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FOREWORD: ICT & MIGRATION PROJECTS' CLUSTER

Hinano Spreafico (European Research Executive Agency, European Commission, Unit C1. Inclusive Society)

easyRights project is part of a cluster of six projects, all funded under the Horizon 2020 call: H2020-SC6-DT-MIGRATION-06-2018-2019, addressing the challenge of migrant integration through ICT-enabled solutions. This call funded four projects in 2018: [NADINE](#), [MIICT](#), [REBUILD](#) and [MICADO](#), and two in 2019: [EASYRIGHTS](#) and [WELCOME](#).

All six projects have the goal of **designing, developing and deploying tools that address the challenge of migrants' integration** through the co-creation of new or improved ICT-enabled services. Through their methodology and via the developed solutions, the projects of the cluster have the final common aim to **improve migrants' autonomy and inclusion**.

Both the social and the technological aspects are deeply intertwined and coexist as essential components. This is particularly true in easyRights whose consortium is composed by beneficiaries from academia, private enterprises, NGOs and public administration bodies, representing a perfect coverage of all needed sectors, including, to name a few: innovation, design, advanced technologies, migration, social support, entrepreneurship, education.

easyRights share with the other projects of the cluster a methodology that pays special attention to put migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and other users including public sector services, NGOs and other interest groups (all stakeholders groups) at the core of all processes via their co-creative methodology.

In order to do that, the six projects started from the identification of the migrants' needs, by:

- Understanding the migrants personal and family situation, including their legal status, origin, cultural background, skills, language skills, medical records, etc.;
- Matching skills with needs and by designing tailored training programmes;
- Co-creating specific tools.

This approach of co-creation, co-design and co-piloting proved to be essential to the success of any ICT solutions. They all implemented case studies and carried out pilot activities with the migrants for their research in several EU and non-EU countries.

However, as the projects' cluster concluded, all ICT solutions present both opportunities and challenges:

- Opportunities, when an ICT solution allows digital connectivity throughout all migration journey but challenges, because it can lead to social exclusion, in case of inability to use the technology;
- Challenges, when it comes to inappropriate use of IT collected data but opportunity to link users' requirements and needs with skills;

The cluster of projects made sure to assess all legal, ethical and societal effects on the use of technology in migration and to be compliant with regulations such as, GDPR and eIDAS, Tallin Declaration and eGovernment Action Plan.

The adoption of digital technologies must be a focal point of new migrant integration like all other initiatives for people of various educational backgrounds, ages and genders. Some projects noticed that in MS where there is a digital strategy, things move more rapidly, but one of the major challenges when it comes to migrant integration policies in the EU is the lack of latest data, of official statistics, transparency and comparable indicators at a regional and local level. In parallel, full integration of migrants is considered impossible unless the full access to their rights and to the welfare system are guaranteed.

easyRights extraordinary innovative approach proposed with the "Mediation Grammar" has the objective to support in remodelling the administrative procedures towards effective and efficient personalised services to migrants. With its collection of minimum requirements for enforcing the informational rights and enabling full exercise of their citizenship rights, the "Mediation Grammar" will allow migrants to benefit from practical solutions, like reducing linguistic barriers and clarifying administrative procedures.

The cluster of these projects has been overall very successful, thanks to the excellent collaboration established among the six coordinators but, also, through exchanges that took place at the participants' level, in their various tasks. This led them to create joint workshops, events, pilot activities, prepare [common policy events](#), [joint policy whitepaper](#), [news](#), [articles](#), scientific publications, [a book](#) and much else.

The projects have now reached the phase when they must focus on their exploitation and reach out to those that can use their results. It is important that the projects continue the networking, and establish a regular dialogue at local, regional and national level with the targeted stakeholders.

It is crucial that public authorities receive information and understand clearly the benefits of the tools and services developed that will improve the integration of migrants.

A few were the obstacles that the projects faced during implementation: like the lack of resources on the side of the public authorities or the lack of digitalisation skills. However, the advantages provided by the tools and solutions tested by the projects will represent not only an investment in terms of work efficiency and competencies reached by the staff but also, they will allow better management of migrants at local, national and European level.

The preparation of an excellent exploitation plan that take into consideration all the potential obstacles and that is regularly updated, during the course of the project, is essential to ensure a life after the end of the project. This is a benefit in terms of good project implementation and it allows projects to anticipate and address most of the obstacles at early stage. The involvement of the right participants who can take care of these aspects and support along the process is essential.

I encourage all projects to plan well ahead, and secure, after the end of the implementation, additional resources specifically dedicated to exploitation.

However, the projects are not left alone and the European Union supports in this phase as well, with some tools and initiatives openly accessible to successfully ended projects. For instance, the [Horizon Results Platform](#), the [Horizon Results Booster](#), the [Innovation Radar](#), the [Horizon Standardisation Booster](#), have been created specifically to enhance the visibility of projects' results and link the research results to the market. We encourage all projects to apply and benefit from training and consultancy support or just an extra "window for visibility" that can be very valuable when entering the exploitation phase, that represents an obligatory step in EU-funded projects. Indeed, the exploitation plan became a compulsory deliverable in Horizon Europe Programme.

The exceptional work done so far by the cluster has certainly paved the way for an excellent exploitation and will hopefully, be even more visible when the best results will concretely reach the market and make a change at migrants' integration level.

If the "Mediation Grammar" of easyRights will become a standard, this approach will not only have the great potential of providing a concrete support for migrants' integration but will be an exceptional outcome that will also ensure the sustainability of the project overall.

It is for these reasons that easyRights project has already stimulated a large interest among colleagues within the European Institutions and we are eagerly awaiting for its results.

Certainly, this and the other projects' results, as well as the joint work of the **ICT & Migration projects' cluster** will remain a source of inspiration for many other future clusters among EU-funded projects and beyond.

INTRODUCTION: THE ORIGIN OF THE EASYRIGHTS PROJECT

Grazia Concilio (Politecnico di Milano)

In 2017, within the framework of the open4citizens EU project, the MyJourney web application was developed. It provided guidance to immigrants on how to go through the complex administrative procedure in order to apply for and obtain the family reunification permit (Concilio et al., 2020). The procedure is one of the most complex immigrants have to go through to guarantee their family members do not live spread over different countries. The procedure is embedded with several big obstacles as a consequence to the lack of clear, reliable, complete, and correct guidelines. Moreover, the stressful experience due to the ambiguous paths and inadequate information often makes immigrants be exposed to the risk of denial of their applications. Living close to your own family is one of the basic human rights and the way the related services or procedures are made available, explained and/or guided is crucial for it to be guaranteed. How to reduce the risk that immigrants experience the denial and infringement of a right due to mere administrative or bureaucratic reasons? What measures to put in place to make rights guaranteed to human beings entitled to? Making rights guaranteed to immigrants is the first crucial step towards their societal integration which can be seen as one unique wide right including all the others.

Within this perspective, the easyRights project conceived services and procedures interfaces between immigrants and their rights and coherently aimed at easing immigrants' access to rights they are entitled to by reducing the number of obstacles they have to overcome when interacting with them.

The easyRights perspective

The "right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1968) is everyday challenged by the capacity of cities to guarantee access to rights and especially to the basic rights shaping the conditions for different forms of citizenship (Amin and Thrift, 2002) whereas the concept of the city is associated to the one of "a society in which all persons are similarly free to fulfill their own desires and in which all are supported in doing so" (Marcuse, 2010: 88). In this perspective the easyRights project looks at immigrants' integration from the point of view of the capacity of services and procedures to guarantee immigrants to exercise their rights.

"Rights are normally considered valid if there is someone with counterparty obligations. In the meantime, the validity of the rights seems to be interpretable and enforceable within relations and/or interactions with the mechanisms put in place to guarantee the rights themselves; the mandatory existence of such mechanisms implies the existence of the value of rights. As a matter of fact, we normally consider null, indeed indefinite, claims or rights that cannot be guaranteed by any mechanism, which no one is obliged to honor or cannot be implemented. If we look at rights as an artefact that interprets human aspirations and desires, it is possible to run the risk of moving into the domain of their invalidity due to the lack of mechanisms ("how") and subjects ("who") that obligatorily guarantee them. Otherwise, if we look at rights as a normative artefact, it is possible to look at rights from the point of view of the obligations to be considered in order to guarantee them. That is why, within a

regulatory approach to rights, mechanisms and/or subjects obliged to guarantee them are fundamental (see O'Neill 2005)." (Concilio et al, 2022: 3/17)

For cities to be plural systems, prone to societal integration in an era of unprecedented growing migration flows, the creation and diffusion of mechanisms and subjects that contribute to integration by guaranteeing people's rights is fundamental. The easyRights project worked exactly in this direction by looking at services as touchpoints of mechanisms or subjects entitled to guarantee people's rights, and their ease of access determines the value and tangibility of these rights. The idea of services and procedures as interfaces between people and their rights is not widely debated but the link between services and human rights has been explored in the years of the worldwide process of the privatization of public services (Sullivan 1987; Moe 1987). Considering services interfaces towards rights is therefore not a novelty and has proved to be a fertile analogy to manage service design and development.

Few facts about the project

The easyRights project received funds from the European Commission within the framework of the Horizon2020 program, Societal challenge 6 "Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Society". It started in January 2020 and had the overarching objective to develop a co-creation ecosystem in which different actors belonging to the local governance system can cooperate to improve the quality of public services used by, and available to, immigrants. It has been implemented in four pilot locations namely Birmingham (UK), Larissa (GR), Palermo (IT), and Malaga (ES) by targeting two services/procedures in each of them. The project has adopted a co-design approach throughout the entire project implementation so including immigrants in the mapping of the service-related pathways, in the identification of procedural or practical problems and obstacles they experience throughout the service/procedure interaction, in the design of some of the solution through hackathon initiatives and, finally in the testing of all the solutions. In doing so, easyRights has supported immigrants in their search for responses to different needs, making them more autonomous—at least to some extent—from discretionary street-level bureaucracies. Indeed, this creates for both migrants and public service providers the condition to save time thus contributing to cutting the cost in time and long waiting periods to process the application which undoubtedly has a direct effect on the socio-economic living conditions of migrants as well as public administrations and society as a whole.

The easyRights project has developed a twofold set of solutions: a chatbot guiding (im)migrants along through the different services' pathways (pathway-based service guidance) and connecting to service-related linguistic support tools (to improve the language accessibility of the service); additional tools have been developed across hackathons processes and events solving very specific operational problems faced by migrants throughout the interaction with the service/procedure.

In addition to the work done on specific services, the project has also developed a set of policy guidelines to mainstream the relevance of human rights literacy in service design, development, and provision¹. In addition, the project has started the process for the creation of a standard to evaluate public services within the framework of social integration of immigrants in Europe. We define it as the Mediation Grammar as a collection of minimum requirements for public services to guarantee the rights of immigrant with the main aim to provide a common basis for the harmonization of public services throughout Europe. All these abovementioned achievements and our successes are described in more detailed in the following pages.

¹ Human Rights Literacy in Service Design and Supply: The easyRights Policy Recommendations: <https://zenodo.org/record/6969064#.Y3eXCezMITV>

A personal note

As coordinator of the easyRights project I want to express my immense gratitude to all the partners who have transformed the whole experience into an incredible learning opportunity for me personally, for themselves and for all those who have been involved along the project activities. I also want to thank Hinano Spreafico, the project officer, who guided me and the whole project consortium up to its conclusion especially across the COVID 19 pandemic and across unexpected challenges like the CEN (European Committee for Standardization) workshop showed to be.

