



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

## Health promotion for improved refugee and migrant health: policy brief

### Policy issue and context

As for all people, refugees and migrants have a fundamental right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health. Addressing the impacts of migration and displacement on each person's physical and mental well-being and advocating for the diverse and unique needs of refugees and migrants is, therefore, a priority. It is also good public health practice that benefits all of society, as healthy refugees and migrants become valuable and productive members of their communities. Addressing their health needs is instrumental in facilitating integration and participation, stimulating positive social and economic development, and bridging development and public health issues. Health promotion helps to support people to control and improve their own health and well-being and to interact effectively with health care services.

### Policy considerations

#### *Health in all policies approach for healthy public policies*

- Utilize available tools and resources, such as health (equity) impact assessments, to promote greater consideration of the potential health consequences of policies and programmes within non-health sectors.
- Invest in health information systems and health monitoring activities to increase availability of comprehensive and up-to-date comparable and disaggregated data on the health, well-being and service use of refugees and migrants.

#### *Social services and physical and social environments*

- Promote integration and cultural exchange between refugees and migrants and the wider communities in which they live, including developing a positive narrative about migration within the mainstream community.
- Invest in social services for improved health outcomes for refugees and migrants.
- Improve the quality of physical and social environments and encourage regeneration for deprived areas where refugees and migrants often live.



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**Knowledge Hub  
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## *Community-centred approaches*

- Invest in community-centred approaches to build local capacities, with the aim of mobilizing resources and assets within refugee and migrant communities.
- Promote the mainstreaming of gender into health promotion activities for refugees and migrants in order to empower both men and women to realize their full health potential.
- Strengthen the networks of local community-based organizations and civil society partners, including diaspora organizations, to improve communications, resources and services and to support trusting relationships with public authorities.

## *Health literacy initiatives*

- Scale up relevant health literacy interventions for refugees and migrants to support the development of personal skills.
- Improve access to health education in primary and secondary schooling and create adult education programmes as part of settlement services.
- Build an evidence base to support the development and implementation of health promotion activities.
- Create systems and key indicators to identify, measure, monitor, evaluate and report on issues such as health literacy levels, patterns of health-seeking behaviour and service engagement.

## *The health workforce*

- Build a culturally competent health workforce with cultural- and diversity-sensitive approaches to health care.
- Implement cultural sensitivity training across the health care sector for all professionals at all levels, including leadership and management staff, to promote both the ethical and the economic imperatives of culturally sensitive health care.
- Improve health literacy responsiveness of health services and resources through creation of a culturally competent workforce and provision of readily accessible information, for example in multiple languages and through outreach initiatives.