

HumanityHub

Where Cultural Inclusion Meets Economic Empowerment

Guidelines for Effective Refugee Engagement Strategies

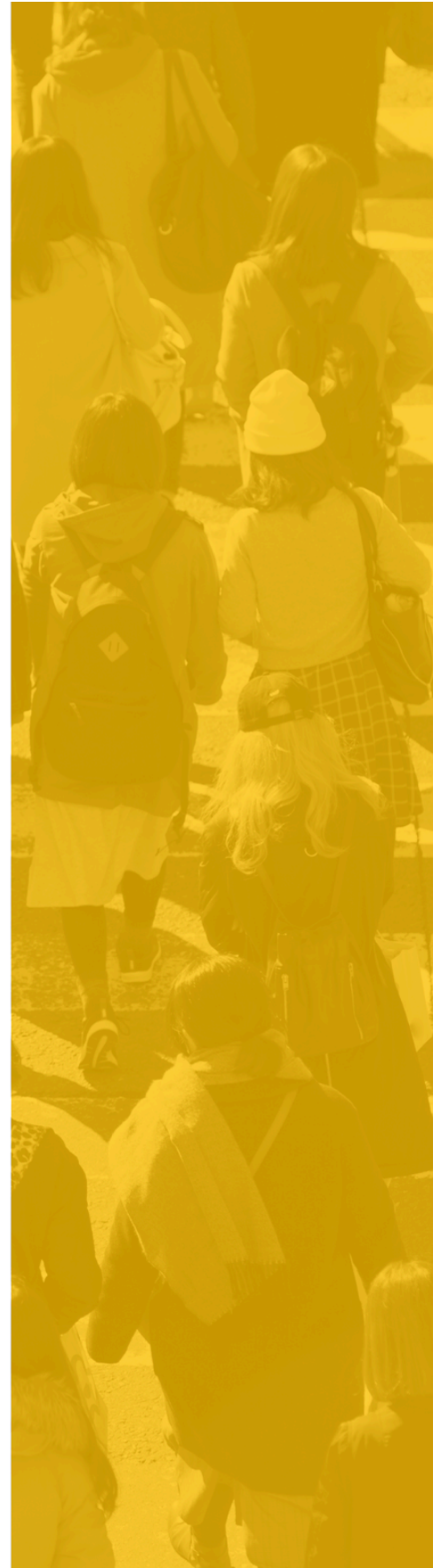
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Project coordinator

Name	
Organization	Rehabilitation Centre for Stress and Trauma (RCT)
Email	info@rctzg.hr
Postal address:	Kvaternikov trg 12, Zagreb, Croatia

Summary of the Project

Humanity Hub is a transnational project co-funded by the Social Innovation Initiative +, focused on addressing the economic and social integration challenges faced by Ukrainian refugees in Croatia and Italy.

The social innovation stems from a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs and difficulties encountered by these refugees. Humanity Hub aims to tackle these challenges through a comprehensive and holistic approach that combines multiple support mechanisms.

The project focuses on enhancing economic and social integration through three primary avenues: 1) psychosocial support and cultural orientation, 2) entrepreneurial education and acceleration program, and 3) a robust peer support system for employability opportunities. This innovative model as an individual and tailored approach, is designed to foster resilience, self-sufficiency, and community cohesion among Ukrainian refugees by addressing their immediate and long-term needs. By combining tailored interventions for economic, social, and psychological support, the project seeks to create a sustainable model for refugee integration that can be replicated in other contexts.

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List of abbreviations

Acronym	Description
WP5	Work Package 5 – Employment, Opportunities, Challenges, Response (Set up and Pilot Test)
RMA	Reciprocal Maieutic Approach
CSC	Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci ETS

Executive summary

The Guidelines for Effective Refugee Engagement Strategies are a practical resource for organisations and practitioners designing or adapting training and peer-support initiatives that support refugees' social and economic participation. They focus on how participants can be involved in identifying priorities, shaping programme content and engaging in learning and peer exchange.

The guide is based on the HumanityHub experience. Within the broader needs-assessment process carried out under A5.1, ten Ukrainian women participated in the Palermo RMA workshops. In Palermo, ten Ukrainian women took part in a participatory needs-assessment process using the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA). The priorities identified through this process informed a twenty-hour training programme organised into five interconnected areas and accompanied by a recurring Job Club. The guide also draws on contextual research and practice examples collected in Croatia and on the evaluation of the Palermo pilot.

The document does not provide a fixed curriculum. It explains the functions of the main approaches used in HumanityHub, the conditions that supported their implementation and the points that require adaptation in another setting. Recruitment, cultural mediation, practical arrangements, programme development, participatory inquiry, professional input, applied learning, peer support, well-being and local engagement are considered as parts of the same programme-design process.

