

HOW CAN AN ASSOCIATION BE MORE INCLUSIVE?

Information and practical tools for associations

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ammattikorkeakoulu

YA!
Yrkesakademin
i Österbotten

the integration port
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FOREWORD

Why did we make this guide?

The aim of the guide is to address why it is important to include people with different cultural backgrounds as well as provide concrete guidance to associations that want to be more inclusive. When we say “inclusive association”, we mean an association that actively works towards becoming aware of any existing barriers and reducing them in order to make it easier for people who, for one reason or another, can easily be marginalised. It is important to keep in mind that this is a long-term effort. If inclusion can be a recurring issue on the Board’s agenda year after year, there is a very good chance that positive change will be achieved.

Background

This guide is intended for associations and has been created within the “Föreningsliv för alla” project, which was run from 2020 to 2022 in the Jakobstad region. The material is based on, among others, a survey (48 responses) and on discussions held in discussion forums (60 associations) and workshops (15 associations) with associations in the Jakobstad region. During the project, we cooperated with municipal cultural and leisure services. Support and encouragement by the municipality is important in the work of associations to make their activities more inclusive. During this work, we noticed that associations in the region have very different starting points in terms of including immigrants and people with a foreign background. We found that sports associations, particularly football associations, have come a long way in terms of including immigrants in their activities. This is due, among other things, to the fact that

hobbies in which language does not play a key role are often easier to engage in. Indeed, the threshold for engaging in an association involved in an activity that is enjoyed all over the world is lower than trying a completely new association activity. We have made every effort to take all types of associations into account with this guide.

How to use this material

The guide provides information, tips and practical exercises, and is suitable, for example, as study material for association boards. The association can choose to focus on certain parts or go through the guide as a whole. All sources are listed at the end of the guide. We hope that the guide can inspire ideas and provide concrete tips on ways to make an association more inclusive. Good luck!

ABOUT THE PROJECT

“Föreningsliv för alla” was a joint project between the Centria University of Applied Sciences (project owner), YA – Vocational College of Ostrobothnia and Integration Services in the Jakobstad region. In the project, each party had different tasks. Centria focused on the role of associations, including the making of this guide. YA produced educational material for immigrants. Integration Services focused on creating collaborations, including designing a model for recreational volunteers. All the material developed in the project can be found on the City of Jakobstad website. The aim of the project was to support the social inclusion and improved working capacity of immigrants by promoting the conditions for participation in Finnish associations. The project encouraged associations to be more receptive and find new members and volunteers from other cultures. The project was funded by the European Social Fund and Svenska kulturfonden.

Thanks

This guide is the result of the more than two year long Föreningsliv för alla project. Many people and projects have inspired us. Special thanks to all the associations that have participated in the project. We are ever so grateful to our project partners Eva Gädda, Melina Saari, Johanna Troberg-Dang and co-workers at Centria for all their help. And thanks to the researchers who have shared their knowledge in webinars and panel discussions. We are grateful to the heads of the culture and leisure departments in Jakobstad, Larsmo, Kronoby, Pedersöre and Nykarleby for sharing their ideas with us.

Jakobstad, 9 June 2022
Mona Groop-Sjöholm and Laura Palovuori



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ASSOCIATIONS TO BE INCLUSIVE?

Finns are active in associations and there are about 100,000 associations in Finland.¹ Associations play a very important role in society in many different ways, including the integration of immigrants.

Associations are important for immigrants

Immigrants often lack networks and local contacts. Contact with others is important for well-being, language learning and access to jobs. This is something that associations can offer. Associations offer a venue in which immigrants can get to know local people naturally, practice their language skills and create networks.

Immigrants can contribute to associations

Many associations need new members and volunteers. By striving to be inclusive for different target groups, including those with different language and cultural backgrounds, an association acquires not only new members and volunteers, but also new ideas and approaches. In an inclusive association, all participants feel welcome and involved, contributing to greater engagement and stronger sense of community.



Figure 1. Associations are important for immigrants, who can, in turn, contribute to the association in a variety of ways.

