

OUTREACH AND DISSEMINATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION TO IMMIGRANTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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SUMMARY

The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the need for public authorities to be prepared for situations where the need for communicating to immigrants emerges. Effective communication products and collaboration fora are achieved in collaboration with civil society and with a pre-defined strategy that takes into account the particular needs of the target group. Civil society organisations and individual resource persons can provide public authorities with knowledge and understanding of immigrants and with feedback directly transferred from the target group. This is a prerequisite for reaching immigrants with public information and for achieving the intended interpretation of the communication content. While immigrants represent a broad variation of cultures, languages and beliefs that differ extensively from each other, they all together represent a group in society that requires added attention and consideration as a target group. This is one of the main learnings from the Covid-19 pandemic. Public authorities learned that, to reach immigrants as one or divided into several sub-target groups, they need to establish and maintain a close relationship with civil society, ensure ongoing development of their communication strategy and be ready to activate their strategy and their collaboration with civil society when the next situation emerges that requires effective and considerate communication to immigrants.

TRANS-NORDIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for dissemination of public information to immigrants during and outside crisis periods

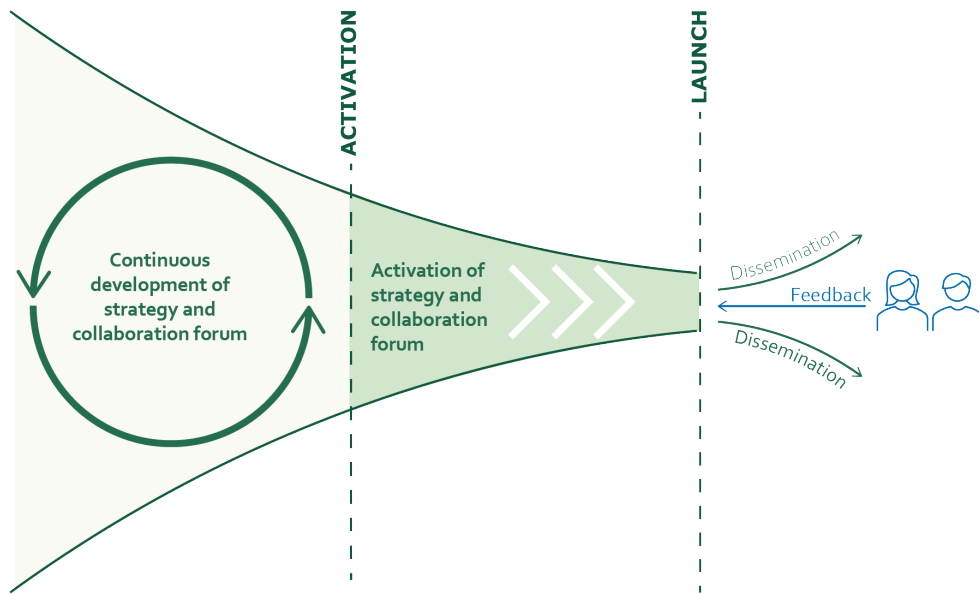
The following policy recommendations relate to three overall phases involved in dissemination of public information to immigrants. The first phase involves the continuous development of a strategy and of a collaboration forum between public and civil society actors. This phase is an ongoing process and is only interrupted when the need for disseminating information to immigrants emerges and the strategy and the collaboration forum need to be activated. Their activation in relation to development of concrete communication initiatives constitutes the second phase.

The final phase includes the launch of communication initiatives, which occurs as a continuation of the activation of the strategy. This is where information is disseminated to target groups and where feedback from the civil society as well as representatives from the target groups is received. The figure below visualises these phases and introduces the recommendations which are further presented in the report

The recommendations in context: Linking to Our Vision 2030

A link can be drawn to Our Vision 2030 developed by the Nordic Council of Ministers, where the goal is to make the Nordic Region the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. The co-operation in the Nordic Council must serve this purpose, hence the Ministers for Co-operation (MR-SAM) have decided to a greater extent to co-operate with the civil society in the Nordic region in their efforts to implement Our Vision 2030. As a result, a Nordic network for involving the civil society organizations is being established to increase the opportunities for input from the civil society, business and industry. The attention directed towards increased involvement of the civil society supports the findings and policy recommendations in this report where the involvement and cooperation with especially civil society organizations is a necessity to reach the target group.

