Public Policy Recomendations Handbook:

Local Immigrant Council



Conselho Local de Imigrantes

Technical File

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Public Policy Reccomendations Handbook: Local Immigrant Council

Authors:

Nélia Neves Inácia Sá

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Rede Europeia Anti-Pobreza / EAPN Portugal Rua de Costa Cabral, 2368 4200-218 Porto <u>www.eapn.pt</u>

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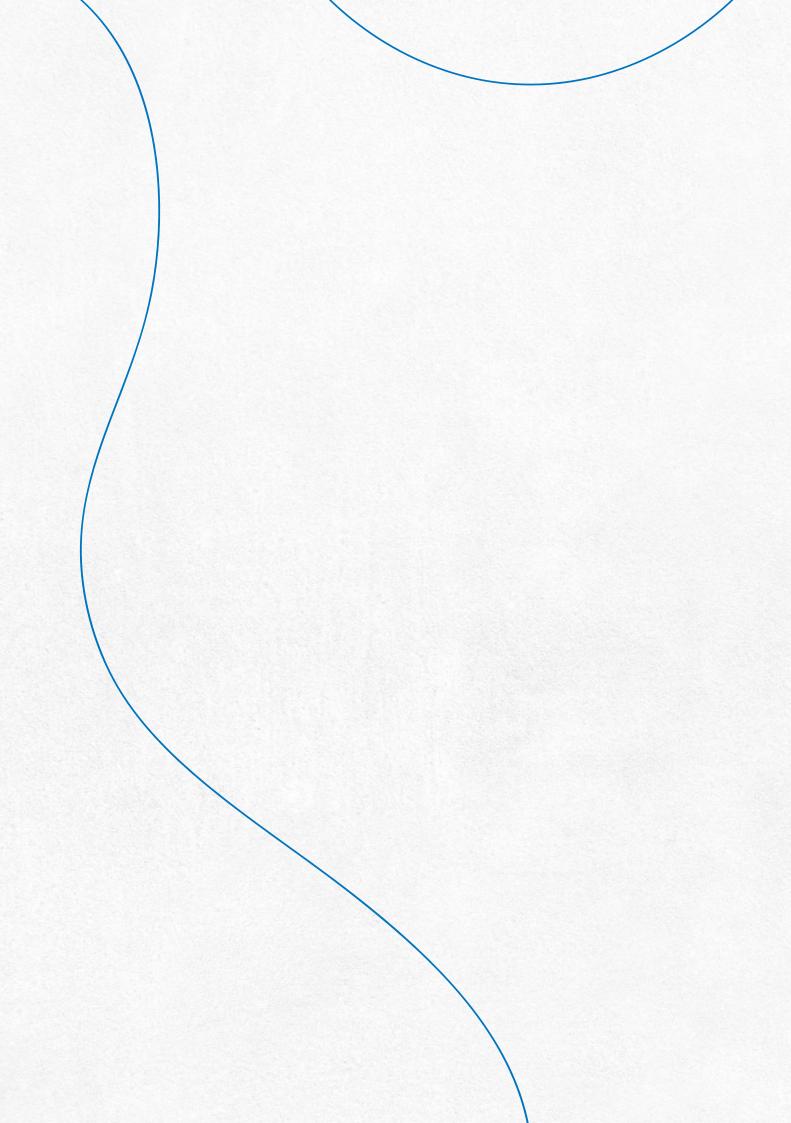
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This manual is part of the Local Immigrant Council project, co-financed by POR Lisboa through the European Social Fund and managed by Rede DLBC Lisboa - Associação para o Desenvolvimento Local de Base Comunitária.

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Nélia Neves Inácia Sá

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Perhaps we are all immigrants Trading one home for another FIrst we leave the womb for air Then the suburbs for the filthy city In search of a better life Some of us just happen to leave entire countries

Rupi Kaur, The Sun and Her Flowers (2018)

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Framework of the Local Imigrant Council

The mission of the European Anti-Poverty Network / EAPN Portugal is to contribute towards building a fairer and more supportive society, in which everyone is coresponsible for guaranteeing citizens access to a dignified life, based on respect for human rights and the full exercise of informative, participatory and inclusive citizenship.

The Local Immigrant Council project was launched at the start of 2021 and was implemented in Lisbon's historical city centre. The project is co-financed by POR Lisboa through the European Social Fund and managed by Rede DLBC Lisboa - Associação para o Desenvolvimento Local de Base Comunitária. The Local Immigrant Council was created with the opening of the POR Lisboa 2020's *Development of New Local Social Intervention Strategies* call which focused on the following axes: 6. Promoting social inclusion and fighting poverty and discrimination, 9. Promoting social inclusion through fighting poverty and all types of discrimination and 9.6(9vi). Prioritizing local development strategies led by the community.

The Development of New Local Social Intervention Strategies call aimed at increasing the number of socioeconomic development strategies in rural and coastal territories, as well as in disadvantaged urban territories.

The EAPN Portugal works "in" a network made up of various organizations from all over Portugal with firsthand experience at the local and national level. The 30+ years in the field has granted the EAPN Portugal the ability to promote the Local Immigrant Council with both institutional public entities and civil society organizations that work directly with the immigrant population in the city of Lisbon, Portugal.

The Local Immigrant Council followed an integrative, multisectoral approach and involved the participation of the immigrant population alongside public bodies and civil society organisations. The multilateral involvement of all parts allowed for a social assessment of the most prevalent needs and difficulties faced by the immigrant population.

Key aims of this public policy recommendation manual

This manual is an instrument resulting from the continuous participation of the immigrant population over three years in the project Local Immigrant Council in the Municipality of Lisbon.

The PAHRCA methodology - Participatory Action Human Rights and Capability Approach - was used to ensure the promotion of immigrant participation, reflection, trust, and analysis of their integration process. This methodology was the basis for deepening our knowledge on the immigrant population living in the territory of intervention.

The manual's objectives are therefore:

- To demonstrate the contributions shared by immigrant people on the challenges and needs they themselves identified, and which will be presented in this manual as proposals/solutions within the framework of public policies.
- Create a document to support institutional bodies, civil society organisations and the immigrant population

in building future actions to improve the process of migrant integration.

- Contribute towards strengthening the functioning of a local support network for the reception, integration, and social inclusion of immigrants.
- To demonstrate that through a methodology with an integrated and multidimensional approach, it is possible to integrate immigrant people into the decision-making process.

Throughout the manual, the voices of the immigrant population and the cultural mediators who have been involved in the project over the three years of implementation are emphasised, with the aim of promoting a bottom-up approach at all stages of the project.



Local Immigrant Council, 2023

The Local Immigrant Council

From the project beginning to its end goals

The Local Immigrant Council is a Participatory Action Research project promoted by the European Anti-Poverty Network / EAPN Portugal with the following general objective: to strengthen the fight against poverty and social exclusion by producing knowledge about immigrant people living in the Historic and Western Centre of the city of Lisbon and promoting citizenship and civic participation practices, as well as policy recommendations that contribute to the implementation of the Local Development Strategy of the Lisbon DLBC Network.

The project's aspirations were built on EAPN Portugal's liaison with associations that support immigrants in vulnerable situations in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area.

EAPN Portugal began the process of reflecting on methodologies for immigrant populations with its partnership in the REGAL project - Regaining Life for Precarious Women at Work¹ (H2020), which took place in the municipality of Amadora from 2019².

To ensure the equal involvement of the various target groups, REGAL used the participatory PARHCA methodology. This methodological experience made it possible to work on the project's objectives through participatory awareness-raising, where the voice of the participants guides the orientation of needs identified. The use of this methodology resulted in the dissemination of concrete solutions to the challenges identified, cocreated by the various groups in situations of vulnerability, to overcome the barriers to balancing personal and professional life.

The ROMI³ project, although developed in a different way, also contributed to influencing the work methodology developed by the Local Immigrant Council. ROMI's aim was to equalise opportunities for Roma women by promoting the exercise of active citizenship among the Roma population⁴.

Through the implementation of the Local Immigrant Council, EAPN Portugal took the first steps in expanding the network by creating partnerships with social organisations that support immigrants in the city of Lisbon. The general aim of the project is to strengthen the fight against poverty and social exclusion by producing social diagnoses of immigrant people living within the territory of intervention. The aim was also to stimulate citizenship practices and civic participation through the planned project activities. This handbook of public policy recommendations is the result of this process.

Characterisation of the Intervention Territory - Western Lisbon / Historical Centre

The intervention territory initially planned for the project was the Priority Intervention Zones of the Territorial Intervention Unit of the Historic and Western Centre of the city of Lisbon, which corresponds to the parishes of Ajuda, Alcântara, Campo de Ourique, Estrela, Misericórdia, Penha de França, Santa Maior and São Vicente. However, due to the constraints caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2023 the area of intervention was extended to include the entire City of Lisbon⁵.



Image: Rede DLBC Lisboa

¹ The REGAL - Regaining Life for Precarious Women at Work project ran from 2019 to 2020. Funded by the European Commission and promoted by BEWEGING in partnership with GRDR (Groupe de Recherche et Realisations pour le Development Rural), Focus Ireland, the European Anti-Poverty Network / EAPN Portugal and FUNDATIA T.O.N (FUNDSATIA the open network for community development), it can be consulted here https://www.regalproject.eu/pt/home-po/.

