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MIGRANT-LED ADVOCACY ACROSS EUROPE

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Biographies

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Executive Summary

Migrant advocates participating in this research identified challenges for their work and solutions to overcome them.

By comparison to advocacy work by non-migrant-led actors, which is mainly based on second-hand experience in the field, migrant-led advocacy can be seen as a new form of advocacy that has emerged from the lived experience of those most affected: migrants themselves. Migrants can use first-hand experiences to improve migration policies, for themselves, for their communities and for European societies. Policymaking is improved when affected populations are engaged in its development¹. This human-centred design approach is in line with the commitments of both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Urban Agenda for the EU.²

Migrant advocates can sense-check policies, contribute innovative solutions, identify gaps and connect to their larger communities. Furthermore, and because of their proximity to the realities of their communities, they are often also 'first responders' to migrant' needs and priorities, and already engaged in work to improve the lives of migrants on the ground.

At a personal level, the migrant advocates who participated in this research are already carrying out the advocate role because they felt the need to do so. For them, sharing personal stories was the initial step of advocacy work, the main aim of which is to change dominant narratives that both victimise and dehumanise migrants. Migrant advocates, however, rely strongly on the support of external, mainstream civil society organisations (CSOs), often due to their lack of (financial) capacity to work independently. Funding challenges can impact on the sustainability of migrant-led organisations, and a lack of ongoing financial capacity often prevents migrant advocates from fully committing to their work.

Most importantly for the purposes of this study, a '*migrant-led initiative*' does not refer solely to support from migrants for migrants: in fact, all of the research participants involved non-migrants in their organisational structures, operational leadership and board composition. For migrant-led initiatives to flourish, it is important to exchange experiences and strategies with other like-minded organisations and mainstream CSOs.

As reflected in **Chapter Two**, the majority of research participants identify a lack of transparency in information-sharing and political processes as the basis for migrant advocates' lack of trust in decision-

¹ United Nations Development Programme (2018) *What Does It Mean to Leave No One Behind? A UNDP discussion paper and framework for implementation*.

² See also European Migrant Advisory Board (2019) *Ask the People*, <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/inclusion-migrants-and-refugees/ask-people-consultation-report-european-migrant-advisory-board>.

making and overall policymaking. Although some participants described engaging with policymakers in various capacities, this engagement was not sustainable and was often limited to providing one-off recommendations which were not followed up on. Research participants often felt that the issues their advocacy work concerns are addressed by politicians only when it is in their interest to do so, and that they are therefore often used as ‘pawns’ in wider political games. In order to avoid this eventuality, many migrant advocates use a tactical approach to addressing specific issues in the political arena.

Chapter Three considers the impact of (re)producing the narrative of ‘victimised migrants’ in public opinion. Migrant advocates participating in the research reported several challenges for their attempts to counter predominant narratives. Migrant stories are often narrated by mainstream media, which tends not to engage with migrant advocates. Research participants believe that migrants are both ‘tokenised’ and rarely able to demonstrate their agency in this context, and that perpetually presenting migrants as ‘poor’ and ‘helpless’ creates a sense of internalised helplessness. Empowering migrant communities requires this issue to be addressed.

Chapter Four details the experience of migrant advocates in working with other organisations. It concludes that spaces for migrant advocates to come together and coordinate their efforts are limited, and that there is a strong need to create such spaces so as to allow independent organisation and advocacy by migrant advocates. When interacting with mainstream CSOs, research participants frequently felt underestimated or that their engagement was tokenistic. A lack of personal financial resources and/or organisational funding also impacted negatively on long-term advocacy work, and research participants identified funding support for the core costs of migrant-led initiatives as centrally important in empowering them to do sustainable work.

The **final chapter** considers an overarching issue that was repeatedly raised by migrant advocates participating in the research: the question of their legitimacy, and the impact of institutionalised racism in this context. For migrant advocates, the question of legitimacy has two dimensions:

- **Credibility**, in which migrant-led initiatives are considered to have less capacity, for example to lead projects or receive funding, relative to other stakeholders. On many occasions during the research, participants described instances of migrant-led organisations being unsuccessful in receiving funding or financial assistance that was instead acquired by their non migrant-led counterpart organisations. Professionalism amongst migrant-led organisations was felt to have limited impact here, due to institutional racism and discrimination.
- **Representativeness**, in the extent to which migrant-led initiatives are ‘representative enough’ of the groups they advocate is used by mainstream CSOs and policymakers to challenge their legitimacy in the political space. In reality, and since it is near impossible for any organisation to be truly representative of all migrants, this act of questioning legitimacy instead intends to delegitimise the voices of migrant advocates, and ensure non-migrant experts become the only trustworthy voices in the political space. Instead of questioning the legitimacy of migrant advocates, mainstream CSOs and policymakers should focus on engaging them to create more inclusive policymaking that reflects the lived experiences of affected populations.

Closing the Gap - Recommendations

Solutions suggested by research participants are oriented toward recognition, self-empowerment and the development of the particular capacities and skills of individual migrants to conduct advocacy in relation to the policies and practices that concern them. Participants also strongly highlighted their desire to cooperate more with other migrant-led initiatives in order to combine their efforts, knowledge, assets and capacities, and to be able to represent a larger constituent group. Working in isolation, migrant advocates are limited in what they can achieve when engaging with CSOs and politicians. Although many acknowledge that the priorities of individual migrant and refugee groups differ, there is a general agreement that unity on specific topics would avoid wasting energy on ‘reinventing the wheel’ and improve efficiency.

The gaps that are addressed in the chapters - in policy and reality, between local and national, in the public realm, and in terms of legitimacy - can be resolved when migrant-led initiatives gain more ownership. With this goal in mind, we offer the following recommendations addressed to the specific actors involved:

Recommendations addressed to migrant advocates:

1. Organise around the objective of making EU policies more inclusive for migrants, and create a mechanism that ensures migrant voices and perspectives have a space within policymaking processes.
2. Create an online space in which migrant-led initiatives can exchange resources, strategies and tactics, and find similar and/or like-minded organisations with which to establish learning relationships or form partnerships. This online exchange could eventually assist in facilitating knowledge exchange via in-person collaboration. An exclusive space would also be of great value in enabling migrant advocates to address common priorities in a safe environment free from challenges presented by exclusion, (institutionalised) racism, bias, and tokenism.
3. Develop strategies to create a wider recognition of the skills and knowledge migrants contribute at every level of society: in schools, the labour market, the political arena, civil society and so on. In short, such strategies should aim to challenge stereotypes and reduce bias.
4. Collaborate with anti-racist initiatives and CSOs to fight stereotypes, xenophobia and racism in public discourse, and address the importance of a fair representation of migrants in the media. An initial step would be to map current representations and discourse in (social) media, and develop specific strategies in response. It will be essential to find media representatives who can contribute to reframing migrants according to their own wishes, thus enabling migrants to ‘gain access to the gaze’. This could be achieved by showcasing the stories of migrants who have successfully settled in European societies and are making contributions to their new contexts.

Recommendations addressed to policymakers:

1. Improve information-sharing on policymaking and legal frameworks affecting migrants by engaging directly with migrant advocates. It is not sufficient to relay information solely via mainstream CSOs, and a lack of knowledge about migrant-led initiatives should not prevent attempts to reach

out to these actors and engage them in this context. The more policymakers attempt to engage migrants directly, the more policymaking will become connected to migrant realities.

2. Ensure that migrants are involved at all stages of the design, implementation and evaluation of policies that concern them.
3. Facilitate and provide funding for the creation of inclusive, self-organised European and national platforms for migrant participation.

Recommendations addressed to mainstream CSOs:

1. Enable migrant advocates to become more actively engaged in decision-making processes within CSO organisational structures. To be truly inclusive, CSOs should directly employ migrant advocates rather than engaging them as volunteers.
2. Engage a minimum of one migrant-led initiative as an equal partner in every CSO project or actions directed toward migrants, and include this/these partner(s) in all stages of the project development, design, implementation and evaluation.
3. Provide capacity-building and training activities (for example, via dedicated workshops) where both migrant and non-migrant advocates can share expertise and exchange ideas on how best to influence policy.
4. Support migrant-led initiatives to access and build relationships with policymakers.

Recommendations addressed to funders and private foundations:

1. Increase engagement with migrant-led initiatives, in order to build an understanding of their community-based work and how funding can be used to support them. Potential ways of achieving this are inviting migrant advocates to present their work to funders and foundations, and involving them in discussions preceding the development of grant-making processes and strategies.
2. Issue Calls for Proposals for actions to be led by migrant-led initiatives, in collaboration with other such initiatives and mainstream CSOs. This will provide resources to enable migrant-led initiatives to flourish, and support the development of sustainable partnerships with CSOs.
3. Introduce flexibility for migrant-led initiatives in funding application and implementation processes. Instead of requiring actions to fit within a rigid project methodology (including for example pre-defined objectives and expected results), engage more with migrant-led initiatives on a personal level, in order to understand the ongoing change they are achieving at grassroots level and how funding can more effectively support their work.
4. Support migrant-led organisations with core funding, to ensure they are themselves empowered while working to empower other migrants. By doing so, you are ensuring the sustainability of their work.

Introduction

Over the past years, a big number of migrant-led networks started to emerge. These migrant-led organizations, initiatives, and advocates bring vital and distinct perspectives and ideas to policy discussions regarding forced displacement at the local, regional, and international levels. Yet they continue to face enormous challenges in their struggle to be included in both public and political discussions.

This research aims to better understand the challenges that migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives face when attempting to influence and engage with European decision-makers. The main research questions are therefore:

- How do migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives access and navigate policymaking spaces at the local, national and EU levels, and influence policymaking on topics that directly concern migrants themselves?
- What challenges do they face when doing so?

This research was commissioned by the European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM) to explore support that could contribute to the success of migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives in influencing policymaking on topics that directly concern them, at local, national and EU level. Moreover, the results are intended to inspire other relevant stakeholders such as policymakers, civil society organisations (CSOs) and funders/foundations in the migration sector to support migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives to be successful in this work.

In this research, we distinguish between two types of advocacy strategies used by migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives, as illustrated in figure 1, below:

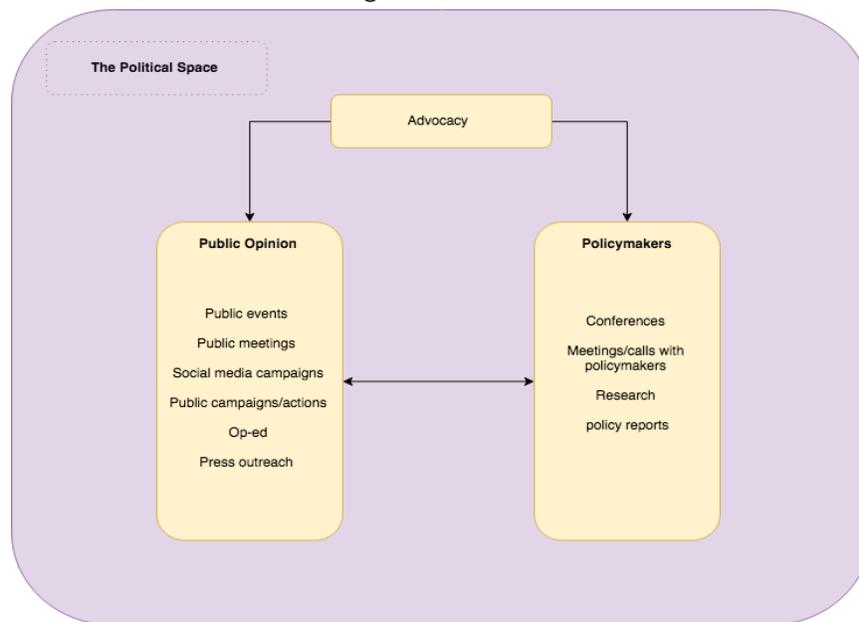


Figure 1. Two types of advocacy strategies

The first strategy is advocacy to influence policy via direct engagement with policymakers. This strategy requires advocates to be involved in decision-making processes, and be present in both informal and formal spaces and settings where decisions are taken. The second strategy is advocacy to influence public opinion. This work requires advocates to become public figures engaged as speakers in spaces such as social and cultural events, so as to promote public interest in and support for the advocacy issues that concern migrants. These two types of advocacy strategies are closely related in that they both aim to shape political debate.