PART 1

Immigration in Finland

- Increased immigration to Finland
 - Short glossary of terms
- How do things look in your association?

A discussion based on immigration statistics and the reasons behind them may increase understanding of the different situations that immigrants face.

INCREASED IMMIGRATION TO FINLAND

Diagram 1. Number of people born abroad in Finland 1990-2021

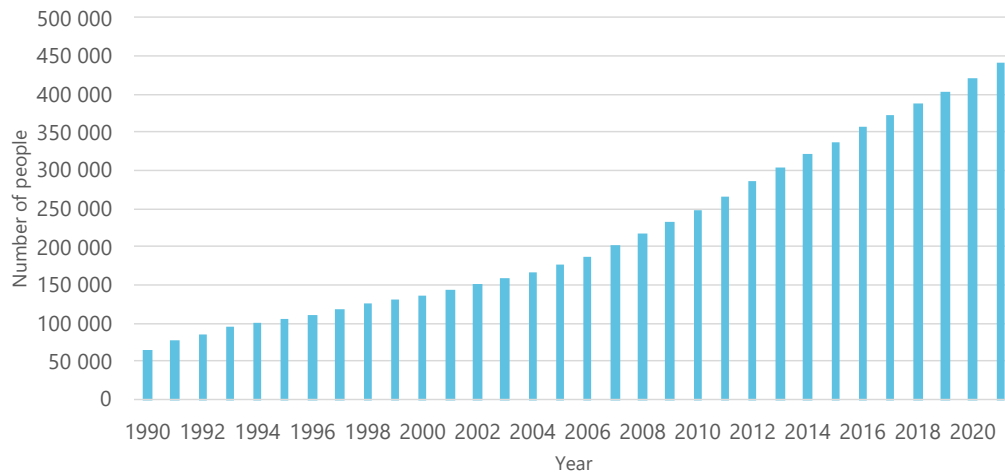
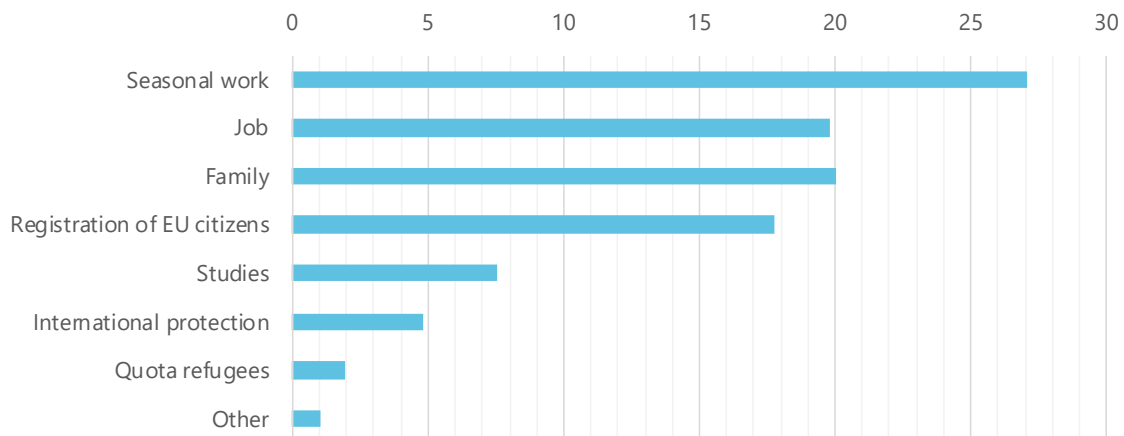


Diagram 2. The first residence permits issued by the Finnish Immigration Service and registration of residence permits for EU citizens in 2020 (%)



More and more people with foreign backgrounds live in Finland and are very much part of everyday life. Diagram 1 shows a marked increase in people with a foreign background in Finland between 1990 and 2021.²

Diagram 2 shows the reasons for granting a residence permit and on what grounds EU citizens were registered in 2020. We see that the most common reasons for immigration in Finland in 2020 were work, family and studies. EU citizens

also move to Finland mainly to work. A small percentage of immigrants receive international protection or are quota refugees.³

Finland's population is ageing and the working-age population is declining, resulting in a labour shortage in all sectors. Demand for labour can be resolved, for example, through immigration.⁴ Immigration is an issue that raises different opinions and needs to be discussed.



