



# WORKBOOK

## Making Connections



# Making Connections



This exercise outlines the importance of making connections within host communities for newly arrived migrants. It encourages individuals to draw on their life experience to help them identify the key services and supports that they consider essential for their new life. It provides a simple to use Integration Wheel tool to enable individuals to visualize the areas where integration has been achieved and pinpoint the areas where barriers to integration need to be overcome.

## Culture Shock

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Moving to a new country is a life changing event that requires a lot of adjustments. Whether you are an economic migrant moving to a new country seeking employment; or a refugee or asylum seeker from a war torn region seeking a better and safer life; one of the first things you will experience is a degree of 'culture shock' no matter how well prepared you thought you were or how much you were looking forward to getting to your new home. The good news is that culture shock is temporary and there are many things you can do to lessen its impact. Integrating into your new environment as soon as possible is the perfect antidote

## Seeking Integration



**CIVIC INTEGRATION**  
**SOCIAL INTEGRATION**



Trying to Integrate into a new country is a multi-faceted endeavour with two distinct integration strands, namely; civic integration and social integration. Integration can be a slow process and is mostly achieved in a piecemeal manner. It is always worth remembering that most countries in Europe have two doors. The first door is the door to the country and this is nearly always open. The second door is the door to integration and this is nearly always closed.

## Confused?

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As with most things in life, getting started is often the most difficult step and the path to integration is no exception. With so many things to consider it can be confusing especially now that you are living in a different country; trying to communicate in a different language; and trying to relate to things in a completely different way. The best way to begin your integration journey and establish your integration objectives is to start by reflecting on your life in your home country and by drawing on your life experience.

## Model Village Approach

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Start your integration process by playing the Model Village game. Imagine you have been asked to outline the essential services and the key supports that need to be available in a new model village being developed. Think back to your home country and list the things that you would consider essential for a reasonable quality of life. Forget about the reality of your home country and try to build a picture in your mind of that proposed model village.

## Key Services



Health Services + Education + Social Services + Public Authority + Law Enforcement



So what are the key services that you would deem essential to provide in this model village? Let's begin with health services for all the family to ensure that they can live a full and active life. Education might come next on the list with appropriate provision from early years' right up to adult education. Social services like childcare and care for the elderly would surely feature to ensure that the most vulnerable groups are properly catered for. Public services like sanitation and refuse collection that are provided by a local authority are essential and need to be added to the list of priorities. Your list of key services might end with law enforcement to ensure the safety and security of all those living in this model village.

## Key Supports



Place of Worship + Community Development + Sport & Recreation



Next you need to consider the types of supports that would be essential to make living in this model village a life-changing experience. Let's start with religion which plays a significant role in many people's lives. A place of worship where individuals can practice their faith with likeminded people without fear of abuse is an essential support. A strong community development ethos within this model village would ensure that everyone pulls together and looks out for each other offering friendship and support when needed. The provision of a wide range of sport and recreation facilities would ensure that the needs of all residents were catered and that people could live active and healthy lives.



## Your New Home



There are villages and towns in every country in Europe that have most, if not all, of the services and supports that you would like to see in your model village. The village or town where you are now planning to build a new life can probably provide all the services and supports you have identified. Now is the time to reflect on how you as a recent arrival to this new region have integrated with the existing service providers and support organisations. Now is the time to reflect on how well your integration is progressing.