Additionally, 'migrant' is here used as an umbrella term for people who identify themselves as having a lived migration experience (including migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and third country nationals moving independently to another state). 'Migrant advocates' is here used to refer to individual migrants who advocate for migrant rights and on broader issues concerning migrants. Additionally, a distinction is made between advocacy groups such as CSOs working on migration, that do not self-identify as migrant-led organisations, and advocacy work that led by migrant advocates and migrant-led organisations and initiatives, here referred to as 'migrant-led advocacy'. Furthermore, when referring to migrant-led organisations and networks and migrant advocates, we mean people, groups and organisations with formal or informal structures that self-identify as such, and practically reflect this self-identification in the composition and structure of their governance and leadership. Similarly, mainstream CSOs that do not identify themselves as migrant-led for our purposes reflect this self-identification via the limited presence or absence of migrant representatives in their governance and leadership structures.

The methodological approach:

The initial approach of this research was based on three assumptions based on the prior observations of EPIM:

1. Policy and ownership aspect:

Migrants and migrant-led organisations lack ownership of (EU) policy processes and public discourse, risking a disconnect between policymaking and the realities of European societies.

2. The social environments of migrant-led initiatives:

Migrant-led organisations and migrant individuals do not possess sufficient networks and spaces to build strategies both among themselves and within mainstream organisations.

3. Organisational structure and capacity of migrant-led initiatives:

Migrant-led organisations lack both recognition and (organisational) capacity necessary to influence (EU) policymakers' decision-making on issues affecting them.

These assumptions were used as a basis to gather input for a more comprehensive analysis of challenges and opportunities in this context. This focus was expanded as the research progressed to include additional aspects related to the central questions suggested by participant inputs. The final study therefore focuses on the full range of findings, including those related to the initial assumptions.

Data was collected through:

- A survey exercise (234 responses).
- Nine in-depth interviews.
- Three pan-European focus groups.
- Participant observation during migrant-led events.

Both survey respondents and interviewees are referred to as 'research participants' throughout, to reflect the nature of their contribution to the research. A more detailed description of the research methodology is provided in Annex I.

The results of this research are presented in six chapters:

- **Chapter One** '*Becoming a Migrant Advocate – the Personal Perspective*' focuses on the personal experiences and motivations of migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives.
- **Chapter Two** '*Having a Proper Seat at the Table*' addresses the issue of influencing decision-making processes.
- **Chapter Three** '*Use Our Image*' explores the challenges for shaping public discourse in European societies.
- **Chapter Four** '*Come Together*' focuses on challenges for migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives when working with other migrant-led organisations and mainstream CSOs.
- **Chapter Five** '*My Expertise is Not Expertise*' describes the legitimacy issues faced by migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives.
- '*Conclusions*' evaluates the initial assumptions provided by EPIM in light of the research findings.

Chapter One - Becoming a Migrant Advocate: the Personal Perspective

This chapter focuses on how research participants first became engaged in advocacy work, and how they perceive this new position from a personal perspective both as individuals within the wider advocacy landscape and within their own migrant-led organisations.

1. Towards self-identification as a migrant advocate

'I automatically became a refugee ambassador because I could speak the language and I am well integrated and I am strong. So that positioned me in that situation'

Nayla, a migrant advocate based in Lithuania

Like Nayla, many of the research participants during the fieldwork describe themselves using the terms *'leader'*, *'advocate'* or *'ambassador'*. Most describe how they did not assume such as positions entirely by personal choice, but that they felt the necessity to play such a role. Working as a volunteer to assist other migrants or refugees, for example with tasks such as interpretation, seems to be the starting point for their activism.

2. Sharing personal stories as an initial step towards becoming a migrant advocate

A large number of research participants noted that their involvement in advocacy started with small-scale projects such as visiting schools and sharing their personal stories. As illustrated by a participant from Italy, quoted below, these types of activities appear **to be a turning point** for their becoming more involved in advocacy work, particularly in work aiming to influence public opinion:

'There are some NGOs who do this kind of projects where they take migrants to schools and they talk about migrants, about how they arrived, and the reasons that they leave their country. So I did this, and it was the initial point of my advocacy job'

3. Deciding to act as a migrant advocate to change the dominant narrative

Personal stories seem to be the **only resource** that migrant advocates have at when they start doing advocacy work. As a participant from Hungary noted, *'By speaking to us [refugees], you will learn about our stories and you will have a better picture'*. Migrant advocates cannot independently organise these types of projects due to a lack of resources, and mainstream CSOs and other organisations therefore take the lead. This below quoted participant describes one such initiative led by UNHCR in a refugee camp:

'UNHCR was the one who is organising and bringing people to the camps to hear their [refugees] stories, so I think these kinds of initiatives close the gap between the migrant as a mythical creature that we don't know and the one that we should create a policy for.'

4. The emergence of migrant-led structures and potential challenges for their work

Migrant-led advocacy work by research participants focuses mainly on providing new perspectives and ideas to change the dominant *'picture'*, *'discourse'* or *'narrative'* about migrants in Europe, and most are involved in advocacy work to change European public opinion on migration and related policy and projects. Some have taken their work a step further by establishing formal or informal migrant-led organisations, which primarily aim to serve the interests of migrant and/or their host communities.

Research participants agreed that the added value of such initiatives lies in the **high level of migrant participation**, and that this aspect is what distinguishes them from other, non-migrant-led organisations and entities. In other words, migrants themselves are in charge of thinking, planning, designing and implementing projects to support themselves and their communities.

Becoming an organiser requires immense determination and commitment from migrant advocates. Through individual work, a migrant advocate creates opportunities to meet and collaborate with like-minded people who eventually support their vision and cause. Some might decide to undertake this work only with those from their own communities, while others decide to work with non-migrants from host communities.

Most of these projects and initiatives begin on voluntary basis, later amending their strategy by incorporate the aim of **professionalising the project**, for example by becoming a formal, official organisation. Establishing a formal organisation and an official website are key steps towards being recognised as 'professional', as is receiving structural and/or official funding for the organisation and its projects. Funding can also determine the long-term sustainability of the organisation in the long-term, not least by providing paid employment (rather than voluntary positions) that in turn positively influences the level of commitments individuals can make to a specific project or organisation.

Another factor that may impact the development of migrant-led initiatives is **the level of consensus among leadership teams and/or board members, and the potential for disagreements or ideological differences** based on differing aims, political positions or approaches.

Social media is centrally important to the communication strategies of migrant-led organisations, and particularly how they maintain a connection with other migrants. Facebook and other online social media enable migrant-led initiatives to share their activities and advocacy messages, and report back from attendance at conferences or other events. **Social media also provides a mechanism to evaluate advocacy messages** and build support for their work. As a participant from Italy commented, *'when I share a video or a text that related to my interventions when I speak [in conferences], they appreciate what I say'*. Migrant advocates take then take the position of 'migrant leader', advocating on behalf of their community, organisation, or specific projects involving migrants.

5. Reliance on people with a non-migrant background

As previously, a ‘migrant-led organisation’ does not mean an organisation ‘only’ by migrants for migrants. In fact, all of **the respondents involve non-migrants in their organisational leadership and board composition**. The role of non-migrants within these organisation varies, and includes board membership, staff and volunteer positions and organisational advisers. Some research participants highlighted that an initiative can only be considered as ‘migrant-led’ if one of the founders or current leaders are themselves migrants. As one participant noted, *‘they [non-migrants] also enjoy working with us. It’s not only a project for us, but it is our project’*.

Challenges for establishing migrant-led organisations vary across Europe. Migrant advocates in Eastern Europe describe challenges that are distinct from those faced by their counterparts different in Western Europe. A participant from Hungary explained how difficult - and potentially illegal it is to start an organisation and receive support, noting *‘it is actually a crime to help refugees’*.

It is important to note is that in any organisation, the board has the ultimate power (at least formally) to make final decisions. However, migrant leaders may themselves decide not to take up leadership positions on their own organisation’s board for a variety of strategic and personal reasons.

One motivation may be **to increase funding opportunities** for the organisation by presenting a ‘non-migrant’ face. *‘We need someone for the chair, someone who is white and can open doors’*, was a sentiment expressed during a board meeting for a newly founded migrant-led organisation in Amsterdam. Others may want **to receive compensation** for their work, which legally cannot be provided to board members.

Trust is also an important factor in decisions about migrant representation at board level, and a lack of trust in the capacity of individual migrants to take up such positions risks creating power asymmetries between organisational boards and migrant leaders. A migrant leader from The Netherlands requested advice on decision-making in this regard for his newly registered organisation, specifically on whether he should take up a position on the board or become the organisation’s director. *‘They [native Dutch] are nice people who also helped me since I arrived in the Netherlands’*, he said, *‘but they still see me just as a refugee’*. He felt that **his leadership ability was in question even inside within his own organisation**. Participants indicated that being outwardly ambitious does not fit the current ‘image’ of migrants, as in this group discussion in Berlin:

‘There is a perception when they ask you, who you are and what are you capable of? So if you are way too ambitious, they will get pulled back; it seems that you’re not capable of achieving your own business’.

Focus group discussion (Berlin, April 27 2019)

6. The added value of migrant advocates for policy and practice

Migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives bring new perspectives to host societies, CSOs, migrant projects and policy debates. A number of specific characteristics of migrant-led initiatives emerged from observations and interviews:

1. **Knowledge and lived experience of migration.** Migrants themselves have a better understanding than anyone else of the challenges they encounter: as one participant from Spain noted, *'we are experts of our lives!'*. Due to their first-hand experience, migrants can more easily communicate with their communities and translate their needs and priorities. As the same Spanish participant continued, *'I think it's actually unique and authentic when you get to hear from the community itself'*. These attributes make migrant-led initiatives unique, and quite distinct from other advocacy actors: advocacy is very much based on communicating experiences to actors at higher levels actors, and non-migrant actors lack first-hand knowledge of such experiences.
2. **First-hand knowledge of migrant advocates brings new perspectives with which to challenge dominant discourses and narratives about migrants** in the public and political spheres. Research participants feel that migrants are always and/or exclusively portrayed as *'problems'*, *'victims'*, *'inferior'*, *'helpless'* or *'poor'* by the media and other actors. As a participant from Germany explained, *'there is a mindset of ideas that they use in their own politics (in which) they see us as victims'*.