Questions to consider

What opinions on immigration have you heard? Try to find a variety of approaches to immigration and discuss together.



Exercise “Who lives in my municipality?”

You can find out the nationality of the different people living in your municipality.

This is how:

- Search for the Statistics Finland StatFin database. On the page, click on "Go to StatFin database". Then, select "Population structure" and "11th - Citizenship according to sex by municipality".
- Scroll down to "Area", enter your municipality in the Search field and click on the magnifying glass.
- Scroll down to "Nationality" and select "Select all".
- Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on "Show table". The population of the municipality will then be shown by nationality, i.e. how many have Finnish citizenship and how many have foreign citizenship, broken down by country.

SHORT GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Asylum seeker: A person who seeks protection and right of residence in a foreign state. An asylum seeker is granted refugee status if he or she is granted asylum.⁵

Refugee: A foreign national who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of ethnic origin, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion. Refugee status is granted to a person who has been granted asylum by a state or who is considered a refugee by UNHCR.⁵

Quota refugee: Quota refugees are refugees who are admitted to Finland under the so-called refugee quota. Before being admitted to Finland, they have fled their home country or their country of permanent residence into another country, but cannot stay permanently in that country.⁶

Registration of EU citizens: You may apply for the registration of your right of residence if you are a citizen of the European Union, Liechtenstein or Switzerland and you will be staying in Finland for over three months.⁷

Difference between quota refugee and asylum seeker: Asylum seekers have travelled to Finland independently, and their need for international protection is assessed after their arrival in Finland, not beforehand. A person must be within Finnish territory before he or she can apply for asylum in Finland. An asylum seeker is granted refugee status in Finland if he or she is granted asylum, whereas a quota refugee has already been granted refugee status and a four-year residence permit in Finland before his or her arrival in Finland.⁶

Seasonal worker: Seasonal work refers to work in agriculture and tourism that is done at certain times of the year. Seasonal work may be per-

formed for a maximum period of nine months over a period of 12 months.⁸

Residence card: A card issued by the Finnish Immigration Service, with which non-EU citizens who are family members of EU citizens can prove their right of residence in Finland. Biometric identifiers stored on the card's chip include a facial image and two fingerprints. The residence card is not an official identity document.⁵

Residence permit: A permit issued to a foreign national for a purpose other than tourism or a comparable short-term residence that entitles the holder to enter the country repeatedly and stay in the country. Residence permits are either fixed-term or permanent. A residence permit can be issued on the basis of, for example, work, self-employment, studies or family ties.⁵

Who is considered an immigrant? A person who has moved to Finland, who resides in the country with a permit issued for purposes other than tourism or similar residence of short duration, whose right of residence has been registered or who has been issued with a residence card.⁹

Who is eligible to apply for asylum, i.e. international protection, in Finland? By law, anyone may apply for asylum, but only within the borders of the Finnish state. The right to seek asylum is based on international agreements obligating Finland and other EU countries to grant international protection to anyone who needs it. The idea is that people may seek protection in another country if they find themselves in a situation where they cannot obtain protection in their own country. If an asylum seeker receives a positive decision, i.e. either asylum or alternative protection, they will be issued a residence permit based on international protection.¹⁰

HOW DO THINGS LOOK IN YOUR ASSOCIATION?

- Do immigrants participate in association activities?
- Do immigrants serve in positions of responsibility in the association (board member, coach, group leader, etc.)?
- Do you have everyday contact with immigrants?
 - Are you looking for new members?



