

Factsheet of Good Practice

Shape Academy for Migrants in Portugal



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the European Union

SHAPE

SHaring Actions for Participation
and Empowerment of migrant
communities and Las

“Shape Academy for Migrants in Portugal”

Empowering Migrants for Positive Community Change: The Shape Academy Journey.

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Background information

Title	Shape Academy for Migrants in Portugal
Geographic area	Portugal
City	Porto
Organisation	Rightchallenge Associação
Contact person or organisation	Rightchallenge Associação
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Website	https://rightchallenge.org/en/ and https://www.aldaeurope.eu/it/progetto/shape-amif-migrant/
Start Date	01/2022
End Date	12/2023

Summary

The Shape Academy for Migrants in Portugal was designed to empower migrants through education and engagement. It offers a series of sessions covering personal experiences, participatory democracy, strategies for participation, advocacy, and activism, culminating in practical project development. This program aims to enhance migrants' socio-political participation skills and promote positive change in their communities.

Goals

This initiative emerged from the imperative need for migrants to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Portuguese political landscape and their rights within it. The program has clear goals, including nurturing active participation, advocacy, and activism among migrants, equipping them with practical knowledge and skills, and establishing a platform for networking and collaboration. The main aims of the program encompass various critical aspects, such as developing participants' abilities

to reflect on and narrate their personal experiences in relation to socio-political engagement, shedding light on the political context in Portugal, discussing migrants' political rights, and raising awareness about the socio-political context concerning health, housing, education, training, and employment through participants' experiences and reflections. Furthermore, the program delves into the concept of participatory democracy, presenting successful practices and examples of migrant participation and participatory tools. It also explores existing strategies and tools within the realms of participation, advocacy, and activism, emphasizing the importance of networking and forging connections with relevant stakeholders. Lastly, the program empowers participants by facilitating the development of project management and implementation skills, including strategies for securing funding. Ultimately, the overarching aim is to empower participants to apply the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the program by creating proposals for potential pilot projects, thereby contributing to positive change in their communities.

How does it work?



The Shape Academy is divided into four training sessions and achieves its goals through a structured curriculum:

Methodology: The program employs interactive sessions, presentations, and debates, encouraging active participation.

Inclusivity: The academy promotes inclusive participation by involving migrants, experts, and stakeholders in discussions.

The organizational and logistical aspects of this initiative were carefully structured. Sessions took place at Rightchallenge's headquarters, accommodating both in-person and remote participation through a hybrid format. To ensure widespread awareness and participation, dissemination efforts targeted key institutions involved in the project, including the ACM (Alto Comissariado para as Migrações), CNAIMs and CLAIMs, Migrant Associations, local NGOs, authorities, and universities. The sessions were





scheduled from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM, with a 30-minute coffee break, ensuring a comprehensive and productive learning experience for all participants.

The first session focuses on "Personal Experiences and Socio-political Participation." It involved a 1.5-hour activity where participants shared personal narratives and discussed how these experiences influenced their political engagement. There

was also a brief overview of Portugal's political landscape and migrants' political rights, followed by a 1-hour exploration of participants' perspectives on healthcare, housing, education, training, and employment rights.

The second session explores "Participatory Democracy" and featured guest speakers from the University of Porto sharing insights on migrant socio-political participation.

The third session, titled "Strategies and Tools for Participation, Advocacy, and Activism," spans two hours and included discussions on various strategies and tools, providing insights on effective networking, funding sources, project application guidelines, and project management during a 1.5-hour segment.



The fourth session focuses on practical application. Participants formed groups to develop mock projects related to community needs, including housing, healthcare, education, employment, and gender issues. They had 1.5 hours to create project proposals, addressing target groups, funding, partnerships, dissemination, implementation, management, impact assessment, and sustainability.



These sessions aimed to empower migrants with knowledge and skills, fostering their active participation, advocacy, and activism while creating a platform for networking and collaboration.