Last but not least I need to thank Maryam Karimi who supported the coordination activities with incredible energy and competence, making the sunshine everyday along the 35 months of the project duration.

Coping with the pandemic: the governance of public service provision for migrants in four European cities

Federica Zardo (University for Continuing Education Krems); Lydia Rössl (University for Continuing Education Krems); Christina Khoury (University for Continuing Education Krems)

A survey conducted in late 2020 by the EU Share advocacy network (SHARE Network, 2021) reported that the lack of access to basic services “due both to legal status (particularly undocumented persons) and to services moving to online/telephone provision without accompanying translation or interpretation” played a big part among the key impacts of Covid-19 on refugees and migrants. This was also confirmed by research on digital services and on the “racialized consequences” (Arias Cubas et al., 2022) of closures and lockdowns (Slootjes, 2022). These analyses identify both similarities and differences in terms of responses provided throughout Europe, yet less is known about the dynamics leading to those outcomes. How did Covid-19 impact the governance of public service provision for migrants and refugees? What accounts for different coping mechanisms?

This paper answers these questions. Based on the Horizon2020 project easyRights, which aims at improving migrants’ access to public services in four European pilot cities (Birmingham, Malaga, Larissa and Palermo), we compared the strategies, practices, and instruments put forward by all the actors of the services’ ecosystems, namely public administrations, service owners, support organisations and users to adapt to Covid-induced disruptions and provide public services for migrants’ integration. Moreover, assuming that embeddedness (Masden, 1981) and the relevance of stable relations that have grown over time within an organization (or a network) shape the options of actions of network actors, we disentangled the conditions that are conducive to more or less adaptive capacity in service provision.

Governance is not easy in the best of times. The tasks involved in delivering public services and in dealing with a potentially hostile environment place significant demands on any set of would-be governors. Those demands are exacerbated when governance confronts a crisis (Peters, 2021), and the pandemic is one of those wicked events “characterized by high consequentiality, limited time, high political salience, uncertainty, and ambiguity”. While actors involved in the governance of migrant integration are not new to crises and emergencies, Covid-19 has put additional pressure on systems that are extremely reliant on close (and physical) collaboration and whose institutional structures are, in many cases throughout Europe, still

in the making. As a global crisis that has affected all areas of life (Hu, 2020) the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the difficulties for refugees, migrants, and those who work with them, particularly for extremely vulnerable subgroups such as

refugee children, precarious workers, irregular migrants and migrant women. Moreover, it has also impacted several countries with varying degrees of severity, and has revealed structural and social difficulties, including the collapse of public trust in government and in expert advice, which was exacerbated by a surge of mis- and disinformation. This fast-paced environment necessitated innovative responses from integration stakeholders and actors across Europe (OECD, 2022). While quick and decisive policy measures were urgently required, the pandemic has thrown countries off their customary tracks. In 2020, when lockdown and social-distance measures were implemented, many in-person services that form the core of integration policies were halted, and the day-to-day activity of governments and civil-society organisations relocated online. This presented new opportunities, but impeded the participation of migrants, policymakers, and other stakeholders with poor digital access or literacy. An online survey conducted jointly by CoR-OECD in 2020, carried out among representatives of regional, intermediate and municipal governments throughout the EU representing 24 countries showcased interesting results on the impact of COVID-19 on regional and local governments. Most of the respondents (63%) anticipated that the socio-economic crisis caused by COVID-19 would have a considerable negative impact on subnational governments, especially on their finances in the short and medium terms. According to respondents, some of the biggest problems in dealing with the health crisis were a lack of technical means and equipment, limited financial resources at the subnational level, and a lack of coordination with other levels of government. The vast majority of responders agreed that it was difficult. Fewer than half of those surveyed believed that communication between local and national administrations was efficient enough to face this challenge. Furthermore, providing adequate and dedicated money to subnational governments, as well as clearly and publicly clarifying duties and responsibilities among levels of government, were two ways that national governments can aid subnational governments in executing recovery measures. The survey also indicated that COVID-19 might alter regional development policy goals on the middle and long term. While each crisis presents its unique set of difficulties, many of these issues are universal and apply in a variety of institutional settings: crisis management necessitates the adoption of preventative measures, which are unpopular in normal times, as well as the development of a plan for responding to an emergency and, most importantly, an appropriate policy response. Evidence from the OECD demonstrates that the management of modern, complex crisis, requires the participation of numerous actors beyond emergency services. This necessitates coordination and raises governance issues, given that crisis management activities are frequently led and supervised by government centres but implemented at subnational levels. Moreover, the administrative capacities and the institutional structure of the government in each country may play a role in coping with complex problems.

Based on the easyRights project, we zoomed in on how Covid-19 has changed, if at all, the governance of public services for migrants. Unlike the main analyses conducted so far as the pandemic unfolded, we don't look at the access to health services but focus on a wider range of services that are part and parcel of the governance of integration, such as applications for citizenship and residence permits, requests for work-related certificates, access to education or application for asylum. We therefore explore the actors involved in the provision of public services for migrants, their roles, types of interaction and practices to assess how and to what extent they coped with the pandemic. Did the pandemic lead to institutional adjustments to the governance system in each country? Moreover, based on this analysis and drawing on a combination of the multilevel governance and public governance literatures, we seek to explain the similarities and differences among the easyRights pilot cities observed, namely Birmingham (United Kingdom), Larissa (Greece), Malaga (Spain) and Palermo (Italy). We assume that two main variables factor in the capacity of integration governance systems to react to unexpected and complex events such as a global pandemic, the first being the network-based or hierarchical structure of the services' ecosystem and the second the "dynamic capabilities" of the actors to engage with each other, learn and take decisions.

The first variable affecting the capacity of governance systems to react to unexpected events is their organizational structure. Service ecosystems might be flatter, modularized, and easily integrated, or rather large, compartmentalized, and insulated hierarchies. Marsden (1981) uses the concept of embeddedness in

network theory to claim that the history of exchange has an impact on the routinisation and stabilisation of relations between members. The structures that have grown and stabilized over time affect and constrain the options for actions of involved actors. Along similar lines, but in the realm of migration and integration, the literature on multilevel governance looks at the polity structure, and actors' relationships more specifically, to understand its implications for policy making process and outcomes. Within the multilevel governance academic debate, the so called localist thesis argues that local policies are shaped by local conditions such as local problems (immigration numbers, economy, demographics, etc.), local political variables including the power relations among local political parties, and governance relations with civil society organisations. The proponents of the relational thesis, conversely, argue that local migrant integration policies are not so much or not only shaped by local conditions, but rather by the relations between states and local authorities. Scholten (2016), for instance, argues that vertical policy coordination fosters frame convergence, while an absence of coordination may lead to contradictory policies. Following these arguments, we conjecture that network-based systems (Birmingham, Palermo) will be faster to cope with the challenges of the crisis than more hierarchical environments (Larissa and Malaga). Based on our cases, the cities of Birmingham and Palermo fall within the first category, while the municipalities of Larissa and Malaga display more centralized ecosystems.

Beyond the formal structure of the governance system, we assume that the nature of the relations between local governments and the variety of actors involved in the provision of public services, including migrants as main recipients, matter for crisis response. Public administration and organizational behaviour's scholars argue that dynamic capabilities (Mazzucato and Kattel, 2020), intended as the ways in which governments engage with citizens, learn and take decisions, provide clues for understanding organizational transformations and institutional reactions to new challenges. Crisis management responses, as a consequence, may be conditioned by the nature of multi-actor collaboration and citizens' participation in policy-making processes (Ansel et al., 2021). We therefore expect that cities displaying more collaborative forms of governance (Speer, 2012) adapted faster to the shock caused by Covid-19.

We examined how the cities of Birmingham, Larissa, Malaga and Palermo reacted to the Covid-19 crisis in the provision of public services for migrants and refugees. To tackle the how, we confronted the empirical record with the manifestations of the outcome, namely adaptive capacity in public service provision from 2020 to 2022. We found that Birmingham and Malaga displayed a medium to high level of adaptive capacity, while Larissa and Palermo displayed a Medium to Low level of adaptive capacity. To understand why public administrations reacted as they did in delivering public services, we performed a controlled comparison of the four cases. We observed that, while both conditions matter for the level of adaptive capacity in public services' provision, the structure of governance is more likely to constrain or trigger coping strategies.

Our findings corroborate – and advance, by comparing the impact of these two conditions - recent research on crisis management in multi-level settings, arguing that the capacity of local governments to manage pandemic challenges largely relied on well-distributed and comprehensive competences across levels (Kuhlmann et al., 2021) and on the quality of their network cooperation with other administrations and with the civil society (Schomaker and Bauer, 2020).

Co-creation as a research method

Nicola Morelli, Aalborg University

The easyRight project aims at redesigning some key services that represent the interface between citizens and their rights (Concilio et al., 2022). This concept becomes crucial when the citizens are migrants arriving in Europe, who often experience barriers of different kinds when trying to access those services. EasyRights focused on a number of services that are crucial for the settlement of migrants in their new location and for their integration in the local community: services like registry office, residence, or job finding. The accessibility problems may derive from their poor proficiency in the local language, but also from the way the service is organized and from a complex bureaucratic process, which is often representing a problem also for local citizens. The easyRights project team worked on the identification and reduction of the barriers that prevent or delay migrants' access to their legitimate rights. The aim of easyRights was to develop a co-creation ecosystem that could aggregate actors with different profiles, experience, skills and knowledge, with the aim of increasing the accessibility of public services for migrants. The actors to aggregate around this purpose were not only the migrants, but also key personnel from the local governance system, service providers, and from the numerous services, often based on volunteer work, that at present are supporting migrants in their effort to overcome such barriers.

A service design approach: The service design approach introduced in this project is human- and user-centred, as it looks at the way services are experienced by its users and how the human factor impacts on the way services are actually accessed. On the basis of this perspective, the easyRights project proposes to improve the organization and quality of such services. Service design starts from the experience of the user – the citizens, the migrants - in his/her journey through the service, highlighting their needs, and also encouraging their participation. The Engagement of citizens in the co-design and co-creation of the solution is crucial, because it implies the activation and the inclusion in the solution of a kind of implicit knowledge that would not be visible from a service provider perspective, nor would emerge from a simple analysis of the service procedure. Citizen participation is operationalized through a co-creation methodological approach. This approach has been applied at many levels in this project:

- Co-creation has been the approach that oriented the collaboration among the members of the research consortium, and
- Co-creation has been the approach that leads to the collaboration between the network of heterogeneous actors working in the pilot locations, to improve the quality of some key services.

Co-creation within the consortium members: The consortium was formed by representatives of different areas of the context surrounding migrants and the public services they are supposed to access. It included support associations, personnel working in municipal services, lawyers, researchers and technical experts working on digital solutions. This diversity corresponded to an extreme diversity also in the way of looking at the problems, interpreting services or even approaching the theme of service innovation. Public service officers, for instance may see a service on the basis of their compliance with bureaucratic procedures, while migrants, or people assisting them, may see the deficiency in such procedures, the gaps or the contradictions in the organization of the service, and often pay the consequence of the lack of proper organization of the service process. Both the perspectives are relevant and useful to the project, as they imply different (implicit or codified) knowledge that should be taken into account in the project. The co-creation approach has been used in this context not only to generate workable outcomes, but also to come to a common language, a shared perspective on the problems to solve and to work out an approach that best supports migrants' - or even local citizens' – access to the service. In other words, within the project team, co-creation has been used to frame the problem.

