



The Nordic Red Cross Integration Network

Key issues and practice
recommendations

Findings Report, December 2022

Danish
Red Cross

Finnish
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Icelandic
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Norwegian
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Swedish
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1.

Introduction and background

In 2021 the national Red Cross societies (hereafter “NS”) of Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark set out to build a strong Red Cross network within the area of the integration and social inclusion of refugees and vulnerable migrants – a network that could operate on both a practical day-to-day level as well as on a more strategic level, and form the basis for knowledge and information sharing, mutual inspiration and collaboration.

The overall purpose of the network is to contribute to bolstering national integration efforts and promote the social inclusion of refugees and migrants in vulnerable positions. To achieve that purpose, we have spent time understanding each other’s national contexts better and sharing experiences, knowledge and good practices, as well as developing new ideas together.

The work in the network

The network has been established around a Project Group, with a senior practitioner from each NS as permanent members, as well as a project manager from Denmark. The network also has a Steering Group, consisting of permanent management-level representatives from each NS. The Steering Group is also a forum for information sharing on a more strategic level.

Members of both groups are working specifically with refugees and migrants, except for the members from the Swedish Red Cross who come from a team working more broadly with a local, community-based approach, encompassing more target groups.

The Project Group has held workshops in the various countries, leading to a better understanding of the different national contexts. The group has visited colleagues at Red Cross headquarters but has also gone on field trips to different Red Cross activities. The above activities have set the scene for valuable discussions and have provided important input to the group that has informed the work presented in this report.

While we have been working on identifying and analysing common challenges, ideas, experiences, and areas of importance – like the key issues – the network has also had a more practical, almost day-to-day function in several ways: We have shared experience of how to adapt to Corona, and when the war in Ukraine broke out, we met online on a regular basis to share updates on how we were meeting the national task of receiving the refugees from the conflict. In addition, the members of the network, as well as other colleagues, have used the network as a channel for acquiring information and know-how about specific activities. Some examples include manuals for bicycle training,

a project description for social cafes and evaluations of volunteers working with supporting employability.

Initially, the network worked with three thematic areas: Cooperation with Public Authorities, Recruiting Refugees as Volunteers and Creating Socially Sustainable Cities and Combatting Urban Segregation. While these themes are all relevant, we saw a need after some time to go beyond them and to discuss our work with the integration/ social inclusion of refugees and vulnerable immigrants more broadly. The key issues in this report and their recommendations are the results of that.

About the report

This report represents the view of the Project Group of the network and is not to be considered the official position of any of the five NS.

First, the report provides a brief overview of some of the national differences and similarities between the NS in the Nordic countries.

This is followed by the central part of the report: The presentation of key issues identified as important to address when working with the integration and social inclusion of refugees and migrants in vulnerable positions. We explain both why the issue is important, what the current situation is and what the challenges are, and finally we give a set of practical recommendations for each issue.

While all NS address these issues to different degrees and in different ways, it is the opinion of the Project Group that more can be done. We hope this report and its recommendations will inspire the NS and contribute to that end. The Project Group will also use the report in its future work and

follow up on the practical implementation of the recommendations, as well as working with other issues, including the two briefly presented at the end of the report.

The terminology used in the report

In the name of the network, the word “integration” is used to describe the process of including refugees, people with a refugee background and migrants in a vulnerable situation in society on an equal footing. In some of the Nordic countries the term is rarely used, and instead the term “social inclusion” is preferred. Moreover, in some countries the term “integration” refers to the process that starts after a refugee has been given a permit to stay, whereas in other countries this process begins in the asylum phase. In this report we use the terms “integration” and “social inclusion” interchangeably.

Although “refugees”, “migrants”, “immigrants”, “people with a refugee background” and “ethnic minorities” all have different meanings, they are terms used to describe the target group in the different countries. For the sake of clarity, this report defines the target group as “refugees” and “migrants”.

Within this field, language and terminology plays a central role. We have thus identified labelling and terminology as an issue that we wish to explore further at a later stage. See also chapter 3.



The Project Group: Maria, Marika, Naghmeh, Anne, Mads and Nina.



2.

