



## **WP T4 – Capacity Building and Policy**

### **Advice**

#### **Deliverable D.T4.3.4**

### **Capacity Building and Knowledge Transfer**

A short report with the main findings on how to improve  
Alpine wide knowledge transfer and capacity building

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## Contents

1. Key definitions .....	4
2. The risks of failure .....	5
3. Capacity building activities implemented within PlurAlps project.....	6
3.1 Main activities.....	6
3.2 Results and impact.....	8
4. Recommendations stemming from PlurAlps project.....	9

## 1. Key definitions

This report is focused on the capacity building and knowledge transfer processes concerning migrant integration policies and measures. Here below we illustrate the key concepts and definitions drawn from the literature.

**Capacity building** aims to improve the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully<sup>1</sup>.

Capacity building is strictly connected to the concept of **policy learning** which implies a cognitive change in the way a certain question is tackled, after knowledge has been gained from other policy experiences.<sup>2</sup>

**Policy transfer** occurs when «knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting».<sup>3</sup>

Policy learning favours policy transfer, and vice versa. Yet, the two processes are not deterministically related, and may occur separately. Policy learning can take place without there being a transfer since it can also be generated by previous policies and experiences, without any transfer from other contexts. Conversely, policy learning is just one of the possible mechanisms through which a policy transfer can take place: for instance, transfer can be non-voluntary and coercive<sup>4</sup> and take place without learning, as it happens when implementing policies decided by higher levels of governments without acquiring a new perspective on the question at hand, and on the ways in which it is dealt with.

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<sup>1</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *The challenge of capacity development – Working towards good practice*, Paris, 2006; European Communities, *ToolKit for Capacity Development 2010*, Luxembourg, 2011, [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/guidelines-toolkit-capacity-development-2010\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/guidelines-toolkit-capacity-development-2010_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> D. Stone, *Transfer Agents and Global Networks in the “Transnationalisation” of Policy*, in “Journal of European Public Policy”, 3/2004, pp. 545-66

<sup>3</sup> D. P. Dolowitz, D. Marsh, *Who Learns What from Whom: A Review of the Policy Transfer Literature*, in “Political Studies”, 2/1996

<sup>4</sup> D. P. Dolowitz, D. Marsh, *Who Learns What from Whom: A Review of the Policy Transfer Literature*, in “Political Studies”, 2/1996

## 2. The risks of failure

Capacity building and policy learning are not sufficient in themselves to generate policy changes or transfer<sup>5</sup>. Policy transfer throughout the Alpine Region can indeed be obstructed by various factors such as different institutional settings and legislative frameworks; cultural distance; a lack of the required financial resources or organisational devices; political concerns and ideologies; bureaucracies' resistance to change.<sup>6</sup>

More specifically, Dolowitz and Marsh identify three aspects of failure in policy transfer, distinguished according to their possible causes<sup>7</sup>:

- a) uninformed transfer, when borrowing actors have incomplete information about the crucial elements that make the policy a success;
- b) incomplete transfer, when those crucial elements are known about, but are not transferred adequately;
- c) inappropriate transfer, when not enough attention is paid to adaptation, and differences between original and borrowing contexts are disregarded.

These risks can easily be underestimated, generating a waste of resources and poor productivity of the investment made in the policy transfer.

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<sup>5</sup> D. Stone, *Transfer Agents and Global Networks in the "Transnationalisation" of Policy*, in "Journal of European Public Policy", 3/2004, pp. 545-66.

<sup>6</sup> S. Bulmer, S. Padgett, *Policy Transfer in the European Union: An Institutionalist Perspective*, in "British Journal of Political Science", 1/2005, pp. 103-26; D. Stone, *Transfer Agents and Global Networks in the "Transnationalisation" of Policy*, in "Journal of European Public Policy", 3/2004, pp. 545-66. ; D. P. Dolowitz, D. Marsh, *Who Learns What from Whom: A Review of the Policy Transfer Literature*, in "Political Studies", 2/1996.; D. P. Dolowitz, *A Policy-maker's Guide to Policy Transfer*, in "Political Quarterly", 1/2003, pp. 101-08; M. Evans, *Policy Transfer in Critical Perspective*, in "Policy Studies", 3/2009, pp. 243-68; I. Bache, A. Taylor, *The Politics of Policy Resistance: Reconstructing Higher Education in Kosovo*, in "Journal of Public Policy", 3/2003, pp. 279-300.

<sup>7</sup> Dolowitz, D. Marsh, *Who Learns What from Whom: A Review of the Policy Transfer Literature*, in "Political Studies", 2/1996.

### 3. Capacity building activities implemented within PlurAlps project

#### 3.1 Main activities

The activities aimed at capacity building and knowledge transfer carried out within PlurAlps project are the following.

#### ***Activity A.T.4.2 - Preparation of capacity building and knowledge transfer materials***

***Capacity building package.*** A large variety of capacity building tools were gathered from all the project partners and collected in a Capacity building package available on the project web site. The package includes ready for use materials such as scripts, lab guidelines, website templates, participatory methods, etc.