Co-creation within the pilots' ecosystems: Innovation in services to migrants required that an ecosystem of heterogeneous actors be engaged and brought together in a common effort to discuss the critical steps that reduce service accessibility, in order to find a shared solution. Here too, co-creation has been a way to bring together and force collaboration among different cultures, knowledge, competences and perspectives. This form of collaboration has been possible through the organization of two cycles of hackathons in each pilot location: Birmingham, Larissa, Malaga and Palermo. The hackathons were therefore a central phase in the project.

Hackathons are a suggestive concept that evokes a creative cooperation atmosphere, however the easyRights hackathons were more similar to civic hackathons (Robinson and Johnson, 2016). They were open not just coding experts – those who are going to find a solution - but also to a number of actors that have direct knowledge of the problem to solve: the “problem owners”. Furthermore, the easyRights hackathons differ from the most commonly known hackathons in the nature of the problem definition. While “mainstream” hackathons are often open to any solution, and even the definition of the problem is often very broad, the easyRights hackathons aimed at addressing very specific problems, also with a specific indication of some technological solutions that could be used in the service resulting from the hackathon. The Project was indeed proposing technical solutions such as an AI-based application that identifies and classifies the service pathway (i.e. the procedure suggested by the existing norms), and solutions to address language knowledge and pronunciation. This form of civic hackathon presented a much higher level of complexity than the “mainstream” hackathons. Such complexity needed to be addressed through a “package” of activities including a pre-hack phase, the hackathon event and, after the hackathon event, in a post-hack phase, in which the hackathon’s result is developed and integrated in the existing municipal services. Although central in the project, the hackathon events were therefore part of a larger co-design process that involved the whole consortium since the earliest phases. The **pre-hack phase** engaged all the project team members in an intense work of preparation and tuning-up. It started with an initial identification of the services to work on, followed by the analysis of the service pathway to diagnose the gaps, barriers, and to define the key procedures and documents that could feed the AI pathway application. Furthermore, in this phase the relevant stakeholders were mapped, to highlight those who have a critical role in the service provision or in the assistance to the migrants. It is crucial that those stakeholders be invited to take an active part in the hackathon event. In other words the three essential pillars were defined in this phase:

1. The challenge (i.e. the service to focus on in the hackathon events),
2. The people (i.e. the potential participants to the hackathon),
3. And the technical aspects.

As mentioned before, the pre-hack phase was also important to come to a common perspective on the problems to solve. A common tool to align the team members’ vision was the service journey (Olmo and Morelli, 2022), i.e. a narrative step-by-step explanation of the project. Here the service journey was reporting different views of the service: a narrative view of how the service was supposed to run and to be accessed by the migrant and a parallel narrative view of what actually happens in each phase of the service. The discrepancy between the official procedure and the actual experience made it easy to identify

- A problem: the challenge to propose to the hackathon
- The stakeholders associated with the critical steps and to be invited in the hackathon
- And the documents or relevant technology used in the critical steps, which should be considered in the hackathon solution.

The **hackathon events** lasted 3 days and followed a similar structure: in the first day the challenge was introduced and, at the end of the day the team’s initial ideas were discussed; the second day focused on the

idea development and iteration, and the last day for the final iterations, presentation, and selection of the winning ideas. The jury was composed of local administrators; this created a further opportunity to involve representatives of the public administration that could not be involved during the hackathon. The service journeys were also used in the hackathon event, to introduce the service and to explain the migrants' experience, especially in relation to the discrepancies between the official and the actual procedure. The journeys were also an important reference for the experts supporting the team, as they triggered the feedback and discussion on the solutions. The **post-hackathon** phase started as soon as the events concluded and lasted some additional months to allow the teams to start an active collaboration with the service owners and the municipal offices.

In conclusion, the co-creation approach was used in every phase of the easyRights project not only as a tool to create new solutions, but also to frame the problems and to align knowledge, experience and expertise in a network of heterogeneous stakeholders. The relevance of co-creation in this process becomes evident when observing how problems and solutions emerging from the co-design activity exceeded the knowledge and experience of each of the participants. The use of service design tools, such as stakeholders maps and service journeys was very important to align the perspectives of such heterogeneous actors and to highlight the different points of view in the provision and the fruition of services. The feedbacks and the observations from the participants, especially from the representative of public services, suggest that the interaction among the actors in the co-design process provides a clearer view of the opportunities to improve the existing services, possibly extending the advantages of the renewed services also to local citizens, which are often experiencing the same accessibility problems described by the migrants.

Towards a European Standard for inclusive public services

Francesco Molinari, Politecnico di Milano

Francesco Molinari's presentation was a call for action to join the ongoing work of a Technical Committee (CEN Workshop) run under the auspices of UNI (the Italian national standard body) named "Mediation Grammar: a standard to enable migrants' integration".

The Mediation Grammar (MG) is largely a work in progress although in an advanced state of elaboration. It is conceived of as a standard for evaluating public services to the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (but more generally, to all citizens) and therefore guiding European public administration to design and implement services that are more respectful of their needs.

It is a collection of minimum, rather than maximum requirements for enforcing the rights to information and fair and equitable access to services of any foreigner who enters the EU legally.

The MG aims to provide a common basis for the harmonisation of public services to migrants and refugees throughout Europe. It is agnostic with respect to the way a public service is organised, notably with respect to the degree of its digitalisation. Therefore, it acknowledges and, if possible, supports the daily work of the so-called "cultural mediators" - professionals usually belonging to NGOs who work with local authorities and public agencies to help bridge the gap between immigrants and their host communities and societies.

To define the MG concept, we took benefit from three sources of inspiration: the US Federal government's Common Core State Standards Initiative; the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for language learning, teaching and assessment; and the vision of the easyRights project directly linking local public services to the migrants with the protection and enhancement of human rights.

The concept has three building blocks: language accessibility, information adequacy, and actualisation of rights, which are joined in a single framework. Measurement is entrusted to a summative testing methodology, adopting a similar approach to the CEFR for the evaluation of language proficiency.

The obligation of government bodies and agencies to grant the same high-level standard of public service supply to beneficiaries irrespective of their locations, and of the location of service providers acting under the same rule of law, is complementary to the right of each legal or natural person to gain the same level of access the public services they are entitled to demand, no matter of the city, county, or region, where those are provided.

Such a non-discrimination principle is notably enounced in art. 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights and in art. 21 of the European Charter for Fundamental Rights as well as embedded in the EU Dublin Regulation on asylum (No. 604/2013), which operates on the assumption that, as the asylum laws and practices of the EU Member States are based on the same common standards, they should allow asylum seekers to enjoy similar levels of protection in all EU Member States. This principle also underlies the European Commission's Action plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2021, which promotes inclusion for all, recognises the important contribution of migrants to the EU and addresses the barriers that can hinder participation and inclusion of people with a migrant background, from newcomers to citizens, in the European society. The plan is built on the principle that inclusive integration requires efforts from both the person and the host community side.

The MG aims to achieve an extension of the non-discrimination principle to all basic public services that regular immigrants have the right to access and take benefit from, irrespective of their port of disembarkment, on the

territory of any EU Member State, because of their acknowledged legal status (therefore, ignoring the case of irregular migrants), which puts them in a position of equality of treatment with respect to the nationals of the Member State concerned. Examples of such basic services include: application for a certificate of residence, request for a tax identification number, renewal of a work permit etc., up to applying for the gateways to access the host country's education, health and social care systems.

With respect to such, probably quite long, list of basic public services, the MG identifies three dimensions of mediation in public service delivery – language accessibility, information adequacy, and actualization of rights – each having three sub-dimensions, which are considered as mostly responsible for the enforcement of the non-discrimination principle.

Then the standard defines what gaps can be observed in the level of empowerment of different types of beneficiaries: regular immigrants, foreign expats, refugees and asylum seekers, compared with the nationals of the EU Member State where a service provider is located. Finally, it provides suggestions on the possible correlations between the observed gaps and the underlying service organisation(s), which can be compared in different ways:

- Across time, within the same location, as a derivative of e.g. a different composition of the population of intended users;
- At the same point of time, between different locations, after controlling for the different compositions of the respective intended user populations;
- Across or at the same point of time, within the same location, but with a special focus on the intertwining of some basic public services, which are preparatory for or conditional to the successful fruition of others.

The ongoing Technical Committee (CEN Workshop) is working to deliver a summative testing methodology, accompanied by operational guidelines and procedures, for service analysts willing to generate comparable information on usage (and outcomes thereof) across beneficiary types, service provider identities and locations, both within and across EU Member States, thus promoting further harmonization and convergence of outcomes, without staying unnecessarily focused on the perceived differences between the various possible organisations or service delivery modes.

This methodology focuses on the extent to which basic public services are provided in a non-discriminatory manner to their intended beneficiaries, including, but not limited to, foreign expats, regular immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, with a special focus on their level of empowerment. This is defined by the ISO/TR 21276:2018 as “the [process of] expansion of people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them”.

Work started from the identification of three dimensions of service delivery that pose the most crucial challenges to intended users when trying to deal with the official gateways to service access and usage, in order to reach their personal goals:

- (1) Language accessibility – the extent to which the service provider’s organisation compensates for the poor understanding of local language, and especially legal jargon, that immigrants (but also poorly educated native citizens) may experience and that prevents them from grasping the details of the administrative procedures to be followed to exercise their rights;
- (2) Information adequacy – the extent to which the service provider’s organisation complements the immigrants’ capabilities to find and follow the correct pathways to gain access to public services, while at the same time solving any technical/procedural problems that may arise in this endeavour; and

(3) Actualisation of rights – the extent to which the service provider’s organisation takes into account the extent, depth and connectedness of services, which may require from the beneficiary’s side a special capacity to explore, navigate and interact with them, especially when the fruition of one is preparatory to accessing another.

A qualifying aspect of the methodology is to remain agnostic in terms of the ways a certain government body or agency sets itself up to deliver a certain basic service (with or without a complete automation/digitalisation, with or without the support of mediators/NGOs, with or without ‘sufficient’ endowment of qualified and experienced staff, etc.), and only focus on the observed gaps in the degrees of user empowerment, from the perspective of intended beneficiaries. The measurement of such gaps and the resulting reflections on which outputs are delivered and how, should help the public service provider (body or agency):

(1) From the point of view of **language accessibility**, to create the conditions for foreign expats, regular immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and more generally intended users of a service, including those who are fluent in the official language of the host country:

(1.1) basic vocabulary knowledge, to understand the technical/administrative keywords or short sentences associated with the instructions on how to access a certain service, when reading the texts provided to them in paper form or as online contents;

(1.2) pronunciation intelligibility, to be able to verbally interact with the assistant at the service desk (either a human being or a virtual bot), making sure that a different pronunciation of certain words is not an impediment to good communication;

(1.3) linguistic and cultural mediation to ask and receive, if and when required, individual support of competent staff (from public sector organisations and/or NGOs) in the absence of dedicated measures bridging the above gaps.

(2) From the point of view of **information adequacy**, to create the conditions for providing to immigrants, and more generally service beneficiaries:

(2.1) preliminary orientation, i.e. giving to newbies or unaware immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers a global overview of where to find answers to which questions/needs;

(2.2) specific advice, i.e. putting intended users in the best possible conditions to overcome the technical and educational/cultural barriers to access and/or utilise available services in their full potential;

(2.3) helpdesk and troubleshooting, i.e. providing continuous support to the fruition of (especially the natively digital or digitalised) public services designed for them.