Figure: Summary of trans-Nordic policy recommendations



Continuous development of strategy and collaboration forum

- 1** Allocate resources and establish a responsible team
- 2** Increase diversity in your teams
- 3** Establish and monitor a collaboration forum
- 4** Create a clearly defined system for your collaboration forum
- 5** Offer training and capacity building of civil society organisations
- 6** Establish a cooperation network between public authorities
- 7** Develop and regularly revise your strategy
- 8** Formulate a strategy fit for unpredictable and sudden changes

Activation of strategy and collaboration forum

- 9** Identify and narrow down the specific target group and tailor the communication content
- 10** Intensify your work in the collaboration forum

Launching communication products

- 11** Identify and translate the most important messages
- 12** Pay attention to the proportion of the target group with no or low reading skills
- 13** Create visual content using symbols and objects that are familiar to the target group
- 14** When using text-based communication products, make sure that sentences are uncomplicated, short and precise with emphasis on the main message
- 15** Select alternative channels such as social media and face-to-face communication

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for quick dissemination of public information emerged. Nordic societies were, together with the rest of the world, impacted on all levels. Public authorities found themselves in an uncertain situation where they needed to react fast to a yet unknown and unpredictable disease, which later turned into a societal crisis, both socially and economically. Public authorities became aware that some groups of immigrants and their descendants (hereafter referred to collectively as immigrants) were particularly exposed to and affected by Covid-19. They were not only at higher risk of infection and hospitalization but also of losing their jobs and even of being stigmatized by media and politicians¹. Many women with immigrant background were additionally considered at risk of being isolated at home due to a limited social network and the responsibilities in the house taking care of children². The pandemic thus revealed and reinforced existing inequalities, with a disproportionate impact on already marginalized groups among the public.

Early in the pandemic, it became clear that one of the main challenges facing public authorities was to effectively reach a diverse group of immigrants with key messages regarding testing and vaccination, social distancing, and the need for self-isolation in cases of exposure and infection. Considerations for reaching some groups of immigrants as a target group differ meaningfully from those relating to most of the population. When communicating to immigrants as a target group, it becomes essential to consider the different languages and cultural backgrounds of the target group as well as their use of alternative channels for accessing information. With the potential for an outbreak of another Covid-19 variant as well as other crises on the horizon, the aim of this analysis has been to gather learnings and identify examples of good practice based on the experiences of civil society organizations and public authorities from the Covid-19 pandemic and on that basis to provide public authorities with a set of policy recommendations to follow to more effectively communicate public information to similar target groups. Throughout the study, vulnerable citizens and women among immigrant groups have been a particular focus to better understand how to reach these target groups and to discover the role of women in the dissemination of public information to immigrants.

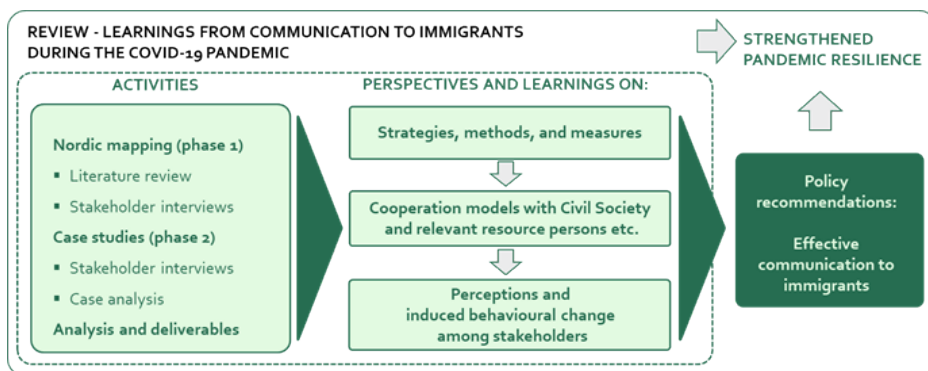
To identify learnings and examples of good practice, and to formulate a set of relevant and useful policy recommendations, a systematic study design was developed to build robust and valid knowledge related to the Nordics, rooted in case studies with perspectives from public authorities, the civil society, and representatives of the target groups. The design combines a mapping of literature with stakeholder insights across the Nordics (phase 1), and an in-depth exploration of minority perspectives through selected case studies (phase 2).

