



MILSA

**National education
platform for civic and
health communication**

MILSA National education platform for civic and health communication

The MILSA education platform is a national project developing capacity for quality assured civic orientation and health communication for newly arrived migrants. The project educates civic- and health communicators while in the same time supporting cooperation and joint knowledge development for actors working in related sectors.

Civic orientation, an obligatory part of the introduction programmes for newly arrived migrants in Sweden, has a strong potential for providing significant and positive contributions in their integration process. However, a

need for national standardisation, inclusion of health communication, and stronger national intersectoral collaboration have been recognized as national priorities for development. The MILSA educational platform corresponds to these needs for development. The educational programme is accessed through the website informationssverige.se.

The project is funded by the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in the period between 2017 and 2020.

”Language is the key to work, but civic orientation is the key to life!”

Mahmood Khaleel, communicator, Flen municipality



Fadil Radi, Khilod Al Gebori, civic and health communicators, Mikael Stigendal, Malmö University, Ziad Jomaa, head of civic and health communication Skåne, Louiseen Abo Mady, civic and health communicator. Photo Nils Bergendal

The programme will result in participants’:

- Increased knowledge for supporting newly arrived migrants’ development as knowledgeable, capable and democratic citizens with self-confidence and abilities to make their own informed choices.
- Increased ability to convey a conviction that peaceful political and social change is possible, and that everyone can be part of this change and help develop Swedish democracy as an equal, inclusive, multi-cultural, peaceful, respectful and effective political community.
- Increased knowledge of factors that promote good health among newly arrived migrants and their immediate families.

”Civic orientation provides a unique possibility to discuss and inform people about equality, equity, and democracy. The MILSA platform gives communicators tools for this important work.”

*Frida Darj, project manager equality,
Skåne County Administrative Board*

Comprehensive education goals

- Improved knowledge of the purpose and importance of civic orientation.
- Increased security in the role as a civic and health communicator.
- Increased knowledge and skills in speaking about Sweden's political system as well as norms and values within for example:
 - Gender equality
 - Equal rights
 - Children's rights
 - The parent perspective
 - Honour-related topics
 - Religion
 - Sexual and reproductive health
 - Mental health and well-being
- Acquired in-depth knowledge of health and the themes within civic orientation.
- Developed ability to handle participants with varying degrees of prior knowledge in related topics.
- Acquired in-depth knowledge and ability to use different educational and communication tools for facilitating dialogue.
- Developed ability to acquire, understand, evaluate and critically review information.





Josefin Wängdahl, Uppsala University, Heidi Carlerby, Mid Sweden University, Erik Amnå, Örebro University. Photo Patric Nadalutti

Course contents

The course consists of 10 modules, divided equally between social sciences and health communication:

- Introduction to civic orientation and social sciences
- Introduction to public health
- Communication & the role of the communicator in civic orientation
- Having influence in Sweden
- Learning
- Health literacy
- Migration and health
- Health & medical care in Sweden
- Principles & methods in health promotion
- Rights and responsibilities of the individual

Examples of modules carried out in workshops

- The study circle as a method
- Motivational conversations
- The role of the communicator
- Gender equality & equal rights
- Children's rights & the role of parents
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Mental health & well-being



Civic orientation for newly arrived migrants

The work done in MILSA corresponds to the different needs for development within civic orientation.

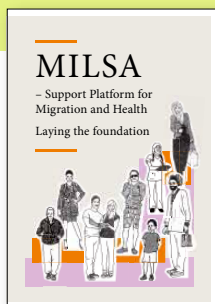
The purpose of the civic orientation programme is to provide newly arrived migrants with a basic understanding of Swedish society and a solid base for continued knowledge acquisition. The goal of the civic orientation is for participants to develop their knowledge about:

- human rights and fundamental democratic values
- individual rights and responsibilities
- the organisation of Swedish society
- everyday life

Dialogue and reflection is central in the civic orientation and fundamental for acquiring knowledge about Sweden's constitutional foundations, the equal value of all, and the principles of gender equality.

Civic Orientation

A part of the establishment of newly arrived migrants since 2010. Municipalities are obliged to offer newcomers covered by the Establishment Act the opportunity to participate in Civic Orientation. Civic Orientation is often conducted through regional or subregional cooperation.



Health Communication within civic orientation

The course corresponds to needs in regards to civic orientation as well as needs regarding the objective of providing health communication within the programme of civic orientation. Good health impacts people's opportunities and is central for a sustainable social development. Poor physical and mental health are more common among newly arrived migrants than among persons born in Sweden or migrants coming here for other reasons. This is not only linked to the migration process itself, but also to in which manner the initial period in Sweden plays out. Depending on different interacting

factors the physical and mental health of many migrants starts to deteriorate in this period, often then subsequently worsening over time. Health information conveyed in an accessible manner is a prerequisite when promoting health for newly arrived migrants. A regional health survey of newly arrived migrants' health carried out by MILSA 2015 in Skåne, the south of Sweden, showed a significant number of health-related risks. Quite a few of these risks can be addressed through high quality civic and health communication delivered in the migrants' native languages early upon arrival. Health



*Slobodan Zdravkovic, Malmö University, Mattias Grahn, City of Malmö.
Photo Nils Bergendal*

MILSA, research-based support platform for migration and health

In MILSA, academic teachers and researchers work alongside practitioners to create a more inclusive, knowledge-based and health-promoting establishment process.

communication conveyed in the native language is a human right and an important tool in the fight for health equity. Civic orientation serves as an effective platform for making this possible.