#### ***Activity A.T.4.3 - Capacity building and knowledge transfer activities***

***Exchange visits and study trips.*** Project partners organised exchange visits, either abroad or within their own country, that allowed the regional stakeholders and observers to learn from experiences identified or developed within the project.

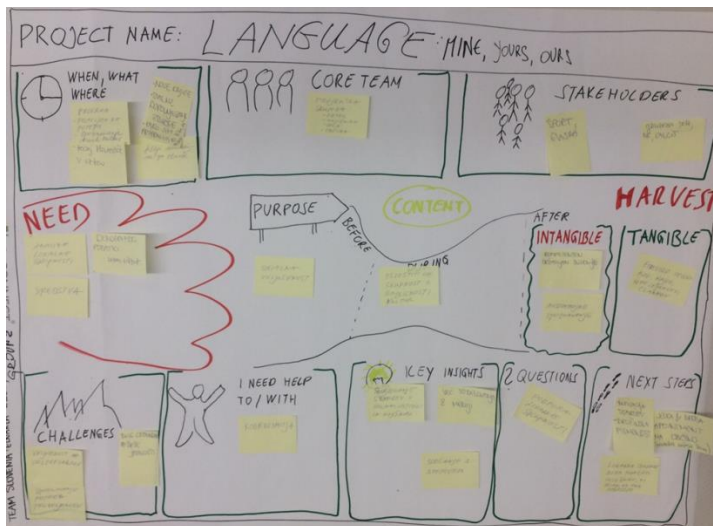
***Regional exchange workshops.*** Project partners carried out regional exchange workshops to transfer the knowledge gathered in the pilot projects to other organisations in the region.

***Public information events.*** Project partners carried public information events in their regions on topics related to welcoming culture and pluralism.

***Transnational capacity building and knowledge transfer activities.*** Within each partner meeting, at least one slot was devoted to promote capacity building and knowledge transfer among partners by using specific participatory methods. Furthermore, five field visits and exchanges with local partners were organized (Lyon in 2017, Turin and Lucerne in 2018, Leoben and Bolzano in 2019) for the PlurAlps consortium in order to provide a deeper insight on particularly successful integration measures carried out in the Alpine area.



Lab “Capacity Building on refugee integration: how to prevent and reverse the fears of the local communities”, PlurAlps mid-term Conference, 16-17 May 2018, Turin



Lab “Equipped for the future”, PlurAlps mid-term Conference, 16-17 May 2018, Turin



Field visit to the Maramao cooperative, PlurAlps mid-term Conference, 16-17 May 2018, Turin

### 3.2 Results and impact

The main results and impact of the capacity building and knowledge transfer activities carried out within PlurAlps have been identified by the project partners through a specific form and are summarized in the following Table.

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- Table – Results and impact of the PlurAlps capacity building and knowledge transfer activities

Target groups	Impact/results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities and stakeholders, including the business sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gaining an insight about migrant integration in the Alpine Region and the needs in this regard</li> <li>- Collecting and sharing problems, ideas, expectations and strategies about migration and integration</li> <li>- Sharing tools aimed at integrating migrants</li> <li>- Defining success factors and challenges of integration measures</li> <li>- Increasing knowledge and insight into working of local practices</li> <li>- Enhancing stakeholders' support and active participation at the implementation of the pilot actions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local population, including migrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness-raising on depopulation of mountain areas, immigration and integration</li> <li>- Increasing knowledge about migration as a challenge and as an opportunity for the Alpine Region</li> <li>- Empowering local population by enhancing its involvement in the identification of the problems, the definition of future scenarios, the development of strategies and the implementation of measures</li> <li>- Testing a methodology aimed at fostering empathy with asylum seekers who have fled war contexts and reflexivity on the situation of forced migration.</li> <li>- Enhancing the contribution that young people to the development of a welcoming and inclusive culture in local communities</li> <li>-</li> </ul>



## 4. Recommendations stemming from PlurAlps project

The activities carried out by PlurAlps partners throughout the project have allowed for the identification of a set of suggestions to improve the quality and effectiveness of capacity building, policy learning and policy transfer.

Generally, it is important not underestimate the complexity of policies, the many elements of which they are made up, the context-related elements, and the complicated processes whereby they are produced, applied and adjusted.

### ***Keeping in mind the diversity of the Alpine Region***

The Alpine Region is highly heterogeneous in terms of landscape (urban and rural), municipality sizes (metropolitan areas and small villages) and legal, political, economic and social features. This factor has to be considered when promoting policy transfer. Therefore, a preliminary understanding of differences and similarities between different national and local contexts is crucial to increase the chances of success of the policy transfer and/or learning throughout the Alpine area.