The central principle is to preserve the connection between participants' experience and programme decisions. Activities, duration, specialist input and local resources may change from one context to another; what should remain clear is why a method is being used, what needs it addresses and how participants can influence the response.

About this guide

These guidelines focus specifically on the refugee job-inclusion pathway developed and piloted in Palermo and on the methods that informed it, developed within the framework of the project HumanityHub. However, they are written for readers who may not know the project and can be used independently from the original training materials.

The pathway developed in stages. Contextual research and practice examples collected in Croatia provided information on recurring barriers and possible approaches. In Palermo, two RMA workshops were then carried out with the women who would participate in the pilot. The workshops explored their circumstances and aspirations and translated them into training priorities and practical arrangements. These findings informed a twenty-hour programme organised around psycho-physical well-being, orientation in the local area, legal and cultural aspects, Italian language, and questions of belonging. A Job Club was integrated as a recurring space for employment-related exchange, practical information and peer support.

The purpose of the guide is not to reproduce that programme activity by activity. It identifies the reasoning behind the design: how contextual knowledge and participants' experience were combined, how needs were translated into learning objectives, how different methodologies were selected and combined, and which elements need to be reconsidered in a different group or local context. Evidence from the Palermo pilot and examples from Croatia are therefore used to explain transferable principles, not to prescribe a single model.

Introduction

As already mentioned, HumanityHub combined two sources of knowledge to understand the conditions affecting refugees' social and economic participation: contextual research and good practices collected in Croatia, and the participatory needs assessment carried out in Palermo, Italy. The latter allowed an in-depth examination of how the identified issues were experienced by the specific group involved in the pilot, and which priorities should shape the training.

Across these sources, employment-related difficulties were closely connected to other aspects of everyday life. Language, administrative procedures, access to services, housing, caring responsibilities and the use of previous qualifications could all affect participants' ability to pursue professional opportunities. In Palermo, many participants had higher education qualifications and previous professional experience; their priorities therefore concerned less the acquisition of basic vocational skills than understanding and navigating the cultural, administrative and institutional context in which they were living and seeking to work.

Participants also wanted to become more familiar with the territory, strengthen social relationships and have space for physical and emotional well-being. These priorities broadened the programme beyond employment information alone. They showed that economic autonomy, communication, access to institutions, local participation, social connection and well-being can influence one another and need to be considered together when designing support.

HumanityHub therefore combined a holistic perspective with a participatory approach to programme development. Rather than fixing the training content in advance, participants were involved in exploring and prioritising the issues that mattered to them. RMA provided the main framework for this inquiry and for the transition from needs assessment to co-design. The training and Job Club then combined different forms of learning and exchange according to the priorities identified. The following chapters translate that experience into guidance for organisations working in other contexts.

2. Target groups

2.1 Organisations and professionals using the guide

These guidelines are intended for organisations and practitioners providing educational, social or employment-related support to refugees and migrants. Their users may include refugee-support and civil society organisations, community-based organisations, adult education providers, employment and guidance services, and other actors developing participatory training or peer-support initiatives.

They can support different stages of programme development: understanding the group an initiative aims to reach, involving participants in defining priorities, selecting appropriate methodologies, organising delivery and reviewing whether the programme remains relevant and accessible.

Professional users may include programme coordinators, trainers, facilitators, educators, social workers, employment advisers and cultural mediators. Not every function needs to be available within the same organisation. Depending on the issues addressed, external professionals or local services may also contribute specialist knowledge. Responsibilities for coordination, mediation, professional input and follow-up are considered later in the guide.

2.2 The participant group in Palermo

The group involved in the HumanityHub project – encompassing the RMA workshops, pilot training and Job Club activities – in Palermo consisted of ten Ukrainian women of different ages and with different experiences of arrival in Italy. Some had arrived following the outbreak of the war, while others had arrived more recently. Most had children, and many had higher education qualifications and previous professional experience. These characteristics formed part of a broader set of personal circumstances: the women were managing everyday life in a new social and

institutional environment, combining practical responsibilities with questions about their own well-being, relationships and future.

Everyday responsibilities and time for themselves. Participants' availability for activities had to be considered alongside everyday responsibilities, as reflected in discussions about suitable meeting times and the possibility of bringing children when necessary. At the same time, participants also wanted opportunities to step away from everyday pressures, devote attention to their personal wellbeing. The wish for activities supporting relaxation, personal expression and social contact was therefore relevant to understanding the group, alongside the practical conditions affecting attendance.

Autonomy in everyday life. Participants wanted to understand the systems and practices affecting their daily decisions and access to services. Their questions concerned concrete situations: what was required to rent a property, how to arrange a medical appointment, which service to contact, what to expect in an administrative interaction and how to recognise potentially misleading requests.

