A centralised vision (ADRA Foundation):**

Sosnowiec collaborates with the ADRA Foundation to operate a One-Stop-Shop (OSS), a central element of its Integrated Action Plan. The OSS offers holistic support in a single, accessible and trusted hub, that coordinates a wide range of services (legal aid, language support, counselling) in one location. The centre in Sosnowiec includes intercultural youth support, but the main focus is on women and children, including food and material aid for families, and an anonymous online mental health platform. Critically, ADRA's model focuses on empowerment of migrant women by employing them as assistants, translators, and educators, or engaging them in leading support groups and organising community events to be active agents in their community.

**Trauma-Informed support** is critically important in all interactions with newcomers to prevent re-traumatisation and build a sense of safety. Early after the arrival of the Ukrainian refugees, Sosnowiec started to work with the NGO "the Power of Support" to help families and children to overcome trauma.

### Framework for action: The 3C Model

To frame the discussions, a presentation on women-centered approaches by expert Eva Valentová highlighted that a "one-size-fits-all" model is ineffective. It introduced the concept of intersectionality, because migrant women are not a homogenous group. Their experiences are shaped by multiple, overlapping factors—including gender, legal status, country of origin, and family situation—which create a unique set of barriers demanding targeted policies. Successfully supporting migrant women and children requires a multi-layered strategy built on effective resource allocation and enhanced local service capacity. This must be strengthened through dedicated training for frontline workers in cultural sensitivity and trauma-informed care.. To address this

complexity, a practical framework based on a 3C Model can be used:

**Consult:** Actively and consistently seek the input of migrant women. This means moving beyond simple surveys to create safe spaces for dialogue. A key strategy is to empower trusted community champions to bridge the gap between municipal services and migrant populations. This asset-based approach recognises women not as passive recipients of aid, but as "artists, creators, and thinkers".

**Collect:** Gather and analyse gender- and age-disaggregated data to understand who is accessing services. Quantitative data should be supplemented with qualitative needs assessments to capture nuanced experiences. Acknowledging that women may mistrust official surveys, cities can leverage partners by commissioning trusted NGOs to conduct this research.

**Collaborate:** Build genuine partnerships to create holistic support. This requires securing long-term political commitment and working across municipal departments to break down silos. It is crucial to engage with local NGOs and migrant-led organizations who often hold deep community trust.

### Insights from network exchanges

The network exchanges powerfully connected to the 3C framework. Partners participating in the workshop on school education confirmed that school enrollment is just the first step. A shared challenge is the "duality" of children's integration (appearing settled while feeling unstable).

Key Takeaway: Cities must look beyond surface-level metrics and invest in deeper psycho-social support. Solutions shared included using intercultural mediators (Fundão, Cluj-Napoca) and inclusive activities

(Timișoara's "UKRKidsHub"). This requires schools to function not just as places of education, but as hubs for building community and providing consistent, trauma-informed care.

The workshop on **outreach & co-creation with migrant women** identified the lack of childcare is the number one barrier preventing women's social and economic participation. This powerfully illustrates that basic needs must be served first; only when women are not in "survival mode" can meaningful engagement and co-creation begin. Key Takeaway: Childcare must be treated as foundational integration infrastructure, not an optional add-on.

Second, the most effective models shift agency to migrant communities. This asset-based approach builds trust and ensures that services are genuinely relevant to the community's self-defined priorities. Key Takeaway: Empowerment over consultation is essential, as shown by Osijek's practice of providing a physical space for the Ukrainian community to self-organise activities.

The workshop on **mental health support** stressed the importance of informal, non-stigmatising settings (like the Transformation Clubs in Sosnowiec). These safe spaces are crucial for building the initial trust required before any formal psychological intervention can be offered. Key Takeaway: A critical, and often overlooked, aspect is the high risk of burnout for frontline staff; acknowledging and addressing this is essential for service sustainability.

Across all themes, one lesson emerged as foundational: that collaboration is key. Effective, sensitive support is impossible without strong partnerships between municipalities, schools, NGOs, and migrant-led organisations.