In response, migrant advocates strive to showcase themselves and others as positive examples of migrants who refuse the imposed narrative of 'migrants as victims'. This narrative does not only produce negative images of migrants, but also places migrants in a specific position in relation to the rest of society. Furthermore, alongside this discursive and structural positioning of migrants as inferior, negative labels and discourses create a corresponding image of non-migrant actors: if migrants are victims, then *'we'* (non-migrants) are *'saviours'*, and if migrants are helpless, then *'we'* (non-migrants) are the *'help givers'*. Research participants reported directly experience of this **structural inequality in social positioning** when interacting with non-migrant-led projects, mainstream CSOs and policymakers, as one participant from Bosnia explained:

'[...] they [non-migrants] call them [migrants] beneficiaries. For me the word 'beneficiaries' is very strange! We [migrant-led initiatives] communicate differently, we understand problems differently and we can detect and react in a different way than organisations that are only led by humanitarians [...] We treat them [migrants] as equal and they treat us as equal. And we stand together in what is happening. That is very important if you do advocacy [...] we share solidarity, not charity'

3. **Bridging the gap between policy and reality, and reconnecting policymakers with the migrants** who are affected by these policies. Research participants believe that the gap/disconnect between pol-

icy and reality in this context emerges from their lack participation in policymaking, and the absence of their perspectives within these processes. As one participant from Spain noted, *'They are missing the point here, because they are bringing a lot of concepts and policies that do not work. If you don't include me, you give me something that will never work!'*

However, this disconnect is not solely a feature of policymaking: in fact, research participants identified the same gap with regard to mainstream CSOs that implement projects for migrants. In response, **migrant advocates strive to be politically active in European societies in order to bridge these gaps and align policies and projects with their realities.** However, many migrants lack the space to become politically active in European society. As one participant from Germany explained, *'they [migrants] don't have the right to vote. They are social citizens, but not political citizens'*. Thus, **the civil society sphere becomes the only space for migrant advocates** to express themselves and demand political change, and **migrant-led organisations becomes the only independent space** in which they can engage in political activism and design projects based on their actual needs.

7. Motivations for involvement in policymaking processes

Participants reported that *'not having a voice'* in policymaking processes strongly motivated them to organise both themselves and their communities, and to demand change from policymakers. As a participant from Italy explained:

'[...] there is a direct and big impact of those policies on our life and it is not functioning. So I started [with advocacy]...my objective was to do something politically because on the ground there are many things that they are not working well, and there is no channel [via which] refugees, asylum seekers...can have direct access to somehow influence those policies or those decisions.'

As previously, migrants use advocacy and the civil society sphere **to have access to and be represented in policy-making spaces.** Being unable to fully participate in the political sphere, instead remaining in the background while decisions are being made about their lives, is the nature of the disconnect that research participants feel exists between mainstream politics and their own realities. The ability to join alongside other citizens constitutes one step towards bridging this gap: in this context, the importance of migrant-led advocacy groups is quite clear.

Conclusions & main challenges:

- Participants became migrant advocates not entirely through personal choice, but also because they felt it necessary to play this role. .
- For migrant advocates, sharing personal stories was the initial step towards becoming involved in advocacy work. However, they do not want to be recognised only as storytellers or be limited to this specific role.
- Migrant advocates rely strongly on mainstream CSOs to carry out advocacy work. This is often due to the individual advocates' lack of (financial) capacity to work independently.
- Emerging migrant-led organisations face challenges in accessing funding, which in turn impacts on their organisational sustainability.

Opportunities:

- ❖ Although the title of 'migrant advocate' is by default given to those migrants using their voice in a public arena, there are many opportunities for migrants working in this context to develop their advocacy skills and build long-term strategies to influence policy. Learning how to use personal stories for example, can increase the impact of their advocacy work.
- ❖ There is huge current interest in working with migrant advocates. Learning how to establish an equal partnership between migrants and non-migrants will both increase the impact of advocacy work, and make such collaborations sustainable in the longer term.
- ❖ Migrant-led initiatives are best practice models for collaboration between migrants and those from host societies to work toward a common cause. They are also an independent space for migrants to organise their voices in order to influence policy and lead change. When considered as a leading best practice for migrant participation in policymaking, scaling up the migrant-led initiative model presents considerable opportunities for such engagement in the future.

Chapter Two - Having a Proper Seat at the Table – Challenges for Influencing Decision-Making

This chapter describes how European political processes and institutional arrangements can prevent migrant-led organisations from having a direct and sustainable influence in policymaking.

1. Lack of trust in decision-making and policymaking processes

Research participants are working in different countries, on advocacy targeting a range of migrant groups. Although the challenges they encounter in their work vary depending on their country of residence and its political system, research participants noted a number of common challenges for advocacy to influence policy by engaging with policymakers.

Overall, there seems to be a **lack of trust** from migrant advocates when it comes to interacting with decision makers. As previously, many research participants perceive a gap between policy and reality and a disconnect between policymakers and the people affected by policy. Rigid bureaucratic systems are the source of much frustration for migrant advocates, who described them as *'outdated'*, *'inflexible'* and *'old fashioned'*. In both survey responses and focus group discussions, participants strongly highlighted the need to speed up both policymaking processes and asylum procedures. For example, a participant from Italy outlined the dysfunctional nature of the current Dublin Regulation and its failure to assist either migrants or European society:

'When I was in Turkey, the smugglers used this Dublin law as an instrument to ask me for more money. They told me "there is a European law that will force you to live in the first country of arrival, which is Greece, and you cannot go to another country". So they said "give us more money, then we will take you without identification in a country where you want." So this is the impact of those policies where there is no space for our voices.'

Research participants also agreed that **integration policies and projects do not recognise or respond to the actual needs and priorities of migrants**. Many pointed to the lack of agreement on a common definition of integration, and to what they feel is the strategic use of the term by organisations applying for funding. Both the unclear definition of integration, and the lack of clear criteria for 'good integration' on which to base implementation and evaluation, can lead to questionable selection of projects to receive funding.

This issue emerged clearly in an organisational case study³ undertaken during the fieldwork. On their website, the case study organisation defines itself as established by and working with newcomers (both recently arrived refugees and longer term migrants). The project in fact consists of invitations for newcomers to attend social activities (such as films, talk and dinners) in a large property purchased by the two non-migrant founders of the organisation, using organisational resources. The founders live

³ The name of the organisation is intentionally not mentioned due to ethical concerns.

in the property, and while they do invite newcomers to the house for social activities as their apparent main objective, a question remains as to who the project's primary beneficiary is. In this type of project, organisations reap benefits by securing funding, the bulk of which is allocated to staff salaries and accommodation. Newcomers, by contrast, are provided solely with access to a space to screen a movie or present their stories.

2. Poor information-sharing and unclear political processes

Research participants reported encountering **inconsistent or contradictory political logics and approaches** at different levels of policymaking (European, national and local). Focus group participants highlighted that although communicating with local politicians was often easier than with national political representatives, decisions concerning the issues that they are advocating for are often made at national level. In some cases, there appear to be **unclear/and unstructured approaches information-sharing** and cooperation between municipalities and national governments.

The lack of trust advocates feel towards policymakers also stems from the perceived **lack of transparency in policymaking processes**. Some research participants referred to unmet expectations or 'empty promises' in this context: although political parties may initially express a strong interest in collaborating with migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives, they ultimately take no action to realise these commitments.

3. Engagement limited to providing recommendations

The majority of research participants have experienced a lack of **feedback, follow-up and continuity** in their advocacy work with policymakers. Policymaking here is a top-down process, in which migrant participation is limited to providing recommendations without receiving any feedback or insight into if and how their input will be used. Additional challenges were faced by research participants undertaking advocacy work on a voluntary basis, generally alongside paid employment or study, who lacked time for structured follow-up with policymakers. Research participants identified full political participation – the ability to vote and to stand for election – as one potential solution for 'closing the gap' between policymaking and migrant realities to this problem.

Several research participants do feel that their voices are being heard in some instances. One participant was very positive about partnerships between municipalities and migrant organisations in the Finnish of Helsinki Vantaa, describing how his organisation had been invited to participate in various conferences and events. A participant from The Netherlands described how it had taken some time for her organisation to be taken seriously as a diaspora-led organisation. As she explains, *'right now municipalities and others are asking us for advice with integration policies and what they should do with this and that case. But now we are like: 'wait we don't have the capacity to do all this work''*.

4. How persistent narratives of victimisation hinder migrant capacity to effect change

The narrative of migrants as ‘victims’ in need of help is persistent and hard to change. It creates difficulties when trying to empower migrants and conceive of them as active agents, and equally prevents migrants thinking of themselves as active agents of change. Many research participants consider that the existence of migrant-led initiatives in itself produces counter-narratives that challenge common myths and misconceptions about migrants.

Many research participants feel misunderstood, unheard and excluded, including in terms of a lack of engagement from policymakers and the absence of political representation. They often feel that the issues they are advocating for are only addressed by politicians when it is in their interest, and that ‘listening to migrants’ only becomes important when campaigning ahead of an election. Their overall feeling is that political representatives are not always seeking actual solutions to challenges for migrants, and are instead using migrant advocates as ‘pawns’ in a wider political game. Migrant advocates doubt the sincerity of cooperation in these contexts, and describe the need to carefully navigate this type of engagement to prevent their issues of interest from being used by politicians solely for their own benefit.

Conclusions & main challenges:

- Migrant advocates lack trust in decision-making and policymaking processes.
- Unclear policymaking processes and cooperation structures between different levels of government hinder the flow of information to migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives.
- Migrant engagement in policymaking is often limited to providing recommendations, with no feedback or follow-up received.
- The persistent ‘migrant as victim’ narrative limits the potential for migrants to act as agents of change.

Opportunities:

- ❖ For policymaking to be inclusive of migrant interests, it is important that both migrant advocates and policymakers can learn how to approach and engage with one another. Creating spaces where both parties can exchange ideas and build the trust necessary to work together can provide the opportunities for this learning to take place.
- ❖ Creating online spaces and tools to explain EU policymaking processes is an effective way of sharing knowledge and information among migrant advocates. Such resources could be created by expert migrant advocates with a long experience of working and influencing policymaking in this context. Translating this information into different languages would enable newcomers to be immediately engaged in policymaking processes.

Chapter Three - “Use Our Image” – Challenges for Influencing Public Discourse

This chapter first sets out how public opinion concerning migrants is shaped by different actors, and how this in turn affects migrant advocates. It then moves on to consider the various actions taken by migrant-led initiatives to change the dominant public discourse, including the challenges they face in this work.

1. Difficulties in countering predominant narratives

Many research participants highlighted **the lack of attention given to, and misrepresentation** of, migrants in the media and communication by other mainstream actors as a centrally important issue affecting their work. This was closely followed in terms of importance by general public opinion that is often based on **insufficient knowledge** about migrants and their lived experiences. A participant from Italy described his own experience of working with the media:

*‘There are different actors that have responsibility, especially the media. In Italy, they don’t include us. I was invited to a TV program to talk on World Refugee Day. But there were **limitations** to what I can speak about, I had to speak only about my journey, my experience and not about my point of view.’*

He further explained the **role of politicians and political parties** in influencing public opinion:

*‘Political parties have great responsibility. Especially now in Italy, those who are in power, those political parties **use our image** in their campaigns. They use crime images against us, against refugees, against migrants to increase their votes in the public.’*

The same participant highlighted **the role of NGOs** in this context:

*‘There is also the responsibility of NGOs that when they raise funds for their projects, they use this image of migrants that they are poor, that they are a needy category of society. So, these images - especially the pictures that they use in the videos for their fundraising campaigns - create a **negative impact on** refugees and migrants in public opinion.’*

2. The impact of (re)producing the discourse of ‘migrants as victims’

As a result of how migrants are portrayed, research participants feel that the focus of European political rhetoric and public discourse has **shifted** towards a rhetoric of fear, security concerns and the protection of national borders, rather than constructive cooperation, openness and support. Many find themselves dealing directly with assumptions and stereotypes about migrants, and rising xenophobia surrounding the topic of migration. A participant from Germany noted:

'When they see that something bad happened then they say all of us are bad and they forget that their own people make the same mistakes. It's like they feel that they need a reason that their fear against the other is true. And they need a reason to confirm that fear and that is a problem.'