² The project had a specific objective to link the directive on reconciling work and family life under the European Pillar of Social Rights, based on the precarious situation of women in various European countries, including immigrant women.

³ The ROMI project ran from July 2011 to November 2013 and fell under Typology 7.3 - Technical and Financial Support for NGOs, Human Potential Operational Programme, and was specifically aimed at Roma women in the municipalities of Santo Tirso and Oporto. It can be consulted via https://www.eapn.pt/investigacao-e-projetos-nacionais/projeto-romi/

⁴ The ROMI project also inspired the drawing up of a participatory diagnosis and the creation of spaces for active participation, reflection and critical analysis that would bring together the various target groups involved.

⁵ During the first two years of implementation, the Local Immigrant Council was limited to the BIP/ZIP of the Western Zone/Historical Centre of Lisbon. However, due to the constraints caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the implementation of the project was extended to all BIP/ZIP territories in the city of Lisbon which allow activities to be carried out and to foster synergies between organisations located in different parishes in the city of Lisbon.

The concentration of the immigrant population is reflected in the city's economic fabric and sense of opportunities, which act as an attraction for more immigrants to settle.

There are service facilities in the area that provide the population socio-economic support, such as job centres, social integration offices and immigrant integration support centres, as well as associations that manage these service facilities, sometimes in partnership with local public entities.

Data from the IEFP - Institute for Employment and Vocational Training and the GEP/MTSSS - Strategy and Planning Office of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, pointed to a high number of unemployed immigrants in 2020 in certain parishes in the Historic and Western Centre of Lisbon.

According to the same data, in 2020, 24.4 per cent of the foreign population living in the city of Lisbon were supported by social welfare. In some parishes in Lisbon's Historic and Western Centre, the percentage of the immigrant population receiving social support exceeded the average for the city of Lisbon, such as in the parishes of Penha de França (27.8%) and São Vicente (55.8 per cent).

These figures are revealing, but we need to reflect on the period in which they were collected. 2020 saw the world come to a standstill due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is important to remember that many immigrants in Portugal work in the tourism, catering and hotel sectors. As we know, these sectors have been seriously affected by the pandemic, resulting in closures and redundancies. Unemployment figures at this time were higher across the country, and this is not a phenomenon exclusive to the immigrant population.

Our methodological inspiration: PAHRCA - Participatory Action Research: a Human Rights and Capability Approach

The PAHRCA methodological framework brings together the theory of participation, human rights and capacities in a single approach. The aim of the approach is to involve people in participatory processes that force them to challenge and change their own world and to collaborate in the co-production of knowledge. The aim is not just to extract data or produce knowledge, but to work with vulnerable groups to enable them to understand and challenge the structures that cause their exclusion and vulnerability.

The PAHRCA methodology is a flexible five-step approach:

- 1. Identifying, bringing together, and developing partnerships
- 2. Preliminary meeting with participants a confidencebuilding step
- **3.** Developing and strengthening capacities applying the human rights approach
- 4. Data collection/analysis
- 5. Producing actions/results

The first steps in the implementation of the Local Immigrant Council project in the initial period of the project in 2021 required a mapping of existing organisations, public bodies and documents aimed at the immigrant population. The mapping of strategic partnerships between organisations that work directly with immigrants carried out by the immigrant population organisation's technical teams, enabled EAPN Portugal's technical team to have greater access to the immigrant community in the City of Lisbon. Community involvement is essential for the realisation of a methodology that requires community participation to achieve its results and respond to a long-felt local need to combat poverty and social exclusion and to promote citizen participation amongst participatory citizenship among the immigrant population living in Lisbon's Western HistoricalHistoric Centre.

The following activities were planned to ensure the successful involvement of immigrant people:

- Focus Groups
- Awareness raising sessions
- Institutional visits
- Participatory Assemblies



The next part of the manual will reflect the steps taken by the technical team to implement the project:

- Building Bridges: The partnerships resulted in the development of activities developed between different project partners.
- Creating links: characterising the target audience. Characterising the target audience is crucial to identify the most prevalent nationalities in the areas of intervention and the social and cultural determinants that required adaptations to improve the quality of the planned activities.
- Activities: Focus groups, awareness-raising sessions, institutional visits, and participatory assemblies.
- Public policy recommendations.

Local Immigrant Council and Partnerships



Building Bridges - Formal Partnerships

- Immigrant associations are privileged spaces for organising cultural and community belonging and involvement, in which people are not merely recipients, but actors in defending their rights and promoting conditions of social well-being.
- Involvement of local intervention organisations in the territory, including their inputs, knowledge exchange

and know-how with a more in-depth understanding of the needs felt by organisations in the field and the immigrant population in the intervention territory.

• The creation of local organisations was fundamental in helping to mobilise migrants, as was the partnership with institutions with public entities in matters relating to migration, gender equality and human rights, which provided crucial support in the technical substance of the project.

Given the number of people from third world countries from the global south who migrate to the city of Lisbon in an attempt to establish a new future, there are a large number of social organisations⁶ that work with the various migrant populations seeking support. On an institutional level, the city of Lisbon has CLAIM - the Network of Local Support Centres, ACM - the High Commission for Migration, the Integration Plan promoted by Lisbon City Council and the development of a number of local actions promoted by certain parish councils, whose immigrant population has been increasing in recent years, such as the Arroios Parish Council and the Santa Maria Maior Parish Council.

The creation of partnerships by the Local Immigrant Council project was essential to ensure the success of its activities. The first year of the project was essential for creating synergies with social organisations that support migrants and, after several exploratory meetings with various organisations, a commitment was made to work together over the next three years. The meetings with organisations and entities on the ground enabled the project to list the most prevalent issues in the lives of immigrant organisations and populations, prioritising the following themes: integration, housing, employment, legalisation, and health. However, as the project developed and immigrant people contributed during the focus groups, the themes were adjusted to the shared needs.

Given the project's objectives and needs, and its area of intervention, the following partnerships were formalised: **The Lisbon Project**⁷, located in Penha de França; **NIALP** - Nepalese Intercultural Association of Lisbon⁸, located in the Martim Moniz neighbourhood; the **GAT Association** - Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamento⁹, which operates, among other places, in the parish of Santa Maria Maior; **CEPAC** - **Centro Padre Alves Correia**¹⁰ located in the parish of Estrela; **Casa do Brasil de Lisboa** in the parish of Misericórdia; **Renovar a Mouraria**¹¹, located in the Mouraria neighbourhood and **CRESCER | Associação de Intervenção Comunitária**¹² located in Quinta do Cabrinha in the parish of Alcântara.

⁶ According to the High Commission for Migration (ACM), there are 153 immigrant associations currently recognised by the ACM, I.P., throughout the country, of which 99 are active. These associations represent different countries of origin such as: Angola, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cape Verde, China, Guinea-Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, India, Mozambique, Moldova, Nepal, Romania, São Tomé and Principie, Senegal, Ukraine, among others. To find out more about immigrant associations in Portugal, visit: <u>https://www.acm.gov.pt/tl-/o-que-sao-as-associacoes-de-imigrantes-e-o-que-fazem-</u>

⁷ For more information: https://www.lisbonproject.org/

⁸ For more information: <u>https://www.nialp.pt/</u>

⁹ For more information: https://www.gatportugal.org/en/

¹⁰ For more information: <u>https://www.cepac.pt/inicio.php</u>

¹¹ For more information: https://casadobrasildelisboa.pt/

¹² For more information: https://crescer.org/

With regard to institutional partnerships, it was essential for the project to have the ACM - High Commission for Migration¹³, whose partnership aimedaim was to: Aa. publicise the project during and after the results of its implementation; Bb. participate in and contribute towards focus group sessions and participatory assemblies; Cc. provide the partner with rooms and auditoriums and; Dd. support the ACM in the final phase of the recommendations manual, in the analysis and its subsequent feedback, focusing on the problems and needs for improving social responses and the integration and social inclusion of immigrant people. International Organisation for Migration Portugal (IOM)¹⁴ is also a partner in this project. The partnership was established through support for training sessions for strategic audiences, the provision of materials and publications published by the IOM and publicising the project through the IOM's communication channels during and after the results of its implementation. The CIG - Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality¹⁵ due to its strong component in gender equality for the promotion of civic participation of immigrant women contributed towards: A.a) supporting the technical validation of the manual recommendations handbook and considering any proposals that may be included in the manual handbook with regard to gender issues that could influence public policies on gender equality and non-discrimination; B.b) support in the technical validation of training content related to gender issues; and C. provision of contacts registered on the list of external professional trainers drawn up by CIG.

Since the project's partnerships are not limited to formal partnerships, other social organisations also took part, such as the Lisbon City Foundation, Porta Aberta -Agência de Empregabilidade and Médicos do Mundo, local authorities through the participation of Lisbon City Council and the Arroios Parish Council and academic researchers from the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning of the University of Lisbon (IGOT-ULisboa) and FCSH Universidade Nova de Lisboa and CICS NOVA, ISCTE / University of Lisbon and ARS | LVT - Regional Health Administration of Lisbon and Tagus Valley.