PART 2

Inclusion and norms

- **What are inclusion, norms and norm criticism?**
- **Norms in individualistic and collectivistic cultures**
 - **Norms in marketing**

By considering inclusion and norms, you can see patterns in the association that can prevent certain people from participating.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF INTEGRATING IN A NEW SOCIETY



Assimilation

Assimilation refers to the process in which a minority group or culture assumes the behaviors, values, rituals, and beliefs of their host nation's majority group.¹¹



Separation

Separation occurs when individuals reject the dominant or host culture in favor of preserving their culture of origin.¹²



Exclusion

Exclusion means that people are excluded from society and have difficulty in being involved or are not invited in.¹³



Integration

Integration occurs when individuals are able to adopt the cultural norms of the dominant or host culture while maintaining their culture of origin.¹²



Inclusion

Inclusion means accepting people as part of a group or community.^{14,15}

We focus on inclusion

In an inclusive environment, everyone can participate on an equal basis based on their own merits. Everyone can feel that they belong to the community and that they are accepted.^{16,17}



Questions to consider

- What does it mean to be yourself in a group or association?
- Can people be themselves in our association as well as change and influence the group?
- What do we do when we meet? What unwritten rules are there in our association?



Worth thinking about

“How does it feel to live in Finland?”
“Do you miss your home?”

These are questions that may feel difficult for some people. Everyone wants to be seen as individuals, and few want people to make assumptions about them just because they may come from another country or look a certain way. Some people with a foreign background may have lived in Finland for tens of years and mostly feel at home here.



Exercise

– Are you privileged?

To be born in Finland, belong to the majority culture and know local people gives privileges (benefits) that immigrants lack.

The exercise “Are you privileged?” can help shed light on the differences between peoples’ starting points.^{18, 19}

Do as follows:

Read each statement and reflect on whether you answer Yes or No.

- My voice is heard in the workplace / classroom.
- I can/have been able to choose the work I want to do.
- I’m rarely afraid in large crowds.
- My holidays are a day off of work / school or marked in red on the calendar.
- My parents and teachers have helped me to feel like I can be what I want.
- I can enter buildings without any problem, even if there are stairs leading up to the door.
- I can walk around town holding hands with the person I love without getting any strange looks.
- I’m not afraid to walk home alone at night.
- I have never needed to explain my sexual orientation to my family.
- I have never felt unfairly treated based on my gender.
- I don’t need to worry about money lasting until the end of the month.
- I have never had a job application rejected because of a non-Finnish name.



I feel that my language, religion and culture are respected in the community where I live.

- I can buy plasters (bandages) in a colour that matches my own skin colour.
- I have never had people giving me suspicious looks while I'm walking in town.
- No one has ever asked where in the world I actually come from.
- I have an EU passport.
- No one would ever question my ability to be a parent.
- I can take care of official transactions without needing an interpreter.
- Every day, I can read news about successful people who look like me.
- If I visit Parliament, people might think I'm an MP.

If you answered Yes to many of the questions, you are privileged. What did the questions make you think about?



WHAT ARE NORMS AND NORM CRITICISM?

Norms are societal assumptions and expectations about what is considered generally accepted, 'normal' or ideal in a given context. Norms have power. Norms can be conscious or unconscious. They often deal with, for example, how a person is expected to look or act.²⁰

Regardless of what activities we are participating in, there are always norms to deal with. Norms vary in different groups. For example, we often behave differently when we hang out with our closest friends than when we spend time with our teacher or boss.²¹ We assume something that is implied. It is difficult to raise the subject with someone who goes against the norm because they are breaking an unspoken rule.

Norm awareness or norm criticism is an awareness of the norms regulating, among other things, values and perceptions. Norm awareness includes making such norms visible as well as analysing them and their impact on, for example, society, school or the workplace. Norm criticism deals with how norms give privileges to some but restrict others. Norm critical thinking can be helpful when hanging out with people with a different cultural background.^{20, 21}

The positive thing about norms is that they can make things easier when we know how we are expected to behave in different situations, not to mention make it easier for a group to function. One example is that we queue when we pay in a store.²¹

The downside is that norms can form structures that include some but limit opportunities for others. Having to fit in and be like everyone else in order to be accepted can be burdensome.²¹

NORMS IN AN INDIVIDUALISTIC AND COLLECTIVISTIC CULTURE

Collectivistic and individualistic cultures are often differentiated in an effort to understand cultural differences. Collectivistic cultures stress the needs of the group over the needs of the individual. In an individualistic culture, the focus is on the needs of the individual.²² Norms in individualistic and collectivistic cultures are very different. Keep in mind that norms affect how men and women socialise, how people greet each other and how people dress.