Focus group discussion (Berlin, April 27 2019)

3. The need to rebrand migration and reframe public discourse

In order to respond to the issue of negative portrayals, some research participants feel it is necessary to reframe or 'rebrand' what it means to be a migrant. A focus group participant from France noted:

'We want the media to see us as a human being like others, to benefit from our skills in your society, not to feel sympathy about my situation. I don't care if you look down at me in sympathy, I want to work, I want to study, I want to live. There are a lot of initiatives by refugees who are doing good things for their communities. We need to highlight these examples, to focus on re-branding migrants to change this mentality. And this perception that the people and the media have about refugees.'

Focus group discussion (Brussels, May 4 2019)

Another participant asked why *'people who are coming from India are seen as expats while those who were coming from different countries are seen as refugees or migrants'*. Exploring these types of double standards can to a certain extent enable access to the 'gaze' of others in relation to migrants. Many of the research participants want to change the current discourse of migrants as passive actors to a narrative that presents migrants as active participants in society who have much to contribute.

4. Framing advocacy demands in order to address common (migrant-local) interests

A participant from Germany suggested how advocacy work and the framing of migrant demands should be approached:

*'We should agree to unite ourselves and think of **the power of knowledge**. We need to find the bridge; we need to say that we don't want to be here because we want to ask you a few things but actually we have something to offer. This is all about power and politics may not be a serious one but it's about the pressure.'*

Focus group discussion (Berlin, April 27 2019)

5. Lack of recognition by other actors

Most of the research participants are very conscious about how they present themselves in public, in order that they are not seen *'just as migrants'*. *'Proving myself'* was a phrase used very often by research participants: a participant from the Czech Republic, currently a university professor, said that one reason she retains this position is simply to have *a 'good title'* that commands recognition.

6. The impact of victimisation narratives for migrant communities

The lack of recognition of the capacity of migrant advocates and migrant-led initiatives negatively impacts migrant communities. A focus group participant described the effect for agency and self-confidence within migrant communities, and how this issue should be addressed via empowerment:

*'...and for the people that I know [...] I feel that there is an **internalised helplessness** within the migrant community, and this internalised helplessness, it could be a major effect for not being able to get funded or not be allowed to lead projects and so on. So, for me, I feel like there is a need for empowerment for people with a migrant background to unleash these ideas and I'm now realising so many things that could be done. We're all very powerful and capable people!'* After which another participant enthusiastically shouted *'nothing about us without us!'* and the wider group laughed.

Focus group discussion (Brussels, May 5 2019)

Conclusions & main challenges:

- **Difficulties in countering predominant narratives.**
- Migration is a process in which choices are made *for* migrants, and European societies pre-define migrants' identities and stories.
- **The need to rebrand migration and reframe the public discourse.** There is an overall lack of engagement with migrant advocates from the media and other actors and, where engagement does take place, it often limits the type of information and/or range of topics that migrants can address.
- Perpetually describing refugees using labels such 'poor' and 'helpless' affects refugees themselves, by creating a sense of internalised helplessness and promoting a reliance dependent on host societies and/or NGOs.
- Lack of recognition by other actors
- The effect of the victimization narrative on the community

Opportunities:

- ❖ The need for ownership was made clear in participant discussion and comments on reframing and developing strategies to influence public discourse. Building migration-related campaigns implemented by migrant advocates is one potential approach to promoting ownership, and the current positioning of migration as a 'hot topic' suggests that the present is a key moment to undertake such work.
- ❖ For migrant advocates, it is important to learn to own their personal stories and use them as a mechanism to do advocacy work. One example of how ownership might be built in this context is the organisation of trainings in public speaking.
- ❖ Empowering migrant advocates and their communities is a key step in increasing the impact of advocacy. Addressing '*internalised helplessness*' of migrants is a first vital step towards empowering migrant communities.

Chapter Four - 'Come Together' – Challenges for working with other CSOs

This chapter presents the findings of the research in relation to how migrant-led initiatives interact with one another, then highlights their interactions with other CSOs before moving on to present the challenges for their (organisational) capacity to do advocacy work.

I wish there is some finance to find a way to come together and to discuss how to involve our work. I really wish that migrant organisations come together and coordinate together the issues and how they're going to work together.

Focus group discussion (Brussels, May 4 2019)

1. Interaction between migrant-led organisations/groups

Approximately 75% of survey respondents reported working together with other migrant-led-organisations, both in their host countries and across the European Union, with partnerships most often being established at national level sometimes also on an EU or global level. *Refugees Welcome* and *Diaspora Network Alliance* were mentioned as partners at both national and European level, as were *SINGA* and *RISE*. However, many survey responses pointed to an overall **lack of opportunities to network** with other individuals working in the field, in addition to difficulties in finding cooperation partners in other EU countries. Building strong networks of migrant-led initiatives and associations to work together on advocacy projects and strategies is therefore challenging.

Additionally, research participants pointed to both the **need to map different organisations** working in this area, and the desire to cooperate with both migrant/refugee groups and mainstream CSOs as a way of strengthening their legitimacy in the public sphere:

'[...] maybe we can target the leaders of these organisations [migrant-led organisations and migration-related NGOs], organise a gathering together and try to work under one umbrella. So we elect a body to represent this umbrella. So we all have the same issues, whether we are migrants or refugees, and then we elect a group so that they can go to the Parliament and say things like 'I have these people behind me'. The number really matters; the more organisations behind us, the more the government will take us seriously, so instead of saying this is a Ghanaian organization, we can say in the name of all refugees.'

Focus group discussion (Brussels, May 5 2019)

The majority of the migrant advocates participating in this research are take a multi-level engagement approach to their work. Approximately 65% work at local or national level, and 40% at European level. Almost 75% of respondents mentioned that they would like to undertake advocacy work at European level in the future, and around 60% noted their desire to work on a global scale to influence migration policies. These responses indicate a **strong desire to broaden the extent of their cooperation**.

Survey responses highlighted the difficulties in convincing colleagues from the same sector to collaborate on specific topics. Organisations that share the same vision often **compete with one another rather than collaborating**, and their efforts become more scattered and weak as a result. As one of the research participants noted:

'We don't optimise our efforts in advocacy work due to this separated way of working. We lack cooperative knowledge and experience sharing and therefore a collective advocacy voice.'

Survey, European Summit 2019

Many research participants feel that organisational, group and personal interests play a role in competition between migrant-led initiatives. A participant from Spain expressed a belief that such competition is mostly about power: *'who can lead whom? Every organisation wants its voice to be heard'*. Other participants feel that competition is about (not) sharing opportunities, such as funding, training and speaking opportunities, with other migrant-led initiatives. However, competition over geographical representation seems to be less present among migrant-led initiatives when advocacy work is undertaken at the European and global levels. As a research participant from Czech Republic explained, *'at the national level, they are not willing to work together, but internationally, they do because there is no equation of competition.'*

Multiple research participants perceived struggles related to **divisions within the same migrant community**. One participant explained how his organisation had tried to bring together all Syrian projects and organisations based in Germany, and how their multiple aims, topics of interest and political statements had prevented their establishing a joint mission. Research participants also mentioned a gap between 'old', 'well-settled' and 'new' (Syrian) migrants:

'There is a very big amount of Syrian expats and professionals but we haven't seen any of them since we arrived. They could have been that bridge but they didn't and I understand why but they could have been that bridge. I tried, maybe not enough but it didn't work out. We [the Syrian community] are a big mess.'

Focus group discussion (Berlin, May 5 2019)

Another participant reacted to this point by asserting that divisions and competition among refugee and migrant-led groups should be overcome:

'[...]can we start thinking not only about Syrians, because there are so many other refugees and we are thinking that we can build something like a network of networks. Somalis, Eritreans, Africans and so on. They also need some kind of organisation because they are also working but they are in the corner... So we need to find a way to be more inclusive. We need to work together, not only to think about Syria or Afghanistan but about how we can work together because this is lacking so far.' [the group complimented her for raising this point]

Focus group discussion (Brussels, May 5 2019)

Another participant similarly asserted:

'I'm not saying that we should be one entity, I'm just saying let's just not concentrate on differences, we share at least one or two things in common, for example, that we should be heard in the society.'

Focus group discussion (Brussels, May 5 2019)

The vast majority of research participants agreed that there should be **more collaboration** as opposed to competition among migrant-led initiatives, especially in relation to *'making migrant voices heard'*. However, the spaces to come together and coordinate such efforts are **limited and determined** by those owning the space and agenda. A participant from Hungary, for example, experienced the European Summit as a space where she could share more than her personal story and where she felt encouraged to share her knowledge and expertise. This is in contrast to experiences highlighted by another participant from Lithuania in non-migrant-led spaces:

'I still find it hard to maintain my ground. I still want to own my story and my knowledge because at some events you feel that you are just there to tell your personal story, how Nyala crossed the Sahara Desert and came to Lithuania and became successful.'

2. Interaction with non-migrant-led organisations

With regard to interaction with mainstream CSOs, experiences of research participants differ: some had fairly positive experiences, while others did not. Some respondents identified a **lack of connection** between the private, entrepreneurial sector and the (social) sector that supports migrants and refugees. The economic agency of migrants and refugees and their potential to boost innovation at the local level is neglected by some CSOs and local policymakers. Some research participants also observed a shift in CSO support for recently arrived refugees and migrants, in which CSOs appeared to be more supportive of these groups before the topic became prominent in public discourse, or at least prominent on their agenda:

'[...] CSOs at the beginning they were addressing us as active factors, now I have the feeling that it's the other way around, as passive factors, as passive entities.'

Focus group discussion (Brussels, May 5 2019)

Research participants from Germany referred to a change in public and CSO attitudes in the wake of negative media attention after widely reported incidents in Köln.⁴

⁴ B, Yermi, and K, Ohlendorf (2016) *Time for the Facts. What Do We Know about Cologne Four Months Later?* in *The Correspondent*, available online > <https://thecorrespondent.com/4401/time-for-the-facts-what-do-we-know-about-cologne-four-months-later/1073698080444-e20ada1b>

Some larger, mainstream CSOs seem to think that they know the best way to assist migrants and refugees. In this context, migrant-led initiatives and migrant advocates are frequently **underestimated or treated as tokens** to give advice to CSOs when it suits a particular organisation's agenda or current vision, echoing the comments of research participants with regard to interactions with policymakers.

Research participants' interactions with CSOs are limited to consultation and provision of information, and do not constitute equal partnerships or an active decision-making role. While their advice and contributions are taken seriously, they do not result in offers of paid employment in high level CSO positions, even where migrants are appropriately qualified. As was highlighted through the interviews and group discussions, a number of research participants have been given voluntary positions such as interpreters, 'cultural mediators', and 'cultural advisors', and while such positions enable migrant advocates to be active in that space, **they limit them from effectively influencing policy** or participating in organisational decision-making. Some research participants described experiencing a **degree of tokenism** in their interactions with mainstream CSOs in the course of applying for funding:

'[...] they [CSOs] use us in a way so that they can get the funding but yet they don't share the funding with us and they don't offer it to us for doing the project or in the project that is working with us. If one NGO is doing this then that is okay, but there is a series of NGOs that do the same thing...so I feel that I'm used, continuously used, they're not supporting us.'