At the same time, the project team took to the streets of Lisbon to publicise the project. For there to be community development, the community has to be present. During these visits, the project was shared amongst the immigrant population within the intervention territory. and information and contact materials on the project were handed out. Since the project proposed the creation of a group which would lead to the creation of the Local Immigrant Council, it was necessary to reach out through social organisations and word of mouth. Through a bottom-up approach and the creation of participatory spaces for sharing expectations, experiences and challenges presented by the participants in articulation with actors from the field and local authorities, it was possible to create a link between the stakeholders involved throughout the process.

¹³ For more information: <u>https://www.acm.gov.pt/68</u>

¹⁴ For more information: <u>https://portugal.iom.int/</u>

¹⁵ For more information: <u>https://www.cig.gov.pt/</u>



Project leaflet distributed by the technical team¹⁶

Local Immigrant Council

Creating Community Connections - Participation of the Immigrant Population

There is no community development without the community. Mobilisation and inclusion in participatory and decision-making processes are essential to guaranteeing measures that are more adequate for the target population they are aimed at.

Characterisation of the Target Audience - Who can join the Local Immigrant Council?

The city of Lisbon is increasingly cosmopolitan and has people from many different backgrounds. Most of the foreign population are from the global south, but the city of Lisbon still has many foreigners from European countries. According to the Migration Observatory (2023), most foreigners from the global south are young and of working age. This contrasts with foreigners from European countries, most of whom are already retired.



Since the original plan was planned to work in the priority intervention neighbourhoods, the participants would initially have to be residents of the parishes in Lisbon's Western Historical Centre: Graça/Sapadores/Alto da Eira/ Alfama/Mouraria/Quinta do Lavrado/Horizonte/São Paulo/ Possidónio da Silva/ Pampulha/ Castelo/ Quinta do Ferro/ Casalinho da Ajuda/ 2 de Maio/ Cascalheira / Alvito Velho / Rio Seco / Quinta do Cabrinha / Loureiro / Avenida de Ceuta.

Although the project was initially aimed at the priority intervention neighbourhoods, due to the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the intervention territory was extended to the entire city of Lisbon. The challenges of the pandemic directly affected projects. This is particularly true for projects linked to the most vulnerable communities, such as immigrants, who, at a time when the project was looking for participants, had many immigrants without access to computers and/or the internet, resulting in the non-application of online tools such as Zoom, Teams etc.,.

Although there is a wider diversity of immigrants in the city of Lisbon, the project's active partnerships meant that the majority of the participants came mainly from South Asian countries, namely Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. In the focus groups and awareness-raising sessions we also had participants from Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP). The predominant languages of the participants are English, Portuguese, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Creole, and Nepali.

Most of the participants are young, of working age, highly educated and have been in Portugal between one and three years. The participants with varying ages and lower levels of education were mostly from the African continent. However, we must remember that the participants in the project are only a small sample of the total number of immigrants in the City of Lisbon and that these characteristics are transversal to all nationalities.

¹⁶ The project brochure was created by Impressão Digital - Lisboa - Gráfica Digital ARP (2021) / https://www.graficadigitalarp.pt

The characterisation of the participating immigrants is particularly relevant in this project. On the one hand, our focus groups were attended by a wider variety of nationalities, but over the course of the project the nationalities present became increasingly homogeneous, especially in the Participatory Assemblies. We believe that this factor is due to the number of organisations present in the parishes of Arroios and Mouraria, which have a large number of beneficiaries from South Asian countries.

Identification of common challenges

During the project's implementation period, participants gave feedback that the project should focus on more practical issues that directly affect the lives of immigrants. Examples of these suggestions were: how to look for a job; how to get an SNS (National Health System) number; immediate social responses in terms of food and accommodation, learning the Portuguese language, amongst others.

The project relied greatly on the support of the volunteers, who are active agents in their communities, to gather information on the general needs of the immigrant population. This made it possible to carry out a more indepth social diagnosis and to restructure the project according to the reality in the territories of intervention.

The presence of the technical team on the ground was also extremely important for creating bonds of trust and affection with the participants. Our presence was always aimed at encouraging participation, but also at having a multicultural group with whom we co-built the project by providing spaces where we could collect contributions to the creation of this manual.

The Local Immigrant Council

The Immigrant Council was created on the model of the Local Citizens' Councils that already exist in the district centres of the European Anti-Poverty Network Portugal. These councils, which exist in eighteen districts in mainland Portugal and one in the Autonomous Region of Madeira, promote the participation of people who are experiencing or have experienced poverty and/or social exclusion, through a citizens' movement at district level. The same happens at the national and European level.

Knowing that participation is a difficult process that needs time and maturation, the EAPN Portugal decided to start by taking small steps to gradually create the conditions for organised and effective participation and create structures and platforms for participation to be able to define and implement policies. Public Policy Reccomendations Handbook: Local Immigrant Council

Focus Groups -Identifying Priority Issues for Immigrants in the City of Lisbon



An Immigrant focus group involves holding a group discussion with participants who share a common characteristic: in this case, being immigrants. The focus groups were fundamental to the construction of the project as they discussed and reflected on a specific theme. This approach to the immigration experience leads to a more valuable understanding of the experiences, challenges, needs and perspectives of immigrant people with a variety of issues, such as integration into the host society, access to public services, among others.

Eight focus groups were held between 2022 and 2023, where the following priority issues were identified as challenges and as vulnerabilities to the integration and well-being of migrant communities: Access to Housing; Access to Health; Access to Education and Recognition of Diplomas; Bureaucratic Procedures; Access to Employment; Knowledge of Rights and Duties; Learning the Portuguese Language and Integration into the Community.

The following steps were followed to conduct the focus groups:

- **1. Define an objective.** As the project is characterised by participatory involvement, it was essential to hold initial focus groups to predetermine the priority issues of the immigrant population.
- 2. Participants. The only request was that the participant had an immigrant background in Portugal. In the specific case of the project, the focus groups were initially made up of immigrant people who found out about the project through partnerships with immigrant organisations or the street campaign. The first focus group resulted in the creation of a mixed WhatsApp group and later a women-only group. Through these channels of communication, immigrants were added to the groups and subsequently became participants in the focus groups.
- **3. Preparing the script.** The project team prepared a list of open questions to encourage participants to share their experiences and opinions. It should be noted that there are topics, as we can see from the description of the focus groups, that are more sensitive, in which case we encouraged focus groups with participants of only one gender. One example is the topic of women's reproductive health, which can create feelings of insecurity and discomfort if discussed within a mixed gendered environment.
- 4. Conducting the focus group. It is important to create a safe and welcoming environment so that participants feel comfortable sharing their opinions.
- Record the discussions. All the sessions had attendance sheets, photographic evidence and detailed recordings/ annotations of the conversations for later analysis.
- 6. Analysing the issues. Since focus groups are a source of knowledge of the immigrant population's priority issues, it is essential to analyse the information

collected. From this, relevant patterns, themes, and events will be identified.

7. Draw up a report. The results of the focus groups served as the basis for awareness-raising actions, institutional visits, and participatory assemblies.

The project's technical team took the following factors into account when conducting the focus groups; A. Language barriers: although the project was initially planned to be carried out in Portuguese, the partnerships and focus groups demonstrated the need to carry out all the activities in both Portuguese and English. Translations into Portuguese and English were also always available. B. Considering the cultural sensitivities of immigrants. For example, the project had many immigrants from South Asia, most of them were of the Muslim faith), which led us to consider the Ramadan period, timetables and dietary practices. This included either not having pork or porkbased food products, in other cases food may have to be Hala¹⁷ (in the case of people of the Muslim faith). This can also be applied to foods from other religious and cultural groups, such as food which is Kosher¹⁸ (for those of Jewish faith) or vegetarian (for those of Hindu or the Sikh faiths). C. The importance of respecting the lived experiences of each participant; and D. The informed consent of the participants and guaranteeing the confidentiality of the information shared during the focus group is essential.

The following tables go through the focus groups held during the project.

^{17 &}quot;Halal" is an Arabic term that means "permissible" or "lawful" in Islam. It refers to anything that is allowed or permitted according to Islamic law (Shariah). This term is often used to describe food and beverages that are prepared and consumed in accordance with Islamic dietary guidelines.

^{18 &}quot;Kosher" is a term used in Judaism to describe food and beverages that conform to the dietary laws set out in the Torah (the central reference of the religious Judaic tradition). These laws are known as "kashrut."