Nordic and national perspectives

This chapter will give a brief introduction to the Nordic Red Cross perspective on how we work with the social inclusion of refugees and migrants. It will also touch upon how the NS are organised, and the similarities and differences in their activities. We will not go into depth in these matters in this report.

Organisational similarities and differences

The most important organisational similarity, and one which is common to all Red Cross Societies around the world, is that our work is volunteer-based and organised around a needs-based approach, acting quickly and efficiently. All the NS have local branches that carry out the activities through volunteers. In the biggest of the local branches, all NS also have paid staff to different degrees.

All NS have one headquarter with employees, located in the national capital, apart from the Swedish Red Cross which has HQ offices in four different cities. The Finnish and Norwegian Red Cross also have a district level with paid staff. The NS without district levels have more staff at headquarter level.

Red Cross in the Nordic countries - similarities

The Nordic Red Cross Societies have a long history of working with social inclusion in various aspects of society, including activities targeted at refugees and migrants. All five NS have considerable but also varying experiences with engaging in the reception and integration of refugees. These experiences have been gained in different national contexts, with both similarities and differences.

The common approach is that the Red Cross is a supplement to, and not an extension of, the public authorities. Our activities are based on needs assessments of our target group, and are mostly conducted by local volunteers, who are the backbone of our work.

Also common to all the Nordic Red Cross Societies is that we have activities for refugees in the arrival phase, such as activities in reception centres, as well as after legal refugee status has been granted and settlement takes place in

the municipalities. Common to all the countries is that we provide language teaching for all migrants regardless of their residence status, as well as various kinds of social cafes and meeting places for young people, adults and families. All run some kind of buddy programme for refugees, in which they are matched on a 1-1 basis with a volunteer or a family. All of the Nordic Red Cross societies also offer help with tracing separated family members.

Another similarity in all of the countries is that they all engage in advocacy work relating to refugees and migrants. The specific topic may vary and will be examined more closely under the next heading.

National differences

Although there are many similarities, as mentioned above, the NS also differ in some of the aspects of our work relating to the target group. For instance, while all the NS work with various integration/social inclusion activities specifically targeting refugees and migrants, the Swedish Red Cross has, within the framework of the Socially Sustainable Cities programme, a broader, community-based approach. Within this programme and through activities for meeting points, refugees and migrants are among the target group.

The Swedish Red Cross provides legal advice and representation in the asylum phase, as well as strategic litigation, and the Danish and Swedish Red Cross support rejected asylum seekers and those who have had their permits withdrawn. This includes strengthening the individual's resilience through providing legal, psychosocial and practical support.

All NS work with refugees' right to family reunification, though on different levels and to a different extent. The Swedish Red Cross provides legal advice and support in research and family reunification, including travel support

and practical assistance in family reunification, as well as advocacy work and legal representation. The Danish Red Cross assists in some cases and performs advocacy work, and in some local branches trained volunteers help to fill in forms for family reunification. The Norwegian Red Cross performs only advocacy work. In addition to advocacy work the Finnish Red Cross advises and provides information on family reunification as well as assists to a limited degree with travel arrangements and arrivals. The Icelandic Red Cross advocates for the importance of family reunification, assists with counselling and information regarding the application process, and offers social support upon arrival.

The Danish and Finnish Red Cross are the only Nordic Red Cross societies that run reception centres for asylum seekers. The Icelandic Red Cross currently runs an emergency shelter for the first three days for asylum seekers as part of its role in the Civil Protection system.

Furthermore, the Finnish, Norwegian, Danish and Swedish Red Cross societies are present at detention centres to provide support for migrants, whereas the Icelandic Red Cross is not.





3.

Key issues when working with integration/ social inclusion

In the Project Group, we have identified four issues that we believe are key to working successfully with integration and the social inclusion of refugees and vulnerable migrants. The list is obviously not exhaustive, but we have agreed across the Nordic Red Cross societies that these four issues are crucial to address. In the following, each key issue is presented under the following headings:

- Why is the issue important for successful integration/
inclusion?
- What is the current situation across the countries?
- What are the challenges/gaps in working with the issues?
- Examples from the different NS of how to work with the issue
- Recommendations from the Project Group regarding how to advance the issue

The network has also identified two other issues that we wish to explore further in the future. These will be briefly presented after the four key issues.