# Lessons for the Integrated Action Plans of Weldi cities - a review of WELDI draft IAPs by Ad-hoc expert Ed Thorpe

*In this article, Ad Hoc Expert Ed Thorpe shares some key tips and reminders on how to deliver impactful local action plans, building on his review of the draft Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) of Weldi partner cities in summer 2025.*

*The article's key messages focus on: clarifying the logic running through the plan; putting planned actions at the heart of the IAP; effectively balancing 'internal' planning detail and 'external' engagement goals; and the critical importance of thinking about ongoing governance and stakeholder engagement for future implementation.*

The URBACT Action Planning Network Weldi is focused on “Building welcoming communities for migrants” - empowering local authorities to put human rights at the heart of their efforts to develop dignified approaches to welcoming newcomers and overcoming the obstacles that migrants can face in accessing their rights.

After 2+ years of networking and exchange, city partners are now finalising in late 2025 their Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) that set out what they aim to do in their city to deliver on this broad ambition at local level.

Based on the draft IAPs, one can already see how much inspiration the city partners have taken from their network journey and how it has helped in many cases to transform their vision and intended approach to migrant reception at local level. One can also see the diversity of local contexts and how each partner has developed a specific plan based on their own realities and the priorities of their URBACT Local Group – the foundation of the local participatory approach.

## Diverse local approaches

For some cities, such as Cluj-Napoca in Romania, the action plan sets out a broad and integrated strategic approach to transforming the reception of migrants. This approach includes actions to improve services for newcomers (one-stop-shop, digital tools...), to improve public acknowledgement of the contribution of migrants (events, training...), to enhance collaboration between local stakeholders and migrants, and to create new channels for policy dialogue.

For other cities, the IAP takes a narrower focus, aiming to complete or address gaps in the existing measures already in place to support a human-rights based approach to migrant reception. For example, in Lampedusa (Italy), the IAP focuses on particular challenges identified in the context of access to health services – particularly for women and around maternal, sexual and reproductive health.

Meanwhile, for the Lead Partner city of Utrecht, which already has a well-developed approach to migrant inclusion based on the Plan Einstein model (also the subject of the URBACT Plan Einstein Academy Innovation Transfer Network), the IAP focuses primarily on the idea of developing a ‘city card’ to take the next step in safeguarding access to fundamental rights for people without papers living in the city. In this context, the integrated approach is built into the design of this one key action, which aims to complement existing local activities.

All these approaches reflect the richness of the exchanges within the network, the diversity of local contexts within the partnership and the

flexibility of the IAP as a tool to present vastly different plans of action, even within the same network. At the same time, some tips and recommendations apply to all cities and all contexts, no matter what the focus of the plan.

## Visualising the logic running through the plan

One specific recommendation for creating a high-quality, coherent IAP is to have a well-presented visualisation of the strategic logic that runs through the plan and connects all its parts. This can add significant value in clarifying and communicating how the IAP holds together as a logical, coordinated response to the identified challenges - whether to an internal or external audience.

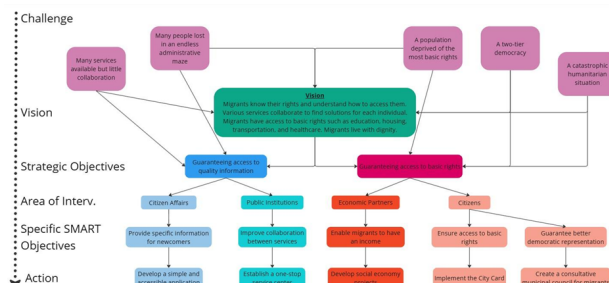
The visualisation of the logic should manage to bridge the gap that can exist between understanding the individual actions set out later in the plan and the overarching vision for the IAP defined by members of the URBACT Local Group (ULG).

Typically, the pathway from vision to action can be expressed through a small number of strategic objectives, each supported by more specific objectives or intervention areas. These provide a natural way to group and present the planned actions.

Even without examining individual actions, considering the plan at the level of its intervention areas or specific objectives offers a clear understanding of the city's overall approach and where it intends to take action. It also helps stakeholders reflect on whether any major areas of intervention are missing, supporting a more comprehensive and integrated strategy.

For example, in the draft intervention logic of Liège (Belgium), we can see their approach for

ensuring that “migrants know their rights and understand how to access them” (see Figure below).