Table 1 – Focus groups held during the implementation of the Local Immigrant Council project

Focus Group	Focus Group Topic	Main Results
Focus Group / October 2021	Presentation of the "Local Immigrant Council" project	The first focus group was held with the participation of 15 people of Indian, Syrian, Portuguese, Bangladeshi, Guinean and São Toméan nationality in partnership with the Portugal Multicultural Activity Association, Renovar a Mouraria and the Lisbon Project association. The aim was to raise awareness of the project's aims, activities, local and institutional partners, priority issues which would be worked on, the role of volunteers during the project and the importance of volunteers in drawing up proposals for public policy recommendations and activity organization and participation. This conversation made it possible to raise expectations of the project, discuss possible issues, methodologies, and alternatives for organising activities and how to make them more appealing to immigrant people and how to address the problems that affect their lives. The participants in the session were added to the project's WhatsApp group to make communication easier, publicise the project's activities and share information more quickly and dynamically.
Women's Focus Group / January 2022	Access to employment, the national health system, education, housing, social security, and the SEF - Immigration and Borders Service	This focus group was attended by 10 women of Portuguese, Brazilian, Angolan, Italian, Nepalese, and Lebanese nationalities. The participants shared their experiences on the topics highlighted, asked questions, and proposed civic participation actions to be replicated in their communities.
Women's Focus Group / February 2022	Access to Healthcare - Immigrant Women	This focus group was attended by 8 women of Portuguese, Brazilian, Nepalese, Bangladeshi, Angolan and Guinean nationalities. The women in this focus group concentrated on the difficulties they had experienced with the national health service, namely: easier access to and obtaining an SNS ¹⁹ number; easier access to booking appointments; improved access to healthcare; a reduction in the discriminatory practices that immigrants suffer when they access the SNS, such as physical, moral and verbal harassment; greater sensitivity on the part of health professionals towards the LGBTQIA+ immigrant community; mental health consultations; greater support for immigrant women during pregnancy and the postpartum period.
Mixed Focus Group / February 2022	What would the ideal Portugal look like for immigrants in 2037?	This focus group was attended by seven women of Portuguese, Brazilian, Syrian, and Bangladeshi nationalities. The question "What would the ideal Portugal look like for immigrants in 2037? " was posed for the participants to brainstorm about what an ideal host country would look like, and the following proposals emerged: an increase in salaries; the development of other regions and cities in the country in order to decentralise the flow of migrants in Lisbon and other large cities; more and better job opportunities that take immigrants' professional and educational qualifications into account; new generations of immigrants who see Portugal as a country of destination and not of transition; recognition of immigrants' professional and literary qualifications; a better integration process when they arrive in the country (more information available, more support from the authorities); greater civic and political participation by immigrants; more cultural activities that bring different cultures and traditions closer together; improved social support; greater support from the SNS; less bureaucratic access to education; better pensions. Better working conditions and less exploitation of immigrants; greater access to learning the Portuguese language; more decent housing conditions; recognition of domestic work in the Labour Code; less bureaucracy in accessing public services; greater support for immigrants who have recently arrived in the country.
Women's Focus Group / May 2022	Project activity planning	Seven immigrant women from Portugal, Brazil, Nepal, Guinea and Cape Verde took part in this group. This focus group served to outline the participatory assemblies; training and awareness-raising sessions; institutional visits; picnic with traditional costumes; social actions for women.
Mixed Focus Group / September 2022	Migration and Healthcare	This group included 7 migrants of Bangladeshi, Nigerian, Ukrainian, Egyptian, Brazilian and Cape Verdean nationalities. The aim was to listen to the migrant population's constraints in accessing healthcare in the city of Lisbon and to incorporate their suggestions for improvement.

19 SNS - Serviço Nacional de Saúde (Portugal's National Health Service).

 Table 2 – Focus groups held with participants of the Local Immigrant Council

The Local Immigrant Council is made up of seven immigrant participants of Bangladeshi, Nigerian, Sri Lankan, and Guinean nationalities.

Focus Group	Focus Group Topic	Main Results
Local Immigrant Council / November 2022	Access to Housing	This focus group was the first of six focus groups to be held to analyse the public policy recommendations that make up this handbook. Focusing on the issues surrounding access to housing, this session reflected on the participatory housing assembly which took place in October 2022 and analysed the recommendations drawn up for improving housing for the migrant population. The final recommendations are available in the Public Policy Recommendations section of this handbook.
Local Immigrant Council / February 2023	Employment	The second meeting with the councillors focussed on the issue of employability and the greatest difficulties faced by immigrant communities. The following challenges were identified: 1. the difficulty in accessing qualified work 2. the low salaries offered 3. long working hours, which are often not compensated. 4. language barriers. 5. the feeling that immigrants from third countries are not as capable of performing the same jobs as Portuguese workers. 6. the difficulty in recognising the qualifications of immigrants. 7. The lack of coordination with boards, particularly in the health field. 8. Immigrants feel that there should be a database that can link immigrants to qualified jobs in their field. 9. Discrimination and xenophobia faced due to nationality, ancestry, religion, etc. This meeting was particularly important for the construction of the second participatory assembly. 10. The inaccessibility of IEFP training for those who do not have their qualifications recognised.
Local Immigrant Council / March 2023	Integration	The third session with the project counsellors focused on their integration in Portugal. Several words associated with feeling integrated into a community were printed out and the counsellors had to choose three of the twenty displayed. For the counsellors, integration exists when you feel at home. The counsellors chose the following adjectives as priorities for integration: social and cultural integration, the right to basic services such as housing, transport, healthcare and education, labour protection, equal opportunities in the labour market, dialogue and communication / accessibility to Portuguese culture, community - the feeling of belonging to a community and that you have created bonds of friendship within that community itself, employment that allows you to survive, guaranteed education for the second and third generation, security of the country. Relationships, belonging and acceptance. Cultural and political knowledge of what is happening in Portugal. Education to learn Portuguese and recognizing social behaviour in Portugal. Acceptance and limits - "my limits are not someone else's limits". Understanding the body language of the people in the country you live in.
Local Immigrant Council / May 2023	Health/Healthcare Services	The fourth focus group that was held with the councillors dealt with health and healthcare issues and can be divided into two spheres. The first relates to the difficulties in accessing the National Health Service that affect the whole population overall, such as the lack of access to general practitioners and family doctors in primary health care, waiting times for appointments and waiting times in the emergency room. However, there are differences with which health professionals are still unfamiliar and lack of knowledge about practices related to the cultural or religious customs of immigrants and even diseases that affect South Asians or blacks more or differently than Caucasians. To mitigate the distance that exists in a sector as important as health, where the ability to communicate affects how the person is assessed, the counsellors warn of the need to create the role of intercultural mediator in health spaces to provide support in appointments. This session also looked at the mental health issues of the immigrant population, the need for psychology/psychiatry consultations with an ethnopsychologyethnopsychological approach became evident, since our culture, religion and even our own language influence how people experience bad times and well-being.

 Table 2 – Focus groups held with participants of the Local Immigrant Council

Grupo Focal	Tema	Resultados Principais
Local Immigrant Council / June 2023	Immigration Experiences /Storytelling and Immigrant Stereotypes	The fifth meeting focused on sharing each counsellor's experience of immigrating to Portugal. The aim was to focus on the journey, the challenges, and the wishes for the future here. Each councillor wrote down their story and, with their permission, some were shared during the Participatory Assembly that took on the Integration of Migrants. The counsellors were also encouraged to share stereotypes they had experienced here. These stereotypes focused on religion, activities linked to terrorist groups, the use of derogatory terms to refer to people from a certain geographical area. There are often racial prejudices against the abilities of black people that result in acts of racism and unequal opportunities. To combat prejudice and publicise different cultures, the participants proposed continuing to promote food events, dances, and other traditional celebrations
Local Immigrant Council / July 2023	Overview of topics discussed and review of proposed public policy recommendations	At the last project meeting with the councillors, we reviewed the topics covered and the public policy recommendations made by the group on the topics previously presented.

Project Activities



The activities developed sought to involve the participation of immigrants in situations of social vulnerability. This vulnerability can arise at various levels and is not restricted merely to economic and financial capacity, as identified by the issues chosen as challenges by the immigrants themselves. Once the priority challenges were identified, it was possible to respond to them through actions that promoted the development of personal skills that would strengthen integration capacity and encourage reflection on the integration process. By creating safe spaces, it was possible to share life stories and have critical and constructive discussions about the needs of citizens who choose Portugal as their destination country.

Training, information, and awarenessraising sessions

Over the course of the project 19 sessions were held, the central aim of which was to train, inform and sensitise the target population to issues considered to be priorities in the overall spectrum of immigrant life in Portugal. As mentioned above, there was an effort to offer participants sessions that met the challenges raised by the participants in the activities and the volunteer councillors of the Local Immigrant Council.