1. Oplysningskampanje om Covid-19 til Etniske Minoriteter i Danmark, evaluation from ALS Research, 2020
2. Innvandrerbefolkningen under Koronapandemien, report from expert group, 2021 & Informasjon og tiltak rettet mot innvandrerbefolkningen i forbindelse med Covid-19, delrapport 3, report from By- og Regionforskningsinstituttet NIBR, 2021

Immigrants as one or more target groups

The term *immigrants* in this report represent a diverse group of immigrants with cultures, languages and beliefs that differ extensively from each other. They should therefore not be seen as one homogeneous group. However, some of the examples highlighted in this report, refer to communication initiatives or products targeting a broad variation of immigrants while others target one specific group, either defined by culture, religion or language. Immigrants are therefore referred to as either one or several target groups.






Figure 1-1. Research design



1.1 Data and methods applied

A short description of the two phases and related data and methods applied can be found in Table 1-1. A more in-depth description of the data and methods applied can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 1-1. Data and methods applied in phase 1 and phase 2³

	Phase 1: Horizontal mapping of knowledge	Phase 2: In-depth analysis in the Nordic countries
Description	In phase 1 a mapping of communication initiatives across the Nordics has been conducted, which has been summarized in a database containing a description of communication initiatives as well as the strategies, methods, challenges, and learnings of each initiative.	In Phase 2, knowledge gathered in phase 1 has been unfolded by conducting an in-depth analysis of good practice to disseminate information to immigrants in the Nordics. Good practice is based on a selection of five communication initiatives across the Nordics – one for each country.
Method	<p>The database is based on a trans-Nordic literature review and on data from semi-structured interviews with relevant organizers of various communication initiatives targeting immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The analysis of the communication initiatives in the database takes its point of departure in a qualitative assessment based on five parameters (purpose, target group, extent, flexibility, and communication stream), whereupon the communication initiative has been assigned a score from 1-5. The parameters for each initiative have been assessed and qualified in an iterative process by Rambøll Denmark, with comments and input from colleagues in the other Nordic countries.</p>	<p>The analysis is based on knowledge collected in phase 1 for the five cases supported by semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and members of the target group.</p> <p>The analysis takes its point of departure in a qualitative assessment based on four to five parameters (purpose, target group, main focus, accessibility and user focus), on which each communication initiative has been assigned a score from 1-5. As for phase 1, the parameters for each initiative have been assessed and qualified in an iterative process by Rambøll Denmark, with comments and input from colleagues in the other Nordic countries.</p>
Data	<p>The database includes a total of 43 communication initiatives and has been collected by local teams of consultants in the Nordics.</p> <p> 22 communication initiatives identified via literature review.</p> <p> 21 communication initiatives identified via stakeholder interviews.</p>	<p>A total of 26 semi-structured interviews have been conducted across the Nordics and were targeted three different groups: senders, receivers, and collaborators.</p> <p> 10 interviews have been conducted with authorities sending the communication initiatives.</p> <p> 4 interviews* have been conducted with the receivers (immigrants) of the communication initiatives.</p> <p> 12 interviews have been conducted with collaborating organizations and individuals.</p> <p><small>* Some cases evolve around a collaboration model rather than a communication product. When a case is entirely focus on a collaboration model without a specific communication product, a direct target group cannot be identified. For that reason, the number of interviews with receivers remains low in comparison to the number of interviews with senders and collaborators.</small></p>

3. The parameters are used similarly across the five cases, however, for the cases in Finland and Norway, the parameter accessibility is excluded as this refers to the content of communication products, as the Finnish and Norwegian cases evolve around collaboration models.