*The draft IAP of Liege has a clear presentation of its intervention logic*

The visualisation shows that they plan to work on both guaranteeing access to quality information and guaranteeing access to basic rights. To achieve these two ‘strategic objectives’, it aims to take action in distinct areas, including: providing information and services to newcomers, improving collaboration between services (public institutions) and working with economic partners.

We can see that, even without looking yet at the specific actions planned under these headings, we can understand the overall strategic approach being proposed by the city and where it aims to focus its attention.

## Putting planned actions at the heart of the IAP

The IAPs should be action focused. To ensure this - after the presentation of the intervention logic - the core of each IAP should be a clearly presented set of planned actions. A tried and tested method for doing this is in the form of summary action tables. These can be used to set out just the key information needed to present and understand what is planned.

Frequently occurring content in these tables includes for each separate action: name of the action; short description; output targets; responsible body (and partners); some indication of resource needs; and an estimation of the implementation timeframe.

The level of specificity provided under each heading can vary according to how far the city has got with the planning. But just by presenting all the actions in a concise, logical, structured way, without overwhelming the tables with too many details, readers can gain a clear understanding of everything that the local partnership plans to do in the city.

| No. | Action                                            | Indicator                                                                               | Target                        | Frequency | Responsible                                                 |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.1 | Organize quarterly info sessions or legal clinics | Number of info sessions/legal clinics held with labor inspectors, labor agency and NGOs | 12                            | Quarterly | Municipality (DAS), labor inspectors, labor agency and NGOs |
| 1.2 | Distribute multilingual legal information packs   | Number of legal info packs distributed by 2028                                          | 300                           | Quarterly | Employment Agency / Civil Society Groups                    |
| 1.3 | Set up reporting mechanism for workplace abuse    | Reporting mechanism operational and number of cases received                            | System in place + ≥30 reports | Ongoing   | Labor Protection Authority / NGO Legal Aid                  |

*The draft IAP of Timisoara uses clear, well-structured summary action tables*

The IAP of Timisoara (see Figure 2) provides a good example of how this can be done in a simple way, with tables that provide a numbered list of actions, output indicators and targets, the expected frequency of delivery of each action and the diverse actors who are taking responsibility for different actions.

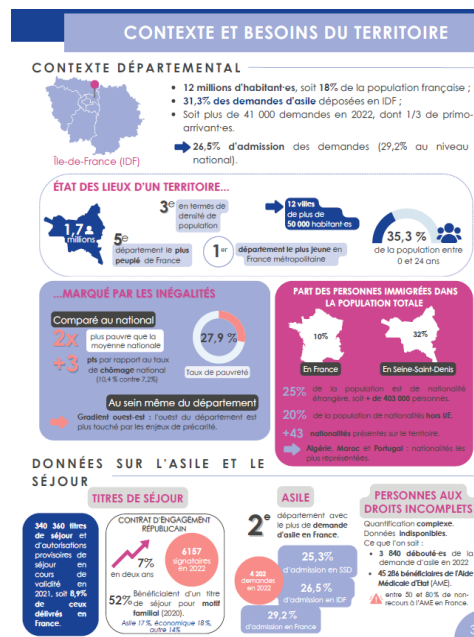
## Effectively balancing 'internal' planning detail and external engagement

Perhaps the key strengths of both the intervention logic visualisation and the summary action tables are that they find the required 'sweet spot' between providing sufficient action planning details and setting out a plan and approach that is easy to understand and build engagement around. Too much detail

can make a plan inaccessible to local stakeholders; too little can make it weak and of limited value in driving future actions.

This same logic should be applied to all sections of the IAP. Not all the detailed activities undertaken in the network to understand the local context and challenges – critical though they are in the URBACT journey – need to be reported in the IAP itself. Part of keeping the IAP action focused is that it should probably not take until half-way into the document to get to the presentation of the intervention logic and the action tables.

Infographics, charts and summaries can be used to present the context, background and challenges facing the city – the information required to understand the plan of action – in short, concise ways. This is more important and more valuable than pages and pages of background information, which can ultimately serve to make the plan of action less accessible to people that the city wants and needs to engage.