Table 3 – Training, information and awareness-raising sessions held in 2021

Session	Primary Goal
Dignified Work for Household Labour / July 2021	This awareness-raising action was attended by 11 participants of Angolan, Cape Verdean, São Toméan, Guinean and Portuguese nationality and took place in partnership with CEPAC - Centro Padre Alves Correia and the ILO - International Labour Organisation with the aim of raising awareness among the migrant population of their labour rights in the field of domestic work, since this type of work is mostly carried out by immigrant women in Portugal, with little access to knowledge of existing rights. The session also included a presentation of the ILO report on domestic labour. During and after the session, participants had the opportunity to relate their experiences, ask practical questions about the work they do and learn more about how to defend themselves against exploitation and labour irregularities in the event of violations in the domestic labour sector.
Migrants' access to healthcare / October 2021	The session brought together 15 participants from Brazil, Germany, Portugal, England, Angola, India, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh. It took place in partnership with the Lisbon Project association and the IOM - International Organisation for Migration. To bridge the gap of language barriers, the session was held in English and aimed to present the IOM project "Fostering Integration by Addressing Health Equity - Phase II" (2021 - 2022), share experiences with the participants and discuss the main barriers to accessing health services in Portugal.
Acesso dos Migrantes à Saúde / Outubro 2021	The session brought together 15 participants from Brazil, Germany, Portugal, England, Angola, India, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh. It took place in partnership with the Lisbon Project association and the IOM - International Organisation for Migration. To bridge the gap of language barriers, the session was held in English and aimed to present the IOM project "Fostering Integration by Addressing Health Equity - Phase II" (2021 - 2022), share experiences with the participants and discuss the main barriers to accessing health services in Portugal.
Immigration Act / November 2021	This information session brought together 13 participants of Gambian, Brazilian, British, Syrian, Libyan, German, Bangladeshi, Nigerian, Angolan and Iranian nationality. and was held in partnership with the Lisbon Project association and the ACM, who offered a legal expert to inform the participants about the conditions for regularising their stay in Portugal; questions about how to start an application for a residence permit; how to make an expression of interest; how to respond to the different parts of the asylum process, including the refusal of refugee status; how to apply for family reunification and how to apply for a long-term residence permit. This session was conducted in English.
	Tening Section



Table 4 – Training, information and awareness-raising sessions held in 2022

Session	Primary Goal
Discrimination in the workplace, harassment and parental protection / March 2023	This information session brought together 12 participants of Bangladeshi, Portuguese and Nepalese nationality. It took place in partnership with the Lisbon International Cultural Association (LICA) and the Commission for Equality on Labour and Employment (CITE) and covered the topics of parenting rights, current labour law legislation, social security support, legal mechanisms for reporting discrimination in the workplace and labour abuses.
World Dinner Party / April 2022	This cultural activity took place in partnership with the Lisbon Project association, the CRESCER association and the ACM. 16 nationalities from 5 continents were represented at this intercultural dinner. The event aimed to promote and celebrate different cultures in Lisbon by sharing traditional dishes from the project participants' countries of origin, with the participants themselves cooking some of these dishes and desserts. As well as sharing food, the event brought together traditional dances, music, and games.
Communication and Leadership / April 2022	This session brought together six participants and was held in partnership with the CIG - Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, and focussed on communication and leadership issues such as public speaking techniques; effective speech techniques; and forms of positive leadership for the community.
Immigration Act / April 2022	This information session brought together X participants and took place in partnership with CEPAC and the ACM. The content was like that of the session of the same name in November 2021. Since the population was predominantly PALOP, this session took place in Portuguese.
Domestic Work: Rights and Duties / May 2022	This information session brought together 24 participants of Guinean, Angolan and São Toméan nationality. It took place in partnership with CEPAC and DINAMIA'CET - Centre for Studies on Socio-Economic Change and Territory. The topic of the session focused on the definition of domestic service, the rights and duties of those who work in this sector and what the legislation says. Participants were also given the opportunity to ask questions.
Women's Healthcare / June 2022	This session brought together 16 participants of Guinean, Cape Verdean, São Toméan, Gambian and Syrian nationality. This session was held in partnership with CEPAC and ASSDCV - Associação de Saúde e Solidariedade da Diáspora Cabo-Verdiana (Cape Verdean Diaspora Health and Solidarity Association) and covered historical and cultural aspects, women's anatomy and physical development, intimate hygiene, family planning, vulvovaginitis, urinary infections and sexually transmitted infections.
How to build a Participatory Assembly / October 2022	The participatory assemblies were planned as one of the main moments for presenting the priority issues affecting the immigrant population to various stakeholders, policymakers and CSOs, but more importantly, it was a moment when immigrants could openly dialogue to propose solutions to be transformed into public policy recommendations.











 Table 5 – Training, information and awareness-raising sessions held in 2023

Session	Primary Goal
How to get foreign diplomas recognized in Portugal / February 2023	This information session brought together 21 immigrants and took place in partnership with DGES - the Directorate General for Higher Education. The aim of the session was to explain the necessary steps that must be taken to recognise an immigrant person's higher education qualifications. There was also an opportunity for participants to ask questions. For more information on this process, you can go to: https://www.dges.gov.pt/en/pagina/degree-and-diploma-recognition . Contracts or Green Receipts? Labour Rights and Duties This session was held in English.
Contracts or Green Receipts (<i>Recibos</i> <i>Verdes</i>)? Labour Rights and Duties / February 2023	This information session took place at CEPAC - Centro Padre Alves Correia in partnership with ACT - Autoridade para as Condições de Trabalho. The session was attended by 40 immigrants, the majoritymajorty of the participants were female. In this session it is important to emphasise two important points: Most of the participants were African women, the majority of whom work as domestic servants. The second is the technical legal language used. With the changes to the Labour Code, it is becoming increasingly necessary to broaden knowledge of the rights to which citizens are entitled. However, this knowledge is hampered when the language available is inaccessible. The session took place in Portuguese with English translation available.
Barriers and Access to Health Care for Immigrants in Portugal / Março 2023	This information session took place at CEPAC - Centro Padre Alves Correia in partnership with GAT - Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamento and was attended by three immigrants. The aim of this session was to clear up doubts about access to primary and hospital healthcare and access to the SNS 24h helpline. There was also information about HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus and other sexually transmitted diseases and the possibility of a free test. Condoms were also available to take home. For this session, we collected questions and put up a box at CEPAC where people could submit their questions and doubts anonymously. The questions were related to doubts about accessing the user number, but also doubts about accessing health services if you are an undocumented immigrant. The session took place in Portuguese.
Documentary "Lisboetas" (2004) / April 2023	The Interculturality Week organised by EAPN Portugal took place in April. Together with the EAPN Lisbon district centre the Local Immigrant Council project supported two events that took place. The first event took place in partnership with the master's Master's programme in Migration, Inter-Ethnicities and Transnationalism from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of the Nova University of Lisbon (FCSH). Sérgio Tréfaut's documentary "Lisboetas" ²⁰ (2004) was shown to students and professors to discuss migration issues at the beginning of the century and make a comparison with the current situation. What has changed? What has remained the same? What is the reality faced by immigrants in Portugal, particularly in the city of Lisbon?
Open Session - Experiences on Immigration / April 2023	The second activity to take place during the Intercultural Week that occurred in partnership with the Local Immigrant Council project, was held at the Lisbon Project. This session brought together immigrants and refugees with members of the PSP - Public Security Police. The aim of this session was to create a safe space where immigrant people could share their stories and their fears and experiences with the PSP. This event was a key moment, opening the possibility of dialogue to combat stigmas and prejudices.
Education in Portugal / June 2023	The session "Education in Portugal" took place at CEPAC - Centro Padre Alves Correia in partnership with the Fundação Cidade Lisboa and the Passaporte para a Cidadania ²¹ project and was attended by 14 immigrants. The aim of this session was to clarify doubts about the school enrolment period, financial support, school lunches and Portuguese language classes for foreign students. It is important to emphasise that there was a common problem identified within the families from Portuguese-speaking African countries who were unable to enrol their children outside the common period. The session also discussed the lack of support available for children with special needs or support during the transition between countries.
Come and build a CV with the Local Immigrant Council / September 2023	This session took place in partnership with the Porta Aberta project and the GAT - Group of Activists in Treatment with their patients. The aim of the session was to review or support the creation of CVs, and to give tips and suggestions on how to adapt CVs to job opportunities.

²⁰ For more information on the documentary "Lisboetas" go to: <u>https://www.rtp.pt/programa/tv/p22093</u>

²¹ To access the project please click on the following link: https://www.fundacaocidadedelisboa.pt/pt/intervencao-iniciativas-projetos/projetos-em-curso/ passaporte-para-a-cidadania/passaporte-para-a-cidadania-iii.htm



Institutional Visits

The institutional visits were an opportunity to introduce the project participants to public organisations and decisionmaking spaces. Immigrants are often alienated from public spaces, particularly immigrants who face language barriers, and these visits provided moments in which they could get to know public and political organisations more closely. Thank you to EAPN Portugal for organising this visit, which will be an unrepeatable opportunity for many of us. It was an incredible feeling to be part of this event. A new experience for me that I will never forget.

Bagladeshi immigrant, Visit to the Portuguese Parliament

Table 6 - Institutional visits carried out between 2021 to 2023

Institution	Primary Goal
Portuguese Parliament / September 2022	The first institutional visit was to the Assembleia da República (Portuguese Parliament) on a guided tour of Parliament. This visit was attended by 23 participants of Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian, São Toméan, Ukrainian, Nigerian and Portuguese nationality. The visit took place throughout the spaces that make up the São Bento Palace. There was also a moment of dialogue with two national deputies from the Socialist Party to learn about the workings of parliament and the day-to-day life of a member of parliament in Portugal.
International Organisation for Migration – IOM / March 2023	The visit to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) gave the participants an insight into the work carried out by this UN agency, the support measures available to them, the projects underway and the latest statistics on migration in Portugal.
Segurança Social / Novembro 2023	The visit to the Segurança Social gave the immigrants who took part in this activity the opportunity to find out more about the services offered by this public entity. And to which services they will have to go depending on the support they are looking for.
Institute for Employment and Vocational Training – IEFP / Novembro 2023	The visit to the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training - IEFP, followed a very similar logic to the visit to the Segurança Social. Participants had the opportunity to find out about the services on offer and to ask any questions they might have.