2. TRANS-NORDIC ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES

The findings from the mapping of Nordic communication initiatives and a trans-Nordic comparison of challenges and learnings are the outset of the following chapter. Here, the similarities and differences in the approaches to dissemination of public information to immigrants among the Nordic countries are highlighted together with a set of trans-Nordic challenges and learnings.

2.1 Country-level Analysis

The mapped initiatives (see the summary of 'methods applied' above) have each been analysed and scored along five communication parameters – extent, target group, purpose, flexibility, and communication stream.

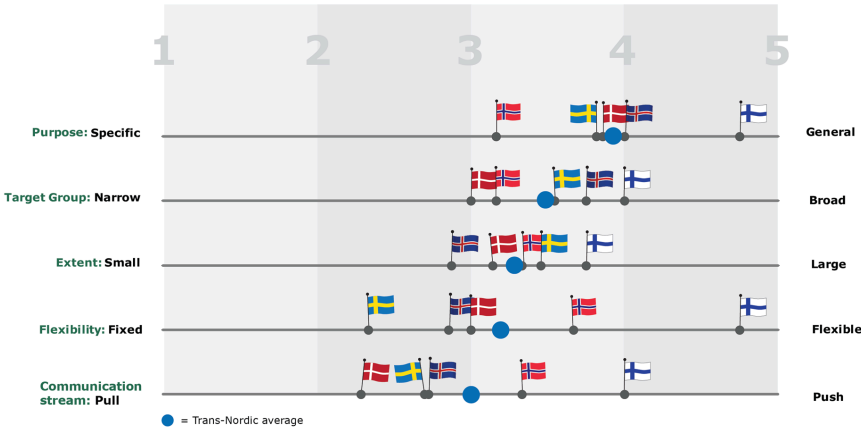
Table 2-1. Explaining the five communication parameters used in phase 1

PARAMETER	DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS (SCORING)
Purpose	How well defined the communication initiative is and whether the purpose is mirrored in the communication products.	Specific (1) → General (5)
Target group	How well defined and specific the target group is defined.	Narrow (1) → Wide (5)
Extent	The extent of the initiative based on the number of components and the potential reach of those components.	Small (1) → Large (5)
Flexibility	The extent to which target groups were involved in the production of the initiative e.g., through feedback, ongoing dialogue or collaboration.	Fixed (1) → Flexible (5)
Communication stream	The direction of the communication stream when approaching the target group and choosing channels.	Pull (1) → Push (5)

To examine whether initiatives in the five Nordic countries differ along these parameters, an average score was calculated for each country for each parameter.

The country-level analysis is illustrated in figure 2-1 and includes a simple average for each Nordic country in relation to the five parameters, as well as a trans-Nordic average to allow for a comparison of each country with the trans-Nordic level.

Figure 2-1. Average scores across initiatives in each country along the five communication parameters



Overall, the Nordic countries have had a similar approach when it comes to the first three parameters: *purpose*, *target group* and *extent*. The smallest variation is seen for the parameter *extent* where all countries are closely clustered with a trans-Nordic average of 3.3. It indicates that the communication initiatives in all Nordic countries in general consists of 3-5 components with many of each component. When it comes to the *target group*, the Nordic countries have generally targeted few and varied target groups with a trans-Nordic average of 3.5. Some variation between the countries is seen for the parameter *purpose*. Here, the Norwegian communication initiatives are slightly more specific in their description of a purpose, for instance focusing on the spread of COVID-19 information among a specific population group or encouraging the target group to make informed decisions regarding the vaccine. The initiatives in Finland, on the other hand, often include general COVID-19 information targeting a larger group of the population and have generally defined purposes such as supporting or linking different stakeholders.