(3) From the point of view of **actualisation of rights**, to create the conditions for ensuring the capacity, or ability, of service users (foreign expats, immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, but also nationals in some cases) to take benefit of:

(3.1) the full range of available services to them, without any exclusion or exception that is unrelated to their legal status (Horizontal actualisation);

(3.2) the full extent (coverage or intensity) of any service they are entitled to access, without any limitation, restriction or interruption that is not due to objective and documented reasons (Vertical actualisation);

(3.3) the possibility of conditional access to additional/derived services, that is the fruition of a service, which is dependent on first accessing another one. Example: until an ID card is obtained there will be no way to rent a flat or formalise a regular work contract (Extended actualization).

The MG may prove useful in a number of concrete instances, such as the following:

- When public service providers intend to collect, directly from the field, valid and reliable metrics of user empowerment, additional to the conventional KPIs in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction, in order to identify improvement areas for the current organisation and/or compare their performance with other providers of identical, similar or different services within the same country or in different countries.
- When the composition of intended users undertakes dramatic changes, such as because of a sudden alternance of the countries of origin of immigration phenomena (for example: after the outbreak of the Ukrainian war), and the question may be if the current organisation and delivery mode needs changes to comply with new or modified requirements of the intended users.
- When the government body or agency undertakes a significant transformation of the service delivery modes, such as moving from analogue to digital delivery, or internalising/externalising some parts of the management from/to NGOs, and this can generate the necessity (or opportunity) to assess with objective means whether intended users are receiving the same standard of quality or not.
- To improve accountability towards government stakeholders, including civil society and higher-level tiers of public administration.

Without prejudice of the traditional approaches of verifying the implementation of EU law, our proposal fits into the complementary and neutral evaluation mechanism described by art 70 TFEU, notably for the EU borders' asylum and migration policies. Such a mechanism – which requires a close cooperation between the European Commission and the Member States – has already been designed for the evaluation of the Schengen *acquis* and cooperation. For the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) it is foreseen by art. 14 and 15 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and should be established before the end of 2023 (art. 73, 2nd paragraph).

A consensus-based CEN Workshop Agreement may be the first step towards successive more binding regulatory mechanisms leading to mutual recognition and progressive harmonisation of Member States' administrative practices in these domains. A strong potential also derives from the association to this endeavour of EU Municipalities and NGOs supporting immigrants' successful entry and integration in the EU society.

Pilots' narratives in the easyRights project

Maria Vitaller (Aalborg University); Fareeda Akbar (Birmingham City Council); Theodora Dimitriou (Municipality of Larissa); Angela Errore (Municipality of Palermo), and Jared Gray (Christar Malaga)

Introduction

Aiming at facilitating migrants' access to their own existing rights, the four pilots of the easyRights project – Birmingham (UK), Larissa (Greece), Malaga (Spain), and Palermo (Italy) – entered into two cycles of activities to re-design some of the public services migrants struggle with when arriving at their locations. The pilots addressed two main issues: (1) reducing the language barriers to accessing public services and (2) investigating and changing services to reduce/eliminate bottlenecks or useless bureaucratic issues. In particular, each of the pilot cities selected two services that present problems for migrants when interacting with them, represented in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Targeted services at each local pilot

To undertake the endeavor, easyRights applied a participatory approach, using civic hackathons as a strategy to find solutions to re-formulate the experience of migrants accessing public services (see more in easyRights First Hackathon Report, 2021, and easyRights Second Hackathon Report, 2022). Traditionally, hackathons are described as the intense and rapid design and development events at which

attendees work to propose solutions for the presented challenges or innovative uses of facilitated databases. Often in 2-3 days spans (most cases a weekend), teams of participants produce technical working solutions that are then presented, evaluated, and potentially awarded. In the case of the easyRights hackathons, the scope, participants, and format differed from mainstream hackathons, shaping a particular project working framework.

The scope. Instead of being focused on exploring the possibilities of new technologies or data sets, easyRights hackathons targeted the re-design of existing services to ease migrants’ experience when using them, resembling the so-called issue-oriented hackathons (Lodato and DiSalvo, 2015) and civic hackathons (Carr and Lassiter, 2017; Concilio et al., 2017; Robinson and Johnson, 2016; Seravalli and Simeone, 2016). The complex and systemic purpose of the event required also a more holistic perspective in the engagement of groups of participants and the most suitable format to guarantee the intended service transformation. Lodato & DiSalvo (2016), describe issue-oriented hackathons as events that, rather than focusing on a technical platform, are organized ‘around a social topic or context, such as environmental wellbeing, food systems, or citizenship’. Similarly, civic hackathons would be a type of issue-oriented hackathon, as Robinson and Johnson (2016) characterize them as ‘time-intensive, civic-focused topic events convened to put data sets, often municipal open data, into active use through the creation of mobile device applications with civic/community intentions’.

The participation. While traditional hackathons are mostly attended by technical profiles – coders, hackers, and other technical experts –, the scope of easyRights to improve existing services that prevented migrants from exercising their roles called for a wider crowd of participants. As a result, solution owners (those with the technical expertise to develop working solutions) teamed up with problem owners (those with first-hand knowledge and expertise about the service functioning and necessary solutions) during the hackathons. Stakeholder participation and engagement (particularly migrants affected by the targeted services) were in the easyRights essence. Therefore, migrants were constant at each step of the process, from the analysis of how the services were working to the development and integration of improvements in the existing services. Together with migrants, other stakeholders that were part of the services’ ecosystems – such as decision-makers, organizations supporting migrants, lawyers, or social workers – took part in the project’s co-design activities (Figure 2).

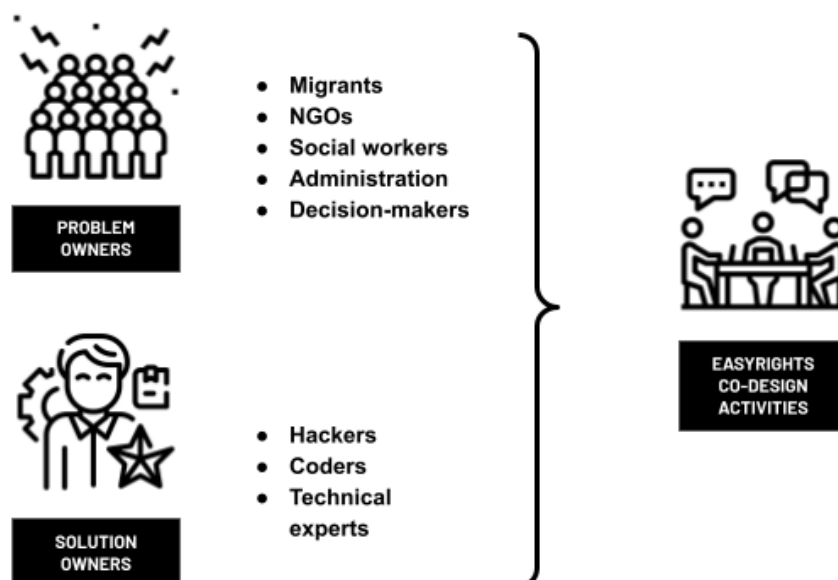


Figure 2: Participants of the easyRights’ codesign activities

The format. In order to support the above-mentioned groups of stakeholders to reach the ambitious goal of improving the access of migrants to public services in the local pilots, the consortium developed a working framework (Figure 3) with specific activities that embedded principles from participatory design, co-design, and civic hackathons. During the pre-hackathon, the project activities at each pilot were mainly oriented to understand the functioning of the service, and the experience of migrants when interacting with it. Those activities set the ground for the identification of the challenges that participants of the hackathons were asked to propose solutions to. During the hackathon events, the groups of participants were supported by a group of experts that advised them on both technical and topic-specific issues, facilitating the teams' progress. Additionally, teams were introduced to the easyRights technical solutions – Capeesh, Calst, and the Pathway Generator (see next chapter of this publication). Those solutions, developed by the technical partners of the project, were intended to ease some of the common barriers migrants find when accessing services. While Capeesh and Calst focus on the language barrier, the Pathway Generator provides a simple overview of the often too-complex bureaucratic service procedures. The hackathon participants had the opportunity to integrate the easyRights solutions in their proposed prototypes to facilitate some specific issues of the particular local service. At the end of the hackathons, a winning team was awarded a 3 months contract to work together with the local service providers, the consortium technical team, and the pilot representatives in the development and integration of the solution in the existing service (post-hackathon).

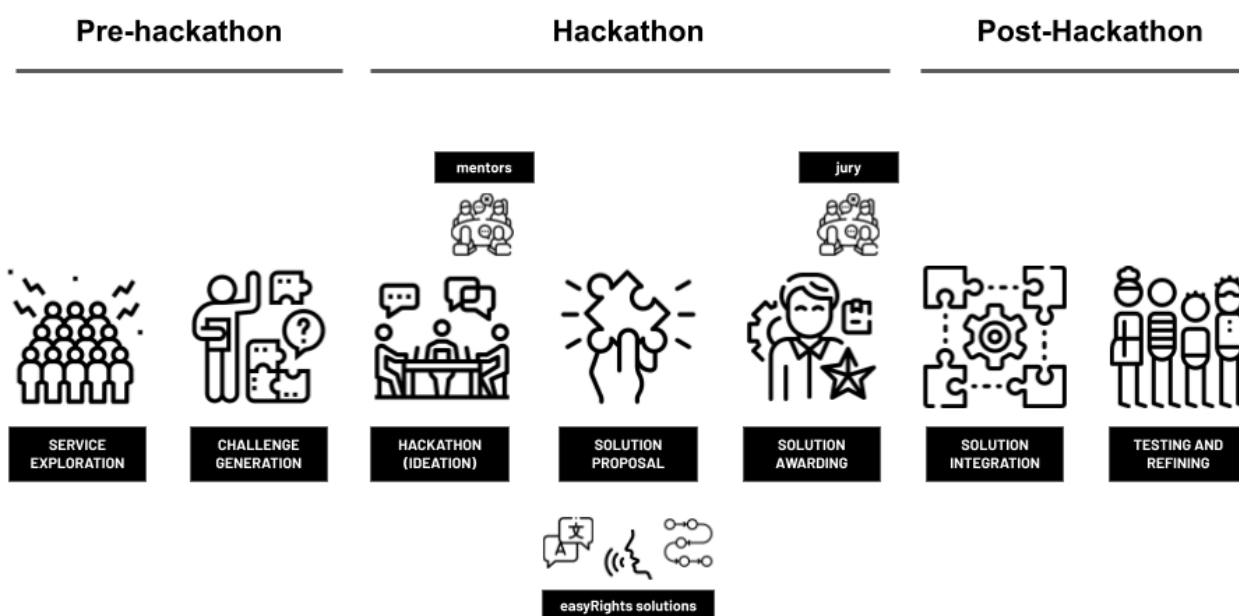


Figure 3: The easyRights hackathon cocreation activities are divided into 3 stages: pre-hackathon, hackathon, and post-hackathon

After experiencing two cycles of activities targeting the improvement of two different public services, the stories and results of the pilots' representatives illustrate some of the main values and impact generated in their local environment throughout the easyRights project and are described below. In this way, the work in Birmingham demonstrated the importance of migrants' involvement throughout the process. In Palermo, the presence and engagement of local authorities from the municipality in the hackathons multiplied the implementation possibilities of the solutions proposed at the events. The second case of Larissa is representative of the potential of integrating the easyRights technical tools in existing services for developing accurate and effective solutions to identified issues. The particular case of Malaga exemplifies how wiki spaces

may enhance information flows between formal and non-formal sources and contribute to migrants' exercise of their rights.