Focus group discussion (Brussels, May 4 2019)

The vast majority of survey respondents strongly agreed with the statement that migrant-led organisations should collaborate more with CSOs, given the lack of current cooperation with municipalities, national governments and other stakeholders.

3. Organisational Capacity

The needs and priorities of migrant groups vary within and across European countries. In France, for instance, advocacy on policy affecting refugees and migrants is oriented toward the fulfilment of basic need and legal rights, such as housing, sanitary provisions, healthcare services and family reunification, and precarious situations in Paris and Calais demonstrate a reduction of governmental responsibility in this area. While a need to ensure provision for basic human needs is ongoing, advocacy work addressing higher level policy or other issues such as integration is not a priority nor an option.

One of the principle challenges for the capacity of migrant-led initiatives to focus on policy-building over longer periods is a **lack of personal financial resources and/or (sustainable) public funding**. Many migrant advocates are volunteers, and it is extremely difficult for them to sustain long-term commitments and activities without funding. Additionally, when the number of individuals doing advocacy tasks is limited, individual advocates can easily become exhausted.

Training migrants to be effective advocates also requires a lot of time and energy, and research participants identified limitations caused by a **lack of skilled advocacy workers**. Some participants identified specific training needs, such as project management, proposal writing and how to escalate issues to the European level when local level responses were unsatisfactory. Training needs in some cases arose from **insufficient knowledge concerning (new) laws and regulations**, in part due to unclear and/or inaccessible information provided by national governments and EU institutions.

Participants also identified a **lack of sufficient contacts and experience** in relation to policy and advocacy, resulting from the fact that many migrants and refugees are relatively new in Europe (in particular those arriving during the period of increased migrant arrivals in 2015). The role of knowledge in building political credibility was described by a German participant:

'I need some kind of political credibility, because if you want to go and represent the community you should really have the knowledge, the political skills, the political education, which we never actually had before coming to this country. So I think, when we talk about capacities, what we need is basic political knowledge in order to be taken seriously at the political level.'

Focus group discussion (Berlin, May 5 2019)

As previously, there is a high demand for people who can effectively follow up on meetings and agreements with organisations and policymakers, so as to ensure that advocacy efforts are sustainable and collaborations can become a long-term partnerships. However, a **lack of a well-structured coordination of volunteers** and sufficient transmission of accurate information and help for the target groups compounds this issue.

Another practical problem obstructing advocacy work is **mobility and legality**, involving issues such as obtaining travel documents, arranging taxes and work permits, and acquiring the residence and citizenship documents. Research participants also mentioned **language barriers**, for example the lack of availability of translated policy documents and communication with refugees community with different language backgrounds.

Conclusions & main challenges:

- Spaces for migrant advocates to come together and coordinate their efforts are limited. There is a strong need to create migrant-led spaces that allow migrant advocates to come together and organise their voices.
- Migrant advocates are frequently underestimated or tokenistically used as volunteers to provide advice to mainstream CSOs and policymakers. Voluntary positions given to migrant advocates within mainstream CSOs and government institutions include 'cultural connectors' and 'cultural advisors'. While such positions allow migrant advocates to be active in that space, it limits them from effectively influencing policies or participating in organisational decision-making.
- A lack of personal financial resources and/or sustainable funding limits migrant capacity to focus on longer term advocacy work and policy building. Additionally, donors/funders are more interested in funding the costs of project implementation rather than core organisational costs, which are key to empowering migrants and their networks to do sustainable advocacy work.

Opportunities:

- ❖ Many migrant-led initiatives and organisations are emerging as new actors in the advocacy landscape. Bringing these initiatives and organisations together to focus on joint activities such as developing a voice in EU policymaking is a crucial step in shaping their future participation.
- ❖ Creating more migrant-led spaces where migrant advocates and other stakeholders can come together to discuss policies and ways to influence them.
- ❖ Raising awareness on how to best engage with migrant advocates, so as to move away from the tokenistic approach currently experienced by migrant advocates.
- ❖ Migrant advocates learning how to build sustainable and equal partnerships with existing advocacy groups and CSOs, so as to share experiences and best practices for influencing EU policy.

Chapter Five - “My Expertise is Not Expertise” - Questioning Legitimacy

The **questioning of migrant legitimacy** is a common theme emerging from this research. Although migrants and non-migrants are not always on opposite sides of debates in this context, questions of legitimacy often seem to manifest themselves along these lines. Legitimacy is in this context defined as *‘the general perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definition.’*⁵ The question of legitimacy is distinguished by two characteristics: firstly the **credibility** of migrant-led initiatives according to other stakeholders, and secondly whether migrant-led initiatives are **representative** enough of those they claim to represent.

1. Questioning the credibility of migrant advocates

Credibility is a particularly important issue for the success of migrant-led advocacy in the context of funding. There are many cases in which migrant-led organisations do not receive funds or assistance, which are instead awarded to their non-migrant led *‘white NGO’*⁶ counterparts. The knowledge and professionalism of migrant advocates is outweighed by **institutional racism or bias** towards non-white advocacy workers. Research participants described how migrant-led organisations struggle with what they perceive as the racist gaze of some *‘white NGOs’*, and that those in higher level organisational positions *‘not being ‘white’ or ‘native’* leads to a reduced credibility relative to native-led CSOs and a subsequent loss of funding. As participant from Germany noted *‘there is a still this kind of perception that we as an African organisation cannot run a project, so they say ‘we’re not giving them funds.’*

This practice of **exclusion because of ‘not being ‘white or native’** is experienced by a number of research participants in their interactions with both NGOs local policymakers. *‘My expertise is not expertise. They take her race seriously and me? They never take me as an expert’*, said one participant, an activist and municipality policy advisor, when describing an incident when policymakers were preferentially consulting a white expert on integration.

The **complexity of ‘whiteness’** becomes clear in integration policies that enable a single social group (mainly ‘white natives’) to define what integration is, while excluding non-natives (migrants) from discussions on how to integrate (new) migrants in *‘our’* country. Migrant perceptions on how integration should implemented are **neglected, either by delegitimising their position** as experts or by not seeing them as ‘credible enough’ to receive funding for their projects.

2. Questioning the legitimacy of migrant advocates as representatives

The legitimacy of migrant advocates as representative of the migrant groups they advocate for is often challenged by mainstream CSOs and policymakers: *‘Are you (the migrant advocate) representative*

⁵ Lister, S. (2003). NGO legitimacy: technical issue or social construct? *Critique of anthropology*, 23(2), 175-192.

⁶ These terms are reproduced verbatim

enough?” is a question often asked of migrant advocates during their interactions with policymakers and some mainstream CSOs. During a discussion at the 2019 European Summit, research participants asked *‘if NGOs have been representing the migrant voices for the last years without being migrants themselves, why do we (migrants) need to see refugee-led organisations as representatives?’*

This practice **intends to delegitimise the current position** of migrant advocates in the political space, and pushes migrant advocates to focus on becoming ‘representatives’. Once ‘representativeness’ has been achieved, however, including migrant voices in policy discussions **becomes an oversimplified and tokenistic act**, ‘checking the box’ relating to the participation of a migrant representative has been included yet still not granting them the opportunity to truly participate. Thus instead of trying to create a ‘representative’ UN module for migrants and refugees, the focus should be on how to create more inclusive policymaking that ensures the lived experiences of affected population are included in the development of policy affecting them.

Conclusions & main challenges:

The identified challenges regarding legitimacy are twofold:

- In terms of credibility, there are many cases in which migrant-led networks do not receive the funds or assistance commensurate to those awarded to their non-migrant led, ‘white’ organisational counterparts. Institutional racism or bias cancels out the knowledge and professionalism of non-white advocacy workers.
- When migrants advocate for other migrants, their ‘representativeness’ is challenged by mainstream CSOs and policymakers. This practice intends to delegitimise the current position of migrant advocates in the political space.

Opportunities:

- ❖ Migrant-led advocacy provides new ways to look at how an affected population can be engaged in policymaking, and new approaches for policymakers to become more connected to realities on the ground. Learning how to improve this aspect of migrant advocacy presents an opportunity for policymaking to become more inclusive of the lived experiences of migrant populations.

Conclusion

Migrant advocates and migrant-led organisations are unique actors in the advocacy landscape. This research describes how some migrants perceive their new position as migrant advocates, and some of the challenges and opportunities they face when undertaking advocacy work in Europe.

This chapter evaluates the extent to which the three initial assumptions outlined by the EPIM team are supported or nuanced by the research findings, and describes the broader findings of the research outwith the initial scope they provided.

1. Migrants and migrant-led organisations lack ownership of (EU) policymaking and public discourse, risking a disconnect between policymaking and the realities of European societies.

This assumption does not capture the external challenges for migrant advocates in establishing ownership of (EU) policy processes and public discourse. Ownership is not solely a matter of the willingness or capability of migrant advocates: the research findings instead illustrate how migrant advocates strive to have more ownership of (EU) policymaking and public discourse, but faced a range of challenges beyond those created by their lack of individual capacity (linked to assumption 3).

In the political space, the issues of credibility and legitimacy outlined in Chapter 5 demonstrate how the external environment prevents the meaningful participation of migrant advocates, well before questions of ownership become relevant. When these intended and unintended exclusion mechanisms are facilitated by mainstream CSOs, government authorities and private institutions, it is extremely difficult for migrant advocates to establish ownership within policymaking. Almost all research participants noted a resulting disconnect between policy and reality, highlighting the need to address exclusion mechanisms as one aspect of migrant advocates' experiences of institutionalised racism.

Regarding public discourse, as explained in Chapter 3 it is difficult for migrants to frame a new narrative that counters the predominant discourse of the migrant as 'victim' and/or as a figure to be described using labels such as 'poor', 'helpless' and 'threat'. The reproduction of this narrative by external actors creates a sense of 'internalised helplessness' within migrant communities, which contributes to a need for migrant advocates to constantly prove themselves to be credible, active agents capable of providing solutions to identified problems. This framing of migrants within public discourse trickles down into the policy domain, and affects how migrant advocates are treated, perceived and judged within policymaking processes.

2. Migrant-led organisations and migrant individuals do not possess sufficient networks and spaces to build strategies both among themselves and within mainstream organisations.

The research findings indeed confirm that migrant-led spaces are limited, and that there is a need to increase their availability so as to enable migrant advocates to come together, to share networking

opportunities, knowledge, strategies and expertise, and discuss potential solutions to common challenges such as institutionalised racism in the advocacy landscape. Such collaborative spaces could also assist in reducing competition between migrant-led initiatives other CSOs.

There is a lack of joint or equal partnerships between mainstream CSOs and migrant-led initiatives. As described in Chapter 4, migrant advocates report being underestimated and/or used tokenistically as volunteers when interacting with mainstream CSOs, highlighting underlying practices of mainstream organisations that warrant further examination. Mainstream CSOs perhaps need to reconsider how they engage with migrant advocates, and take steps to make these interactions more meaningful by focusing on empowering migrant advocates. There is also a need to consider how the private sector can better engage with migrant advocates and support their work.

3. Migrant-led organisations lack both the recognition and (organisational) capacity necessary to influence (EU) policymakers' decision-making on issues affecting migrants.