### ***Prevent the “learning marginalization” of peripheral areas***

In the Alpine Region, more peripheral areas face higher risks of exclusion from knowledge and policy transfer. In fact, transnational networks of localities on migrant integration generally involve rather large cities whereas small towns and mountain areas are often left out, also because of the fewer human and economic resources they can count on. On this backdrop, it is therefore important: to organise local events and activities to disseminate the lessons learnt at local level; to translate materials in national languages to foster non English-speakers' engagement in learning process; to enhance the capacity of small local organisations of participating in transnational networks by providing specific support; to make value of secondary-level organisations of public and private entities able to disseminate policy learnings among their members.

### ***Disassemble migrant integration policies***

Transferring an entire policy is, in fact, a very ambitious goal. At times, it is more realistic and effective to transfer only a part of the policy components. Possible components are<sup>8</sup>:

- ideas, e.g. the rejection of the assumption that migrant seasonal workers do not need integration measures because of their temporary stay;
- policy goals, e.g. overcoming policy fragmentation and promoting an integrated policy approach towards migrant integration by coordinating the measures adopted by different departments and public entities (e.g., employment, education, cultural diversity and housing, etc.);
- policy instruments and administrative techniques, e.g. including intercultural mediators as a structural part of local service working teams;

Each of these elements may be the object of transfer<sup>9</sup>.

### ***Learning from mistakes***

Both positive and negative lessons can be transferred<sup>10</sup>. Despite the widely acknowledged usefulness of learning from mistakes, this aspect is often overlooked in processes oriented towards policy learning and policy transfer. Sharing the obstacles met and the mistakes made in policy formulation and implementation helps to prevent their repetition during policy transfer. Even when transferring “good practices”, their side effects and failures should be disclosed avoiding to focus only on successful aspects and positive achievements. For this purpose, closed door meetings, as the ones organised within the PlurAlps project, could offer a sheltered venue to share mistakes without the fear of conveying a negative image of the work done to the large public, including media and voters.

### ***Involving both public and private organisations***

A public policy may be defined as such not so much because it has been implemented by public actors, but because it relates to questions of public interest<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, even a measure carried out entirely by profit or non-profit organisations can be considered a public policy. Indeed, migrant integration is

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<sup>8</sup> G. Zincone, I. Ponzio, *How European Cities Craft Immigrant Integration. Something to learn*, Fondazione Italianeuropei & FEPS, 2013,

[file:///C:/Users/Ponzo/Downloads/3774\\_Italianeuropei\\_European\\_cities.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Ponzo/Downloads/3774_Italianeuropei_European_cities.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> For further examples of policy components that can be transferred throughout the Alpine Region see the PlurAlps White Paper “Fostering pluralism as a key to local development in the Alpine Space”, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Dolowitz, D. Marsh, *Who Learns What from Whom: A Review of the Policy Transfer Literature*, in “Political Studies”, 2/1996.

<sup>11</sup> G. Regonini, *Capire le politiche pubbliche*, il Mulino, Bologna 2001.

a policy sector in which numerous stakeholders are mobilized and where the civil society plays a key role. In this perspective, the involvement of public and non-public organisations in policy learning and transfer is crucial to develop effective measures.

### ***Identifying key stakeholders able to transfer integration policies***

Public and private subjects' capacity for agency plays an important role. Indeed, some subjects have a greater desire and ability to learn than others, due to their particular professional skills and competences, greater resources or time available, or for reasons of political sensibility<sup>12</sup>. In this perspective, it is crucial to identify stakeholders and even single persons able and willing to spread lessons and transfer knowledge. Given the changes that occur across localities of the Alpine Region to the specific configurations of local organisations and stakeholders active within migrant integration, mapping those subjects in areas where knowledge and practices have to be transferred could be useful.

### ***Organising field visits***

Field visits, like the ones organised within PlurAlps, appear particularly useful to foster knowledge transfer by providing a concrete view of policies and measures at hand and stimulate reflections on their actual functioning. In a rather direct and friendly manner, field visits foster awareness of context-related elements,

help to figure out how the concerned migrant integration measures can be reproduced in other localities and facilitate the identification of the potential obstacles to this process. Finally, they promote the relations among stakeholders and the development of a "community of practices" paving the way to subsequent contacts to continue knowledge transfer over time.

### ***Properly planning and budgeting knowledge transfer***

Knowledge transfer, as well as networking, is often regarded as a positive side effect of more concrete actions. Actually, it requires a relevant amount of work to develop and take care of contacts among stakeholders, manage the learning processes and report the results into sharable outputs. Therefore, it is crucial to tailor those activities into projects' workplans and budgets. PlurAlps project has devoted a specific Work Package to capacity building and transfer allowing the project partners to fruitfully share knowledge among them and disseminate learnings to a larger public.

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<sup>12</sup> F. S. Berry, W. D. Berry, *Innovation and Diffusion Models in Policy Research*, in P. A. Sabatier (ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process*, Westview Press, Boulder, CO 1999; D. Stone, *Transfer Agents and Global Networks in the "Transnationalisation" of Policy*, in "Journal of European Public Policy", 3/2004, pp. 545-66.

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