Summary of the key issues

1. Active involvement of our target group

We need to actively involve those whom we wish to integrate/include in all phases of our work. It is important to include their perspectives when designing and implementing initiatives that sustainably address the most important needs.

2. Our organisations should reflect the diversity of our societies

The composition of our Red Cross staff and our volunteers should be as diverse as the societies in which we operate. This contributes to enhanced legitimacy and increased trust among minorities, and an expanded potential volunteer base.

3. Equal treatment of all beneficiaries based on vulnerabilities/needs

When we design and implement our programmes, we should always base them on an objective needs assessment of the target group, no matter which group or demography they belong to. This ensures that no one is discriminated against, and that everyone is treated on equal grounds based on needs, which is in line with the Red Cross principle of neutrality.

4. Cross-sector cooperation

We are much stronger when we work together across sectoral boundaries, especially together with the public sector. This already happens to a large extent, but there are still more benefits to be gained. It takes an effort, but is well worth it.

Key Issue:

1. Active involvement of our target group

Why is it important for successful integration/inclusion?

Active involvement should be at the centre of our endeavours, as it can lead to a long list of positive effects. When you involve the target group in your activities, you obtain a better understanding of the needs and context of those we wish to support. This enables us to design better and more effective programmes and operations and improves the chances of addressing the most important needs. At the same time, it fosters empowerment and creates the opportunity for minorities to be their own advocates. This, in turn, builds resilience and an increased understanding of society.

It also can create ownership and a sense of responsibility, making the programmes stronger and more sustainable when implemented. Moreover, new resources can be released when the target group contributes to the programmes. When this happens, it improves the equality between the target group and the volunteers, building trust in the programmes within the migrant communities, with a higher level of acceptance and greater legitimacy. This goes beyond the individual programmes and affects the relationship between the Red Cross and communities in the longer term.

What is the current situation?

All NS work with involvement in individual programmes to different degrees and in different ways. At the same time, it appears that all NS are having trouble acting consistently on the issue. It is mentioned in different project/programme documents, but often with no clear commitments or plans for how to tackle this consistently in our activities. The most common type of involvement occurs on an ad-hoc basis in day-to-day activities. However, in some NS there are examples of members/representatives of target groups being represented on decision-making bodies, such as local boards. Other examples include participation in reference groups or user panels.

What are the challenges/gaps?

While all NS agree that active involvement is important, there appear to be numerous challenges at play when attempts are made to put this into practice:

- In those instances where the core activities are described by guidelines and manuals, the framework for each activity is already established, often leaving little room for actual, active involvement (especially in the design). This applies both to volunteers and to the target group.
- Language is often a major challenge, as it can make it difficult to create mutual understanding and make the different perspectives clear, as it limits the level of nuanced communication. Language can also be used as an excuse not to practise involvement, because it can be cumbersome at times.
- Despite our good intentions, we fail to be open to new perspectives when they do not correspond with our underlying/implicit values, beliefs, and ways of doing things.
- It takes time – and it can appear easier in the short term without involvement.
- Sometimes the issue seems more pertinent to staff than to volunteers.
- There is a tendency to view the target group as passive recipients of support, especially among some volunteers.
- It can challenge the self-perception of volunteers, as it changes the power dynamics between the volunteers and the target group: the givers and the receivers.
- There can be a lack of organisational commitment and allocation of time to fully implement participatory approaches.

Recommendations from the network

1. Make involvement a strategic priority/political decision within the RC.
2. Make it mainstream, create a cultural change (e.g. by making it mandatory).
3. Make the benefits of actual involvement clear (e.g. better programmes, more sustainability and not a question of being 'politically correct').
4. Invest in organisational capacity building and know-how regarding how to involve the target group.
5. Remember involvement in the different phases of a programme:
 - a. In the needs assessment
 - b. In the project design (i.e. set time aside for involvement)
 - c. In the implementation of the programme
 - d. In the evaluation of the programme
6. Examine the potential for using IFRC methods (in adapted, simplified versions).

NS examples of how to work with the issue

Denmark

- In the project Friends Show the Way, written materials are checked by representatives of the target group as a way of ensuring the quality of communication.
- In some local branches the target group is represented either on the board (with a seat on the board on equal terms), or in the coordinating steering group of the migration activities.

