

Factsheet on the expert brief

All that glitters is gold?

Funding for integration work in rural districts and municipalities

If a district or municipalities in the district wish to motivate migrants to stay, they must become more proactive, better organised and make the necessary resources available for their measures. This requires – all the more so during times of budgetary constraint in the public sector – needs-oriented, easily accessible funding instruments. Public and private funders provide the monetary means to finance integration work on the ground. In doing so, they must ensure that their funding foci, guidelines and processes in practice are in line with the actual needs in rural areas.

Core questions of the expert brief

- What funding strategies harbour potential to have a sustainable impact in rural areas?
- What needs do funding programmes address?
- How do funding instruments need to be designed for rural municipalities to make use of them?



Challenges in applying for and processing funding due to...

- ... low level of flexibility of funding programmes
- ... fragmentation of funding programmes
- ... bureaucratic hurdles
- ... lack of know-how
- ... insufficient human resources
- ... confusing/complex information flows
- ... lack of support from the funder

Addressees of the expert brief

- Public funders from the state and federal levels
- Private funders, e.g. foundations
- Recipients of funding

Recommendations

Create funding programmes for acute needs

A funding programme for providing short-term funds for acute needs, similar to emergency assistance under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) at the EU level, can also help at the federal or state level to react to changing circumstances in a swift and unbureaucratic manner. This will give municipalities much needed room to manoeuvre at exactly those times when it is most needed.

Leverage multiplier organisations for the distribution of funding

Integration work in rural areas is especially characterised by the engagement of volunteers and smaller initiatives. These often do not have the capacity to carry out funding applications. Funders could, however, use multiplier organisations, such as regional foundations, umbrella associations of migrant organisations and welfare associations. Funders can, for example, give out earmarked, but compounded grants/endowments from which multiplier organisations can support smaller, local initiatives.

Replace target group orientation with target orientation

Narrow target group definitions allow hardly any inclusive offers to be realised, though such offers are necessary in many areas, for instance in early childhood education. If funding programmes were to move away from an orientation towards target groups to simply targets, municipal integration work would greatly benefit – not only, but especially in rural areas.

Enable coherence among funding programmes via a “municipal integration package”

A far-reaching, but very promising solution could be to allow municipalities to submit a single funding application at their respective state for a “municipal integration package”. The competent state authority could then finance this package from different funding programmes (EU, federal, state programmes). This would allow municipalities to develop more coherent strategies for a sustainable local integration system and, at the same time, save them time and human resources.

Reduce bureaucracy, improve transparency

The bureaucracy surrounding the application process for, the utilisation and settlement of funding is, for many, an insurmountable hurdle. Considering the scant human resources available, many fail to even attempt to apply for funding. Municipalities apply for funding predominantly at the state level. It would therefore be beneficial to establish a “funding advice centre for districts and rural municipalities” at the state level.