

AN INTEGRATION PLAN FOR MIGRANTS, BY MIGRANTS

Key information

- Location: **Roquetas de Mar (Spain)**
- Population: **97 100**
- Involved in URBACT network: **ARRIVAL CITIES**
- More information: <http://urbact.eu/arrival-cities>



★ Lead Partner

Building on its participation in the URBACT ARRIVAL CITIES network, Roquetas de Mar secured EUR 10 million of European funding to implement its urban development strategy for the successful integration of migrants. This was achieved by a process that effectively engaged local migrant populations and services in integrated action planning.

The old fishing village of Roquetas de Mar in Andalusia, Spain became one of the first tourist resorts in Spain in the 1960s. More recently, a major driver of economic growth has been a rapidly expanding intensive agricultural economy. This growth has attracted large numbers of migrants looking for work.

The municipality has experienced rapid population growth from 28 000 in 1990 to 97 000 by 2018. Migrants now make up at least 30% of the permanent resident population. The municipality has tended to be positive about the contribution of migrants to the city economy and created the Municipal Office for Migrants' Integration in 1997. However, migrant populations continue to suffer greater inequality than the Spanish population, with irregular migrants at particular risk.

◆ An action plan supported by investment

Through its participation in the URBACT Arrival Cities network, Roquetas de Mar successfully developed an Integrated Action Plan to support the integration of migrants, and tackle related challenges such as the rise of xenophobic movements.

The plan is based on a number of guiding principles and lines of action that aim to: strengthen stakeholder capacity; promote the benefits of diversity; improve inter-cultural

understanding; and tackle educational disadvantage and ghettoisation.

The Integrated Action Plan was incorporated into the Municipal Integration Plan, which was officially approved on 10 April 2018. At the launch event, José Galdeado, Municipal Councillor for Social Services was clear: "Today marks the end of the project, but we do not stop here. The strategic plan which we presented today will give the work continuity."

This continuity has already been supported by the awarding to Roquetas de Mar of EUR 10 million for Integrated Sustainable Urban Development under the European Regional Development Fund. The award was based on a strategy to identify and implement best practices from European level, based strongly on the lessons from Arrival Cities.

José Juan Rodríguez, Councillor and Deputy-Mayor of Roquetas de Mar, is sure that "ARRIVAL CITIES was a crucial element in securing funds... [It] was where everything started, with the exchange between different European cities, with a really magnificent local group whose work has culminated in the Integrated Action Plan, which will be implemented through various European projects, one of which is the Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Strategy and another the Regional Development Strategy."

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Matthew Brown

◆ A plan built on local and migrant voices

A key strength of the process to develop the action plan was the engagement of local stakeholders and migrant representatives. The main body for its development was the URBACT Local Group that Roquetas de Mar established under the coordination of Juan Francisco Iborra, Head of Social Services in the municipality.

The URBACT Local Group was composed of 15 members, including key providers of public services and NGOs working with migrants, such as the local offices of the Andalusian Employment Service, public health and education services, the Spanish Red Cross and the Foundation for Coexistence and Social Cohesion (CEPAIM). Importantly, the group also benefitted from strong local political support, with the active involvement of the two city councillors quoted above.

To ensure that the plan was for migrants and by migrants, the technical work of the group was supported by broader consultation meetings that attracted migrant participants.

At a first consultation meeting, Juan Francisco Iborra asked migrant associations to elaborate proposed actions. These were developed over several months and then presented to the URBACT Local Group members.

Later on, participatory forums were organised to allow the Group to discuss its working documents with stakeholders. A first forum discussed the provisional SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, while a second considered draft action lines for the Integrated Action Plan. Stakeholder feedback led to real modifications and improvements.

◆ Incorporating lessons from transnational exchange

Selected URBACT Local Group members participated in each of ARRIVAL CITIES' five transnational exchange meetings - on civic participation, education, reception services, labour market and community cohesion - before feeding back to the group. In addition, the local group coordinator from Dresden participated in one meeting in Roquetas to exchange ideas and experiences.

Interesting practices were presented at a participatory forum to obtain stakeholder feedback on how these could be integrated locally. The result is an action plan that includes 'Incorporation of international experiences' into almost every activity line.



The members of the URBACT Local Group in Roquetas de Mar

Roquetas de Mar Integrated Action Plan – 8 Key Actions

- 1 Mapping of key local assets for migrant integration
- 2 Training programme for public officials working with immigrants
- 3 A capacity-building 'train the trainer' programme for immigrant associations
- 4 Targeted community social work in a deprived neighbourhood (the '200 homes')
- 5 Creation of a multifunctional inter-cultural space in the town centre
- 6 Educational intervention programme targeting young migrants at risk of low educational outcomes and absenteeism
- 7 Training courses for adult migrants
- 8 Multicultural celebration days and awareness campaigns