Iceland

- Input from participants that affect programme design are ensured through monitoring and evaluation activities and regular DAPS surveys (Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety) in asylum social activities and refugee pairing projects.
- Harm reduction project for homeless persons and drug abusers invites the group to provide user consultation on a regular basis, as far as this is possible with the group. Some of the former participants (beneficiaries) later become volunteers solving tasks that match their capacities.

Norway

- "Stovner family centre" – an activity in Oslo for families in one part of the city based on mapping done within the local community about their needs and input. The activity is designed together with those who eventually will become beneficiaries/volunteers.
- National guidelines with concrete examples of active involvement of beneficiaries.

Sweden

- A national programme (Socially Sustainable Cities with community-based methodology), national guidelines for the active involvement of beneficiaries with complementary support materials govern the work carried out at all levels, including the local branches.
- The activity After-school for Unaccompanied Minors focuses on enabling newly arrived young people to co-create and take responsibility for the development of the meeting places. Group leaders from the target group are trained to assume responsibility for the gatherings.

All countries

- Guest speakers from beneficiary groups attend volunteer seminars and all NS use the term "participants" as an effort to signalling active involvement, rather than passive reception of help.

Key Issue:

2. Our organisations should reflect the diversity of our societies

Why is it important for successful integration/inclusion?

Having employees and volunteers with different experiences and backgrounds provides us with knowledge and perspectives that help the Red Cross to better understand the different needs of the various groups and how to respond to these in the best way. This enables us to develop relevant and better programmes and activities that address the needs in the best way.

We also need new volunteers to secure the sustainability of our operations, and representation is important: If you see yourself in the images of the Red Cross, you know there is a place there for you, too. If our staff and volunteers come from all spheres of society, we gain further legitimacy and can build trust among the target group, the public and the authorities.

The IFRC is committed to promoting the value of a diverse society with gender equality. There is a Gender and diversity policy (2020) which applies to all NS and all aspects of our work.

What is the current situation?

Across the Nordic NS there is some variation in how the issues of diversity are approached. In the Finnish, Icelandic, Swedish and Norwegian NS, increased diversity is mentioned in the national strategies.

However, the lack of data on the diversity of the staff and the volunteers makes it difficult to show the actual situation, and the strategies are often not followed up by implementation plans, monitoring regimes or dedicated funding.

The Danish NS approaches diversity on a programme-to-programme basis: Based on a needs assessment of the target group, volunteers with a minority background may be recruited if this is deemed important to meet the needs identified.

What are the challenges/gaps?

There are a number of challenges that span the different levels of the organisation, in programmes and governance, HR, policies, and organisational culture. These include:

- The lack of people with different backgrounds in images and information materials gives the impression that the Red Cross is not open to all.
- Increasing diversity is often “everyone’s responsibility”, with no one being responsible for the necessary actions and progress, and no follow-up mechanisms in place.
- In the staff and volunteer management procedures, there are examples of structures that can exacerbate exclusion:
 - Internal language barriers. It is difficult for minority groups to access information, understand their rights, be able to get involved or receive support if the only language used in the organisation is the national language.
 - Information about activities and recruitment campaigns are published mostly in the national language and in traditional forums.
 - Repayment routines can be problematic, which affects volunteers with low income, such as refugees and young people.

Recommendations from the network

1. Increasing diversity (among staff and volunteers) should be included in the national strategy and should be mainstreamed in all programmes and at all levels.
2. A person/body should be appointed with a strong mandate and resources to follow up on the strategy.
3. Branding (including spokespersons and images) should show diversity.
4. The NS should analyse their own barriers to welcoming everyone, and address issues such as:
 - a. Activities should take the different life situations of volunteers into account when it comes to the date, time and place of activities
 - b. The information channels and languages used should be inclusive
 - c. Repayment routines should be in place that do not exclude people with low incomes.

NS examples of how to work with the issue

Denmark

- Repayment routines: There are examples where the volunteers have a cash card for the local grocery store or a pre-paid card.
- In some local branches the target group is represented either on the board (with a seat in the board on equal terms), or in the coordinating steering group of the migration activities.