Results

The academy aimed to empower participants with the knowledge and skills needed to become more active in their communities. Tangible results included enhanced socio-political participation skills, increased awareness of political rights, and strengthened networks and partnerships. In total, 24 migrant citizens representing 15 different migrant civic organisations attended the Shape Academy, namely:

N.	Organisation (Migrants Association)
1.	Associação Unida e Cultural (Terraços da Ponte)
2.	Unida e Cultural de Terraços da Ponte
3.	Aequalitas - Associação para a Igualdade e Animar
4.	CulturFACE - Associação Cultural para o Desenvolvimento
5.	ALCC - Associação Lusofonia Cultura e Cidadania
6.	ACM
7.	GAT - Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamentos
8.	Men Non
9.	Associação Cultural Batucada Radical
10.	Associação Renovar a Mouraria
11.	Aequalitas - Associação para a Igualdade e Animar
12.	Código Simbólico - Associação Sociocultural
13.	Associação de Estudantes Angolanos em Portugal
14.	Associação de Amizade Portugal - Vietnam (NAMPOR)
15.	Associação Afghan

Evaluation

While no external evaluation has been conducted, internal assessments and participant feedback guide program improvements. Some of the participants' feedbacks were:

"I learned a lot about migration and integration issues. We must be willing to help, inform, raise awareness, guide, and more. On the other side, there must be a willingness to accept, learn, and integrate. It is very important to actively participate in the social and political life of the country where we reside."

"Participating in the Shape Academy was extremely rewarding, not only because of the scientific knowledge acquired migrant social and political participation, advocacy, and activism but also because I met people from different and opposing realities to mine, with enriching experiences that certainly contributed to my growth. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Shape Academy."

"Shape Academy was a space for listening and sharing experiences, scientific approaches, as well as giving voice to the problems experienced/felt and possible solutions. This expanded my understanding of the multidimensionality of this topic. From the training, I can take more comprehensive and integrated approaches, possibilities to create migration-related projects with greater viability, increased recognition of migrants' potential in seeking solutions to existing social problems, the importance of empathy and openness to intercultural dialogue to rebuild our society, challenges in facing social and territorial cohesion by integrating migrants, the global dimension of migration, and challenges to sustainability: a topic to reconsider and integrate into the horizons of the SDGs."

"I learned that the field of migration is very diverse and intersectional, so it is always important to step out of our comfort zone and learn about the specificities of other cultures and migrant communities in Portugal."

"The sharing was enriching, and the contextualization of experiences is important, but the objectives need better delineation for more effective implementation. Participation

in these actions allows me to say that it was quite rich, especially in terms of Participatory Democracy and the role of migrants in Portugal. Overall, the actions allowed the sharing of knowledge in various domains by integrating migrant and refugee citizens.”

“Participating in this project was a unique experience, involving knowledge exchange, integration, and dynamism on the part of the speakers that excites and inspires everyone who participates.”

“Through the Shape Academy, I had the opportunity to meet other people and get to know other entities that also work for the well-being of migrants in Portugal. There was sharing of different cases, different problems that led us to better choose the project we would present, for the improvement of an immigrant's life and stay in Portugal, as well as the provision of information for their preparation to come here.”

“Among all that I have learned, I want to highlight the importance of knowing the work of the other participants. This knowledge is very important, mainly because it gives us a real view of what is being done (or not) in the country!”

Who benefits?

- Migrants in Portugal
- Migrant associations from the City of Porto
- NGOs and Public Cabinets workings with migrants
- Local authorities
- Universities

Source of funding and resources used

The practice received funding from the European Commission through the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund under the “SHAPE: SHaring Actions for Participation and Empowerment of migrant communities and LAs” Project. No additional external funding was used.

Replicability

This practice is transferable to other contexts with similar integration challenges. Conditions for successful replication include institutional support, funding, and a commitment to intercultural collaboration. While it was not mentioned above, the practice was also implemented in different contexts, namely, in Germany, Hungary, Italy and Croatia what enhances its replicability.

Insights gained

The program continually learns and adapts, gaining insights into promoting migrant socio-political participation. Innovations include a focus on personal narratives and practical project development.