

GUIMARÃES ACOLHE | GUIMARÃES HOSTS

"THIS IS MORE THAN A JOB, IT IS A MISSION WHERE WE END UP RECEIVING MORE THAN WHAT WE GIVE, BEING ABLE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES"



Before the war, The Guimarães Acolhe Consortium arises from the humanitarian imperative to join the global effort, given the worsening of the humanitarian crisis felt since 2015. In this sense, the Municipality of Guimarães, in the north of Portugal, organized itself and created the consortium Guimarães Acolhe in collaboration with its Social Network and the Portuguese Council for Refugees (CPR). The consortium has as a goal welcoming and integrating refugees by providing conditions of well-being and security.

Guimarães Acolhe has a community base, integrating public and private entities, which remain involved and dedicated in all phases of the process.

The structured action for the integration of refugees begins long before they are received, with several actions such as needs assessment, the training of case workers and those involved and the assignment of multidisciplinary support and monitoring teams. The Consortium is also dedicated to carrying out transversal awareness and information actions.

The commitment and concerted effort on the part of all the institutions involved has allowed, so far, the reception and integration of 56 people, including 10 families, of different nationalities such as Eritreans, Sudanese, Syrians, Nigerians and others.

The success of Guimarães Acolhe action is not, however, immune to challenges inherent to inclusion, such as: lengthy legalization processes; the difficulty of accessing both the house and the labor market, this last one especially for women; the discrepancy between low incomes and very high costs; or the difficulties in learning Portuguese which translates into impediments to communication and understanding. There are other needs, such as: expectations management, namely by case workers; the poor sustainability of the processes

whose support program ends; as well as the lack of resources, both human and financial, which hampered a more focused support.

The Consortium aims to mitigate such issues, which strategies may involve the professionalization of the reception service, as well as that of Portuguese teachers, who up to now have been mostly temporary or voluntary; strengthen Portuguese teaching and access to translation services; boost training and empowerment projects, especially for women; increase health support; create more spaces and moments of social interaction and sharing; or work on management expectation.

"CONSORTIA ONLY REMAIN ACTIVE IF THERE IS COMMUNICATION AND MEETINGS, PRESENTING RESULTS, NEEDS AND DIFFICULTIES, MOBILIZING EVERYONE TO LOOK FOR JOINT SOLUTIONS"

The joint and common dedication of all entities of Guimarães Acolhe is the basis of the success of their work, in which communication, exchanges between teams and the commitment to the search for joint solutions, reinforce complementarity, leaving those involved with a great admiration and pride to be part of this Consortium that represents "the wealth of the common".