As discussed for assumption (1), above, both recognition and capacity are strongly connected to creating migrant ownership of public discourse and policymaking processes. Capacity is related to the question of credibility, while recognition is linked to the perceived legitimacy of migrants as advocates. Assumption (1) and (3) are therefore closely related, although assumption (1) focuses more on structural, cultural and societal aspects. To address the challenges of assumption (3) and create a sustainable approach, it is first necessary to tackle those challenges mentioned under assumption (1). However, migrant advocates lack essential skills such as personal financial resources, organisational funding, knowledge of rules and regulations, language skills and structured cooperation with policymakers. These challenges prevent migrant advocates from providing their best work.

Annex 1: Detailed Methodology

This annex describes the framework of the research framework conducted during the fieldwork phase, and provides a detailed explanation of the research methods employed during the period March-June 2019.

Methods

To explore the core assumptions provided by the EPIM team and collect data in an inductive manner, four key research methods were used: surveys, participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus groups, the latter three of which were conducted in an ethnographic manner.

There were two main research sites:

- **G100: New Voices for Europe conference (Berlin April 27 2019)**, a grassroots migrant network created to collect the inputs from migrants on the challenges of integration Germany. Approximately 80 migrant advocates attended the event.
- **European Summit of Refugees & Migrants (Brussels, May 4-5 2019)**, held to collect input from migrants on integration in a European context. Approximately 150 individuals with a migrant background attended the event, and on the final day of the summit met with other stakeholders such as mainstream CSOs and private sector organisations.

1. Survey

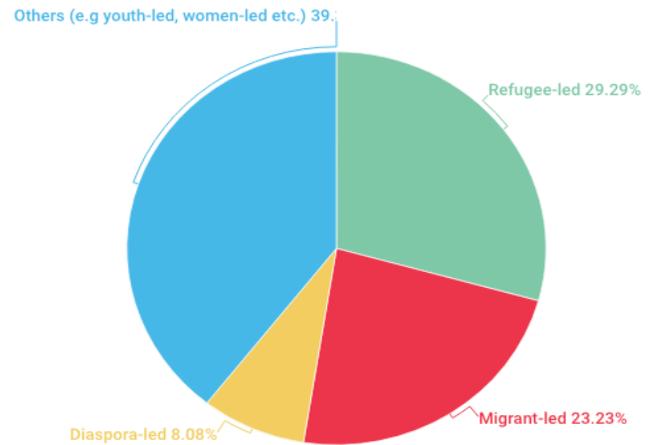
An online survey was designed both as a mapping tool and an application form for the European Summit of Refugees & Migrants, made available during April-May 2019. 234 survey responses were submitted by from migrant-led networks and other CSOs working on advocacy for migration in Europe. The charts below illustrate how the respondents self-identified themselves and their networks/organisations (see annex 2.1 for the complete survey).

2. Participant observation

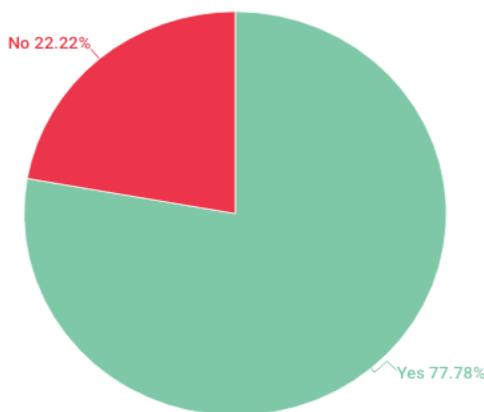
Participant observation is one of the main ethnographic data collection methods. It entails participating in social settings with the group that is being studied, while simultaneously observing their social practices. Participant observation provides an understanding of group social and cultural practices within the group, and involves the researcher balancing dual insider and outsider perspectives.

Participant observation was conducted at the two research sites described above, during formal meetings (workshops, brainstorming sessions, discussions) and informal settings (conversations during breaks and dinners). Observation here focused on the interactions and dynamics of these meetings, and interactions between migrant advocates themselves. During the last day of the European Summit, the primary focus of participant observation was the interaction between migrant advocates and other stakeholders.

Participant observation was also used to select migrants for focus groups and interviews, as it enabled the collation of background information on the interests, aims and experiences of potential participants. Participant observation produced a recognition that the experiences of migrants vary depending on factors such as gender, age, interests and ethnic background, and final focus group and interview selection strove to make as many diverse voices as possible heard within the research process.



Self-identified organization/network
234 responses



Self-identified with a lived migration experience
234 responses

3. Focus groups

Focus groups are an important tool to develop an understanding of group dynamics when a specific issue is being addressed by that group. Three pan-European focus group discussions were convened during the research process: one at G100 Berlin and two in Brussels during the European Summit of Refugees & Migrants. All focus group participants had a migrant background, had experience in leadership positions and in formal/informal collaboration with CSOs, and were highly educated. As most migrant advocates have more experience in the

public sphere than that of policymaking, the selection of migrant advocates to participate in focus groups was skewed toward those with experience of policymaking. Selection also strove to produce a diverse range of genders, ethnic and residential backgrounds amongst participant, so as to produce more representative views both of Europe and of the differences within the broader migrant advocate group.

- **Focus group 1 (Berlin)**

12 migrant informants (five women and seven men) participated in the first focus group in Berlin. All were also attendees of G100 Berlin conference, which consisted mostly of Syrians. The focus group was held at the same location as the G100 Berlin conference and took place directly after the conference.

The majority of the group had a Syrian background, with those of Egyptian and Pakistani backgrounds also represented. Interest was limited by the long, busy days participants had experienced at the conference, and by the professional obligations of many potential participants. Most participants were involved in local community work, a few were working at the national level and two worked at the European level.

- **Focus groups 2 & 3 (Brussels)**

These two focus groups were conducted during the European Summit in Brussels (May 4-6). By comparison attending the G100 in Berlin, attendees at the Brussels event were more active as migrant advocates, with the majority engaged in this work as their primary profession. Additionally, European Summit attendees were more diverse in terms of ethnic background and country of residence.

Seven migrant informants (four women and three men) participated in the first Brussels focus group. They resided in the Czech Republic, Finland (two participants), Germany, Austria, The Netherlands and France, and had Russian, Syrian (two participants), Eritrean, Cameroonian and Palestinian nationality. Three worked at the European level, while four worked in their country of residence.

Six migrant informants (two women and four men) participated in the second Brussels focus group. They resided in Germany (two participants), Malta, The Netherlands and Spain (this is 5 only), and had Syrian, Filipino (two participants), Rwandese and Sudanese nationality. Most worked in their country of residence.

Regarding organization structures, the majority of focus group participants had their own migrant network, some of which were also part of an umbrella organisation, while a few worked within a CSO with staff from migrant backgrounds. All were undertaking advocacy work in the public sphere, and some conducted advocacy oriented towards policymaking.

4. In-depth interviews

Alongside participant observation, in-depth interviews are an important ethnographic method for collecting empirical data. Nine individual of approximately one hour in length were therefore conducted with migrant advocates, with the aim of exploring the main challenges and opportunities for migrant advocacy, and potential solutions and recommendations offered by migrants themselves. The majority of interviews were conducted online via Skype, with just one conducted face-to-face in The Netherlands.

Interviewees were living in a range of different European countries (Spain, Italy, Hungary, Germany, Denmark, Lithuania, Bosnia, Czech Republic and The Netherlands), and come from a diverse range of national backgrounds (Eritrea, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria (two interviewees), Ethiopia, Bosnia and Sierra Leone). Interviewees were sampled during the European Summit of Refugees 1 Migrants, and follow-up interviews were conducted with two participants from the Czech Republic and The Netherlands due to their experience of working both at a European level and together with mainstream CSOs and politicians. Other interviewees were selected based on their different work experience, including working in leadership positions, for a municipality, in media and journalism, collaborating with non-migrant-led organisations and using interesting advocacy tools.

Three interviewees did not identify their organisations as migrant-led networks. One was not familiar with the term as in their country of origin every non-profit organisation is referred to as an 'NGO', while two worked in organisations involving non-migrants in their activities, leadership and board membership. All organisations with whom interviewees were affiliated had a high level of migrant participation.

Annex 2: List of migrant advocates and migrant-led organisations

- The list provides an overview of migrant advocates and migrant-led organisations based in 22 EU Member States. Migrant advocates and migrant-led organisations included in this list have agreed to share their contact details.
- All data were gathered through an online survey developed by MB Capacity Development and conducted ahead of the European Summit of Refugees and Migrants. The survey was disseminated via the networks of the consultancy and EPIM. Some EU Member States are missing from the list due to the fact that no survey responses were received from any persons based in these countries.

Name	Email/Website	Name of the Organisation (if applicable)	Form of the Organisation ⁷ (if applicable)	Location	Advocacy Scope	Area(s) of focus	Target group(s)
Austria							
Edwar Hanna	edwar.k.hanna@gmail.com	Syrbanism	Initiative, Migrant-led	Vienna, Austria	Local, National, EU	Peace-building, reconstruction	Diaspora, Migrants
Abdulhamid Kwieder	abdulhamid.kuider@gmail.com	Documentation center against Islamophobia	Organisation, Migrant-led	Vienna, Austria	Local, National	Racism, asylum, Integration	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees
Durra Chiban	Durrashaiban@outlook.com	YouTube channel: Unique pearl	Network, Student-led	Vienna, Austria	Local	Education, Children	Refugees
Belgium							
Mahmoud Ramadan	mahmoud.ramadan@playmakers.be	Diaspora Networks Alliance (DNA)	Network, Diaspora-led	Brussels, Belgium	EU, Global	Integration	Diaspora, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/Refugee women
Bernadett Varga	Bmvarga@icloud.com	(Former) Roma health Fund	Organisation, Migrant-led	Brussels, Belgium	EU	Access to healthcare services	Migrants, Undocumented migrants, Roma

⁷ Survey respondents were invited to describe the form of their organisation in their own words, rather than choosing from a list of pre-defined categories. As such, the list provides a broad spectrum of different organisational forms.