Language and communication. The women expressed an interest in improving their Italian beyond basic levels, particularly highlighting the need for practical communication tools in order to gain confidence and navigate their new national context independently. Language was relevant across different areas of their lives: communicating in everyday situations, accessing services, participating in social activities and pursuing professional opportunities.

Economic autonomy. Their employment-related questions included understanding the local labour market, contractual conditions, rights and responsibilities, and possibilities for self-employment. Once again, their requests for support focused less on vocational training and more on gaining the knowledge and confidence to navigate their current circumstances, the tools to pursue both their personal and professional goals within the new national context.

Physical and emotional well-being. Participants requested opportunities to decompress, engage in gentle physical activity, take part in activities dedicated to emotional well-being and develop social connections. These needs were closely connected to the pressures participants were managing in other areas of their lives. In line with the programme's holistic approach, the training therefore dedicated specific

space to physical and emotional well-being, recognising how these factors can affect engagement with work, family responsibilities, everyday life and the programme itself.

Relationships, belonging and future perspectives. Participants wanted to become more familiar with Palermo not only to access services, but also to understand the social and cultural environment in which they were living, identify opportunities for participation and build local relationships. This broader knowledge of the territory could support both their immediate participation in everyday life and, for those considering a longer stay, a more informed reflection on how to build their future locally.

All these dimensions are closely connected. Language and familiarity with local systems influence whether participants can access services, understand procedures and pursue employment opportunities. Caring responsibilities and well-being, in turn, affect the time, energy and continuity they can devote to training and work. Knowledge of the territory and local relationships also shape access to information, opportunities and practical support. The programme therefore treats well-being, local orientation, legal and cultural understanding, language and belonging as interconnected conditions for labour-market participation, rather than as separate areas of support.

2.3 Understanding capabilities, priorities and participation conditions

For organisations applying these approaches elsewhere, the Palermo experience illustrates why a participant group needs to be understood through more than its demographic or employment characteristics. Age, gender, education and work experience provide relevant information, but do not in themselves explain what people want from a programme or what would enable them to participate. The participatory needs assessment in Palermo brought these characteristics into relation with participants' personal aspirations, family and everyday circumstances, and with the opportunities and constraints of the local context.

When defining the group for a similar initiative, organisations should therefore consider both people's present circumstances and the changes they wish to pursue. Professional aspirations belong within this understanding, alongside family life,

communication needs, access to services, social participation and personal well-being. **Crucially, these elements cannot be assumed in advance: they need to be explored directly with participants. A participatory process is therefore essential to understand which needs and priorities are actually relevant and how they should shape the programme.**

The relative importance of each dimension may differ in another group. The Palermo programme's attention to women's health and local belonging reflected the participants involved; another group may identify different priorities or different connections between them. The purpose is not to reproduce the same profile, but to understand the specific combination of circumstances, aspirations and contextual factors that should inform the programme.

3. Recruitment and communication

3.1 Presenting the programme

Recruitment should enable a person to judge both the relevance and the feasibility of participation. To prevent an employment-support programme from creating expectations that mismatch its actual offerings, prospective participants need to know exactly what the programme provides, for example: to receive information, practise skills, discuss questions with professionals, exchange experience with peers or access individual support. These activities should not be presented as equivalent to job placement.

The communication should therefore explain the programme's focus, the planned forms of activity, the approximate commitment and the scope for participants to influence content. It should also state the venue, languages, dates or scheduling process, any participation conditions, and the support arrangements that have actually been organised. Information about accompanying children, for example, needs to describe the arrangement accurately rather than implying that a childcare service is available.

The recruitment recommendations here extend the attention to accessibility and communication. For a new programme, the choice of channels requires local assessment: which organisations already have contact with the intended group, where people receive information, and who may remain outside those networks. The organisation can then combine introductions through relevant services or associations with direct contact and accessible written information, according to that assessment.

A referral or expression of interest should leave room for a conversation before enrolment. This allows the team to clarify expectations and identify practical barriers without using the first training meeting for administrative selection. When a person's main request lies beyond the programme's scope, the distinction should be explained and an appropriate contact route discussed where available. The purpose is not to redirect everyone whose situation is complex, but to avoid promising support the programme is not equipped to provide.

3.2 Cultural mediation as part of the engagement process

A cultural mediator supported all the activities in Palermo. The role extended beyond linguistic assistance: mediation helped establish mutual understanding, clarify contextual meanings and support participants in expressing their perspectives. The needs assessment therefore identifies cultural mediation as a structural component of the programme rather than an occasional translation service.

This is crucial to ensure an effective preparation. The facilitator and mediator need a shared understanding of the session's purpose, the questions to explore and the decisions participants will be invited to make. Preparation is particularly critical when professionals lead the meetings; in these cases, any specialist terminology should be discussed in advance.

