

Portugal One-Stop-Shop's - CNAIM's

(National Support Centre for the Integration of Migrants in Porto, Lisbon, Beja and Faro)



Portugal

Lead Agency

High Commission for Migration (ACM)

Context & rationale

The National Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants were created in 2004 to address challenges faced by migrants in Portugal:

- Challenges around interacting with multiple services with different modes of operating, and incompatible times, and
- Communication challenges and challenges in cultural differences.

The Centres are one-stop-shops that bring together under the same roof a set of services that aim to support issues directly related to migration and the integration of migrants. Having multiple agencies under one roof offers many advantages for migrants.

Description

The CNAIMs were set up in 2004, in Lisbon and Porto and later in Faro and Beja (2009 and 2021, respectively).

Key elements of the Portuguese CNAIM are:

- services for immigrants are available free of charge and accessible at one physical point (concentration);
- such services cover in principle all domains that are relevant for migrants (migration and integration related services);
- such services are coordinated in time and content through intensive and on the spot coordination of the various services;
- in the provision of the service, there may be links to non-governmental entities (for example, migrant associations) that can provide complementary or appropriate support to the situation of the migrant person (for example, non-formal training at the level of learning Portuguese language).

- in the practice of providing the services, language and cultural mediation is made available on the spot to smoothen communication and to build trust, or, when this is not possible, the ACM Telephone Translation Service may be used. More than 60 languages or dialects are available here;

The Lisbon CNAIM and the Porto CNAIM involves six Government agencies from five Ministries (Foreigners and Borders Service, , Social Security, Health, Education, Tax Authority and the Ministry of Justice), together with other innovative support services provided by High Commission for Migration, to meet the concrete needs of immigrants, such as access to housing, education, employment and entrepreneurship , recognition of qualification, family reunification, regularization, access to health, Portuguese language learning, support for victims of domestic violence etc..

The National Support Centres work together with the 154 Local Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants (CLAIM), constituting the National Support Network for the Integration of Migrants.

Before the opening of the service, it is important for partners involved to set up a true collaboration, including with migrant associations, backed up by a political commitment as having different services under one roof does not guarantee actual collaboration. To make the service efficient, there is a need for a true institutional commitment (not just the signing of a protocol) that enables a systemised collaboration between each partner and that make them accountable for their actions. That also includes identifying focal points within partner institutions.



Resources Needed

The High Commission for Migration (ACM) has currently 4 One-Stop-Shops CNAIM in the regions of Algarve (Faro), Alentejo (Beja), Lisbon and North (Porto). As a beneficiary of European Funds, the ACM is executing projects, until June 2023, to ensure the operation and the structure of all the CNAIMs, with a total investment value of 5,831,243.93 euros.

Of the total amount, 2,114,292.76 euros refers to the budget of the ACM, I.P. (designated as National Public Contribution), while the remaining 3,857,541.17 euros refers to contributions from the operational programmes.

Regarding European co-financing, the main source of funding is the European Social Fund, namely the Operational Programmes “Cresc Algarve” (Algarve Regional Operational Program), POR Lisboa (Lisbon Operational Programme) and PO ISE (Social Inclusion and Employment Operational Programme). Workers: 77 (47 public servants; 30 cultural mediators), all working according the principles of the intercultural mediation.



Results

- The project CNAI was distinguished in 2005 with the 1st place of the Prize Good Manners in the Public Sector
- It was also considered an example of Good Practice in the “Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners” (in November of 2004) by the General Direction of Justice, Freedom and Security of the European Commission.
- One first evaluation took place in 2009 and concluded that the OSS-format is an ideal type of service provision, particularly geared to early reception of newcomers, if the political and structural conditions are fulfilled. In 2019, Portugal’s High Commission for Migration received the United Nations Public Service Award, an international recognition of excellence in public services for the CNAIM

- In 2022, the most recent assessment of the National Support Network for the Integration of Migrants (RNAIM) was completed (RNAIM includes the National Centres and the Local Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants), which resulted in an updated diagnosis of this Network and the identification of a set of suggestions and recommendations considered priority and relevant for a better functioning of this Network.

This study also made it possible to characterize the profile of the users of the Centres, as well as to measure the satisfaction of users with the Centres, resulting in a majority mentioning that expectations are exceeded after using the services in the CNAIM target group:

Migrants and refugees are the main users of CNAIM. The CNAIM intend to mediate the relationship of migrants with the various public (or other) services relevant to their integration process, regardless of their migratory status and path or stage of integration (newcomers; long-term residents; or even national with a migrant background). The services are prepared to respond to different profiles. On the other hand, the ACM, also through CNAIM, intend to sensitize the various public services (or others) to the importance of articulated responses in the integration of migrants, considering the specific needs of migrants and refugees. In general, it is intended to facilitate access to services by migrants and refugees.



Success Factors

- Being ahead – predicting changes and adapting.
- Place should be a welcoming space, easy to reach with adequate opening hours, in recognition of the fact that it may be challenging for beneficiaries to get there. This also means the service must be efficient and flexible, being also provided by telephone and e-mail.
- Intercultural mediators bridge an important gap between clients and the service.
- Effective training of staff is important in order to align all agencies with a common vision.
- Operating as part of a network, including with other local agencies, allows to expand the service's geographical remit, and serve different communities.
- Citizens with an irregular situation can be assisted at the Centers and be supported in their regularization process



Risks & Challenges

- If one agency does not share the same approach or attitude as the others, and is less sympathetic to migrants, this can damage the reputation of the OSS within the migrant community and have an impact on relationships and trust.
- Keep the team fully updated on legal rules and procedures.
- Maintain a coherent discourse in the approach to the citizen.
- Regular adaptation to different migrant profiles and different needs.

Do's

Pre-conditions for success:

- Actual and genuine collaboration between services that goes beyond the signing of an MoU is key.
- Find a space that is easily reachable
- Identify workers with the appropriate profile to serve the citizen
- Identify partners at various levels (central government, municipalities/local administration, non-governmental organizations, private sector) to cover the various dimensions of the integration process.

TOP 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Commitment at management and staff level to the mission of the service. As for the staff, training on awareness about migration and vulnerabilities and how to support migrants is key to engage staff and develop a sense of commitment.
2. Intercultural mediators are necessary to bridge the gap between clients and the service
3. Working as a network



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OSS Lisbon
CNAI, EU Integration
Evaluation of the One-stop-shop project, 2009
IOM, Frameworks and good practices of intercultural mediation