Visit to the Segurança Social, November 2023



Visit to the Portuguese Parliament, September 2023

Public Policy Reccomendations Handbook: Local Immigrant Council

Participatory Assemblies and Public Policy Recommendations

Between 2022 and 2023, five participatory assemblies were held at the ACM – High Commission for Migration in the city of Lisbon. The intent of these assemblies was to bring together immigrants, civil society organisations, public bodies, and local political actors in a joint dialogue to discuss the priority issues identified by the project's technical team, field organizations and the Local Immigrant Council focus groups.

Participatory assemblies are a meeting or gathering where speakers and participants come together to discuss, deliberate and make decisions collectively on various issues that affect them. In a participatory assembly, the emphasis is on inclusion, collaboration, and the involvement of all participants in the decision-making process. Its aim is to ensure that diverse perspectives are heard and considered when decisions are made that impact a community. The participatory assembly model involves open discussions, sharing information and the active participation of citizens. Overall, these assemblies should enable decision-making and generate solutions that reflect the collective perspicuity of the participants.

Participatory assemblies should include the following fundamental principles; Inclusion. A wide range of voices and perspectives should be heard and encouraged. The project has sought to ensure this diversity by sharing the assemblies with partner organisations and promoting the events on social media platforms, to reach as many migrant people as possible; Equality. Ensure that all participants are treated equally whilst creating an environment where all people feel their voice is heard, valued, and respected; Deliberated. Thoughtful and respectful discussions in which participants engage with each other's ideas, exchange information, and explore solutions collectively should be encouraged; Transparency. Relevant information should be provided, and it should also be ensured that the decision-making process is transparent and understandable to all participants who are present. Since the assemblies took place with Portuguese-English and English-Portuguese translations, the technical team and the volunteers took great care to ensure transparency, despite the language barriers; Creating a consensus. It should be ensured that participants work together to find common ground and create solutions. These steps were essential to ensure the functioning of the assemblies and to guarantee the best way to discuss solutions and public policy recommendations presented in this handbook.

Priority Themes

Key Priority 1: Access to Housing: The real challenge

The first of the fives assemblies took place in October 2022. Through a partnership with the ACM - High Commissioner for Migration, the project was privileged to be able to hold all the assemblies in the ACM's auditorium. The location was particularly important given that the ACM and CLAIM²² are concentrated in the same space, and it guaranteed a well-known space that was easily accessible to participants.

The assembly "HOUSING: The real challenge for immigrants"

brought together immigrants with the aim of informing the immigrant population about the existing support on the access to housing and the main difficulties faced by immigrants in accessing affordable rent, buying a house and social housing support, as well as receiving ideas and proposals from different stakeholders, particularly immigrants, on how to minimise and solve some of these challenges, thus promoting a participatory dialogue.





²² Networks of Local Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants

The problems identified in terms of access to housing were: 1. high rental costs; 2. lack of decent, affordable housing. 3. Precarious or overcrowded housing; 4. Low salaries in the Portuguese labour market; 5. Discriminative or xenophobic behaviour from landlords; 6. Inability to comply with bureaucratic processes, for example, the requirement for guarantors, often of Portuguese nationality, proof of IRS²³, pay slips and work contracts. And the inability to pay the number of rents and the value of the security deposit, which is often outside the values established by Article 1076° of the Civil Code²⁴, yet even the values established by the Civil Code are higher than the financial power of immigrant people.

This participatory assembly was attended by 35 participants and included the advisor to the Lisbon City Council's housing councillor, in place of the councillor for human and social rights, the head of CNAIM²⁵'s Social Affairs and Inclusion Office, two researchers from the IGOT²⁶ University of Lisbon research centre who work in housing with studies focused on immigrants, and a real estate consultant.

In the following section we present the recommendations devised and discussed jointly with the various stakeholders during the participatory assembly and focus groups that took place between 2021 and 2022.

Recommendations directed at improving immigrants access to dignified housing

Target Audience: Public authorities, policy makers, legislators, and embassies

- 1. The average rental price for a house in the municipality of Lisbon is 1235.00²⁷ euros and 430.00²⁸ euros for a room in a shared house. Maximum rental values should be set, which are in line with the reality of the low salaries since the values currently practised are inconceivable for most of the working population in the country. In addition to the problem of low salaries and unaffordable high rents, it is necessary to focus on the specific needs of each territory and a social diagnosis of the population that lives there.
- 2. Illegal sub-letting is a serious problem in Portugal. There are countless cases resulting in overcrowded buildings, several families living in a single house/ room or the more recent phenomenon of shared rooms with bunk beds for two, four or more people, which are easily found on websites such as Idealista, OLX etc. This type of housing violates the most basic human rights by violating sanitary and hygiene conditions, lack of space and other constraints that make overcrowded housing dangerous. An example of the dangers of overcrowded housing was the fire that occurred in the Mouraria neighbourhood

of Lisbon in February 2023, which resulted in fourteen injuries and the death of two people. To combat these violations, housing conditions must be monitored more assiduously by the public authorities responsible.

- **3.** Immigrant people report experiencing racial and xenophobic discrimination when looking for a home to rent. A figure/office dedicated to combating discrimination in housing should be created to aid in reporting and battling this issue.
- 4. The public authorities responsible for housing should set up a public office to combat fraud and violations of the law committed by tenants and lessors.
- 5. Most immigrants arrive in Portugal without knowing anyone local. This makes the rental process more difficult when a guarantor is required to fulfil the rental contract. A guarantor requires proximity and trust, and although Article 634 of the Civil Code does not mention the guarantor's nationality as a factor for compliance, many immigrants report requesting that the guarantor be of Portuguese nationality. In addition, the guarantor does not remove other requirements in the rental process, such as the employment contract, proof of salary and IRS. Considering the necessary documents required to sign a tenancy agreement, the guarantor should be removed from the law.
- 6. Responsible public bodies, such as the government and local councils, must respond to citizens' enquiries in a public manner in relation to their national legislative commitments to guarantee the population access to decent housing, as enshrined in Article 65 of the CRP and in the Basic Law on Housing (2019). The same should apply to international treaties and conventions ratified by the Portuguese state.
- 7. Simplify the systematisation of information available online and the bureaucratic procedure for access to social housing. For example, an immigrant can only apply for social housing after two years of formalised residency. Given that immigrants are among the citizens most in need of housing, this time frame should be reduced.
- 8. Improve the dissemination of support programmes for access to housing. Public bodies should work alongside immigrant organizations, ensuring that the responsibility does not fall solely on social workers, creating an intersectoral support mechanism that disseminates information clearly, with translation to break down language barriers.

²³ Persnal Income Tax

²⁴ Article 1076 of the Civil Code on Rent Anticipation stipulates that the limit on the amount of rent paid between the tenant and the landlord must be agreed in writing and must not exceed two months and that the maximum amount that can be requested as a deposit is the total amount equivalent to two months' rent. You can consult article 1076 at https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/decreto-lei/68-2019-122373682

²⁵ National Support Centre for the Integration of Migrants. You can consult it at https://www.acm.gov.pt/ru/-/cnai-lisboa

²⁶ Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning. You can check it out at <u>https://www.igot.ulisboa.pt/</u>

²⁷ This figure is according to the study "Radiography of the Rental Market in Portugal" (2021).

²⁸ According to Idealista (2022).

9. Create a public social diagnosis to identify the characteristics of Lisbon's residents to devise solutions more suited to the characteristics of the city's population.

Key Priority 2: Employability and Recognition of Qualifications

The Participatory Assembly "Employability and Labour Conditions for Immigrants" brought together 20 participants and featured several speakers, including Miguel Sanches from Lisbon City Council, researcher Alina Esteves from the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning at the University of Lisbon, Patrícia Brederode and Victor Hastenreiter from the Casa do Brasil de Lisboa, and Ana Paula Rosa from the International Labour Organisation. The aim of this assembly was to identify the main challenges faced by immigrants in accessing employment, as well as to receive proposals for public policies to mitigate these challenges.





Factors that create inequalities for the migrant population when accessing employment:

1. Discrimination and Prejudice

Discrimination and prejudice in job applications are serious and persistent problems experienced by the immigrant population in Portugal. Prejudice occurs when a candidate is treated unequally based on the following characteristics: nationality, ethnicity, ancestry, territory of origin, language, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, marital status or other personal characteristics.

These occurrences have a significant impact on the lives of immigrants, both in terms of emotional and social wellbeing as well as with professional opportunities. It should also be noted that Articles 23²⁹, 24³⁰ and 25³¹ of the Labour Code enshrine protection against the prohibition of labour discrimination.

2. Excessive bureaucracy

The immigrant population in Portugal faces several bureaucratic procedures when it comes to accessing the labour market. The first difficulty is the waiting time for regularisation of visas, as the waiting time increased due to the difficulties and restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and has yet to be regularised. At the time of the publication of this manual, the SEF - Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiros (Aliens and Borders Service) was abolished, and the Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA) was created and began operating on the 29th of October 2023, for which no further information is available at this time.