Time and mechanisms for clarification must be included in the activity itself – a complex explanation followed by a request to confirm that everything is clear gives little information about understanding. The type of support needed – such as cultural mediation, translation or visual materials – should be determined according to the group's actual communication needs, rather than assumed on the basis of nationality.

3.3 Agreeing arrangements that make attendance feasible

The Palermo workshops addressed preferred days and times and the possibility of bringing children when necessary. These discussions took place alongside the

definition of training topics. Flexible schedules and modular participation are recommended because care responsibilities and other daily constraints can limit regular attendance.

For organisations, the implication is to assess access before finalising the programme. Relevant questions concern the length of meetings, travel, work shifts, breaks and the suitability of the venue for the activities and any accompanying children. The team should distinguish requests it can meet directly from those requiring another arrangement. Allowing children to be present and providing supervised childcare are different offers; participants need to know which is available so that they can make informed plans.

Flexibility and predictability have to be considered together. Repeated meetings at an agreed time can help people organise work and family responsibilities. A practical approach is to agree to a regular arrangement, establish how changes will be communicated and discuss alternatives for participants who cannot attend a particular module. This is consistent with the training programme's combination of periodic meetings and independently usable modules.

The organisation should also consider how participation resumes after an absence. A brief explanation of the topic, access to the material and a chance to ask questions can help a person rejoin without requiring all previous sessions as prerequisites. An absence provides information about feasibility, but it does not by itself explain motivation or the usefulness of the programme. Where the participant agrees to further contact, a short follow-up can clarify the reason and identify whether an adjustment is possible.

3.4 Communication between meetings

Agree with participants which channel will be used between meetings for reminders, schedule changes, materials and other practical information, and use it consistently. The purpose of the channel and the type of response participants can expect should be clear from the beginning.

Questions may also emerge between sessions. The coordinator should distinguish between information that can be provided directly, information that needs to be

checked and questions that require input from a professional or service. When the same issue concerns several participants, it can be brought back into a subsequent session. Peer experience can be useful, but it should remain distinguishable from verified information, particularly on legal, health, employment or administrative matters.

Participants should also have a way to raise individual questions privately when a matter is not appropriate for the group channel.

4. Programme development

4.1 Combining contextual knowledge with participants' experience

Programme development should draw on both contextual knowledge and direct input from participants. Contextual research can identify the main legal, institutional, social and labour-market conditions affecting the group, while participatory inquiry shows how these conditions are actually experienced and which of them require attention in the programme.

The two sources should be used together. Research can help organisations prepare relevant questions and identify issues that may need to be explored, but it should not determine priorities in advance. Participants may confirm known barriers, give them a different weight, or identify needs that are less visible in general research. In Palermo, for example, the workshops confirmed concerns related to employment, language, services and administrative procedures, but also gave greater prominence to territorial orientation, social connection and psycho-physical well-being.

The purpose of this combined approach is to move from a general understanding of the context to a programme that responds to the specific group involved. Contextual knowledge provides the framework; participants' experience determines how that framework should be interpreted and translated into priorities, content and methods.

4.2 Moving from exploration to agreed priorities

In Palermo, the first RMA workshop opened a broad exploration of participants' circumstances and of what meaningful participation in society meant to them. The second returned to the issues that had emerged, examined them in greater depth and translated them into training priorities and practical arrangements.

The distinction between exploration and prioritisation is important. An initial concern identifies an area that matters to participants; it does not yet determine the appropriate response. The next step is to clarify what participants are trying to understand, practise or change and whether the issue is best addressed through information, practical learning, professional input, peer exchange or another form of support.

The facilitator should return a synthesis to the group so that the main issues, connections and differences can be checked before they are converted into programme categories. Prioritisation does not require everyone to agree on the same issue. It should identify what can be addressed collectively, what requires a different level of support and which areas the group considers most relevant for the programme.

Priorities then need to be considered alongside the programme's scope, available expertise, time and local services. Where an important need cannot be resolved through training, it should remain visible and be linked, where possible, to an appropriate source of further support rather than being treated as if the programme had addressed it.

4.3 Translating needs into learning objectives and methods

The needs assessment organised findings into five thematic clusters: legal orientation and housing; healthcare access; economic autonomy and the labour market; language and local engagement; and psychophysical well-being. The training programme organised its content into five modules: psycho-physical resilience and healthcare navigation; navigating the territory; legal and cultural frameworks; an Italian speaking

club; and belonging and future aspirations. The relationship is integrated rather than strictly one-to-one: language and service navigation, for example, recur across several modules.

A need or topic has to be translated into a learning objective before a method is selected. The objective should state what participants are expected to understand, practise or decide as a result of the activity. This makes it possible to choose the professional input, materials and methodology according to the function they need to perform. The table below shows planning formulations derived from the needs and approaches documented in the programme.