Finland

- Diversity in the volunteer activities training module is intended for all the Red Cross volunteers and staff. Sessions are held on norms, interaction situations, equality and accessibility. One of the objectives of the training is to gain tools to critically examine norms and prejudices and understand their influence in encounters and interaction.
- New organisational brand (2022->) tries to increase diversity in communication through the use of more diverse imagery.

Iceland

- In line with the new volunteer strategy (2022), the NS volunteer representation should be reflective of the diversity of the population.
- The whole NS is undergoing a PGI (Protection, Gender and Inclusion) assessment with the relevant IFRC tools. A newly established Transformation team at HQ level covering the whole NS and its programmes will oversee the implementation of both these issues.

Norway

- HR guidelines on diversity in the recruitment process for employees. This has been in use since 2021.
- "Colour-aware" recruitment campaigns for different activities, with the use of "diverse" pictures.

Sweden

- The governing board has decided to promote and strengthen diversity and local representation at all levels. This includes appointing a working group with the task of conducting an analysis of obstacles to perceived inclusion in a few selected local branches and amongst the national staff through data-driven analysis. Based on this, an action plan will be developed with measures to promote diversity and inclusion.

Key Issue:

3. Equal treatment of all beneficiaries based on vulnerabilities/needs

Why is it important for successful integration/inclusion?

The foundation for successful integration/inclusion is to give all members of the community opportunities to participate and contribute on equal grounds. The participation needs to be based on the certainty that the human rights of a diverse population are respected.

The Red Cross principle of neutrality is essential when we plan and implement our activities. Neutral needs assessments will reveal the different life circumstances of members of local communities and society as such. It will point to the different kinds of support they need to secure their equal rights. Treating people equally in terms of addressing their different needs, regardless of which group they belong to, generates a stronger sense of belonging and social cohesion.

If we fail to treat everyone in society equally from a needs-perspective:

- Polarization may increase.
- Discrimination among different migrants and refugee groups may increase.
- Self-esteem and mental health problems may increase in the target group.
- Distrust within society may increase and create tensions.
- Trust towards the NS may decrease.

What is the current situation?

Equality and inclusion are joint and interconnected goals for the Nordic NS. It does not seem to be clear to all members of our target group and many stakeholders that the Red Cross supports all refugees or migrants equally, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, nationality or legal status. This is particularly the case when a new group of asylum seekers or migrants begins to arrive in our country. All of the Nordic NS have dealt with newly arrived refugees and migrants, and have seen the unequal treatment of Ukrainian refugees and other groups in society.

What are the challenges/gaps?

- Not always performing the necessary assessments before starting activities on a local level (branches).
- In some places, volunteers start a new activity based on their own wishes or resources rather than on the needs of the target group.
- We want to support our volunteers and initiatives in their work, but in some cases this might be in conflict with the needs of the target group or the quality standards of our activities.
- The availability of information in more languages is also a challenge.
- National legislation and the public sentiment in some cases treat groups differently in terms of opportunities and entitlement.

Recommendations from the network

1. Develop guidelines with checklists to support staff and volunteers in the local branches in their needs assessment.
2. Make it mandatory to use the needs assessment guidelines and checklists.
3. Mandatory training for staff and volunteers about equality, fairness and service based on needs.
4. The Red Cross should be clearer about the expectations we have towards our volunteers when it comes to treating all beneficiaries equally based on needs.
5. Dedicate resources to enable staff to follow up on whether the volunteers follow the Red Cross principles in practice.
6. Look into the potential of using IFRC methods (in adapted, simplified versions).
7. Advocate for the importance of equal treatment of different refugee groups in our dialogue with donors, legislators and in the public debate.

NS examples of how to work with the issue

Denmark

- A national tool (“The Red Cross assessment”) is used at branch level when planning new social activities. This addresses, among other things, the issue of “the needs of the target group vs. the interest of the volunteers”

Finland

- Diversity in the volunteer activities training module for all Red Cross volunteers and staff include a session about equality and its importance in the activities of the Red Cross.

Iceland

- Has translated and adapted the Core Humanitarian Standards (of interagency alliance, including the IFRC) for all programmes, which stresses an equal approach.