In MILSA, promoting health communication has been one of the main objectives since the start in 2008. In 2014, MILSA, in cooperation with national and international experts and researchers, put forward recommendations for health communication in relation to the introduction programmes. In

2015, MILSA carried out a national feasibility study regarding health communication in relation to the civic orientation. The study found that the need for an educational programme relating to civic orientation coincided with needs in developing health communication. A need for a national educational programme for civic education and health communication both as well as a need for the support of regional collaboration in order to promote the healthy establishment of newcomers to Sweden was thus identified and put into action in 2017.

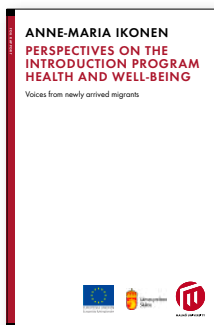
Supporting mental health and wellbeing

People coming to Sweden as forced migrants often carry with them experiences of trauma and exposure to different difficulties. Poor mental health is common and is often perceived as a bigger problem than poor physical health. The factors behind poor mental health are often complex and interrelated. Civic and health communication can help promote newly arrived refugees' mental health by providing knowledge and tools, as well as improving the conditions for self-empowerment and social inclusion.

The project works in-depth in areas of mental health and wellbeing on assignment by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. The work includes providing communicators with information and knowledge about areas such as:

- Resilience
- Supportive environments
- Understanding trauma
- Managing trauma, prevention and support
- Physical activity
- The role of NGOs in reception and establishment
- Structure of the health service
- Parenting support

In addition, the project also offers intersectorial workshops, seminars, and conferences.



”My children are my heart. But I am worried. How will I know what to prioritise for them?”

Civic Orientation participant





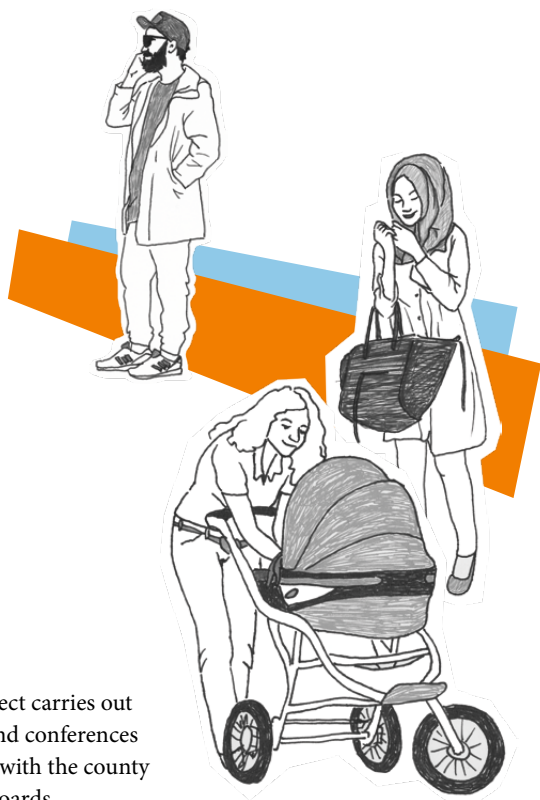
Anette Agardh, Lund University, Katarina Carlzén, Skåne County Administrative Board.

Photo Nils Bergendal

Support for collaboration and joint knowledge development

Alongside the role to support municipalities in their task of providing civic orientation to newly arrived migrants the county administrative boards have different assignments regarding promoting regional capacity for receiving migrants. One priority is to facilitate collaboration and knowledge based development and for this the county administrative boards are responsible for

maintaining regional forums for intersectoral cooperation. On a national level, the different county administrative boards work together in close cooperation on integration in order to promote shared important knowledge in the area. The cooperation with MILSA regarding national development of civic orientation and health communication is an example of an important joint development effort.



The MILSA project carries out joint seminars and conferences in collaboration with the county administrative boards.

The project also produces learning aids such as imagery and films on various topics.

Evaluation and follow-up

The project is evaluated based on the general purpose of supporting increased quality in civic orientation as a tool for supporting newly arrived migrants' personal resources and integration process into Swedish society.

Partners

Skåne County Administrative Board

Project owner

Universities

Uppsala University –
Coordinator of education

Mid Sweden University

Lund University

Malmö University

Örebro University

Civic orientation operations

More than 30 organisations
spread over Sweden

The county administrative boards

All county administrative boards
provide process support and expertise
in areas such as equality, honour
questions, and parenting support.

Non-governmental organisations

ISSOP – International Society for
Social Pediatrics and Child Health

Sensus Study Association

The Social Economy Network Skåne

Save the Children

Vårsta Diaconal Centre

**The project has a number
of reference groups**

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