Immigrants from the global south encounter difficulties in having their qualifications obtained in their countries of origin recognised in Portugal. The bureaucratic procedure, whose guidelines can be consulted on the DGES -

29 Article 23 of the Labour Code - Concepts on the Matter of Equality and Non-Discrimination

31 Article 25 of the Labour Code - Prohibition of discrimination

^{30 &}quot;Workers or jobseekers have the right to equal opportunities and equal treatment with regard to access to employment, training and promotion or professional careers and working conditions, and may not be favoured, benefited, disadvantaged, deprived of any right or exempted from any duty on the grounds, in particular, of ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, family situation, economic situation, education, social origin or condition, genetic heritage, reduced working capacity, disability, critical illness, nationality, ethnic origin or race, territory of origin, language, religion, political or ideological convictions and trade union membership, and the state must promote equal access to such "Article 24, paragraph 1 of the Labour Code / Right to Equal Access to Employment at Work

Directorate General for Higher Education - website, raises doubts and criticisms. Recognition of diplomas requires travelling to higher education establishments that are compatible with a particular degree course. In addition to this dispersion, the costs associated with the recognition of diplomas is anywhere between five hundred to nine hundred euros, with no guarantee that the diploma will be recognised by the university. The price and the need to clarify the bureaucratic procedure put obstacles in the way of the professional development of the immigrant population. In addition to the bureaucratic process, professional organisations tend to consider immigrants from the global south to be less qualified and capable. This happens even when the immigrant person has the same qualifications as a national person.

People from the global south who live in Portugal and need to have their diploma recognised do not have access to the training courses offered by the IEFP, which are only available in Portuguese. However, the IEFP, like other organisations, offers Portuguese classes for foreigners.

Recommendations for improving access to employment:

Target audience: Public bodies, local authorities, political decision-makers, legislators, and companies

- **1.** The responsible body should simplify and accelerate the regularisation process to improve access to the labour market in Portugal for people from the Global South.
- 2. Combat discrimination on the grounds of nationality and language in the workplace and in the recruitment process, guaranteeing that the articles of protection against discrimination that are enshrined in the Labour Code are being met.
- 3. Mechanisms should be set up to link the Portuguese state with the embassies that represent the largest number of immigrant people in Portugal, to facilitate the process of regularisation and professional recognition of immigrants that move to the country.
- 4. Simplify the procedures for applying for temporary and permanent residence by reducing bureaucracy to make the process more accessible and thus ensure a more effective transition for individuals wishing to settle in Portugal.
- 5. Disseminate simplified information on labour rights and duties directly to interested parties.
- Implement a holistic system that integrates the regularisation, employment, and education of migrants to facilitate their integration in the country.
- 7. Public entities should promote awareness-raising and training actions on fundamental labour rights for professionals in public services, schools and other institutions that receive migrants to improve their monitoring capabilities.
- Public entities should prioritise access to the Portuguese language to improve opportunities and integration and consider the constraints that affect

immigrant people's ability to attend classes, such as creating "after-work" classes.

- **9.** Increase the number of free Portuguese language courses on offer.
- **10.** Carry out public campaigns to demonstrate the importance of immigrant people and their contributions to society.
- **11.** Establish regulations to improve the conditions of access to employment for immigrant people, especially for jobs that do not require proficiency in the Portuguese language.
- **12.**To guarantee more diverse teams, particularly in specialised/professional areas, quotas for immigrant people employees should be established by law.
- **13.** Encourage companies to adopt hiring policies and practices that value diversity to provide equal opportunities for qualified immigrants.
- 14. A database platform should be created where immigrant people who settle in Portugal can register and submit their qualifications to improve companies' ability to access qualified workers.

Key Priority 3: Inclusion and Exclusion - Immigrants must be heard!

The third Participatory Assembly "Inclusion and Exclusion: Immigrants must be heard" aimed at promoting debate, analysis and reflection on the main integration challenges faced by immigrant communities in Lisbon. It also sought to receive ideas and proposals, especially from the immigrant population, to mitigate these challenges and promote more successful integration. The event had twenty-three participants and four speakers on the debate panel: Joana Clemente, representing Lisbon City Council; Luís Sousa, representing Arroios Parish Council; researcher Dulce Pimentel, from the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences and CICS NOVA; and Rute Machado, from the Lisbon City Foundation.



behaviour related to the limits imposed by us and others. To do this, you need to understand the language, but you also need to understand body language, social language and behaviour.

Local Immigrant Council

The main exclusion factors identified include:

- Constraints to legalisation.
- Difficulties in accessing public services.
- Language barriers.
- Lack of knowledge of the national cultural programme and political agenda.
- · Lack of emotional ties with local communities.
- Discrimination and xenophobia perpetuated in the daily lives of immigrant people, be it in the workplace, public services, schools/universities, places of leisure, transport, etc.
- Economic difficulties lead to an increase in the number of immigrant people who are homeless and/ or subject to poor housing conditions. Economic difficulties also result in immigrants being subjected

to labour exploitation (long hours, no contract and low pay) and unsafe and risky conditions.

- Difficulties in accessing the labour market. As previously discussed in the section on employability, there are several factors that result in the exclusion of skilled migrants from the labour market.
- Lack of knowledge of the local education system (enrolment, subject matter, assessment, language).
- Lack of communication between schools and teachers with immigrant parents. Language barriers often result in children being their parents' translators, complicating the dialogue between the sides.
- Lack of understanding for immigrant parents and the difficulties faced by children at school on the part of teachers and members of the school community.
- Teachers find it difficult to manage multicultural classes due to lack of adequate resources.

The Integration of Immigrants

The foreign population in Portugal is diverse, which makes integration a complex challenge. However, several factors influence integration, including:

- · Access to employment with a decent salary.
- Mastering the Portuguese language and the inclusion in political and cultural life.
- Creating a social network with people from the community and creating a sense of belonging.
- Fulfilment of fundamental rights.
- The presence and creation of ties with the community already established in Portugal.
- Stability and social cohesion.
- Openness to the arrival of foreigners.
- Cultural differences.
- Available resources.
- Clear public integration policies.



Recommendations for a more successful integration of migrants in Portugal:

Target audience: Public entities, civil society organisations, local authorities, policy makers, legislators, and companies

- Creation of spaces during non-working hours for immigrant people to interact with residents (buddy system).
- A public recognition that integration is a shared responsibility, with the need to address people's needs more comprehensively.

- **3.** Investment in the retraining of immigrant people, with the aim of integrating highly skilled people into the labour market.
- Recognising and harnessing the skills of highly qualified immigrants to contribute to the country's development, especially for those currently working in less qualified sectors.
- **5.** Development of a Manual of Rights and Duties in the languages of the communities most represented in Portugal to combat misinformation and fake news about the migration process in Portugal.
- 6. The language of documents with fundamental information for the integration of immigrant people should be simplified through shorter texts, more accessible language, active social networks, and online explanatory videos.
- 7. Projects and campaigns should be created to promote the deconstruction of stereotypes about immigrants in companies and alongside the general population.
- 8. Companies and public bodies should provide training on the benefits of diverse workplaces and promote cultural activities such as meal exchanges, music, cinema, etc.
- 9. Raise awareness among immigrants of the importance of learning the Portuguese language as it plays a fundamental role in the successful integration of migrants.
- **10.** Portuguese lessons that are not restricted to learning the language in a theoretical way. To increase immigrant people's motivation to learn Portuguese, lessons can be diversified with activities from everyday spoken Portuguese.
- **11.** To make these changes a reality, there needs to be more funding for organisations that implement community projects, better salaries for the human resources of organisations and teachers, and the opportunity to increase the number of teams.
- 12. Public organisations (public services, parish councils, schools, and hospitals) should have on-site translators in the languages of the communities most present in Portugal to improve the quality of services and care. Language barriers result in misunderstandings between officials and immigrants and the inability of immigrants to resolve issues quickly and adequately.

Key Priority 4: Immigrant People's Right to Health in the City of Lisbon

The Participatory Assembly "Immigrant People's Right to Health in the City of Lisbon" brought together 23 participants and featured several speakers, Daniel Resendes and Bruno Castro from the Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Health Administration, Willian Gomes and Ana Montrond from GAT - Group of Treatment Activists, Cristina Santinhos from CRIA - Centre for Anthropology Research Network and Eunice Nobre from SAMANE Portugal³².

³² They must be nationals of Member States of the European Union or equivalent, third-country nationals or stateless persons, applicants for international protection and migrants, with or without their legal status.



The aim of this assembly was to articulate synergies between the immigrant population and organisations that play a central role in the population's health. The immigrant population suffers various difficulties in accessing healthcare in the National Health Service - SNS. In Portugal, immigrants have access to healthcare under paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Basic Health Law and article 4 of Decree-Law 52/2022 of 4 August, which states that all Portuguese citizens are beneficiaries of the National Health Service, as well as all citizens with permanent residence or in a situation of temporary stay or residence in Portugal.

There is a great concern for both regular and irregular immigrants. Foreign citizens who have a valid residence or residence permit (temporary or permanent) on national territory are registered in the National User Register (RNU), where they will be given a national user number. Through the procedures, these citizens are subject to the same principles and rules regarding payment and exemption from fees as nationals.

However, the situation changes for citizens in an irregular situation. Although they have the same right to use the SNS, appointments for them will have associated costs. Costs that most irregular migrants cannot afford.

user number. Lack of knowledge of current legislation. Barriers related to digital literacy.

identified, including:

- Communication difficulties, translation unavailable or
- Communication difficulties, translation unavailable or inadequate for users' needs.