Characteristics of an individualistic culture

- The individual is at the centre of everything.
- The individual is responsible for themselves - free will.
- Social security through financial aid from the state.



Characteristics of an collectivistic culture

- The family/relatives bear responsibility.
- Choices made by individuals are linked to the collective.
- Social security through family/relatives.



Worth thinking about

Many children who are immigrants live in different cultures every day: one at home and another at school.

New immigrants need time to get used to the norms and values that are typical in the new country. If you get a helping hand from the locals, it's much easier!



Questions to consider

- What norms do you encounter in your everyday life?
- What happens when your norms conflict with those of someone else?

NORMS IN MARKETING

One way to study norms is to look at your marketing materials. By reflecting on the images used by the association in its communications, you can avoid stereotypes and select images that reflect many different groups in society. If you vary the images used to describe the association, you can show that everyone is welcome.²³

Gender norms and whiteness norms

Two norms that are important to consider when it comes to marketing are gender norms and whiteness norms. Gender norms describe what is considered masculine and feminine, such as “Girls like playing with dolls and boys are brave and noisy”. Whiteness norms assume that light-coloured skin is normal. For example, “skin coloured” plasters should be light beige.²¹ Another aspect to consider when it comes to image communications is that women from different cultural backgrounds are often characterised as being helpless, not as strong women with their own opinions.

To consider

Look at the pictures below.
What kind of things do they bring to mind?



PART 3

Inclusive communications and member recruitment

- **Inclusive communications and member recruitment**
- **Concrete tips**

This chapter provides new approaches for planning communications and member recruitment.

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Inclusive communications involves clear and respectful communication, using a language free of stereotypes.²⁴

Why?

When an association strives to use inclusive communications, it contributes both to improved well-being and increased engagement in the association. It is easier for someone who feels seen and included in the group to contribute their thoughts and ideas.

When?

Consider using inclusive language both during activities and in external communications. This applies, for example, to exercises, presentations, the association website and information materials.



Exercise 1

Familiarise yourself with your own website, Facebook and / or Instagram account or those of any other association. Consider the following:

- Are your contact details clearly listed and up-to-date?
- Examine images norm critically.
- Is the language used clear and straightforward? Would you understand the information if you were newly arrived and had studied Swedish / Finnish for a short time?

Exercise 2

If your association communicates via a messaging app, read through some of the messages you have recently sent out. Would you understand the information if you were newly arrived and had studied Swedish / Finnish for a year? How could the message be simplified?

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION

During meetings

- Use simple and clear language in both text and speech when giving out information to participants.
- Showing images, searching for information on the internet and using body language make communication possible when language is not enough.

Text messages

- Keep in mind that it is important to write in a way that is easily understandable and emphasise the most important information.
- Feel free to use emojis in text messages.
- Send a link to your meeting place using a navigation app.
- Take pictures of the meeting place / person leading the meeting and send out the pictures.
- Ensure that everyone has understood the information and offer help if needed.
- Record short voice messages / video messages along with the text messages.

Email

- Use clear, simple language and write the most important things first.
- Because personal communication works best, it's a good idea to include a personal message when sending out emails. Mass emailings can feel so impersonal that no one reads them.

Website

- Make it as easy to understand as possible.
- Make sure the contact details are up-to-date. Clearly mark contact details with, for example, a telephone symbol.
- Include information in different languages, if possible.
- Ensure that diversity is represented on the website.



INCLUSIVE MEMBER- RECRUITMENT

Inclusive member recruitment is about recruiting in a way that reaches out to many different groups in society.^{25, 26}

Why?