*The draft IAP of Seine-Saint-Denis shows how infographics can be used to communicate a wealth of background information and context*

## The critical importance of future governance and stakeholder engagement

The final message for Weldi partners (and other APN cities) is that one of the key findings of the URBACT IAP Study 2 published in 2023 was that a critical success factor for future implementation of URBACT Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) is an effective process of governance and ongoing stakeholder involvement.

The IAPs should not be understood as project plans which have to be implemented to the letter and where the precision of the planning is the most important element. Rather, ideas continue to evolve and change and the lessons and inspiration of the URBACT journey continue to be built upon as part of a longer process.

For example, actions as described in the IAP often evolve as they feed into specific funding applications. Success typically comes when local stakeholders continue to develop, refine and deliver these planned actions.

Equally, it is not necessary to have identified precisely how much every action will cost or exactly which funding source will be used for each action. But to feed into future reflections on how to implement and fund actions, it is helpful to have identified which actions need significant investments and map out potential fundings sources for specific types of action.

For these reasons, almost regardless of the level of planning detail achieved in the IAP, it is critical that cities taking part in Action Planning Network like Weldi take the time before finalising their plan to confirm and set out the future governance arrangements and plans for ongoing involvement of ULG members and other local stakeholders. Ultimately, these will be the processes that further refine actions, develop specific funding applications and implement the actions required to deliver on the action plan's clear strategic approach.

I look forward to following the ongoing journeys of Weldi partner cities as they continue their progress towards building ever-more welcoming communities for migrants - building on the plans set out in their IAPs - and wish them all the best in their endeavour.

## Being Jan Braat: The WELDI Advocacy Masterclass



On its final stretch, WELDI organised a masterclass on advocacy with Jan Braat. During three decades of work as senior advisor for Utrecht city council, Jan has been a real policy entrepreneur. He helped to convince the state refugee agency to test a more locally-steered reception model in the city and formed part of a coalition that triggered a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights, forcing the national government to provide basic support to undocumented migrants. This Masterclass was the moment to engage other WELDI partners to learn from his experiences at a moment where they may face obstacles in getting their action plans implemented in a climate that is often not sympathetic with migration issues.

Indeed, WELDI partners do face obstacles to make themselves heard within their

administration, when migration is not a priority or considered as a too divisive topic to act upon; or when national policies provide many practical obstacles for newcomers to become autonomous, when it comes to having qualifications recognised, to access language training or to obtain residence permits. Here are some of the lessons that Jan shared in this session.

**Define goals:** there is no advocacy without a clear goal. It is okay to start with more general advocacy goals and to narrow them down in the process into more specific lobbying actions.

**Analyse the playing field:** Think about who are your allies and who are your opponents, and which undecided players you should win over.

**Think about your story:** “Every good advocacy

starts with a good narrative". Prepare different versions of this story, a one-pager and a one-sentence elevator message.

**Go out and connect with people.** You won't solve your problem on your computer screen!

**Appeal to different groups with different arguments:** your story should not be one-dimensional and you should particularly think of and connect with people who seem less sympathetic to your ideas from the outset. For instance, undocumented migrants sleeping rough can be framed as a human rights violation, but also as a public order issue that appeals to more conservative-thinking people. Linking migration to entrepreneurship and economic development is another topic that can win over people who might be less sensitive to human rights questions.

**Connect your advocacy goal to local competencies** to claim authority to act. For instance, cities are usually responsible for public order and public health, which are two issues that can justify actions even though your city may not have an official mandate to work on migration.

**Present yourself as problem solver:** "As local government we are in the solution business". Show how your policies make a difference, e.g. in getting people off the street or into work.

**Present win-win-arguments:** Show how your solution is a gain for everyone, and what concretely it means for the local population. E.g. recognising foreign qualifications allows people from abroad to work in sectors they have been trained for, and brings more local tax revenue.

**Stress innovation and efficacy:** Demonstrate how your solution is innovative or how it has proven to work in another place.