Norway

- An online “migration coffee session” with local staff members every three weeks, where we discuss these kinds of issues with about 20-25 staff participants each time.
- Mandatory training for all volunteers in migration activities, talking about equality and dignity.

Sweden

- In the national strategy, it is pointed out that the local branches are obliged (as an important prerequisite) to perform needs assessment on an ongoing basis (we have a tool designed for the branches).
- In core training for volunteers, we highlight the need to talk about core values, equality and dignity.

Denmark and Iceland

- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) is implemented as the mandatory basic method in all social activities, regardless of target group. Both NS have designed training for volunteers with the purpose of giving all volunteers basic skills to act and approach beneficiaries equally, with the same MHPSS mindset. The Icelandic Red Cross also trains other service providers in basic MHPSS and cultural sensitivity, to enable them to provide service with a more equal approach.

All Countries

- Advocacy work in the media and towards stakeholders on the equality of all refugees/migrants.

Key Issue:

4. Cross-sector cooperation

Why is it important for successful integration/inclusion?

Cross-sector cooperation is needed to solve the complex problems we are facing in our societies. Broad commitment is essential; all sectors need to take responsibility, be involved, and work together to create change.

The whole of society must contribute to creating successful integration and social inclusion of refugees and migrants. We also need such cooperation in order to understand the target group, the different roles we play, and how we can complement each other.

When all the different parts of society combine forces, such as the municipality, the NGOs, private companies and associations, we can design activities that are more coherent.

This can enhance efficiency, reduce double work, and better meet the needs of the target group.

What is the current situation?

All of the national Nordic Red Cross societies cooperate with the public authorities and other organisations to a large degree. Some cooperations are long-term, while others are shorter and more ad-hoc. This applies at both national, regional and local level.

Cooperation with the public sector, in particular, is essential for all Nordic countries, and all NS are funded to a large extent via government bodies.

Some of the countries have also collaborated with private companies, such as IKEA (Norway/Denmark), ICA (Sweden), NOVO and housing companies (Denmark/Sweden).

What are the challenges/gaps (a Nordic perspective)?

- It can be challenging to apply the Red Cross principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence consistently when cooperating with other sectors who do not share the same principles.
- It can be challenging to have a service provider role, an advisor role, and an advocacy role when it comes to cooperation with public authorities.
- When working with other organisations, e.g. Save the Children, and advocating for a common cause, the Red Cross will sometimes not make a joint political statement with them. This is due to our special role as an auxiliary organization, and is not always understood by the other organizations.
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of each other's sectors and added values – such as Red Cross principles.
- Different expectations towards the cooperation – thinking the Red Cross can perform activities that are the municipalities' responsibility.
- Ensuring long-term collaboration requires resources that we do not always have.
- Lack of long-term funding agreements.
- Conflicting goals and agendas between sectors.
- The scope of the funding purpose does not fit our mandate.

NS examples of how to work with the issue

Denmark

- Collaboration with the municipalities regarding guardians for unaccompanied minors. The Ministry of Integration informs the municipality that the Red Cross can recruit and train new volunteer guardians.
- Collaboration with other NGOs and the national sports federations. The aim is to ensure that when people with a refugee or migrant background (newcomers) are to start in the sports clubs locally, there will be volunteer trainers who know “how” to greet and include newcomers.

Finland

- The Finnish Red Cross coordinates and develops a Civil Society Network for Reception and Integration, which comprises around 110 members from different NGOs and some authorities, such as relevant ministries or offices. The network aims to foster cooperation and dialogue between civil society and the authorities, for mutual capacity building and improved support and service quality for asylum seekers and recognized refugees. Nationally, the network partners meet quarterly for exchange and coordination of knowledge and best practice.

Iceland

- Contracts on social support for asylum seekers and refugees, respectively, stressing MHPSS and including training efforts for other service providers in MHPSS. Contracts are adapted on the basis of regular consultation of changing needs.
- Children’s Rights Watch: nine agencies working together to further the rights of the child, including the rights and access of refugee and immigrant children.
- Coordinates the national “team on refugee issues” which comprises approximately 30 members from different local and national authorities and NGOs.