Birmingham - migrants' engagement as a key approach for their integration

One of the Services that the Birmingham pilot addressed was the Registration to the English courses offered to migrants. Without the language, migrants are limited in their access to many other essential services, such as travelling around the city, registering on study programs (for their children or themselves), going to the doctor, or even receiving British Citizenship, among others.

To gain a clear understanding of the experience of migrants within the service, the pilot representative undertook a large number of participatory activities of the easyRights framework. Together with a service officer and other individuals supporting migrants, they developed a variety of research actions to better understand the barriers and challenges that the service interaction presented for migrants.

Some of the initial insights revealed that, although BAES (Birmingham Adult Education Service) offers many of the newcomers free English courses (based on their eligibility), all the information regarding eligibility, registration and assessment is provided in English. This entails a clear barrier for many migrants, who often do not feel confident in taking the first step and generate a dependency to rely on a relative, a friend, or someone from their community to register in English courses. Some of the interviewed migrants declared that it took them many years until they felt confident and took the first step to join a class to learn English.

"Lost many years not being able to learn English due to being a family carer, small children, not encouraged by family to learn English." (Interview to BAES student, Birmingham, June 2021)

"Missed many years with excuses. Wished I had learned English upon arrival in the country, I feel like I have wasted my life as I am now nearly 70 and now learning English." (Interview to BAES student, Birmingham, June 2021)

"Sadly I didn't know how to get help for my deaf child because I didn't know English." (Interview to BAES student, Birmingham, June 2021)

The involvement of migrants in the redesign of the Birmingham Adult Education Service benefited the project in many ways:

- First, during research, it guaranteed that their needs were addressed for the service redesign during the hackathon. In particular, the hackathon challenge versed on the registration of migrants with entry or pre-entry English levels.
- During the hackathon, migrants contributed to generating the necessary empathy among the attendees toward understanding the challenges that needed to be solved, and provided feedback and support to the participating teams in the development of their solutions.
- As decision-makers and testers, migrants had the opportunity to select desirable and valuable solutions for their community. This participatory process reassured migrants that their voices are powerful and essential for the re-design of public services for the municipality.

Beyond the digital solution developed during the hackathon, the participation of migrants in the codesign activities had a clear impact on their perception of the integration in their new locations. Not only did they feel heard and respected, but also that they were an important concern of the municipality when considering the offer of public services. In the words of one of the participating migrants...

“Congratulations to all, the biggest job is the one to come, to spread the word that this reaches many migrants. I will be the happiest seeing BAES filled with happy faces of people fulfilling their dreams of learning English to be able to integrate. That is inclusion, that is thinking about the other. THANKS, A LOT (...). Please keep considering my participation. It is important for me. I enjoy helping and in special with this kind of project for the community. Thanks for the opportunity to take part in this project.” Alumni from BAES and collaborator of the easyRights hackathon, Birmingham, February 2022)

Larissa - integration of easyRights’ technical solutions for the re-design of public services

Migrant parents reaching either the Refugee Camp or coming from the ESTIA (Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation) project in the Larissa Municipality find themselves in a scattered process full of obstacles when going through the process of registering the birth of their child. The language barrier, the scattered bureaucratic process, and the lack of organization restrain them from reaching a flawless birth registration process. The consequences of such barriers in the service experience and organization are extended also to other actors affected by the birth registration process: municipal employees, language interpreters, hospital employees, as well as social workers (in the case of migrants coming from refugee camps).

Some of the most common problems identified in the service start at the hospital, including grammar and spelling mistakes when writing the parents’ names and other details in the registration form at the hospital. This form is digitalized by members of the hospital, enlarging the possibilities of human errors and future negative consequences that affect the parents of the new-born. There is rarely an interpreter at this step of the process that can identify such errors. Then, the digital form is transferred to the municipality, with no possibility of checking for spotting potential grammar or spelling mistakes. Afterward, a municipal officer arranges an appointment to formalize the birth registration that requires the presence of the beneficiaries (migrants), a social worker, an interpreter, and a municipal officer. If any mistake in the form is detected in this final step, the document is not issued, the procedure is paused and it needs to be resolved in court.

The need for accurately-reported information among the numerous actors involved in the process was the main focus of the second Larissa hackathon. The call asked participants to find solutions that ensured a solid flow of communication in terms of the required documentation throughout the process, the spelling and treatment of migrants’ personal data, and an easy-to-follow process for the issuing of the birth certificate. To support participants in this quest, easyRights provided the teams with the three technical tools developed by the project to solve the two main barriers identified in the access of migrants to public services, namely the complexity of bureaucratic processes and the language barriers.

In particular, the problems identified within the birth and name registration process were associated with the pronunciation of names and personal data of the migrants. As this data was not correctly transcribed throughout the process, the migrants faced complications in the expedition of the birth certificate that could only be resolved in the local court. As the birth certificate is necessary for the name registration, this procedure was also delayed, complicating the process for migrants and the public officers in the municipality.

The hackathon-awarded solution is an online application designed to overcome the frustrations and challenges associated with the process that migrants in Larissa follow to register a new-born at the Registry Office and assign a name to them. The digital tool allows parents, prior to the birth, to be informed about the data and documentation requested from the hospital and save them in the application, so they can easily access them in due time. After the birth, parents’ and new-borns’ data are collected by the hospital officers with the support of the app and sent to the Registry Office. Before emission, a draft of the registration document can be accessed by parents to confirm or correct the data. Once the information is correct, the

parents can also mark their availability for the appointment, and the Registry Office to sign and receive the birth certificate. Additionally, due to the problems identified along the journey of this service with the misspelling of the migrants' personal data, the awarded solution proposed to integrate the CALST solution. This tool could facilitate migrants' pronunciation training to reduce the problems associated with the collection of data by the hospital and the Registry Office.

The integration of this particular easyRights' ICT solution allowed targeting some specific issues in relation to the pronunciation of essential data throughout the process, preventing frustration and endless processes for migrants and public officers during birth registrations in Larissa.

Malaga - wiki space to enhance information flows in the asylum application and job-seeking processes

An internal studio developed by Charstar international in 2017 identified that navigating the asylum process and seeking employment as the primary challenges migrants face in Malaga. From first-hand experience in the location, Charstar International witnesses the difficulties migrants find when navigating those two services.

On one hand, the asylum-seeking process is very long and has no specified timings. There are almost as many casuistic as migrants, which makes each case different and very lengthy to resolve or to describe as a step-by-step procedure. Furthermore, migrants on the asylum-seeking process often arrive with no (or very little) Spanish skills and no understanding of the legal processes around asylum-seeking. Such information on asylum-seeking is typically complex and most of it can only be found in Spanish. While services such as translators and immigration attorneys exist to support migrants in this process, most of them can only be found at physical locations such as the Red Cross offices or police stations. On the other hand, the personal situation of the migrant in terms of their international protection status directly affects the job-seeking process and diversifies the cases even more.

The two processes could not be solved through a simple technical solution generated in a hackathon. However, the problems related to the access to accurate information on the procedures could be approached by generating a common platform nurtured both by official sources and informal experiences. The easyRights Malaga wiki (<http://malaga-wiki-easy-rights.herokuapp.com/en/home>) was shaped as an informative space where migrants and organizations supporting migrants could consult about the resources, legal aspects, and general questions related to the asylum and job-seeking processes, and contribute with their own experiences to help other migrants that are going through (or will be in) similar situations. This digital space is open to everyone and embraces feeding from official sources of information (governmental institutions, lawyers...) but also experiential knowledge from migrants so that the content is regularly updated (Figure 4).

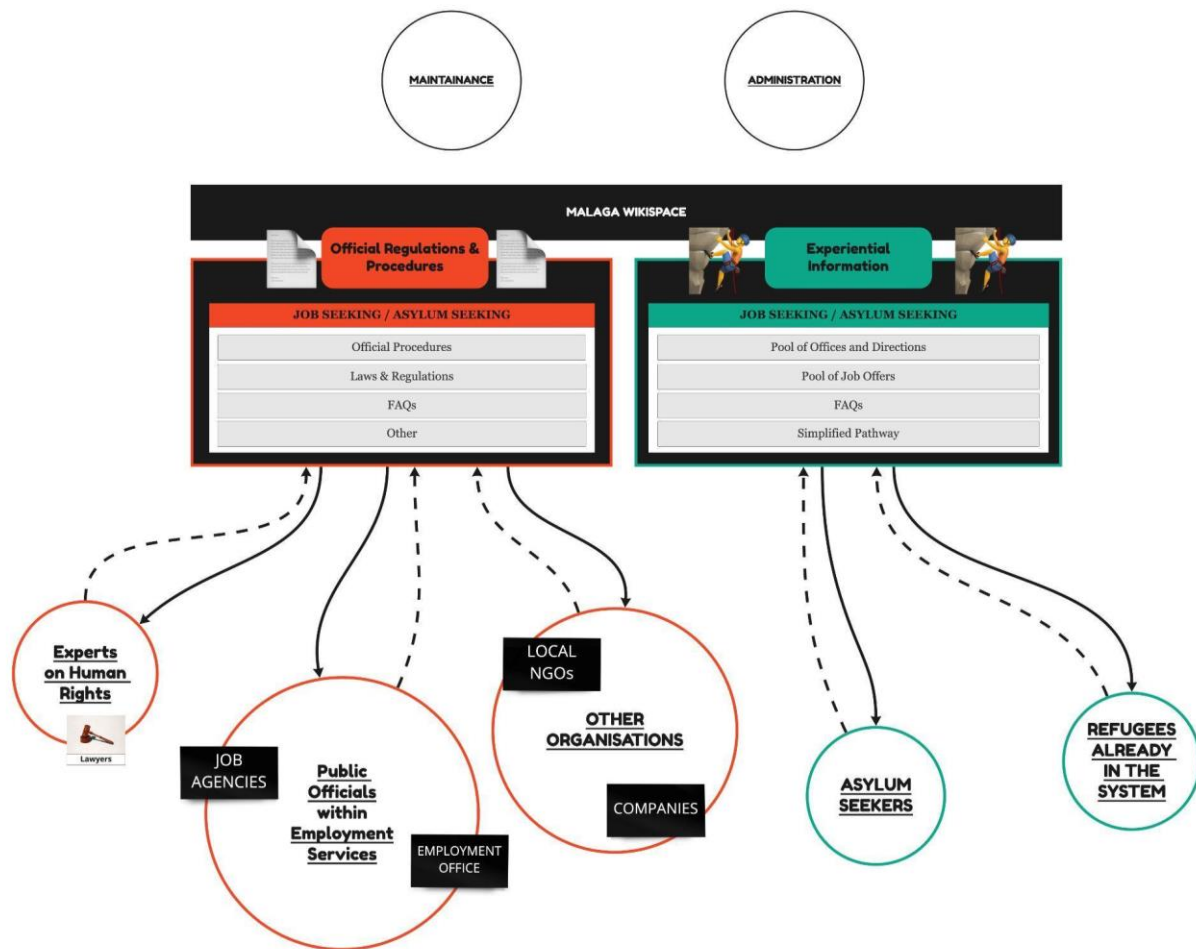


Figure 4: Information flow in the easyRights Malaga wiki space

The development of the easyRights Malaga wiki space makes the most out of the “common knowledge” that is often transferred by word of mouth among migrants. Additionally, it triggers the interaction of official knowledge sources in an attempt to facilitate the complex and entangled procedures migrants have to navigate and yet, are key for their integration into their new countries.