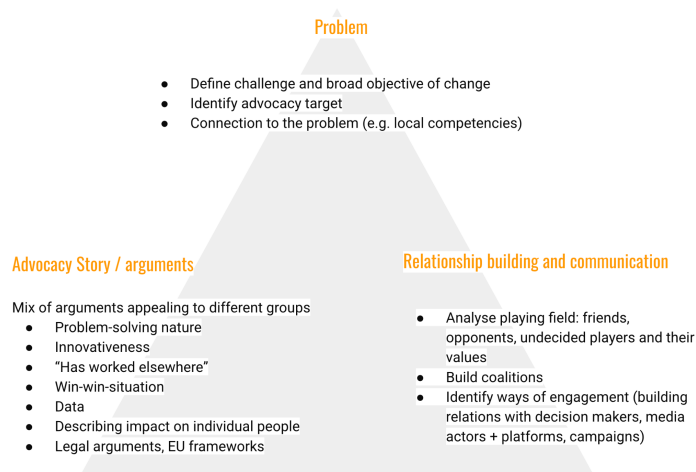
**Combine data with personal stories:** be

prepared to demonstrate that your idea works through hard data (e.g. through an evaluated pilot, research or evidence from other places) and combine data with personal stories that appeal to emotions.

**Build relations with media:** build relationships of trust with local and national media. Build relations of reciprocity where journalists can rely on you as an information source and in return become an outlet for your stories, or let your mayor shine. As a policy maker, you can provide journalists with access to interesting places and stories, while safeguarding ethical standards.

**Use European engagement strategically:** being present in European initiatives such as URBACT and Eurocities gives you visibility and access to information that can support advocacy in your city council and with the national government. But this engagement has to be aligned with your objectives and be long-term to bear fruits.

Jan's Masterclass showed how these different elements positively interact with each other and lead to an advocacy ecosystem. It highlighted in particular the potential that WELDI partners still have in developing stories and engaging with media to promote the many good ideas that they developed in their Integrated Action Plans.



# Funding welcoming cities through civic crowdfunding - a model to ensure sustainability, innovation and co-creation with citizens

By ad-hoc Expert Agnieszka Płoska

Today's cities face complex challenges in supporting inclusive communities, especially when it comes to welcoming migrants and building a sense of belonging. Funding for such initiatives can come from various sources: public funds (European programmes, government grants, municipal budgets), philanthropy (corporations, foundations, private donors), and as a very interesting participatory approach: civic crowdfunding - where residents collectively finance projects they care about. No matter which way is chosen, strategic planning for sustainable funding is crucial. Without it, even the most promising projects risk failing when initial grants run out. A blended approach not only diversifies resources but strengthens community resilience as well.

## Building solidarity - how fundraising campaigns can bring migrants and residents together

Fundraising can be so much more than a financial transaction - it can be a booster for building connections between newcomers and long-term residents. In welcoming cities, the most successful campaigns are those that invite everyone to participate, not just as donors, but as co-creators of change. Imagine a neighborhood festival where both migrants and locals share food, music, and stories, with proceeds going toward a shared community project, or a renovation of a public space, where fundraising is paired with work of citizens, and every contribution builds a sense of belonging.

These efforts do more than raise funds; they create opportunities for people to meet,

collaborate, and connect. When a fundraising campaign is based on the community's real needs and aspirations, it becomes a reason for people to come together, talk to one another, and build trust. These shared experiences may lead to deeper relationships and a more welcoming city.

## An inspiration of civic crowdfunding - the example of Milan

Crowdfunding, known for years as a tool to build community and co-finance projects, has its very interesting variation - civic crowdfunding. It may change the way cities approach public projects, and Milan stands out as a pioneer here. The city's civic crowdfunding idea was launched in 2016. The aim was to combine private and public resources, engaging local communities and promoting inclusivity, sustainability, and quality of life. Residents were proposing projects that matter to them, from transforming abandoned lots into community gardens to launching language exchange programs for newcomers. Promoting and attracting community around these ideas were key factors of success, people contributing whatever they could - sometimes a few euros, sometimes much more - became a validation of the need to create projects.

What sets Milan apart is the city's willingness to match community contributions with public funds, effectively doubling the impact of every donation. This approach sends a powerful message: the city government trusts its residents to know what's needed and is willing to invest as long as the citizens are engaged as

well. The results speak for themselves - projects are brought to life quickly, with wide support of both citizens and municipality.