Norway

- Three-year collaboration agreement with the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI).
- Collaboration with IKEA, in which we receive money for language teaching, and Fellesverk, where IKEA also wishes participants from the activity to take part in their summer job project for young people.

Sweden

- The programme Socially Sustainable Cities highlights the fact that cooperation between actors on the basis of a Penta-Helix model is preferable. By involving actors from all five sectors of society (public sector, non-profit sector, academia, business and citizens), an opportunity is created to create a genuine impact, as everyone contributes what they are best at. All sectors need to take responsibility, be involved, and work together to create change.
- Local project “Jämlik Hälsa”, a cross-sector collaboration with the University of Malmö, local municipality, Save the Children, TePe and others.

Norway/Denmark

- Written agreements with the municipalities regarding funding and clear expectations towards roles and responsibility. The Norwegian Red Cross has a template that is used by local branches as a framework, and in written agreements with the municipalities.

Recommendations from the network

1. Cross-sector cooperation should be identified in the local assessments, and collaboration partners (including relevant networks) should be included in the early planning phase.
2. Make sure to invest time in understanding each other across sectors and to make the different roles and agendas clear, including the Red Cross mandate.
3. Develop a checklist to support staff and local branches to support collaborative projects.
4. Develop a template for written agreements with the municipalities regarding funding and clear expectations towards roles and responsibilities.
5. Develop templates for written agreements with NGOs/private sector partners to ensure clarity in the various roles and responsibilities.
6. Pay attention to guaranteeing long-term funding agreements, so as to be able to build capacity over time – providing sustainable activities.
7. Pay attention to diverse funding sources – not being dependent on just one donor.
8. Broaden the perspective on how, besides funding, the different companies can contribute to the collaboration, for example through volunteers, pro bono activities, internships and equipment – as well as knowledge and experience sharing.

Other issues to address

It goes without saying that there are relevant issues other than the four presented in this report. At this stage, the Project Group has identified an additional two issues that the group wishes to examine further within the network:

What do we call our target group?

The issue of labelling

All NS in the network are working consciously with how we label the people we wish to support in our activities. Do we call them “beneficiaries”, “participants”, “refugees”, “minorities”, “migrants” or something else entirely? It matters. Certain labels can have an unintended exclusionary effect, which is counterproductive to our efforts to increase social inclusion.

How we define someone is part of letting them know how we view them, and can affect how they view us and even their self-esteem, especially if they belong to a minority group. This can have a negative impact on the solidarity within society and thereby create polarization and counteract integration. It can create an “us” and “them”, based on ethnicity, nationality or residence status. It can also make our activities less appealing to those we intend to help.

How long, for instance, should we continue to refer to a person as a “refugee”? For how long is a person to be called an immigrant/migrant, or second-generation immigrant? Moreover, when we ask someone where they actually come from, it sends the signal that the person asked is not actually from the Nordic country concerned.

The NS are to a large extent aware of the importance of language and of the impact certain words can have in terms of labelling and stigma. An interesting example is how we are now aware that many newly arrived refugees from Ukraine do not like to be called refugees, and while many volunteers and even staff members try not to use this term as a label for this group, we still use it for others.

The Project Group wishes to explore the issue of labelling further, involving the target group themselves.

The potential of using IFRC methods in domestic integration and social inclusion programmes.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has created a range of methods and tools that are being used around the globe, but to a far lesser degree in the developed parts of the world, such as the Nordic countries. These include Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), Community-Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA), and standards such as Core Humanitarian Standards (CSH).

These methods recognize and value community members as equal partners and make sure our beneficiaries’ opinions are heard and used to design and guide our work. The methods identify both the needs and the solutions together with the beneficiary. This contributes towards participation and empowerment, which is important for successful integration and social inclusion, and helps to empower individual participants to take on leadership roles in their communities.

While we do see some examples of the IFRC methods – or parts of them – being used in our domestic programmes in the Nordic NS, it happens to a limited extent.

The Project Group believes that these methods could strengthen our work on inclusion in general, and in particular with some of the key issues presented in this report. We wish to further examine the potential for the increased application of these methods and tools in a Nordic context.



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The whole of society must contribute to creating successful integration and social inclusion of refugees and migrants.