Reshad Jalali	rjalali@ecre.org	European Council on Refugees and Exiles	Organisation, ECRE is a Pan-Alliance of 101 organisations in 40 countries	Brussels, Belgium	EU	Protection of migrants, participation in policies	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors
Khaled Fazely	khaledfazely@gmail.com	-	-	Belgium	National	Integration, sexual health, language	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Unaccompanied minors
Ahmad Abu Sen	ahmadabosen@gmail.com	Refugee Party	Group, Refugee-led	Antwerp/Brussels, Belgium	Local, National	Protection of migrants, Integration (labour market), access higher education	Asylum seekers, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Isa Yilmaz	isa@vluchtelingenwerk.be	Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen	Organisation, an NGO	Brussels, Belgium	Local, National, EU	Reception, integration, employment	all
Abdul Azim Azad	azimazad00@gmail.com	European Spokespersons' team of Belgium Undocumented People	Network, Migrant-led	Brussels, Belgium	Local, National, EU	Participation in policies	Migrants, Undocumented migrants
Maria Grazia Montella	mmontella@unitee.eu	UNITEE	Network, Diaspora-led	Brussels, Belgium	Local, EU	Integration	Diaspora, Migrants, Migrant/refugee women
Haluk Dogan	ha_look@yahoo.com	-	-	Mons, Belgium	Local, National	Psychological Support	Diaspora Asylum seekers, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors
Vita Liucija	v.l.vaisnyte@gmail.com	RANA	Community, Refugee-led	Belgium	Local, National, EU	Access to education, cultural exchange, languages	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Mohammad Noman Stanakzai	Nomansarwan@hotmail.com	FRD	Organisation	Belgium	National	Not specific yet	Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee children

Seyma Celem	seymacelem@gmail.com	Phoenix KM BVBA	Organisation, Local-led	Brussels, Belgium	EU	Socio-economic inclusion	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee children
Basim Akasha	basim.akasha@gmail.com	VOICE MECHELEN	Organisation, Refugee-led	Mechelen, Belgium	National	Work, integration, racism	Asylum seekers, Refugees
Alexey Solomasov	innsmut@gmail.com	-	-	Brussels, Belgium	Local, National	LGBT+, safety, social inclusion	Asylum seekers, Refugees, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees
Lama Jaghjouha	Rwan.belgium@gmail.com	Raise Women's Awareness Network - RWAN	Organisation, Refugee-led	Brussels, Belgium	National, EU	Gender equality, employment, education	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women
Omar Al Tarsheh	oaltarsheh@ecre.org	Syrische Vrijwilligers	Community, Refugee-led	Belgium	EU	Integration	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees
Sayed Abbas Kazimi	Shehzada.abbas@gmail.com	Brussel Onthaal	Organisation	Brussels, Belgium	Local	Integration, asylum procedure	Asylum seekers
Bulgaria							
-	http://sitekreator.bg/herbals/main.html office@arabis-bg.org	ARABIS	Migrant-led Network	Sofia, Bulgaria	National	Increase intercultural understanding	Migrants and locals
Cyprus							
Elvis Bokanda Mokundu	elvismokundu@gmail.com	-	-	Nicosia, Cyprus	Local, EU	Housing, integration, participation in policies	Migrant/refugee children, Refugees, Migrants, Asylum seekers, Diaspora
Czech Republic							
Elena Tulupova	asusenik@gmail.com	Agency for Migration and Adaptation AMIGA	Organisation, Migrant-led	Czech Republic	Local, National, EU	Access to health care, social rights, political rights	Migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children

Denmark							
Ahmad Wesal Zaman	wesalzaman@gmail.com	Afghan Youth Association in Denmark (AYAD)	Organisation, Refugee-led	Viby Sjælland, Denmark	Local, national	Refugee mobilisation, participation in policies	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Refugees, Undocumented migrants
Naanaah Massoud Nada	nnaanaah@gmail.com	Dansk-Syrisk Kulturforening	Community, Refugee-led	Copenhagen, Denmark	Local, National	Education, Job, Cultural, Children	Diaspora, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Buthaina Shaheen	buthainashaheen@yahoo.co.uk	The Syrian Cultural Institute	Organisation, Diaspora-led	Copenhagen, Denmark	All	Education, returns	Diaspora, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Hozan Ibrahim	eng.hozan.ibrahim@gmail.com	The Syrian Civil movement	Organisation, Diaspora-led	Herning, Danmark	Local, National	Language, education, access to the labour market	Diaspora, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Assem Swaid	assem@syriandocdays.dk	Finjan	Organisation, Diaspora-led	Hillerød, Denmark	Local, EU	Deportation	Diaspora, Refugees, Unaccompanied minors
Estonia							
Kasianchuk Maksym	Maxim@ecom.ngo	Eurasian coalition on male health	Network; Gay and trans - led	Tallinn, Estonia	National, EU	LGBTQ+	Diaspora, Migrants, Refugees, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees
Finland							
Eugene Ufoka	eugenebryant86@yahoo.com	Moniheliry	Organisation, Migrant-led	Helsinki, Finland	Local, National	Integration, human rights, access to education, job, social inclusion	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Burhan Hamdon	burhan@hakunila.org	Hakunila International Organisation	Organisation, Migrant-led	Vantaa, Finland	Local, National	Integration, labour market access	Asylum seekers, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors

-	Website: www.kolumbus.fi Email: figfa@uta.fi	Finnish Ghanaian Friendship Association	NGO, Migrant-led	Helsinki, Finland	National	Cultural exchanges	Ghanaians and Finns
-	Website: http://ghanaunionfinland.com Email: info@ghanaunionfinland.com	Ghana Union Finland	NGO, Migrant-led	Vantaa, Finland	National	Increase cultural understanding	Ghanaians and Finns
-	Website: www.migranttales.net Email: migranttalesblog@gmail.com	Migrant Tales – Blog Community	Blog Community, Migrant-led	Mikkeli, Finland	National	Combat stereotypes	Migrants and locals
-	Website: www.yhdessa.org Email: info@yhdessa.org	Together Association	Association, Migrant-led	Turku, Finland	National	Integration	Migrants
France							
Yasin Abi Jama	yaabja@ref-asso.org	Réseau des Exilés en France (Network of Exiles In France)	Organisation, Refugee-led	Paris, France	National	Information on Asylum, integration, Social inclusion	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women,
Mas Mahmud	asmd.mahmud@gmail.com	Sciences Po Refugee Help	Individual	Paris, France	EU, Global	Refugee representation in policy making	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Unaccompanied minors
Najib Obaid Babakerkhail	n.babakerkhail@frenchrefugeecouncil.com	French Refugee Council	Organisation, Refugee-led	Paris, France	National, EU	Integration, Language	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors
Nour ei-houda AL FADEL	nouralfadel@hotmail.com	Demande Asile طلب لجوء بالعربي . Stalin-grade connection Radio	Individual	Paris, France	Local	Give information about asylum procedure	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors

Selina Babak	Selina.babak@yahoo.com	Women Refugee Voice	Network, Migrant-led	Paris, France	Local	Access to education, Access to employment	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women
-	Website: https://www.kabubu.fr/ Email: kabubu.team@gmail.com	Kabubu	Network, Migrant-led	Paris, France	National	Integration	Refugees and migrants
-	Website: https://asmlsyria.com/	ASML Syria	Network, Migrant-led	Paris, France	-	Syrian Conflict	Syrians
-	Website: https://women-now.org/ Email: info@women-now.org	Women Now for Development	Network, Migrant-led	Paris, France	-	Women empowerment	Syrian women and children
-	Website: https://www.festivaldessolidarites.org/acteurs/syriens-amp-friends-paris Email: jean-marc@festivaldessolidarites.org	Syrians & Friends Paris	Network, Migrant-led	Paris, France	-	Awareness, Syrian Conflict	Syrians and locals in France
Germany							
Diana Gonzalez Olivo	dianaolivo@gmx.de	Migrantenbeirat der Landeshauptstadt Potsdam	Council to the city of Potsdam, Migrant-led	Potsdam, Germany	Local	Political representation, recognition of skills	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees
Jala El Jazairi	Johns70s@gmail.com	Migrantenbeirat Potsdam & Diaspora Network Alliance (DNA)	Council to the city of Potsdam, Migrant-led	Potsdam, Germany	Local, National, EU	Diversity and Integration	Diaspora, Asylum Seekers, Migrants, Refugees
Oula Sulliman	oula.suleiman94@gmail.com	Diaspora Network Alliance (DNA)	Network, Diaspora-led	Berlin, Germany	Local	Gender equality, Global health, Higher education	Asylum seekers, Refugees, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women
Larry Macaulay	refugeeradionetwork@gmail.com	Refugee Radio Network	Network, Migrant-led	Hamburg, Germany	All	Media, Inclusion, Racism	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ

							migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women
Saeed Mais-sara	maissara.saeed@umbaja.de	UMBAJA e.V	Organisation, Diaspora-led	Hannover, Germany	EU	Empowerment, Human Rights, integration	Diaspora, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women
Marah Alasaad	Marah.2l2s3ad@gmail.com	The global Experience "life back home"	Refugee-led	Münster, Germany	Local, National	Integration, stereotypes	Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Mary Grace Schardin	mgschardin@t-online.de	European Network of Filipinos in Diaspora (ENFiD) Germany	Organisation, Diaspora-led	Pulheim, Germany	Local, National, EU	Integration and labour rights of migrants	Diaspora, Migrants, Undocumented migrants
Huseyin Demir	drhuseyindemir71@gmail.com	Aktion für Flüchtlingshilfe w.v	Organisation, Refugee-led	Berlin, Germany	Local	Integration, the process of asylum	Asylum seekers, Refugees, Undocumented migrants
Amineh Sawan	ameenah.sawwan@gmail.com	Network for Refugee Voices	Network, Refugee-led	Berlin, Germany	EU, Global	Access to protection	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants
Greece							
Jackie Ab-hulimen	jackie.abhulimen@g2red.org	Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality and Diversity	Organisation, migrant-led	Athens, Greece	Local, National, Global	Second generation, Integration, Equal treatment	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee children, Second generation
Shadia Sbait	shadia@humanitycrew.org	Humanity Crew	Organisation, Refugee-led	Athens, Greece	Global	Mental health	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors
Mustafa Mohammad	Mustafa@velosyouth.org	Velos Youth	Organisation, Refugee-led	Athens, Greece	Local	Access to accommodation, securing immigration status, accessing support for mental	Asylum seekers, Refugees, Migrants, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors, young people between 16 to 21 years old

						& physical health	
Moussa Sangare	ivoiro.grec@gmail.com	Greek Forum of Refugees	Organisation, Refugee-led	Athens, Greece	Global	-	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants
Vasili Sofiadellis	vasili@changemakerslab.com	Changemakers Lab	Network, Migrant-led	Mytilini, Plomari, Lesvos, Greece	All	Integration	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Unaccompanied minors
Hungary							
Tamam Habib	tamamhabib91@gmail.com	NA	Individual	Nyiregyhaza, Hungary	National	Mental health and emotional status of refugees	Refugees, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees
Huda Salman	hudasalman729@yahoo.com	N/A	Individual	Nyiregyhaza, Hungary	Local	Integration, racism, Labor market	Migrants, Refugees
Ayşegül Sayın	aysegulsyn@hotmail.com	N/A	N/A	Budapest, Hungary	Local	Health	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Ireland							
Lye Ogun-sanya	Lye@houseofakina.ie	The house of akina	Social enterprise, migrant-led	Dublin, Ireland	Global	Education, Accommodation, Employment	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors
	Website: http://nasrudinsaljoqi.tripod.com/ Email: afgcommunity@hotmail.com	Afghan Community & Cultural Association of Ireland	Network, Migrant-led	Dublin, Ireland	National	Integration, Cultural activities	Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers

	Website: http://africacentre.ie/ Email: info@africacentre.ie	Africa Centre	Network, Migrant-led	Dublin, Ireland	National	Social inclusion, meaningful participation in policies	Migrants and locals
	Website: www.theafricanvoice.ie Email: info@theafricanvoice.ie	AFRICAN VOICE NEWSPAPER	Network, Migrant-led	Waterford, Ireland	National	Cultural diversity and integration through the media	Migrants
Italy							
Yagoub Kibeida	Kibeida@mosaicrefugees.org	Mosaico	Organisation, refugee-led	Turin, Italy	Local, National, EU	Refugee rights, raising awareness, policy proposals	Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/Refugee women, Migrant/Refugee children, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Unaccompanied minors
Ebtehal Abdalla Mansur	ebtehal90@gmail.com	Mosaico	Organisation, refugee-led	Italy	Local, National, EU	Integration and Social Inclusion	Refugees
Hasnain Syed	hasnainsyed2015@gmail.com	Network for refugee Voices	Network, refugee-led	Rome, Italy	All	Safe and legal routes for refugees, Asylum Procedure and integration	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors, rejected asylum seekers that risk deportation
JAIME JAVIER NORIEGA ADRIANZEN	cicalitalia@gmail.com	CICAL - International Afro-Latin Cooperation Center	Organisation, Migrant-led	MONTEROTONDO, ROMA, Italy	Local	Inclusion, civil and cultural solidarity	Migrants