Need identified	Possible learning objective	Appropriate response
Housing and employment procedures	Identify the questions to ask about a document or condition before taking the next step.	Work on a sample document, followed by clarification with a relevant professional and practice formulating questions.
Access to healthcare and local services	Describe the route to a service, the information to check and how to request an appointment.	Collaborative mapping, professional information and a simulated conversation.
Economic autonomy and qualifications	Distinguish available support pathways and identify the next source of individual guidance.	Specialist questions and answers, pathway mapping and follow-up through the Job Club.
Italian and participation in local life	Exchange the information needed for a specific everyday or professional interaction.	Paired language tasks, prepared role-play and activities involving local settings.
Well-being and social connection	Identify preferred ways to take part in physical, reflective and peer activities.	Voluntary well-being activities, group exchange and discussion of continuing opportunities.

Method selection should follow the difficulty being addressed. Where information is missing, participants need a reliable explanation. Where information is understood but difficult to use, practical application may be more useful than further presentation. Where priorities are still unclear, participatory inquiry is appropriate.

Where a question depends on an individual case, group learning can help clarify it but cannot replace individual professional attention.

Several methods can contribute to the same objective when they perform different functions. Professional input can clarify a system or procedure; case analysis can make its implications concrete; role-play or problem-based work can support application; and peer exchange can add experience from everyday use. The sequence is coherent when each element has a clear purpose, not when methodological variety is added for its own sake.

4.4 Organising modules and maintaining continuity

The programme and its evaluation describe a twenty-hour course with five modules, integrated with a Job Club. The training publication recommends independent modules and combines well-being activities, interactive learning, breaks and peer exchange. These elements should be treated as a design reference, not as evidence that every group needs the same duration or sequence.

An independent module needs to make sense to a participant who has not attended all earlier meetings. It should identify its purpose, provide the essential context and allow people to contribute from their current experience. Independence does not mean that modules have no relationship. Questions raised in one can be carried into another: a difficulty identified during service mapping may become a language-practice scenario, while an issue that remains unresolved can be brought to a professional or a Job Club meeting.

For planning, the team needs to distinguish learning time, mediated discussion, breaks and peer exchange. A particular agenda can exceed the time available once translation, questions and practice are included. Reducing the number of issues addressed in a meeting may therefore be more appropriate than compressing participants' contributions.

Continuity also requires documentation that is useful to the group. This may be a shared summary of questions, a map of services, a set of phrases or a record of agreed next steps. The format should reflect what participants can consult and update. Such material has a different purpose from attendance documentation: it

connects one meeting to the next and allows participants to return to what they have learned.

4.5 Staffing, resources and the limits of the programme

The programme calls for a dedicated coordinator, flexible spaces and the involvement of professionals familiar with local services. As it is known, delivery time alone is not a sufficient basis for planning staff workload involved in the implementation of the programme.

Preparation includes contact with participants, coordination with the mediator, selection of examples, preparation of visiting professionals and checking local information. Between meetings, questions and changes may require follow-up. These responsibilities should have an identified owner, thus ensuring transparency and clarity in the communication process.

The same attention applies to space and materials to be chosen for the planned activities. A room used for both dialogue and movement needs suitable furniture and privacy. Mapping or document-analysis tasks need material that can be read and worked on together. An activity outside the venue requires arrangements for travel, timing and access. Resource decisions should follow the selected activities and the group's circumstances rather than an abstract template for a training room.

Where needs extend beyond the programme, the team should identify relevant services and the practical means of approaching them. This may concern more advanced language learning, qualification recognition or individual assistance with work and family circumstances. In order to guarantee the success of the training delivery, arrangements therefore need to be established locally and described accurately to participants.

4.6 A record for reviewing programme decisions

A concise planning record helps the team maintain the connection between participants' priorities and delivery. The format below is proposed for adaptation. It

should be completed for a module or a significant activity and revisited when feedback changes the planned response.

Planning question	What the team should make explicit
Which need is being addressed?	The concern expressed by participants, including any important differences within the group.
What is the intended learning?	The understanding, practice or decision the activity is expected to support.
Why this method?	The specific contribution of dialogue, explanation, practice, peer exchange or a combination of these.
What makes participation feasible?	Language support, timing, venue, materials and agreed arrangements relating to work or care.
Who is responsible?	Facilitation, mediation, specialist input and follow-up responsibilities.
What will be reviewed?	Participants' feedback, remaining questions, usefulness of the activity and any need to change the next meeting.

This record is not a substitute for dialogue. Its purpose is to make organisational decisions accountable to what participants actually expressed and to prevent a topic from becoming a fixed activity without an explanation of its relevance.

4.7 Reviewing and adjusting the programme

The Palermo evaluation used pre- and post-programme self-assessment, open-ended questions and a final group discussion. For programme development, however, feedback is also useful during delivery because it can identify remaining questions, access difficulties and aspects of the programme that need to be adjusted before the programme ends.