Some of the **barriers to accessing healthcare** have been

• Excessive bureaucracy and difficulty in accessing the

- Stigma and discrimination.
- Lack of understanding of the Portuguese healthcare system.
- Fear of deportation.
- A general shortage of socio-cultural mediators to accompany an immigrant person to appointments.
- Expensive and sometimes inaccessible medications.
- Gender restrictions (in certain cultures, a man can only be consulted by another man; a woman can only be consulted by a woman).
- On the other hand, there are challenges that health professionals face when dealing with the immigrant population, especially the difficulties that sometimes arise from a lack of communication strategies.
- During academic training, there is a lack of training in social sciences and sociocultural diversity in health.
- Lack of communication skills to communicate well with patients.
- Lack of knowledge of the patient's life story or even medical history.
- Lack of time in the clinical consultation to listen to the patient.
- Cultural stereotypes, racism, and xenophobia.





Recommendations for improving access to healthcare for immigrant people in Portugal

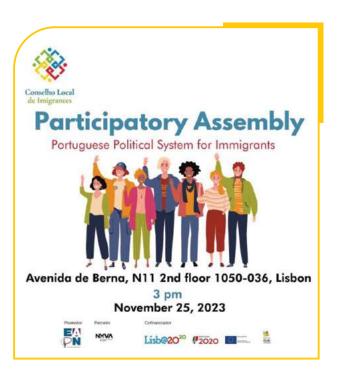
- 1. Personalised technical assistance to help migrants book appointments and ensure they have access to upto-date information on available health services.
- Re-adaptation of health centres to improve accessibility and communication (e.g., wider access for workers, space available for children, gender specificity where necessary, interpreters/cultural mediators).
- 3. Implement the presence of intercultural mediators in health centres and hospitals to facilitate communication and understanding between healthcare professionals and migrants from different cultural backgrounds.
- 4. Improving the social and cultural competences of healthcare professionals to make health services more accessible and effective for people from diverse backgrounds and ethno-cultural communities.
- Promote awareness, training and education of health professionals in relation to cultural diversity (with basic notions of medical and social anthropology).
- 6. Facilitate collaboration between health professionals and social services when necessary.
- 7. Increase health literacy in migrant communities.
- Promote an effective communication system so that migrants can report problems with access to healthcare,

ensuring greater transparency and the rapid resolution of these issues.

- 9. Promote an effective communication system so that migrants can report problems with access to healthcare, ensuring greater transparency and the rapid resolution of these issues.
- **10.** Make salaries more attractive and improve living conditions in Lisbon to attract and retain health professionals, to overcome the shortage of doctors.
- **11.** Facilitate training programmes for health professionals, both in Portugal and in their countries of origin, to promote the bilateral integration of knowledge and experience.
- **12.** Promote the coordination and sharing of information between health professionals, avoiding the need for users to repeat their medical history at each consultation.
- **13.** Implement teleconsultation services with family doctors for online consultations, to improve access to healthcare.

Key Priority 5: Portuguese Political System for Immigrants

The Participatory Assembly "Portuguese Political System for Immigrant People" brought together 22 participants and was attended by Beatriz Ribeiro, a PhD student in Political Science from the NOVA University of Lisbon and an associate researcher at the Portuguese Institute of International Relations. The last assembly held as part of the project aimed to inform the participants on how the national and local political system works in Portugal and what the duties and rights of immigrant people are.



The Portuguese political system for immigrants follows the general rules of the parliamentary democratic system. Portugal is a democratic republic, and the political structure is outlined by the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic.

Some points about the Portuguese political system that are relevant to immigrants are the figure of the President of the Republic, the Parliament, and the Government. Civic participation in the Portuguese political system is related to immigrants in Portugal having the right to participate in municipal elections, which allows them to influence decisions at a local level. However, to take part in legislative and presidential elections, it is necessary to acquire Portuguese nationality. Immigrants in Portugal have similar rights and duties to Portuguese citizens, although some political rights, such as the right to vote in all elections, are reserved for nationals only.



In the case of local elections, this model has undergone some changes. All Portuguese citizens and Brazilians with equal political rights status can vote in these elections, provided they are registered in the national census. Citizens of the following countries can also vote:³³

- Member States of the European Union³⁴;
- United Kingdom with residence in Portugal prior to Brexit;
- Brazil (without equality status) and Cape Verde, with a residence permit in Portugal for more than two years;

• Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Iceland, Norway, New Zealand, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela, with a residence permit in Portugal for more than three years.

Recommendations to support the political and civic participation of immigrant people

- 1. More sessions should be organised like the initiatives that took place in the Local Immigrant Council project, which provide information on the functioning of the Portuguese political system and its institutions, the rights and duties of immigrants and offer a safe space to ask questions and express their ideas.
- Immigrants as active citizens should have the right to vote in local and national elections, subject to pre-established requirements. Since the bilateral agreements in force are not representative of immigration in Portugal.
- **3.** Political bodies and parties should be more diverse and representative of the people they represent.
- **4.** Political manifestos should be available in languages other than Portuguese to ensure inclusion.
- 5. Community ties need to be guaranteed and, to this end, all members of the community must be involved in contributing and participating. To this end, there must be greater synergy between public bodies and social organisations to facilitate the promotion of civic and political education.



³³ For more information: https://www.acm.gov.pt/pt/-/sou-cidadao-estrangeiro-e-resido-em-portugal-posso-votar-nas-eleicoes-portuguesas-

³⁴ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Contacts and Services

Telephone Translation Service / ACM - High Commissioner for Migration Access the following link: https://www.acm.gov.pt/ru/-/servico-de-traducao-telefonica

Public Entities and Services

AIMA - Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum

Address: Avenida António Augusto de Aguiar, 20 Telephone: Landline in Portugal 808 257 257 (local call cost) Telephone: Mobile network (+351) 218 106 191 (cost according to tariff) Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9.00 - 20.00 and Saturday 9.00 - 17.00 Email: geral@aima.gov.pt Website: <u>https://aima.gov.pt/pt</u>

CIG - Comissão para a Cidadania e a Igualdade de Género / Comission for Citizenship and Gender Equality

Address: Rua Almeida Brandão 7, 1200-602, Lisboa Telephone: 217 983 000 Email: cig@cig.gov.pt Website: <u>cig.gov.pt</u>

Direção-Geral do Ensino Superior / Directorate General for Higher Education

Address: Avenida Duque de Ávila 137, 1069-016, Lisboa Telephone: 213 126 000

Contacts:

https://www.dges.gov.pt/pt/pagina/contactos-dges

Recognition of Qualifications:

https://www.dges.gov.pt/en/pagina/degree-and-diplomarecognition

Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional, I.P. / Institute for Employment and Vocational Training, I.P. - IEFP

Website: <u>https://eportugal.gov.pt/en/acesso-aos-servicos-publicos-em-portugal/atendimento-nos-servicos-do-instituto-do-emprego-e-formacao-profissional-iefp-</u>

Address: Location varies according to user's address / Verify the location closest to you

Instituto da Segurança Social, I.P. / Social Security Institute, I.P - Social Security

Website: <u>https://en.seg-social.pt/homepage</u> Address: Location varies depending on the user's address / Verify the location closest to you

Lojas do Cidadão (Citizen's "shops")

The **Lojas do Cidadão** (Citizen's Shops) bring together the counters of public and private organisations and allow people and companies to access various services in the same space. You can find the Social Security (*Segurança Social*), Finance and Taxes (*Finanças*), IEFP, Registry and Notary services (*Registo e Notariado*), as well as GALP, EDP and CTT, amongst other services.

Loja do Cidadão - Laranjeiras

Address: Rua Abranches Ferrão, nº 10, 1600 - 001, Lisboa Telephone: 300 003 990

Website: https://eportugal.gov.pt/en-GB/locais-deatendimento-de-servicos-publicos/loja-de-cidadao-daslaranjeiras-lisboa

Loja de Cidadão do Saldanha

Address: Rua Eng.° Vieira da Silva - Mercado 31 de Janeiro, 1º Piso, 1050-094 Lisboa

Telephone: 300 003 990

Website: <u>https://eportugal.gov.pt/en-GB/locais-de-atendimento-de-servicos-publicos/loja-de-cidadao-do-saldanha</u>

Loja do Cidadão de Lisboa - Marvila

Address: Avenida Santo Condestável - Centro Comercial Pingo Doce Bela Vista - Loja 34, 1950-392 Lisboa Telephone: 300 003 990

Website: <u>https://eportugal.gov.pt/en-GB/locais-de-atendimento-de-servicos-publicos/loja-de-cidadao-de-lisboa-marvila</u>

Social Organizations

Casa do Brasil de Lisboa

Address: Rua Luz Soriano 42, 1200-248 Lisboa Telephone: 213 400 000 / 935 141 813 Website: <u>https://casadobrasildelisboa.pt/</u>

Centro Padre Alves Correia – CEPAC

Address: Rua de Santo Amaro 43, 1200-801 Lisboa Telephone: 213 970 030 Email: geral@cepac.pt Website: <u>https://www.cepac.pt</u>

CRESCER | Associação de Intervenção Comunitária -Lisboa

Address: Rua da Quinta do Cabrinha 3, 1300-906 Lisboa Telephone: 213 620 192 Email: info@crescer.org









conselholocaldeimigrantes.eapn.pt



Financing









