

INTEGRATION HUBS

- CENTERS FOR NEIGHBORHOODS TO BUILD SOCIAL INTEGRATION -



MORE THAN SHELTERS.

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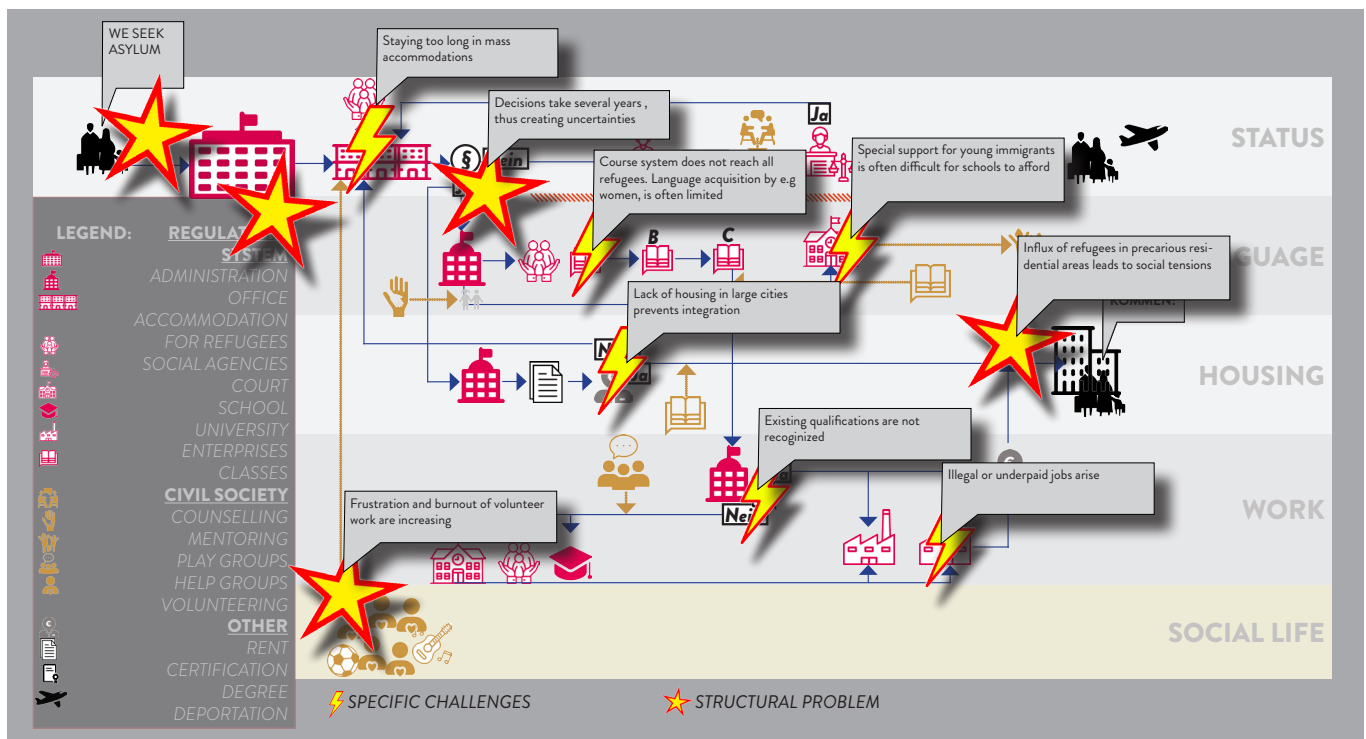
IN SHORT:

The concept of INTEGRATION HUBS has been developed for municipalities by **MORE THAN SHELTERS** with the support of the Robert Bosch Stiftung. The INTEGRATION HUBS are a ready to implement strategy that transforms immigration societies into active communities. Based on three pillars: an architectural design for a place of encounter, a community building strategy and an incubation curriculum for social innovations it is a one stop solution to build strong, stable and diverse communities.

SOCIAL CHALLENGE:

Since 2015, municipalities across Europe have had to handle a growing influx of refugees and migrants due to prolonged, protracted conflict in countries of civil unrest. The significant rise in immigration the past five years has triggered multiple effects in many municipalities, regions or neighborhoods:

- Lack of social cohesion amongst native citizens and newcomers
- Cultural clashes and miscommunication – or lack thereof
- Migrant dependency on government aid and resources
- Lack of available housing
- Increased unemployment
- Violent tensions and incidents



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THREE MAIN FACTORS :

Often municipalities see that their current system to integrate newcomers is under massive stress and therefore it takes more time and is more expensive than expected. Among others three main challenges can be observed.