## Sample Case Study



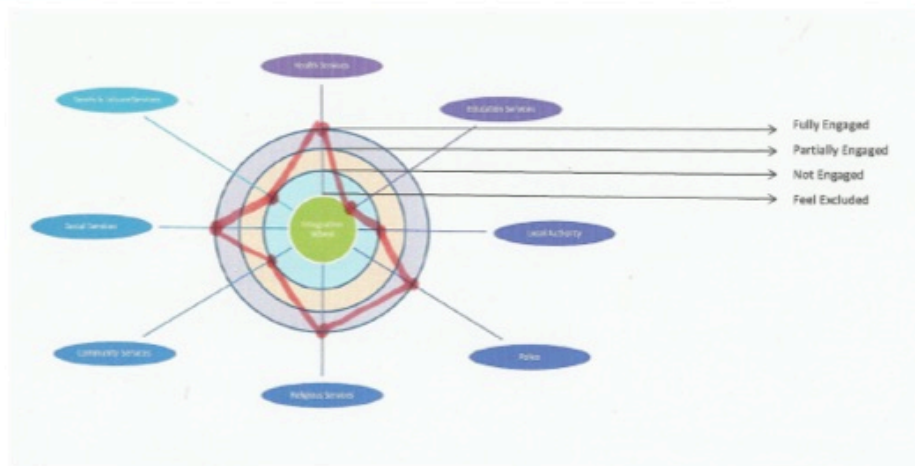
Anna

- Lebanese
- Female
- 29 years old
- Married
- 1 Child aged 3
- Trained as a nurse



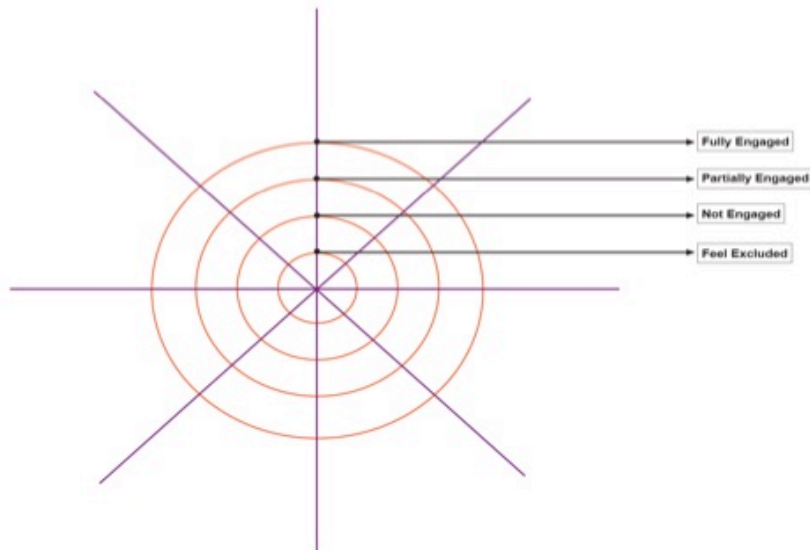
Anna is a twenty-nine year old mother from Lebanon who has recently arrived in Europe with her family. Anna is a fully qualified nurse but is finding it difficult to have her credentials recognised. Although Anna only arrived 5 months ago she has already identified and registered with a new family doctor and her son has received all available vaccinations; she is a keen singer and has joined the choir in her local church; she has enrolled her three year old son in the local kindergarten. Anna has registered with the neighbourhood watch. Anna has no interest in sport and rarely attends any of the events in her local community. She would like to resume her career but feels excluded from the education system and is frustrated by all the red tape she keeps encountering. Anna has had no need to deal with the local authority.

## Anna's Integration Wheel



Anna's integration wheel has the same eight services and supports that we spoke about earlier in the model village game. Anna has marked on the wheel the areas where she feels she has fully engaged, partially engaged, not engaged or feels excluded. Anna's integration wheel clearly identifies areas that she needs to focus on if she is to achieve an holistic integration into her new host community.

## Personal Integration Wheel



Now it is time to complete your own integration wheel. On the blank template provided start by listing the eight services and supports that you would regard as most important in your model village and allocate each one an individual axis. Once you have listed these services and supports, assess how well you feel you have engaged with the organisations or institutions in question and mark the point of engagement on the relevant axis. Join all the points to identify the areas where you need to focus your efforts if you wish to progress your civic integration in your new country.

# Thanks!

All photographs courtesy of Pixabay.com

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