Palermo - public service innovation emerging from a strong ecosystem of stakeholders

Job is the key tool for migrants’ inclusion in society. It allows them to achieve autonomy and foster a sense of belonging and a psycho-social balance. Above all, having a work contract allows them to renew their residence permit and therefore prevent irregular status. On the contrary, migrants' difficulty in accessing the job market makes them vulnerable and at risk of extreme poverty, as they cannot benefit from governmental economic support. Not having a work contract means not being able to renew their residence permit and thus, entering into an irregular status.

Finding a job is a challenge for migrant communities due to a lack of information on job opportunities, guidance, or reference experiences in their new territory. The low self-awareness of skills and widespread prejudice and discrimination against migrants also decrease their opportunities to find a job. In Palermo, a big

Participants from all three circles represented were engaged in the codesign activities in Palermo, especially at the hackathons. The second hackathon, aimed at developing a wiki space that could facilitate the process of accessing the job-training and internships for migrants as a first step to entering the job market in Palermo, was strongly supported by the presence of employees from relevant municipal offices, including lawyers and migration experts attending migration procedures, IT experts and councillors from the municipality of Palermo. Most of them took the role of mentors, while others were part of the jury.

The presence of municipal officers and decision-makers throughout the process – they are part of the project consortium – allowed them to, on one hand, understand better the problems perceived by the migrants in relation to the targeted public services. On the other hand, to perceive the value offered by the hackathon solutions, so they could activate the necessary resources to realize them and turn them into a reality, facilitating the access of migrants to those services.

As a result, the jury of the hackathon announced Next Generation as the winning team. Their solution had the best potential in terms of scalability, information structure, easy navigation, as well as technical development. However, aware of the importance of the content in a wiki space, the Municipality of Palermo decided to also fund another of the participating teams with a strongly informed proposal to support the awarded team in the development of the wiki space. Both teams worked together to finalize the solution (<https://wiki-easyrights.comune.palermo.it/it/home>).

In Palermo, public service innovation has been catalysed through the engagement of a broader ecosystem of actors and stakeholders in the easyRights project. Their involvement in each step eventually forged a valuable solution for the local community. Now, the challenge for the Municipality of Palermo and its stakeholders is to make the technological solution visible, spread it among the various migrant communities, through associations and job agencies; involve the Employment center; continue to raise awareness among enterprises, and strengthen migrants' awareness of their skills, including digital skills.

easyRights in practice: the easyRights ICT solutions

Inna Tolskaya (Capeesh)

Introduction

Understanding a country's legal processes or how to access social services is a complicated matter even if you were born in a country. Imagine having to learn all of this in a new language you don't yet understand and with no bridging language to help you. This is the situation for many migrants all over the world. And this is what we aim to help. We are using artificial intelligence (AI) to analyse governmental web pages, legal documents, and description of complex processes such as asylum seeking, to create tailored pathways and language courses aimed to show migrants the practical steps they'll need to take and to teach the language connected to each step.

The three technical partners: Capeesh, LINKS and NTNU have created three components of the easyRights solution that interact to reduce the information and language barriers.

The first component, the pathway generator, helps to understand what needs to be done to access a certain service and presents the procedure as a series of clear steps, each described in terms of **when, where** and **how**.

However, having arrived at the correct place, on time, and with a correct stack of documents, the migrants still need to interact with the officials, who most likely do not speak their language. This is where the second component helps, the tailored language training, which helps migrants to learn precisely the terms they'll need and practice the conversations they'll have in real life in a playful app.

While the vocabulary courses focus on memorising the correct phrases and gaining confidence to say them, the third component - the pronunciation training - helps the migrants practice their pronunciations to increase mutual understanding during any interactions with the officials.

easyRights Agent

All the three components of the easyRights solution can be accessed through a unique access point - a chatbot in Telegram. Telegram is a cloud-based mobile and desktop messaging app with a focus on security and speed, and it is widely used among migrants.

In order to access the easyRights Agent one can either open telegram and Contact the @easyrights_bot, or simply scan the QR code. Access to the entire easyRights solution through a single QR code is very convenient from the point of view of dissemination, as it makes it possible to print out the QR codes and post them in highly visible places, on welcome brochures, etc.

Telegram is an application already widely spread on the market, making it an intuitive access point to the tools for migrants who face the language barrier and technological barriers. It also provides an easy platform for developers, which makes it easier to expand the tool with additional services in the future.

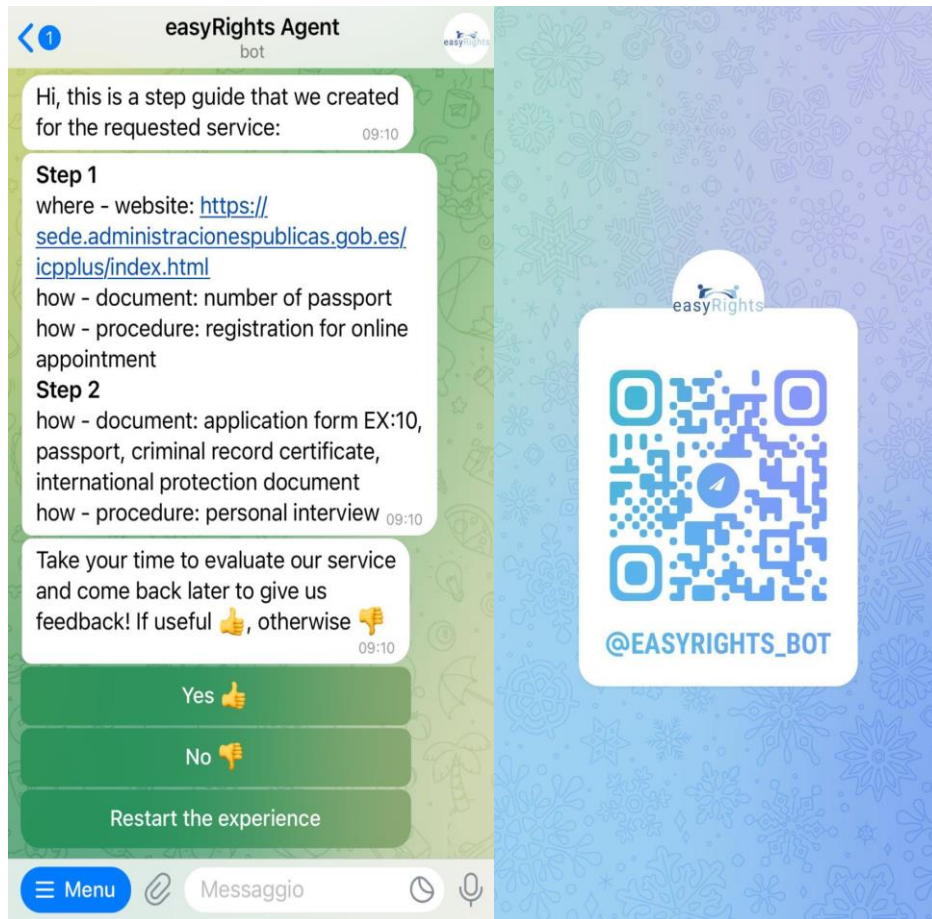


Figure 6: Accessing easyRights Agent

Pathway Generator

The Pathway Generator is an AI-based tool that automatically generates easy instructions starting from a bulk of textual information describing a given service such as Asylum Request.

One of the utmost challenges that a migrant faces at the early days of his/her arrival in a new country is knowledge access in a comprehensible and actionable fashion

The information is distributed among numerous documents each containing numerous unfamiliar words, with a few take home messages.

The pathway generator extracts the necessary information and presents it as an easy pathway following the schema WHAT-WHERE-WHEN-HOW:

- WHAT: The name of the step, for instance “interview” or “admission to the process”
- WHERE: Web page or office where to apply
- WHEN: Opening time, deadlines, and response time (if any)
- HOW: List of personal documents to bring to access the step

This schema is proposed for each step. For example this is how the pathway looks like for the chosen service Asylum Request in Malaga for step 1, i.e. how to perform and Asylum Request.

| WHERE | WHEN | HOW |
|--|---|---|
| <p><u>Physical Offices:</u> Office of Asylum and Refuge, Foreign Office, Police Stations, Foreign Internment Centres</p> <p><u>Web Pages:</u> None</p> | <p><u>Deadline:</u> one month from entry to Spain</p> <p><u>Response time:</u> six months</p> | <p><u>Procedure:</u> personal interview</p> <p><u>Documents:</u> identification documents</p> |

Table 1: Pathway for Asylum Request in Malaga

Capeesh: task specific language training

The tailored courses are offered in a gamified mobile app, freely downloadable from app store/google play, and localised to some of the most common migrant languages. The courses help migrants overcome language barriers when dealing with local bureaucracy and therefore enable migrants to access their rights more easily.

In order to access the courses, the users are asked to download the Capeesh app, and to provide a username, which is automatically added to the relevant course, so that the users can access the course tailored for their needs after they have downloaded the app.

Artificial intelligence is used to process the relevant documents (same documents as were used by the pathway generator) provided by the municipalities and to extract the most crucial vocabulary, selecting the words and phrases that are essential to memorise in order to successfully access the requested service and interact with the service providers. Additionally, it is possible, upon request and in collaboration with the customer, to create interactive branching scenarios, where the end user can practise relevant conversations in realistic simulated dialogues.

This lesson is an interactive, voice driven role play where you need to actually speak the correct answer, in the target language, to progress to the next stage. The learners are presented with 1-3 alternatives to speak out loud. If they are unsure of the pronunciation, it is possible to press the alternatives to have them read out. To choose the answer, one has to say it out loud, and the speech recognition algorithm will guess which of the alternatives was pronounced, even if the speaker has a heavy accent or made some minor mistakes. The most important thing is that the learners actually speak, and the Capeesh role plays teach the content, and help practice some of the relevant conversations a newcomer might encounter in her/his new life - and become confident enough to have the conversations in real life.