Feedback should be connected to the purpose of the activity and to participants' experience of taking part. Short opportunities to review usefulness, clarity,

participation conditions and unresolved issues can inform subsequent sessions. Group discussion can be complemented by the opportunity for individual feedback where participants may not wish to raise a concern in front of others.

The team should also be clear about what each form of feedback shows. Self-assessment describes perceived knowledge or confidence, while satisfaction describes the experience of participation; neither is, by itself, evidence of employment outcomes or independent use of a service. Their value is to identify participants' perspectives, remaining needs and possible changes to the support offered.

5. Methodologies

The HumanityHub programme combined different methodologies because the priorities identified with participants required different forms of learning and support. Some issues called for collective inquiry, others for reliable professional information, practical application, peer exchange, direct engagement with the local context or dedicated work on well-being and future planning. The methods were therefore combined according to the purpose of the activity rather than applied as a fixed sequence. The evaluation concerns the programme as a whole and does not establish comparative effects for individual methods.

5.1 Participatory inquiry and co-design through RMA

The Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA), developed by Danilo Dolci, is a participatory and dialogic methodology for research and self-analysis. It begins from a heuristic question and develops through reciprocal dialogue, in which participants contribute their experiences, perspectives and knowledge to a shared inquiry. The process is intended to deepen understanding of an issue, identify connections between different experiences and open possible directions for action.

RMA differs from consultation methods that collect individual opinions and leave interpretation entirely to the organisation. Participants also take part in examining what emerges, questioning assumptions and co-build meaning. The facilitator structures the dialogue and supports participation without directing the group towards a predetermined conclusion.

In practice, the heuristic question provides a common starting point rather than a fixed questionnaire. Contributions are brought into relation with one another, further questions can emerge, and the facilitator synthesises the main issues and connections so that they can be checked and developed with the group. Where the subject

requires further exploration, a subsequent meeting can build on the previous discussion rather than treating each exchange as a separate consultation.

In Palermo, two RMA workshops conducted as part of the needs assessment moved from a broad exploration of what participation in society meant to participants to the identification and prioritisation of needs, training topics and organisational arrangements. For replication, the essential point is that the inquiry takes place while meaningful programme choices are still open. RMA as an approach can also guide the training itself: even once the main topics have been defined, the participatory and horizontal principles of RMA can help keep the learning process open to inquiry. Participants' experiences continue to inform this inquiry: through reciprocal dialogue, they are shared, questioned and connected, allowing the group to develop a shared understanding of the issues raised. The questions that remain unresolved can then inform practical activities and indicate where professional clarification is needed. The reciprocal element thus lies in participants contributing not only their experiences, but also to their collective examination and to identifying what the group needs to investigate further.

5.2 Participant-led questions and professional knowledge

Question-based sessions are useful when participants need to understand concrete situations, systems or procedures that affect their everyday lives. Questions may arise before or during a session and can redirect the discussion as new doubts or connections emerge. The format therefore remains responsive to the issues participants are actually trying to resolve.

When a topic requires specialist or locally specific knowledge, participant-led questions can be combined with contributions from professionals or practitioners familiar with the relevant services. Information sessions and interactive presentations can support this exchange, but their function is to provide accurate and usable information, not to replace participants' questions with a general lecture.

The facilitator and cultural mediator help connect professional explanations to the group's circumstances and clarify terminology or contextual differences where necessary. General information should also be distinguished from situations that

depend on individual assessment or referral, particularly in legal, health, employment and housing matters.

This approach was strongly supported by the Palermo evaluation: participants particularly valued practical answers to specific questions, and the impact report recommends maintaining and strengthening Q&A sessions with experts. When the approach is transferred elsewhere, the format can be retained but the professionals, procedures, services and information need to be checked against the local context.

5.3 Applied learning through real situations

Case study analysis, problem-based learning and role-play were used to connect information with situations participants may actually need to navigate. These methods are related but perform different functions. Case analysis supports close examination of a document, procedure or situation; problem-based learning requires participants to work through a practical difficulty and consider possible courses of action; role-play adds the communicative and interpersonal dimension of carrying out that action.

Functional language practice follows the same logic. In the Italian Speaking Club, language was treated as a tool for obtaining information, explaining a need, asking for clarification and managing everyday or professional interactions. The emphasis was therefore on communication in context rather than on language practice detached from the situations in which it would be used.

These methods can be combined within the same learning objective. Participants may first examine the information available, identify a possible response and then practise the interaction required to act on it. Activities should be selected because they help participants interpret, decide or communicate in relation to a realistic situation, not simply to make a session more interactive.

Documents, scenarios and procedures need local review. Materials developed for Palermo are not automatically valid in another municipality or country, and practical

exercises should reflect the systems, language demands and situations relevant to the group involved.