There is more variation in the last two parameters, *flexibility* and *communication stream*, across the Nordic countries, which demonstrates differences when it comes to the setup of their communication initiatives and the way they attempt to reach the desired target group. For the parameter *flexibility* the largest difference is seen between Sweden and Finland, where communication initiatives in Sweden have had a more fixed design while the design of communication initiatives in Finland have been more flexible and thus more adaptable to changes and feedback from the target group. This is exemplified by Migrationsverket's (SE) direct distribution of letters to asylum seekers, a rather fixed approach based on a one-way-communication approach compared to the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare's

roundtables where NGOs could bring their concerns to the table (from stakeholder interviews). The trans-Nordic average at 3.2 indicates that the initiatives at a trans-Nordic level include equal amounts of fixed and flexible elements. For the last parameter *communication stream*, the largest difference is seen between Denmark and Finland, where communication initiatives in Denmark provide information that the target group should seek themselves (*pull*) while Finland have been more active in forwarding information to the target group directly (*push*). The trans-Nordic average at 3 indicates an approximately equal distribution of push and pull methods in the outreach and dissemination of public information across the Nordic countries

2.2 Stakeholder-level Analysis

The mapped initiatives have additionally been analysed at the stakeholder level to examine any differences and similarities across the three types of stakeholders, national authorities, local authorities and NGOs, when it comes to the five parameters. As illustrated in figure 2-2, a simple average for each stakeholder type has been calculated and set in comparison with an overall average across all initiatives.

The difference between the three types of stakeholders is minimal when it comes to *purpose*, *target group* and *extent* of the communication initiatives. The three stakeholder types are all situated close to the overall average across initiatives, which indicates that the initiatives by these stakeholders on average have more than one *purpose* with varied precision in the description (average=4), have few and different *target groups* (overall average=3.3), and have an extent defined by either 3-5 components or 1-2 components with a broad reach (average=3.3).

More variation is seen between initiatives driven by the three stakeholder types when it comes to the last two parameters, *flexibility* and *communication stream*, where the largest difference occurs between national authorities and local authorities. With an institutional average of 3.3 for *flexibility* and 2.7 for *communication stream*, the initiatives include equal amounts of fixed and flexible elements, and the stakeholders use an approximately equal distribution of push and pull methods in the outreach and dissemination of public information. The most flexible strategies are, however, deployed by local authorities. The need to continuously adapt to changing restrictions and to receive feedback from the target group is stated by several stakeholders across the Nordic countries, and this has particularly been the case for NGOs and local authorities, who received information on the latest restrictions and recommendations from national authorities.

In addition, national authorities have launched more initiatives that require the target groups to seek information themselves (*pull*), while local authorities have been more active in forwarding information to the target groups directly (*push*). The former is exemplified on the website [Covid.is](https://www.covid.is), an initiative launched by the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management in Iceland, where citizens must seek out the information themselves. The latter is illustrated in the initiative *Corona Guides coordinated by Aarhus Municipality*, through which COVID-related information was actively distributed through local ambassadors, for instance by a door-to-door approach and handing out brochures at local events.



We adjusted all the time. Our strategy was to adjust.

– Representative from a local authority

Figure 2-2. Average scores among initiatives organized by each stakeholder type along the five communication parameters



2.3 Trans-Nordic Analysis on Main Challenges and Learnings

Overall, **three main challenges** related to immigrants as one target group have been pervasive across the stakeholder interviews and literature review in the Nordic countries.

1. Language and cultural barriers: Immigrants and ethnic minorities often possess limited language skills within the country of residence and experience general reading and writing difficulties in their own language. As a result, these groups rarely follow traditional media in the Nordic languages. Different cultural barriers can also make it difficult to reach some immigrant groups or make it difficult for them to comply with restrictions set by authorities. This could for instance be the size of the family, extending the number of people recommended to be included in one's closest social circle⁴ or the culturally different interpretations of symbol and colours. In the Old District of Oslo, they discovered that the symbols used in their information campaign were misunderstood by the Somali target group due to different cultural

4. Covid-19 og etniske minoriteter, Kortlægning af informationskanaler og medier, Realize & DRC Cansk Flygtninghjælp, 2020

interpretations of these symbols⁵.

2. Misinformation and contradictory messages when reading news from several countries: Immigrant and ethnic minorities often seek knowledge and information from their country of origin, either because of the language barrier or due to a lack of trust in the relevant authority. As a result, contradictory messages and misinformation spread among immigrants as they sought information from sources unrelated to Nordic authorities.