When considering inclusion and norms in membership recruitment, an association can more easily attract people with different backgrounds. The association will then be of interest to more people while contributing to diversity. For many associations, member recruitment is generally challenging. Taking an inclusive approach makes it possible to explore new recruiting opportunities.

How?

Consider who your members are and whether there are missing groups who you could target. Encourage current members to tell others what the association does and ask whether they are interested in joining. Regularly discuss the inclusion and norms observed in the association so that existing members can keep this in mind when recruiting new members. If someone is interested in an association, they will often look for information on websites and social media, so remember to consider inclusion in your communications.

When?

For membership recruitment to be inclusive in the long term, the topic needs to be regularly discussed as well as reviewed throughout the association's activities and structures.



Exercise

Imagine that you're a newcomer to the community and want to join an association. What do you need to know? Where can you find information? What challenges might you encounter? What would make things easier for you?

TIPS FOR MEMBER- RECRUITMENT

Actively keep people informed

- Provide information in local newspapers and through the local integration services office.
- Ask people in different language groups to spread the word about various events. Anyone who speaks the language of the target group and knows them should ideally act as a contact for the association.
- Put up information bulletins on school noticeboards. Provide information during school gatherings or lessons.

At meetings

- Offer an opportunity to come to an association event together with someone. Trying something new together with someone else offers a sense of security.
- If necessary, mention that attendees should bring along, for example, coffee money, exercise clothes and shoes.

Board

- Appoint a contact person/mentor for new members. Hold a meeting for all interested parties or new members.
- Regularly discuss member recruitment during board meetings.
- Consider the norms and unwritten rules that could be barriers for people with different cultural backgrounds to join.

Pay visits

- Visit meeting points for immigrants, such as language cafés, and talk about the association. It is good to provide information in person, as this gives a face to the association and lowers the threshold to try out the association's activities.

Invite the whole family

- Actively inform and invite families with children/youths. Can parents do something together while waiting for their children?

Explain

- Provide information on what associations are all about. A new arrival might be completely unfamiliar with the idea of associations. Tell them who is in charge and show pictures of them. Tell them why a membership fee is paid. Tell them what volunteer activities are for and what they mean to your association.



TIPS FOR ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

Before the meeting

- Consider when the holidays of different religions fall when planning important activities.
- Consider the need for an interpreter at different functions.
- Do start by serving coffee / tea, thus giving members enough time to prepare for the formal programme. A little coffee/tea gathering also makes it easier for participants to get to know each other.
- Do set up a little play corner for children so that the parents will have an easier time participating.
- Be flexible about the time you invite immigrants/people with different cultural backgrounds. People's conception of time can differ widely.

During the meeting

- Not everyone drinks coffee or eats pork. Remember to offer alternatives.
- If new participants come, take them on a little presentation tour to show them around.
- Keep in mind that participants with a different cultural and linguistic background may find it difficult to follow if the presentation is made too quickly, in a dialect or using insider jargon/slang. Ideally, someone should sit together with the participant to make sure they understand everything and provide explanations when needed. Participants may also find it difficult to express themselves as not everyone can read and write, and not everyone can do so in Swedish / Finnish.
- Listen to those new to the association. Take time to get to know them and ask them what they would like to do.
- Encourage participants to engage with new people.

General tips

- Together with immigrants, discuss how one might best tackle various challenges. You don't have to know all the answers.
- Address inclusion in the association board regularly and identify any thresholds/barriers to participating in activities. Keep the discussion active.



PART 4

Exercises

This chapter contains exercises for evaluation and formulating an action plan.

EXERCISES FOR EVALUATION AND FORMULATING AN ACTION PLAN

The exercises in this chapter are intended both to help you evaluate the association and formulate an action plan, but in a slightly different way. Your association can freely choose the most suitable exercise.

Inclusive association - the self-assessment questions will suit most associations.

Association venue is particularly suitable if your association is active in multiple physical locations.

The aim is to identify challenges and plan measures to make it easier for members who, for various reasons, fall outside association activities. This can help not only people from different cultural backgrounds, but also others who are more easily excluded.