Milan's experience shows that civic crowdfunding isn't just about raising money - it's about giving people responsibility for their city. When residents see their ideas become real, they are more engaged, more hopeful, and more likely to participate in other civic activities.

### From ideas to impact - how crowdfunding success is empowering communities

When cities plan for sustainable funding - blending public, philanthropic, and community resources - they strengthen the potential for lasting impact. For example: imagine a neighborhood where residents want to create a safe space for children to play. Instead of waiting for municipal funds that might never come, they proactively launch a crowdfunding campaign, partner with local businesses and maybe even secure a small grant from a local foundation. The result is not just a new playground, but a sense of community pride and cooperation.

Or a group of migrants and long-term residents who work together to open a community kitchen, using crowdfunding to cover start-up costs and public funds to support ongoing operations. The kitchen may become a hub for cultural exchange, job training, and social support - a place where newcomers can network and locals can discover new flavors and friendships.

In 2018, at the end of the URBACT network BoostInno on social innovation for citizens, the coordinator city Gdańsk (Poland) decided to implement its own innovation programme INNaczej . Firstly, there were no grants for citizens, but with every next year it was growing. Today, this program is an important first step for

many individuals and organizations who want to make a difference locally. They often combine their strategy with the local program FIR (Forum Initiatives Development) where citizens need to launch a successful crowdfunding campaign to present their project and have a possibility of being awarded with a grant.

These examples illustrate a key point: when funding is planned with sustainability in mind, projects are not just implemented - they thrive. The benefits are wider: strengthening the community, boosting local economies, and making cities more adaptable in the face of change, to name just a few. Sustainable funding models also encourage transparency and accountability, as multiple stakeholders are engaged in the outcome. Over time, this approach builds a culture of participation and trust, empowering communities to tackle even bigger challenges together.

### Recommendations for cities in the WELDI Network

For cities engaged in the WELDI network, the journey toward sustainable, inclusive funding is both a challenge and an opportunity. First, it's essential to start by mapping the unique assets and needs of your community - listen to citizens to identify their needs and priorities. Build partnerships early, not just with local government and established philanthropies, but also with grassroots organizations, migrant associations, and local businesses. You may consider piloting small-scale crowdfunding campaigns that are easy to manage and visible, so residents can quickly see results and build confidence in the process. Maybe an experiment with matching funds or hybrid models that combine public, private, and community resources is worth considering. Finally, you may consider investing in communication and storytelling: celebrate successes, share lessons learned, and make sure everyone understands

how their contributions are making a difference. By taking these steps, WELDI cities can create a culture of shared responsibility and pride, ensuring that welcoming initiatives are not only well-funded, but also deeply rooted in the community.

Blending public funds, philanthropy, and civic crowdfunding isn't just a financial strategy – it is

a way to build stronger, more welcoming cities. By inviting everyone to contribute, cities can benefit from a wider pool of resources, ideas, and energy. It is about keeping the focus on community, because when people feel they have a real influence on their city's future, anything is possible.

## Upcoming: final meeting in Utrecht, 10-12 December

**10 December, 17:00–22:00:** Networking at Utrecht's International Human Rights Day

**11 December, 9:30-13:00:** A new reception model - telling the story of WELDI and of the partners integrated action plans

**14:00-16:40** Reflecting on learning in WELDI

**12 December, 10:00-12:30** Political Panel: discussing WELDI advocacy topics

**14:30-16:30** WELDI products and what comes after WELDI

[Registration link](#)

## About WELDI

The URBACT network WELDI (2023-25) tackles the question of how local authorities can promote human rights when receiving and offering integration support to newcomers. WELDI starts from the acceptance of the reality of migration and focuses on how to ensure a well-organised and dignified reception and integration that can benefit the whole local population. WELDI starts from the potential of cities as places of dignified reception and integration of newcomers and wants to demonstrate local leadership in reception and integration and to trigger bottom-up change towards models that are in line with the fundamental rights that lay the basis for the European Union.

Unless otherwise stated, the content of the WELDI Journals is written by Dirk Gebhardt (WELDI Lead Expert).