3. Frequent changes in restrictions and recommendations: The frequent changes in restrictions and recommendations meant that new caveats had to be continuously communicated to citizens. Translations of restrictions and recommendations therefore had to be adjusted on an ongoing basis. This was time-consuming, difficult and complex, especially due to the short time frame that was given to implement the changes in the communication materials. The frequent changes also made it difficult to keep track of the newest information from the authorities and could result in doubts about which guidelines to follow.

Additionally, two **main learnings** are repeated across stakeholder interviews as well as in the identified literature. These emphasize the importance of collaboration across stakeholders and of developing alternative approaches to communication components and channels rather than communicating 'as usual.'

Women's role in disseminating information to vulnerable target groups

The role of women was not defined as an explicit focus by the public authorities included in the case study. Instead, public authorities were focused on diversity overall among collaborating partners to represent the broadly defined target group with a variety across gender, culture, religion and language. Nevertheless, women played a vital role in some of the identified communication initiatives, especially as actors involved in spreading information to target groups. Specific examples are highlighted in the case studies presented below.

1. Collaboration across stakeholders: In stakeholder interviews, both national and local authorities point out that they learned the importance of collaborating with different actors, being other authorities, civil society, and the target group itself.

By collaborating with civil society, authorities were able to get closer to and engage with the target groups themselves and through civil society. Civil society has existing knowledge and connections with the target groups that many authorities did not possess at the beginning of the pandemic. Trust is essential when communicating with and handing out information to vulnerable groups in society, and the civil society can help establish trust with the target groups on behalf of the authorities. Collaboration across types of stakeholders can also help conquer the challenge with

5. Informing Hard-to-Reach Immigrant Groups about Covid-19 – Reaching the Somali Population in Oslo, Journal Article in Journal of Refugee Studies, Jan-Paul Brekke. 2021

changing restrictions and recommendations.

Collaborating with and adapting one's communication initiatives to feedback from the target groups are also something which many NGOs and authorities acknowledge as a vital approach when reaching the desired target groups. This approach is seen across the Nordics with the use of local ambassadors, role models and networks. Some mention that women in particular have had a role when it comes to disseminating information to vulnerable target groups while others simply point to the importance of having a diverse team which reflects the difference in gender as well as religious and cultural backgrounds among the target groups.

Overall, it is evident from interviews with various stakeholders that authorities need to have established strong internal collaborative ties among colleagues and departments, to have a pre-defined strategy and to ensure a good ongoing relationship with the civil society and local communities, so frameworks for effective collaboration are already built when crises (inevitably) arise.



Good networks and confidential relationships with different actors allow for a rapid response to unexpected needs.

– Representative from a local authority

2. An alternative approach to components and channels: To reach the target groups and address the above-mentioned challenges, various stakeholders across the Nordics have learned that a traditional approach to dissemination of public information is insufficient. In terms of components, many suggest that visual and audio materials as well as face-to-face communication have been more effective than written material in the form of brochures and posters.

Translating messages into the various languages of the target groups has proved not to be enough to overcome barriers when reaching the target groups, as elements such as symbols and colours may be interpreted differently based on cultural and religious backgrounds, and text-based material, often appears complicated, even in the mother tongue. The message thus needs to be adjusted to the specific target groups, so they are formulated in a simple and easily understandable language and related to everyday situations of the target groups.

Many have learned that information should be distributed through channels that the target groups already have trust in and where they can forward the information to others who trust them. Many stakeholders therefore point to alternative channels such as a door-to-door approach, social media, local TV and radio, and local networks and ambassadors as more effective means of reaching the desired target groups, as these channels are already an integrated part of their everyday life. Through this approach, it is also possible for the sender of the communication initiative to get closer to the target groups and to receive feedback on an ongoing

basis.

The main challenges and learnings are summarized in table 2-1.

Table 2-1. Main challenges and learnings identified in the analysis phase 1

3 main challenges

1. A large number of immigrants and ethnic minorities possess limited language skills. As a result, they rarely follow media in the Nordic languages.
2. Many also often seek knowledge and information from their country of origin, because of the language barrier or due to a lack of trust in the relevant authority. As a result, contradictory messages and misinformation could spread.
3. The frequent changes in restrictions and recommendations meant that new caveats had to be continuously communicated to citizens. Translations of restrictions and recommendations therefore had to be adjusted on an ongoing basis.