Inclusive association

- Self-assessment questions

Self-assessment questions help you analyse how inclusive your association is by examining different areas. Use the self-assessment questions to review your association's activities, communications, members and decision-making, and take note of any concrete opportunities for improvement. If a question seems irrelevant or difficult to answer, you may skip it.

Remember: The questions can help your association take small steps forward. This is not a test - you don't have to answer every question correctly. When you and your association take the time to consider these questions together, you're already on the right track!

Do as follows: Go through the questions. Discuss and make notes. Then draft your own action plan (see page 35).



Activities

Read every question. Discuss and evaluate on a scale from 1 to 3:

1: Needs improvement 2: Works reasonably well 3: No need for improvement.

Then, write down your reflections and any suggestions for improvement in the column on the right.

Question	Reflections and suggestions for improvement		
Do any immigrants participate in your association's activities?	1	2	3
Do any immigrants serve in leadership positions in the association (board member, coach, group leader)?	1	2	3
Is it easy for new people to be included in the association?	1	2	3
Are new participants allowed to have a say in association activities?	1	2	3
Are new participants able to be themselves even if they differ from the norm (e.g. appearance, background, age)?	1	2	3
Are you aware of norms typical in collectivist cultures (family / relatives bear responsibility) which affect, for example, how women and men may socialise, how women dress and the ability of girls to participate in sports outside the home?	1	2	3
Do you know when the holidays of different religions are so that, if necessary, you can plan your activities around them?	1	2	3
Do you offer alternatives to coffee, alcohol, pork, sweets containing gelatine (pork by-products)?	1	2	3
Do you start your meetings by serving coffee/tea so that those who come late can make it to the actual scheduled activity?	1	2	3
Are there arrangements for children's activities, a play area or something similar so that parents can participate more easily?	1	2	3
Have you applied for aid from a fund that supports multicultural work?	1	2	3



Members

Read every question. Discuss and evaluate on a scale from 1 to 3:

1: Needs improvement 2: Works reasonably well 3: No need for improvement.

Then, write down your reflections and any suggestions for improvement in the column on the right.

Question	Reflections and suggestions for improvement	
Do you inform schools about your activities (school noticeboard, during lessons)?	1 2 3	
Do you keep the person coordinating local integration services informed about your activities?	1 2 3	
Have you shared information on your activities at local gathering places for immigrants, such as language cafés?	1 2 3	
Do you take participant family members into account in your activities, such as by offering something for parents while their children are participating?	1 2 3	
Do you clearly inform participants on what they need to bring along (e.g. coffee money, indoor shoes, exercise clothes, snacks)?	1 2 3	
Do you offer new, interested participants a support person or the possibility for an association member to meet and join them for their first meeting?	1 2 3	
Do you regularly hold an open house or similar function, where you present information on the activities of the association and how new members can get involved?	1 2 3	
Does your board regularly discuss member recruitment?	1 2 3	
Do you discuss possible barriers to immigrants joining in association activities and how you could make it easier for them to participate?	1 2 3	
Do you provide information on what associations are, such as what volunteer work means and what the membership fee is used for?	1 2 3	



Communications

Read every question. Discuss and evaluate on a scale from 1 to 3:

1: Needs improvement 2: Works reasonably well 3: No need for improvement.

Then, write down your reflections and any suggestions for improvement in the column on the right.

Question	Reflections and suggestions for improvement		
Consider whether your association's information and communications are adapted to suit people whose native language is something other than Swedish / Finnish.	1	2	3
Is there clear, easy-to-understand information on the association's website and social media accounts?	1	2	3
Are your sign-up instructions and forms easy to understand, or do you offer help?	1	2	3
Is it possible to get information on events / meetings in voice or video messages if one cannot read?	1	2	3
Is there a designated contact person who new members can turn to for more information?	1	2	3
Are there clear and up-to-date contact details on the association website and social media accounts?	1	2	3
Are there people of different ages, genders and ethnicities represented in pictures on your website and social media accounts?	1	2	3
Do you ensure that members understand the information sent out, and do you offer assistance, if necessary?	1	2	3
Do you avoid using jargon/slang that outsiders won't understand?	1	2	3
Have you considered using an interpreter at certain events?	1	2	3



Decision-making

Read every question. Discuss and evaluate on a scale from 1 to 3:

1: Needs improvement 2: Works reasonably well 3: No need for improvement.