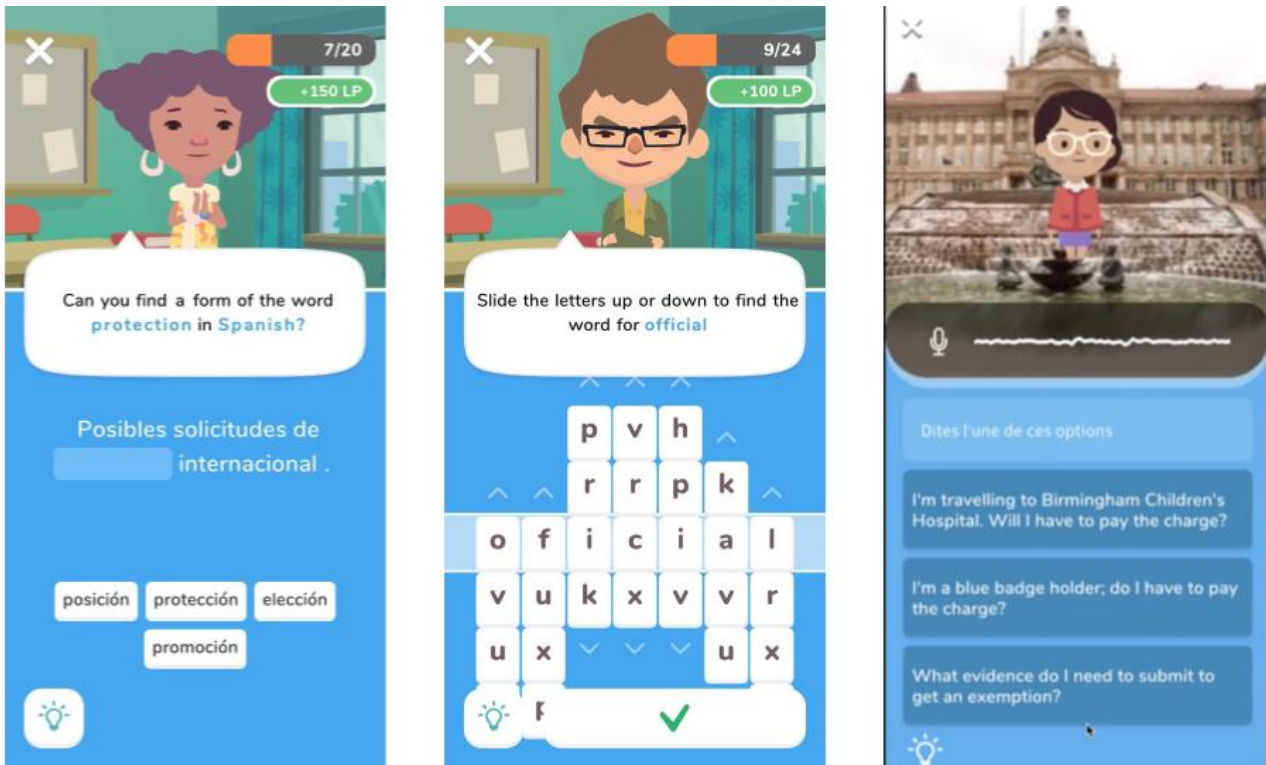


Figure 7: Capeesh app

CALST Pronunciation training

While Capeesh speech recognition is designed to be extremely lenient and encouraging and will recognise a phrase in spite of pronunciation errors, training correct pronunciation is also important.

Not only does incorrect pronunciation led to misunderstanding, but a foreign accent can lead to prejudices which are very hard to suppress: for instance, speakers with a strong accent are considered less trustworthy (Lev-Ari and Keysar, 2010).

By pronouncing words in a comprehensible way, a migrant is easier to understand and thus takes part of the load off the interlocutor, which will make a conversation easier and create more goodwill.

To “prep” for interviews, migrants can learn to avoid pronunciation errors in the domain-specific vocabulary generated by Capeesh. For smoother and more effective communication in a somewhat longer perspective, they can also take general listening, pronunciation and spelling exercises on the CALST platform (<https://www.ntnu.edu/isl/calst>).

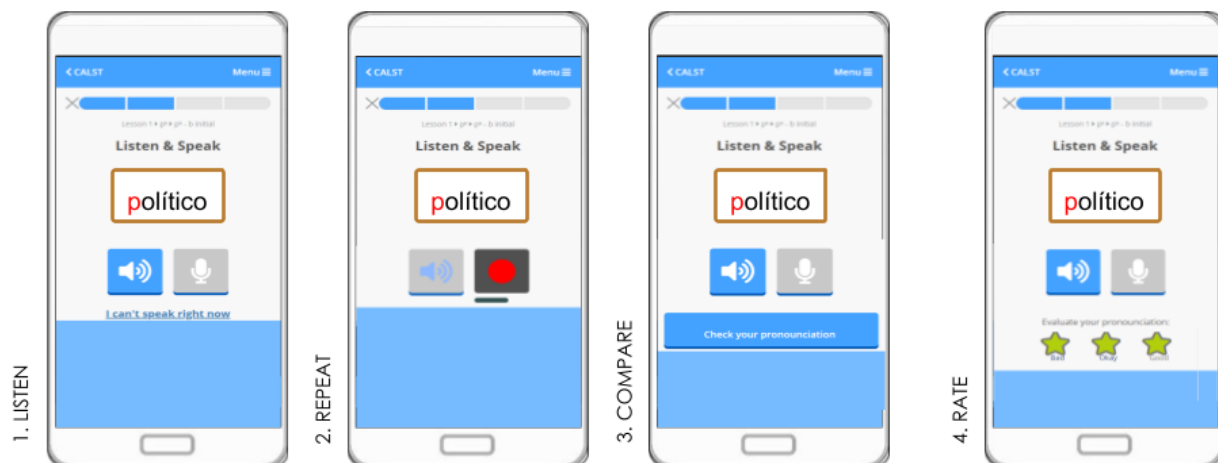


Figure 8: Pronunciation exercises

Pronunciation Training is offered by CALST (Computer-Assisted Listening and Speaking Tutor) for the four target languages in the easyRights project: British English (Standard Southern English), Greek, Italian and (Castilian) Spanish. Besides exercises based on Capeesh vocabulary, a comprehensive set of exercises is based on a phonological analysis of the sound systems of the target languages, taking into consideration language acquisition theory. Using a database of over 500 languages, the migrant's target language is compared to their native language to determine which sound contrasts each specific user must practise. Figure 8 illustrates how the database is used to select relevant pronunciation exercises for a learner based on what sounds are missing in his/her native language. Often, learners have a problem with a new sound because they cannot distinguish it from a sound in their mother tongue. For example, an Arabic speaker may find it hard to distinguish the sound /p/ from /b/, and will simply hear /b/ for both (since /p/ does not occur in Arabic), thus sound /p/ is marked red in the L1-L2 map for Moroccan, and a Moroccan learner will be offered exercises targeting /p/-/b/ contrast in Spanish, e.g. «pelo» (hair) vs. «velo» (veil). However, for a Romanian learner, such exercises will be unnecessary as both sounds exist in Romanian, so they will get a different set of exercises.



Figure 9: L1-L2 Map

The exercises increase migrants' comprehensibility and enable a smoother communication when they exercise their rights, for instance in dealing with administrative procedures. CALST is accessible through the CALST entry website in any browser on any technical platform, such as pc, laptop, tablet, or smartphone.

Conclusion

The three solutions together enable migrants to make use of their rights easier by providing a digital guide with language support to help them through the steps of the procedure. The research in the course of the project showed that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is quite powerful, when it comes to finding information in long and complex documents, however, the main shortcoming we found during this project, is that no AI can find information which does not exist, so there is still quite a long way to go in information availability, and cooperation and co-creation with the local communities, service providers, administration and local experts is crucial.

Mainstreaming human rights literacy in service provision: the easyRights policy recommendations

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The management of the Ukrainian refugee influx following the Russian military aggression in February 2022 has highlighted, once again, the role that public services play in the governance of migration and immigrants' integration and in ensuring the protection of human rights, particularly of vulnerable people. While the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive by the European Commission has provided an exceptional framework to assist European Member States in offering protection and a clear legal status to refugees, the implementation will rely on its interaction with national asylum and integration systems, actors and services. The second easyRights Policy Brief summarises the most important lessons learnt along the project to derive recommendations on how to improve the accessibility and quality of public services for immigrants in Europe. Having identified the notion of human rights literacy as the overarching principle cutting across the many challenges immigrants face when accessing public services, the project has explored why and how public services should move towards a more human rights-centred design.

The link between public service provisions, the governance of migration and integration and the protection of human rights cuts across a dense multi-level network of legal provisions, policies, and operational guidelines. The complexity of this policy framework is witnessed by the fact that recent migration research is exploring the dynamics of "mainstreaming integration" in which the governance of immigrants' integration is "incorporated into general policymaking" as well as the migration-relevant policies. This essentially implies that the goals of integration can be achieved by acting in proximate policy realms. Key pieces of legislation and policy documents in the three areas of digitalisation, public services, and immigrants' integration agree upon the challenges that both immigrants and service providers including public administrations and service designers experience when interacting with services. For migrants the challenges are how accessing public services and for public administrations and service providers when designing services, with all the implications that have in terms of the protection of human rights across Europe. The European Union Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 published in November 2020, for instance, highlights how "migrants are more likely to face unmet medical needs related to various factors such as [...] lack of knowledge on how to access services, language barriers and lack of adaptation of national systems to the specific needs of migrants". The general definition of service can be related to the provision of benefits for an individual or group of people through different tools and methods. The literature on public services often emphasises the intangible aspects of services as the value proposition which takes place in the structure of service delivery and provides a tangible result. For instance, a service such as a registration system for social housing provides access to a house as a tangible result of the service process. This view of providing

intangible values (e.g. access to education, medical information, communication infrastructure) makes the process of service design even more significant and complex when it comes to the enforcement of human rights within the service provision. Moreover, essential public services including civic and administrative ones need to meet certain quality standards in order to fully serve the public interest. In many cases, service access, navigation, and fulfilment either through physical offices or digital interfaces do not follow a straightforward and easy path. Scholars have increasingly pointed out how access to citizenship is a pivotal component of EU integration policies. Immigrants often have to overcome obstacles to access basic services. At the same time, the recent advancements in digital technology - especially artificial intelligence and algorithmic decision making in the design and development of public services - could bring significant benefits in terms of accessibility to services.

Despite the richness of the scholarly and practitioners' debates on public services and migration, human rights literacy has been studied and investigated largely in countries experiencing persistent violations of human rights. Research has looked at the design and implementation of human rights education programs and other measures to combat human rights violations². In this regard, literacy on human rights has been conceptualized both as a prerequisite to ensure dignity, equality, and freedom and as a goal – or norm – across horizontal and vertical levels of governance. Since human rights emerge from everyday social practice, it is crucial not to limit human rights to education or any specific professional skills, but also to raise awareness and empower each member of society including immigrants, institutions, public officials, civil society and NGOs. Our analysis aimed at specifically exploring the practices of key actors of the easyRights ecosystems, such as service directors and operators, NGOs and civil society organisations working directly with immigrants, but also ICT experts. The easyRights surveys for ICT experts of service providers and interviews with public officials, NGOs and supporting agencies allowed us to assess the actors' understanding of human rights, and the ways in which they enact those rights throughout their everyday work. The results also helped us to have a better understanding of and the potential of technology-supported services as interfaces between immigrants and their rights: in essence, we gauged the level of human rights literacy in the design and provision of public services to propose easyRights policy recommendations.

We relied on an inductive analytical framework that was fine-tuned along the process. Collected evidence helped identify three pillars of a successful strategy to increase the human rights literacy of service providers, namely: education and training, awareness raising and empowerment, and the improvement of delivery processes and practices through service design. Three main results stand out and guide our policy recommendations³.

First, while there is a significant degree of awareness of the link between human rights and service provision, there is a serious gap in training in this area. Many respondents working in public administrations declared that they had not followed specific courses but instead had acquired experiential knowledge, mainly from having worked in direct contact with immigrants in the past or in their current job. Compared to public servants, in NGOs, there is a diffuse sensibility about human rights, built through a plurality of fragmented and informal learning opportunities but also because many staff members and volunteers in NGOs work face to face with asylum seekers and refugees.