5.4 Mapping and learning through the local context

Collaborative mapping was used to connect information about services with the territory in which participants were living. Mapping can bring together locations, functions, access conditions, transport, contacts and other practical information that may otherwise be fragmented, helping participants understand how different resources are actually reached and used.

The approach can be extended through experiential and field-based learning when direct engagement with the local environment contributes to the learning objective. In HumanityHub, territorial learning concerned both practical orientation and participants' interest in becoming more familiar with the social, cultural and community context of Palermo.

This form of mapping should remain distinct from strengths or asset mapping, which is concerned with participants' own capacities and resources rather than with services or geography. In another setting, the relevant places, institutions and forms of engagement will differ; the transferable element is the connection between learning and the local context in which participants need to act.

5.5 Peer learning and the Job Club

Peer learning was used across the programme to make participants' practical experience available within the group. Experiences of employment, services, language and everyday life can help others understand possible strategies or questions to explore, while also revealing differences between individual circumstances. Peer knowledge therefore complements professional information rather than replacing it.

The Job Club gives this exchange a recurring structure. In HumanityHub it was integrated into the training as a regular space for sharing employment opportunities, contacts, information, strategies and experiences, and for returning to practical

difficulties that arose between meetings. Its continuity allowed the subjects addressed during training to be connected with developments in participants' everyday and professional lives.

The Job Club also had a social and relational function. Regular exchange supported relationships and informal forms of mutual assistance alongside employment-related discussion. The coordinator facilitated participation and the circulation of information without becoming the sole source of answers.

Because peer experience is necessarily situated, it should remain distinguishable from verified information. Where information has legal, health or administrative consequences, the group should know when a point reflects personal experience and when it has been confirmed by an appropriate professional or service.

5.6 Somatic and well-being practices

Physical and emotional well-being was an explicit priority identified during the Palermo co-design process. The programme therefore included experiential and somatic practices such as gentle movement, grounding and relaxation, alongside opportunities for social connection and reflection.

Within these guidelines, such activities are understood as part of a non-clinical support programme. Their function is to provide space for well-being where participants have identified this as relevant; they are not a substitute for psychological or medical care. Participation should not require everyone to engage in the same physical or reflective activity, and the form of the activity should be appropriate to the group, setting and expertise available.

The transferable principle is therefore not a particular exercise. Organisations should first establish whether well-being is a priority for the group and then determine what form of activity is appropriate, feasible and within the programme's competence.

5.7 Strengths-based and future-oriented reflection

The final part of the HumanityHub programme combined dialogue, collective asset mapping and future-directed visioning. These approaches were used to identify existing capacities and resources and to connect them with participants' longer-term aspirations and possible next steps.

The focus of collective asset mapping is on the resources participants bring individually and collectively, including skills, previous experience, knowledge, relationships and forms of mutual assistance. This allows difficulties to be addressed alongside available resources rather than organising the discussion only around deficits.

Future-oriented reflection then links present resources with personal, family or community aims. In HumanityHub, this was used to help participants consider a longer time horizon and identify practical steps connected with their own priorities.

These approaches are relevant when participants want space to consider longer-term directions, but their use should not assume a common professional ambition, settlement plan or definition of progress. The content of the reflection, and the extent to which it belongs in a particular programme, should be determined with the group.

6. Lessons learned

6.1 What the evaluation supports

The evaluation involved ten women who completed both questionnaires and participated in the training and Job Club. Nine recorded a higher total self-assessment score after the programme, while average satisfaction with the programme was 9.7 out of 10. Qualitative feedback emphasised practical answers, the reliability of professionals, social connection and well-being activities.

These findings support a positive assessment of participants' reported experience and perceived changes within this group. They do not show which single method produced those changes, because the methods were delivered together. The reported evaluation also does not provide evidence of sustained employment outcomes after the programme. The appropriate use of the findings in guidelines is to identify features worth retaining and questions requiring further attention, not to promise equivalent results in a new context.

6.2 Practical information was more useful when participants could question it

Participants' appreciation of answers to specific questions indicates the importance of how information was delivered, not only of the topics covered. The programme addressed systems that people needed to use, and the question-based format allowed them to connect professional explanations to their own uncertainties. The evaluation consequently recommends maintaining and strengthening exchanges with experts.

For future delivery, the lesson is to prepare professional contributions around the group's questions and include sufficient time for clarification. A broader or more

technically detailed presentation is not necessarily a better response. The team should review whether participants leave with an understandable next step and whether unresolved individual issues have an appropriate follow-up route. This preserves the practical contribution without claiming that a group session can settle every case.

6.3 Well-being and social relationships had a place within employment support

The needs assessment had already identified opportunities for decompression, physical activity and social connection as priorities. The impact report describes the prominence of these benefits in participants' feedback as an unexpected added value. Read together, the reports distinguish an initially expressed need from the particularly strong appreciation of that component at the end; they do not justify treating well-being as an issue discovered only after the training.