Then, write down your reflections and any suggestions for improvement in the column on the right.

Question	Reflections and suggestions for improvement	
Do you strive for diversity on your board? (age, gender, ethnicity)?	1 2 3	
Do you also invite new members to participate on the board and not just those who have already served for a long time?	1 2 3	
Is everyone heard at your board and annual meetings?	1 2 3	
Does the association leadership have the courage to re-examine old habits and make changes?	1 2 3	
Is the board able to address uncomfortable/sensitive issues?	1 2 3	
Is everyone's opinion given equal consideration on the board?	1 2 3	
Are you aware of any invisible barriers to member participation in decision-making?	1 2 3	
Do all association participants understand how decisions are made?	1 2 3	



Association venue

This exercise helps the association identify possible challenges and what can be done to help those who are excluded for various reasons.²⁷

Do as follows:

Examine your association environment and discuss each room using the picture below. For each room, ask yourself some questions and try to answer them. The rooms can be physical rooms or 'rooms' created by members gathering, such as when you do not have your own meeting place, but instead meet in different places. There may be different challenges in different environments. Make notes. Let everyone be heard!

After you have discussed the association rooms, you need to put your thoughts and ideas into practice in an action plan (see page 35).

Questions

- Who is in the room? In other words, who are your participants, who is not participating?
- What do the participants in the room look like (age, gender, background)? Who fits in the room most easily? Who doesn't fit in so easily?
- What does the relationship between the participants in the room look like? Does everybody know each other well? Is there an inner circle? Is anyone outside? Can you be yourself?
- Do you use any jargon/inside slang that could be difficult to understand?
- Have you ever had any conflicts/cultural clashes in your room?
- Can you do anything to make the room more inclusive? Is there anything you want to change and improve?

ENTRANCE DOOR, THRESHOLD, FOYER

DRESSING ROOM

ASSOCIATION MEETINGS
(football practice, choir rehearsal,
Martha meeting, youth evening)

KITCHEN, COFFEEMAKER

VOLUNTEER EVENING
(shift manning the association kiosk, selling
toilet paper / cookies / Christmas calendars)

**MEETINGS AND TRAINING
FOR LEADERS/COACHES**

BOARD MEETING, ANNUAL MEETING

OWN EXAMPLES



Action plan

Use the action plan to put your thoughts and ideas into practice.
Discuss the challenges you've identified and decide which ones you want to address first.

CHALLENGE / What are the challenges we face?

GOAL / What is our goal?

CONCRETE ACTIONS / What should we do? How are we going to do it?

PERSONS IN CHARGE / Who should do what?

SCHEDULE / When should we do it?

EVALUATION / How and when should we make an evaluation?

CONCLUSION

Finally, we would like to highlight something that we have been thinking about throughout the project. How do you make a guide that helps people meet each other? Behind the statistics are always people who have their own history. Each member of the association, regardless of their background, is an individual contributing to the community. Each and every encounter between people is an important event, because it makes it easier for us to understand each other.

Local meeting places, such as language cafés organised for immigrants, can be an important first step. Once we have met, we can also say hello if we see each other in town or at the store. The second, much bigger step is taken by immigrants when they join in a new hobby/recreational activity. The third step is when immigrants serve on boards and get involved in planning and making decisions on activities.

We hope this guide plants some seeds that will grow and bear fruit when it is time to move from idea to action.

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YA!
Yrkesakademin
i Österbotten

the integration port
integrationsporten
kotouttamisportti



Svenska
kulturfonden

Hävkraft
från EU
2014–2020



Europeiska unionen
Europeiska socialfonden