Second, the organisational complexity of municipal offices, the length of the processes and the inefficiencies of service providers often create “spaces of immobility” wherein immigrants cannot properly exercise their

² Becker, A., de Wet, A. and van Vollenhoven, W. (2015). Human rights literacy: Moving towards rights-based education and transformative action through understandings of dignity, equality and freedom. *South African Journal of Education*, [online] 35(2), pp.01-12. doi:10.15700/saje.v35n2a1044.

³ For more detailed information see Human Rights Literacy in Service Design and Supply: The easyRights Policy Recommendations <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6969064>

rights. Migration research has highlighted how “potential migrants’ ability to migrate is determined in their encounter with the immigration interface”⁴. These practices along the service provision process can be fairly described as “practices of immobility” that immigrants experience when interacting with the “integration interface”. In this framework, awareness-raising and empowerment actions in the service ecosystem become crucial. Awareness refers to the acknowledgement of the human rights implications of their actions by those actors involved in service design and provision; empowerment concerns the (increased) actors’ capacity to perform their work according to a human rights-oriented approach. Moreover, we also considered the relevance, for “shaping” the process and the context, of the awareness and empowerment of immigrants themselves to be able to exercise their rights. The analysis highlighted that while civil servants are aware of the fact that the lack of access to services can have a negative impact on immigrants’ access to rights, there is much less awareness of the fact that possible limitations to the enforcement of human rights can arise from everyday practices.

Third, the level of concern about human rights within service provision depends on the composition (public, private, mixed) of the actors’ landscape. Overall, however, the analysis pointed to a substantial agreement among the respondents that co-design might ensure a stronger respect for human rights.

Overall, the study confirmed our assumption that services and service access are the interfaces between immigrants and their rights and indeed human rights literacy is a critical challenge in service design and provision. This is even more true when services do have a direct deep impact on citizenship and cascade effects on other services and rights. In addition, we strongly believe in the fact that immigrants should be included in the design, development and testing phase of the service interfaces in order to increase literacy on human rights which eventually benefit society as a whole towards a more inclusive and sustainable place.

⁴ Carling, J. (2002). Migration in the age of involuntary immobility: Theoretical reflections and Cape Verdean experiences. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 28(1), 5–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830120103912>

Human rights and migrants' integration: local perspectives

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The Department for Integration and Diversity of the City of Vienna - the capital of Austria - gave a presentation on "Human Rights and the Integration of Migrants from a Local Perspective".. The growth of the city is directly related to international migration. The following numbers refer to the latest available data from January 1st 2022. At the beginning of 2022 32.2% of Vienna's population were foreign nationals, and 37.6% were born abroad. 42.6% were of foreign origin, i.e. they had a foreign citizenship or held the Austrian citizenship and were born abroad. The main countries of origin (foreign nationals or born abroad) were Serbia (100,828), Turkey (75,555), Germany (66,307) and Poland (55,070). Vienna is thus a European immigrant city, which in the last thirty years has undergone a transformation from an ageing and shrinking city to a young, dynamic city due to international immigration⁵.

The City of Vienna has an equality-based concept of immigrant integration, as integration is understood in terms of equal rights and opportunities. Exclusion of residents instead is seen by the City as weakening positive social relations among the city residents. To promote equal treatment and equal opportunities the Department for Integration and Diversity funds, and itself implements a variety of integration projects, including the Project Start Wien, which is a support program for new city residents. The program is offered in a variety of languages. In 2007, the City of Vienna established the *Integration and Diversity Monitor*⁶. Given that the monitoring is conducted every 3 years, this allows for substantive across-time comparison of legal, social and economic developments of the city. The *5th Diversity and Integration Monitor*⁷ was published in 2020 and summarises key results and achievements. It covers 8 fields of action, sixty integration indicators, eleven diversity benchmarks and 3 dimensions of analysis. Some of the key findings, supplemented by more up-to-date figures from early 2021, are presented below. The next monitor will be published in 2023.

The *Integration Monitor* focuses on the systematic measurement - using statistical time series and indicators - of the social position and equity of access to goods and services of migrant population groups. The own migration history or that of the parents, or the country where they acquired their highest educational qualifications, are considered as factors impacting on the social, educational and political participation, income, occupational mobility, risk of unemployment, health and housing.

In terms of political participation, immigration and restrictive naturalisation combined with the fact that citizenship is a prerequisite to be allowed to vote, result in very limited options of political participation and create democratic deficits⁸. In 2022 31.5% of Viennese residents without citizenship above the voting age of 16 were not entitled to vote in municipal, provincial or federal elections⁹.

In the field of education differences between Vienna's population groups are slowly declining. Between 2013 and 2016 the number of people from 15 to 19 years old who have a third country migrant background and attended programmes qualifying them to attend university increased significantly¹⁰.

⁵ <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/social/integration/facts-figures/population-migration.html>

⁶ <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/social/integration/facts-figures/monitoring.html>

⁷ <https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/download/pdf/3668514?name=Englische%20Kurzfassung>

⁸ <https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/download/pdf/3668514?name=Englische%20Kurzfassung>

⁹ <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/social/integration/facts-figures/population-migration.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/download/pdf/3668514?name=Englische%20Kurzfassung>

The Integration monitor illustrates that employment of women with third-country qualifications are strongly impacted by child-care duties. In comparison, only 21% of women with third-country qualifications and at least one child under 2 are employed, while among women without an immigrant background, the rate is 77%. Additionally, qualifications obtained abroad have little value on the Austrian labour market, which leads to people from third countries working in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations despite intermediate or higher qualifications (42% among residents from third countries and 32% of residents from EU/EFTA countries)¹¹.

The *Diversity Monitor* has made it its goal to evaluate public administration's performances to adapt to the city's diverse population in regards to human resource development and provision of services. Overall, a very positive development of diversity management in the institutions can be stated: 53 institutions of the administration of the city of Vienna participate in the systematic implementation of diversity-oriented policies. In the year 2020 nine departments reached the highest level of diversity management, eight achieved the professionalisation stage and 11 managed to cover at least one of the analytical dimensions of measurement.

This comprehends at a strategic level the implementation of a diversity strategy in the fields of personnel development, public relations, knowledge management, complaints management, quality assurance and project management and furthermore, a clear definition of competences and responsibilities for their diversity management. More than one third of the facilities have appointed their own diversity officer. Significant progress was also made in personnel development and regarding the expansion of competencies. This includes diversity-focused training of 24,200 employees in the past three years (referring to data from 2019), and the inclusion of diversity skills (e.g. conflict management, intercultural and language skills) in recruiting processes¹².

Language skills in particular are also of great advantage when dealing with customers and reflect the diversity of the population. As many as 92% of the departments can communicate with customers at least in English and can discuss complex administrative issues. In more than half of the facilities, employees also speak Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Turkish. Over a third can offer information and advice in Czech, Slovakian, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, Romanian, Arabic and Farsi. More than a third also offer information material in different languages¹³.

The employees of the city's administration were born in 117 different countries and the share of staff members with foreign origin continuously increases. In 2019 25.6% were of foreign origin (foreign nationality or Austrian citizenship and born abroad)¹⁴.

¹¹ <https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/download/pdf/3668514?name=Englische%20Kurzfassung>

¹² <https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/download/pdf/3668514?name=Englische%20Kurzfassung>

¹³ <https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/download/pdf/3668514?name=Englische%20Kurzfassung>

¹⁴ <https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/download/pdf/3668514?name=Englische%20Kurzfassung>

CONCLUSION

ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL: ENSURING INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE, AND CONTEXTUALISED PUBLIC SERVICES

What impact does facilitating access to public services have on society as a whole? How can we guarantee that migrants and asylum seekers have equal access to the rights to which they are entitled? What are the remaining challenges? These questions livened up the easyRights panels' discussions with, among others, Prof. Gudrun Biffi, Prof. Peter Scholten and Dr. Peter Slominski as key discussants, and shaped the main takeaways from the final conference.

Inclusion was the first keyword of the open debate. Migration research has often highlighted the extent to which there is a decoupling between the services as experienced by users or citizens who are already within the system and services as they are *for newcomers*. The high degree of uncertainty, complexity, and fragmentation of the service infrastructure, blurs the boundaries of what is allowed and accessible and what is not, it creates filters to integration and inclusion. Support and extra assistance for migrants and asylum seekers is especially needed during that phase of the integration process preceding the formal undertaking of migrants' demands by public institutions in order to prevent exclusionary dynamics. Time and temporalities play, indeed, a significant role in the migration and integration journey, and targeted tools to reduce uncertainty such as those developed through the easyRights project may have a strong positive impact in terms of inclusion.

Second, bordering and de-bordering processes do not only involve physical frontiers, and public services may well be considered another, yet less visible, wall between migrants and their rights. From this perspective, improving the access to the public system is part and parcel of **democratisation** efforts. It allows migrants to interact on an equal basis with host societies and, by doing so, it does not only (re)shape the integration system of European states but also the *modus vivendi* of European democracies. While the link between public service and democratisation processes is well established in social science research, projects addressing the interaction between service design and provision, human rights and the role of digital technologies are much needed to continue unpacking the micro-dynamics of policy making in democratic contexts.

Third, while it is widely acknowledged that co-creation is pivotal in "improving public policies and services and reinvigorating democracy", **good co-creation** entails going beyond a methodological choice to embrace co-creation as a norm. Co-creation as a concept has travelled through different sectors, disciplines, and has been used by different actors. The debate highlighted, however, that a normative approach to co-creation involves de-constructing assumptions and power relations, bringing in others' views and voices not only because it is cost-effective, but also because it is the only way to create public value.

Fourth, co-creation both builds on and results in **trust and empowerment**. On the one hand, collaborative methods require a high level of trust between the actors involved in the process. They assume that learning can be the most effective driver of change and that all actors are willing to contribute to achieving a common objective. This is particularly important in a socio-political context where trust in public administrations is

decreasing. On the other hand, the process may empower the actors (migrants and institutions) and foster feelings of belonging and recognition.

Belonging and recognition become possible because the outputs of the co-creation process are **contextualised**. Research has demonstrated how *one size fits all* solutions across public administration may not work in all settings¹⁵. Problems and challenges are often context specific. While some may overlap with others, some don't. Collaborative and participatory approaches bring in the actors' knowledge, histories, perceptions and have the potential to produce responsive tools. Once developed, however, ideas may travel and trigger both learning processes beyond the local services ecosystems but also innovation mechanisms within. In this regards, effective communication can make a difference between services or tools that grow and become visible, and others that lose their transformative energy.

Contextualisation can take place through the analysis and the use of **big data and technology**. However, the negative fundamental rights implications of big data-related technologies have only recently been acknowledged by public authorities and international organisations. The use of new technologies and algorithms, including machine learning and AI, affects several fundamental rights. These include, but are not limited to: privacy and data protection, non-discrimination and access to an effective remedy. While these three are the most obvious implications, in principle, almost any fundamental rights in the charter can be impacted due to new technologies.

Eventually, there is little doubt that **sustainability** is a pivotal component of a successful approach to change and transformation in public services. Institutional sustainability is intended as the capacity and willingness of the system to secure necessary inputs and support, to provide, efficiently and effectively, a continuing stream of activities and outputs that are valued by its stakeholders (members, clients, etc), for as long as it is needed. While the sustainability analysis carried out within the easyRights project indicates that in most cases, the involved institutions are likely to support the project outcomes in the long run, the debate has highlighted how long-term monitoring and communication activities beyond the local boundaries will ensure a systemic impact.

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