The implication is to preserve an explicit place for these priorities while discussing their form with each new group. Their relevance does not depend on demonstrating a direct effect on employment. Participants valued the opportunity to meet, attend to themselves and receive support alongside practical learning. The programme should remain clear about its non-clinical role and avoid requiring all participants to engage in the same physical or reflective activity.

6.4 Accessible delivery required continuing coordination

The workshops involved participants in decisions about timing and practical arrangements, but it is always important to coordinate different needs and schedules.

It is important therefore to remember to plan time for coordination, communicate what flexibility is possible and make responsibilities for follow-up explicit. Regularity, modular participation and the possibility of returning after an absence need to work together. Shared responsibilities and roles are crucial: a programme that relies entirely on one facilitator's personal availability may be responsive in the short term but difficult to maintain or replicate.

The same lesson applies to cultural mediation. Its contribution to the initial inquiry should not disappear when the programme moves to technical content. The need to understand, question and discuss information continues throughout training, so the mediator's support needs to be taken into consideration during all the time of the training delivery.

6.5 Group learning needed links with individual and longer-term support

It is important also to consider unmet needs of all the participants rather than treat the group satisfaction which can come up from a positive evaluation as sufficient for everyone.

The practices collected in Croatia offer relevant examples. MENTOINTEGRATION combines language-related and sociocultural learning with individual mentoring. Active again links psychosocial support and mentoring with practical learning for people receiving minimum-income support. The programme supporting refugee interns at IKEA Croatia combines group and individual work with attention to supervisors and colleagues. These examples show different ways to distribute support across participants and the organisations around them.

Other useful examples are the ones which illustrate longer pathways. Empowerment for Employment combines language education, psychosocial support and vocational retraining; the Refugee Empowerment & Integration Initiative connects language and creative activities with employment and self-employment guidance. B-WISE addresses skills among workers with support needs, their supporters and managers in work-integration social enterprises. Its target group is broader than refugees, so its relevance concerns the capacity of support organisations rather than a directly comparable participant profile.

For replication, the useful question is which function is missing from the local offer: individual guidance, sustained language education, contact with employers or the preparation of staff. The organisation can then identify a suitable partner or service to enrich and make the learning offer pathway more complete, taking into consideration both the needs of participants and the network of organizations offering specific services and interventions.

6.6 Conditions for adaptation and further review

The experience supports transferring a set of connected working practices: participant involvement in identifying priorities, facilitation that enables reciprocal exchange, practical activities linked to those priorities, appropriate professional contributions and recurring peer support. Their implementation depends on the context. The distinction below can be used to review a proposed adaptation.

Aspect to retain	Decisions to make locally
Participants contribute to defining needs and priorities.	Opening questions, languages, group composition, number and duration of workshops.
Methods have a clear function in the learning process.	Which issues require explanation, practice, collective inquiry or individual support.
Professional information is connected to participants' questions.	Relevant specialists, service contacts, locally applicable material and follow-up routes.
Peer exchange has a regular place and a coordinator.	Frequency, venue, group agreements, entry of new participants and continuation arrangements.
Well-being and access are addressed as expressed needs.	Preferred activities, work and care arrangements, mediation, pace and use of space.
Feedback informs subsequent decisions.	Suitable questions, accessible response formats and responsibilities for acting on feedback.

As a recommendation to have future evaluation more complete, it would be important to include among the items to be analysed both participation, confidence shown during the training, support accessed, employment outcome and so on. In this way, the results could provide further suggestions for the improvement of the course in the future with another group of beneficiaries.

7. Conclusions

The contribution of the HumanityHub experience lies in the connection between needs assessment, training design and peer support. Participants helped identify the issues to address and the conditions required to attend. The programme responded through a combination of methods rather than a single form of instruction, while the Job Club provided a setting for continuing exchange around practical concerns and professional aspirations. The evaluation indicates that participants valued both the usefulness of information and the relational and well-being dimensions of the experience.

For organisations using these guidelines, implementation begins with a limited set of concrete decisions: the group and needs to be addressed; the scope of the training and support offer; the responsibilities for facilitation, mediation and coordination; the methods appropriate to the learning objectives; and the routes for issues requiring further assistance. The planning record in Section 4.6 and the adaptation framework in Section 6.6 can be used to check these decisions before delivery and revisit them afterwards.

A credible replication does not depend on reproducing the same activities or reporting the same satisfaction score. It depends on being able to explain how participant input has shaped the programme, what each activity is intended to contribute and how the organisation responds when a need remains unmet. Where local circumstances differ, the content and arrangements should change accordingly, while retaining that connection between inquiry, learning and support.

References

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