1. *No cross-departmental coordination*

Firstly, for those working in local government and public administration, it has been exceedingly difficult to handle the complex “crisis” situation that has landed, here, at home. Migration and successful integration of migrants, refugees, and newcomers is multifaceted, with high emotional, economic, and political stakes and cannot be solved by one entity within local administrations. Unfortunately, although a host of services are provided, (i.e housing, language courses, employment aid) the lack of coordination and collaboration between administration, social institutions, and civil society creates a highly fragmented situation and not a streamlined integration process.

In turn, the many obstacles the newcomer faces in this complex system often leaves her*him in a state of limbo with no job or income for too long, forcing her*him to depend on subsidies from the state. Lack of coordination and collaboration ultimately costs all actors and stakeholders involved more time and more money, but yields limited integration results.

2. *Lack of safe spaces for encounter*

Secondly, there is often a lack of socio-spatial places where newcomers and natives can productively interact. Migrants and refugees are housed in accommodation centers often isolated or segregated from society. This, exacerbated by language barriers and a host of other challenges that accompany resettlement, makes it extremely challenging to connect and engage with their new social reality. Ostracization and little socio-cultural contact often leads to poor psychosocial well-being, which can cost their ability to find employment, trapping them in a vicious cycle of dependency.

3. *Deficit oriented narratives and services*

Thirdly refugees and migrants are often seen as a burden, sometimes even a threat. Even in welcoming neighborhoods narratives and services about and for newcomers are often focusing on what is lacking. The whole discourse and also the system is then based on a multitude of deficits (e.g. no language skills, no proper certificates, no intercultural knowledge). It is rare that there is a focus on the talents and skills of newcomers and therewith on opportunities created through immigration. Even though in aging societies it can be of crucial importance to foster the influx of young talented people. The current system though functions on a deficit-oriented approach, where services are attempting to alleviate refugees’ shortcomings, rather than capitalize off their talents, ideas, and assets that push society forward.

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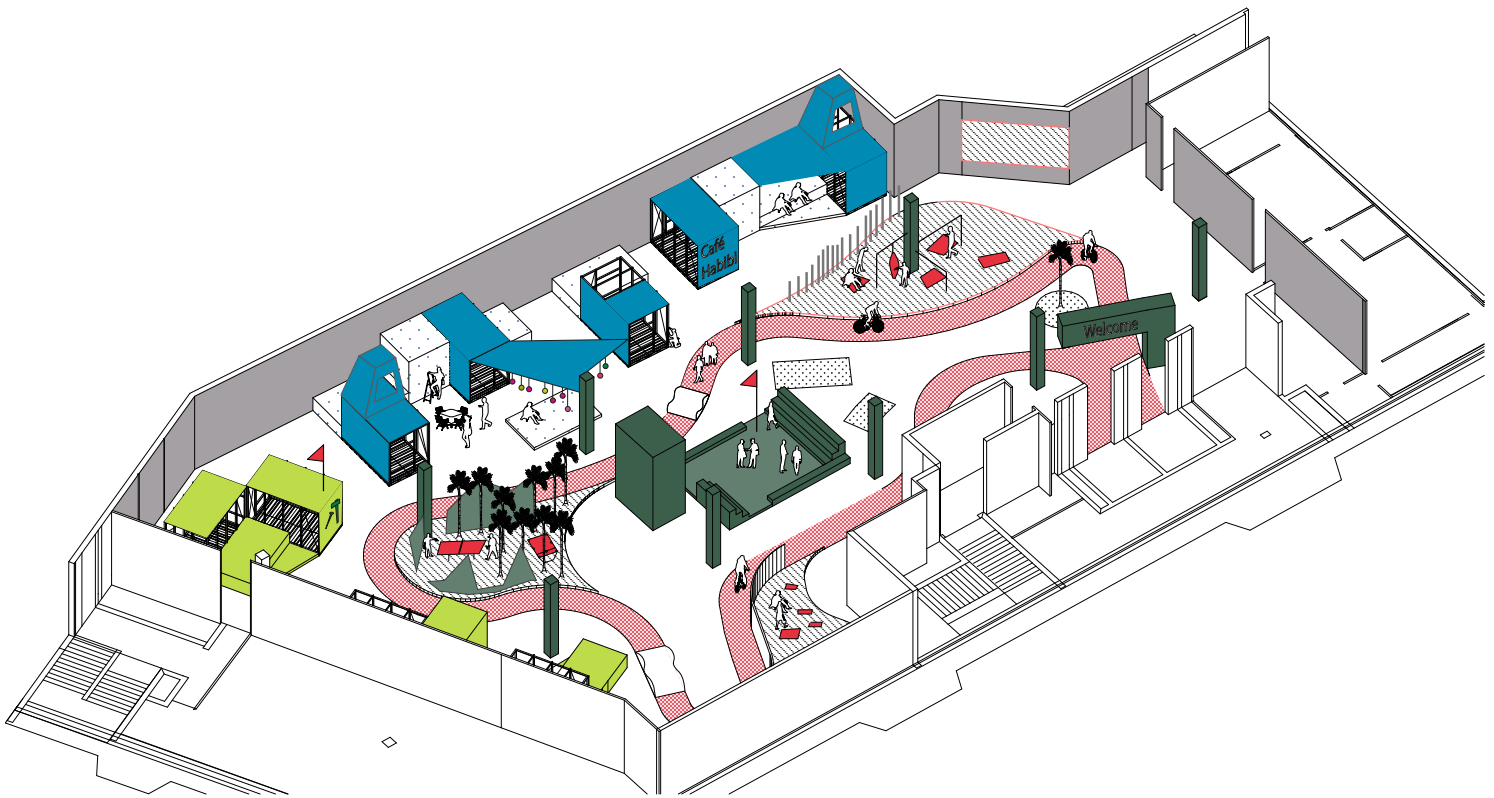
THE SOLUTION = NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER + COMMUNITY BUILDING + TALENT INCUBATOR:

Looking at migration from a systemic, top-level view, but working from the bottom up on a local level, MTS presents an integrated solution: the INTEGRATION HUBS.

The INTEGRATION HUBS aims to solve migratory challenges of neighborhoods by bringing together the many stakeholders involved: refugees, native citizens, civil society organizations, authorities, and volunteers, to and actively implementing a community building strategy.

An INTEGRATION HUB is a space organized into zones of encounter, community, administration, quiet, and incubation, meant to focalize services by creating one, integrative, access point. It is a neighborhood center of the 21st century.

INTEGRATION HUBS are investing in the talent and skills of its community and the individual. They provide a clearly structured curriculum to turn talents and skills of newcomers, locals and mixed groups into initiatives that support the neighborhood. Focusing on the resources within communities will decrease their need for services, in turn decreasing the need for local governments, to provide such services that are costly, timely, and complex to deliver.



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THREE MAIN ADVANTAGES

1. *Coordination and Collaboration*

- Provides a municipality with focalized access point to services, streamlining and simplifying the “integration system”
- Helps communities transform problems into opportunities by serving as an access point for innovative collaborations, idea-sharing, and solution engineering.

2. *Socio-Spatial Place that Incubates Solutions*

- Provides neighborhoods with a social space for productive encounters and collaborations between refugees, migrants, and local residents
- Provides districts with a toolbox – filled with result-oriented mechanisms and methodologies that individual Hubs can apply to engineer localized solutions
- Helps cities take diagnostics of the needs of all stakeholders to co-create solutions that are sustainable, pragmatic, and achieve long-term community health and well-being

3. *Resource-Oriented Services*

- Helps communities incubate and develop skills and talents of migrants and locals to fast track full participation in society – economically, politically, and socially
- Helps administration to shift from a service-oriented approach to a resource-oriented approach, helping the community and the individual become more resourceful, and therefore less dependent on aid, saving cities and their administration time, energy and money.

A TAILORED TO FIT SOLUTION

The INTEGRATION HUB concept is a flexible and adaptive solution and can be transferred to many contexts. Currently two INTEGRATION HUBs are being built in Berlin and Stuttgart, Germany. Both of them are adapted to the local context. For further information please consult the full INTEGRATION HUB manual or even better get in touch directly with the INTEGRATION HUB team at **MORE THAN SHELTERS**.

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Manual and further information:

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