Ahmed Abdullahi	generazioneponte@gmail.com	Associazione Generazione Ponte	Community, Migrant-led	Torino, Italy	National, EU	Citizenship rights, refugee status, discrimination, stereotypes	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants,
Welly Marguerite Lottin	griotintercultura@libero.it	Associazione Interculturale Griot	Organisation, Migrant-led	Rome, Italy	All	Cultural integration, language teaching, health	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women
Brhane Tareke	comitato3ottobre@gmail.com	Comitato 3 Ottobre	Organisation, Refugee-led	Rome, Italy	National, EU	-	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors
Paul Azemata Amune	amunepaul@gmail.com	Support Office for Migrants in Europe (SOME)	Organisation, Migrant-led	Italy	EU	Education	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women
Malta							
Asma Dekna	asma.dekna@gmail.com	LIBICO	Community, Migrant-led	Pembroke, Malta	Local, National	Education, inclusion, social and psychological support	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Babiker AB-DU-RAHMAN ABDELA	babikerahmedsd@hotmail.com	Sudanese Migrants Association	Community, Refugee-led	Marsa, Malta	Local	Integration, education and healthcare.	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants
Negmledin Soliman Arbab	negmeldin.soliman.17@um.edu.mt	Sudanese migrants association in Malta	Organisation	Humron, Malta	Local	Labour market access	Diaspora, Migrants, Refugees Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors

The Netherlands							
Ola Shams	ola.shams@gmail.com	Yalla	Organisation, refugee-led	Alkmaar, The Netherlands	National, EU	Integration	Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Aziz Kawak	Kawakaziz5@gmail.com	Aziz kawak	Freelancer, Individual	The Netherlands	National, EU	Public advocacy	Refugees, Undocumented migrants
Chirin Abbas	chirinabbas@gmail.com	DOING	Refugee-led organisation	The Netherlands	Local	Language, Family reunification	Asylum seekers
Mohamad Albilal	m.albilal@student.vu.nl	NA	NA	Amsterdam, NL	Local	Integration	Asylum Seekers, refugees, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees
Mohan Subba	mohan_subba32@yahoo.com	Bhutanese Community in The Netherlands	Community, A refugee-led	Zandaam, The Netherlands	local, National	Integration, Language, Labour market	Asylum seekers, Refugees
Gopal Gurung	gurunggopal29@yahoo.com	Bhutanese Community in The Netherlands	Organisation, A refugee-led	Harderwijk, The Netherlands.	National	Integration, Human Rights	Asylum seekers, Refugees, Migrant/refugee children
Lydia Booji	awp.vrou@gmail.com	African Women Perspective in Amstelveen and South East Amsterdam	Organisation, A refugee-led	Amstelveen, The Netherlands	Local	Health, Education, Empowerment	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Umbreen Salim	Umbreensalim@yahoo.com	New Women Connector	Organisation, Refugee-led	The Netherlands	Local, National	Employment, labour market, women	Diaspora, Migrants, Migrant/refugee women
Majed Machati	majd.neth@gmail.com	Anne Frank House	Network, Educational	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	EU, Global	Public Advocacy	Refugees and locals
Maja Coric	majcor@gmail.com	Stichting Vluchtelingen Ambassadeurs	Network, refugee-led	Amersfoort, The Netherlands	Local, National	Empowerment, Inclusion, Dialogue	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors, Dutch society

Mostafa Betaree	mbetaree@hotmail.com	Spotlight team international Art	Organisation, Refugee-led	Roosendaal, The Netherlands	Global	Human Rights	Asylum seekers, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Refugees
Milka Yemane	milka.yemane@stichtinglemat.com	Stichting Lemat (Lemat foundation)	Organisation, diaspora and migrant led foundation	Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Assen, The Netherlands	Local, National	Integration, psychological and social well-being for Eritrean refugees	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors
Ram Bahadur Chhetri	karkiram90@hotmail.com	Bhutanese Community in The Netherlands	Community, Refugee-led	The Hague, The Netherlands.	All	Elderly refugees, citizenship Rights	Asylum seekers, Refugees, Migrant/refugee children, Invited refugees for their integration.
Hanna Molly	mollyhanna16@gmail.com	Building Bridges Group.eu.org	Network, Diaspora-led	The Netherlands	EU	Human Rights, Safety and Peace building	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors
Laura Coello	l.coello@inclusiveworks.eu	Inclusive Works	Organisation, Migrant-led	Utrecht, the Netherlands	Local, National	labour market, anti-discrimination, political participation	Migrants, Refugees, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Children of migrants
Thami Schweichler	thami@makersunite.eu	Makers Unite	Organisation, Migrant-led	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	All	Integration, Public Awareness	Refugees
Kutaiba Alkteit	Kotepa1985@gmail.com	Syrian Justice Organisation	Organisation, Refugee-led	The Hague, Netherlands	EU	Integration, Psychological support	Refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Marlon Lacsamana	mtlacsamana@gmail.com	Migrante-Netherlands in the Hague (it is one of the city chapters of Migrante-Europe)	Organisation, Migrant-led	The Hague, Netherlands	Local	Legal & health rights of migrants (mostly undocumented economic migrants in the domestic work sector).	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees

Soha Shat	Sshat@ithaka-isk.nl	It's My Child	Institution, Refugee-led	The Netherlands	National	Parents empowerment, parents integration	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Poland							
MUAMMER BUR-TACGIRAY	burtacgiray@humanrights-ev.com	HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS	Community	WARSAW, POLAND	EU	Human rights	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees.
Portugal							
Adam Labaran	adam.labar@urep.pt	Uniao de Refugiados em Portugal	Organisation, Refugee-led	Lisbon, Portugal	Local, national, EU, Global	Integration, housing, education, employment	Diaspora, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented Migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied Minors.
Ana Paula Costa	ana.apc.costa@gmail.com	Women's Platform of Brazil	Community, Migrant-led	Lisbon, Portugal	Global	Combating violence and gender stereotypes	Migrants, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Unaccompanied minors
Cyntia De Paula	cyntiadepaula.br@gmail.com	Casa do Brasil de Lisboa	Organisation, Migrant-led	Lisboa, Portugal	National	Political and social inclusion	Migrants, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women
Ismail Haki	esmail3@hotmail.com	N/A	Individual	Lisbon, Portugal	Local	Volunteer in food and help to the homeless (Voluntário na alimentação e ajuda	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees

						aos sem abrigo)	
Radwan Obai	ubai1982@gmail.com	N/A	Individual	Lisbon, Portugal	All	Education and employment	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Md Enamul Hoque	enamul150@yahoo.com	Capital juridico	Organisation, Migrant-led	Lisbon, Portugal	National	Health	Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants
Sabitri Shrestha	Sabee19@hotmail.com	Renovar Mouraria	Organisation, Refugee-led	Lisbon, Portugal	Local	Education, health, culture	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Mubarak Hussein	mubarak.hussein@urep.pt	Union of Refugees in Portugal - UREP	Network, Refugee-led	Lisbon, Portugal	Local, National	-	Asylum seekers, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children.
Abdalla Ahmed Mohamed	Geral@urep.pt	UREP AND FÓRUM REFÚGIO PORTUGAL	Organisation, Refugee-led	Lisbon, Portugal	Local, National	Reception	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Romania							
Oana Vasile	Aplromania.oana@gmail.com	Legal Migration Association	Organisation, Migrant-led	Bucharest, Romania	Local, National	Public Advocacy	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees
Razvan Samoila	razvan@arca.org.ro	ARCA - Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants	Organisation	Bucharest, Romania	Local	Inclusion in policies	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors
Spain							
Zouhair El Hairan	zeo.zeh@gmail.com	Euro-Arab	Organisation, Diaspora-led	Barcelona, Spain.	Local, National	Entrepreneurship	Diaspora, Migrants, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors

George Reginald Freeman	george@prideequality.org	Pride Equality International	Organisation, Refugee-led	Barcelona, Spain	Local, National	Access to education, Protection and healthcare and other basic facilities for asylum seekers and refugees including LGBTQI people.	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Unaccompanied minors, LGBTQI
Alfredo Campos	casmun2@gmail.com	Asociación MUN2	Organisation, Migrant-led in rural areas	Madrid, Spain	Local, National	Reception	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees
Sweden							
Hala Akari	halaakari@gmail.com	RISE network	Network, Refugee-led	Mariestad, Sweden	Local, EU	Labour market, empowerment	Asylum seekers, refugees, migrant/refugee women, migrant/refugee children
Mudar Kouli	Mouddar@kouli.se	Mumtaz Integration	Organization, Refugee-led	Stockholm, Sweden	Local, National	Access to labour market, inclusion in policies	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women
Mahmoud Agha	m.gha@alkompis.se	Alkompis Media AB	Organisation, Refugee-led	Stockholm, Sweden	National, EU	Provide information, Work and housing,	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees
Safi Arezo	Neha_16_17@hotmail.com	Afghan women's organisation	Organisation, Migrant-led	Sweden	Local, EU	Asylum seekers rights	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children
Asif Khan	asif@ccbe.se	Centre for Capacity Building & Empowerment	Organisation, Migrant-led	Malmö, Sweden	Local, National, EU	Asylum process, Safety & Security, Integration	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees
United Kingdom							
Salma Zulfiqar	Salmazulfiqar@hotmail.com	ARTconnects	Community, Migrant-led	United Kingdom	Local, National, EU	Integration, empowerment	Diaspora, Migrants, Refugees, Migrant/Refugee

							women, Migrant/Refugee Children, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees,
Aline Khoury	alinek.br@gmail.com	N/A	Individual	London, UK	National	Inclusion in policies	Asylum Seekers, Migrants
Ifeoma Peters	oma.peters@gmail.com	Femage World	Organisation, Migrant-led	United Kingdom	Local	Labour Market, Integration.	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors
SARLI NANA	ssnana@live.co.uk	Bradford City of Sanctuary	Charity - umbrella organisation, Refugee-led	DEWS-BURY, UK	Local, Global	Asylum accommodation	Diaspora, Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women
Marchu Girma	marchu@refugeewomen.co.uk	Women for Refugee Women	Organisation, refugee-led	London, UK	Local, National	Detention, anti-racism	Asylum seekers, Refugees, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Migrant/refugee women
Mihai Calin Bica	mihai@romasupportgroup.org.uk	Roma Support Group	Organisation, Community-led	London, UK	Local, National	Discrimination	Migrants, Undocumented migrants, Migrant/refugee women, Migrant/refugee children, Unaccompanied minors
Prieto Mabel	European	Amal Learning	Organisation, Volunteer-led	Edinburgh, The UK	National, EU, Global	Integration, Combat stereotypes	Asylum seekers, Refugees, LGBTIQ migrants/refugees, Displaced people
Zeno Onokaye-Akaka	zenookaye-akaka@justforkidslaw.org	Let Us Learn	Community, Migrant-led	London, England	National	Discrimination	Migrants, Undocumented migrants
Makinde Dami	DamiMakinde@justforkidslaw.org	Let Us Learn	Community, Migrant-led	London, United Kingdom	Local, National	Citizenship, higher education	Migrants, Undocumented migrants
Nazek Ramadan Moussa	nazek@migrantvoice.org	Migrant Voice	Non-profit, Migrant-led	London, United Kingdom	All	Protection, human rights	Asylum seekers, Migrants, Refugees, Undocumented migrants