2 main learnings

1. National and local authorities point out that they learned the importance of collaborating with different actors, being other authorities, civil society, and the target group itself. By collaborating with civil society, authorities were able to get closer to and engage with the target group.
2. To reach the target group and address the above-mentioned challenges, various stakeholders across the Nordics have learned that a traditional approach to dissemination of public information is insufficient. Many suggest that visual and audio materials as well as face-to-face communication have been more effective than written material.

3. CASE STUDIES: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS AND COLLABORATION MODELS

The following pages present overviews and analyses of five Nordic cases of initiatives developed to enable more effective communication to immigrants relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each case is initially presented with an overall case description and a summary of its purpose, the target groups, content, considerations of accessibility and orientation towards user groups, with specific notes on aspects related to women in particular where relevant. Following each case description, an analysis of the case is presented, identifying its placement in relation to the same five dimensions (specificity of purpose, target group range, main focus in terms of knowledge vs. behaviour, ease of accessibility, and a sender vs. receiver user focus). Finally, learning points from each case are presented.

Table 3-1. Explaining the communication parameters used in phase 2

PARAMETER	DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS (SCORING)
Purpose	How well defined the communication initiative is and whether the purpose is reflected in the communication products.	Specific (1) → General (5)
Target group	How well defined and specific the target group is defined.	Narrow (1) → Wide (5)
Main focus	What is the main focus of the initiative – is it on imparting knowledge or promoting/ changing a certain behaviour.	Knowledge (1) → Behaviour (5)
Accessibility	How accessible the content is to the target group - is it easily accessible or more difficult.	Difficult (1) → Easy (5)
User focus	How the focus is on the users and their needs – is it based on the sender's message or based on the needs of the recipient.	Sender (1) → Recipient (5)

Senders, collaborators and receivers:

In phase 2, interviews have been conducted with senders, collaborators and receivers.

Senders are public authorities or NGOs behind a communication product or collaboration forum.




Collaborators are civil society organizations or individuals collaborating with the senders on a communication product or collaboration forum.

Receivers are the target group of the communication product or collaboration forum.

DENMARK

Case overview – Corona Guides Programme Aarhus Municipality, Denmark

Corona guides became the link between the official Aarhus and its immigrant citizens

	Sender: Aarhus Municipality		Target group: Minority and immigrant groups who were difficult to reach through traditional media, and groups who were characterized by high infection rates and low vaccination rates during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many in the target group live in vulnerable residential areas and have different mother tongues than Danish.
	Collaborators: Social housing organizations in Aarhus, the Neighbourhood Mothers (Bydelsmødrene), the civil society and local mosques.		

OVERVIEW

At the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Aarhus Municipality reached out to new and existing contacts in the local community, arranging a series of online meetings to discuss possible strategies for reducing infection rates among immigrants in the municipality. This led to several initiatives in collaboration with civil society organizations, local mosques, the Neighbourhood Mothers etc., one of these being the education of local corona guides.

The corona guides programme was targeted at representatives from the local immigrant communities and helped the municipality reach out to their target group. The corona guides received special training and were equipped with knowledge of the specific health situation to guide and answer questions from people in their local community. They were visible in the local area and played an important role in giving information about isolation guidelines and the official vaccination efforts.

The corona guides were part of a larger communication effort during the COVID-19 pandemic in Aarhus Municipality. The initiative came following the high number of infections among some minority groups. To reach the target group and encourage a change in behaviour to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 (such as self-isolation), it was necessary to gather knowledge and input from the target groups themselves regarding their needs and doubts in the midst of various restrictions and recommendations from the Danish health authorities.

The corona guides played a vital role in the communication efforts of Aarhus Municipality as they were able to spread information efficiently and build trust to the target group. Therefore, it was necessary to encourage representatives from the target group to participate in the corona guide education, because they were

recognisable, they spoke to the target group in their own mother tongue, and they had important know-how about the local communities and their language and cultural barriers. The initiative was an important step in reducing infection rates.

The corona guide initiative is the result of a year-long collaboration model in Aarhus Municipality between local authorities and local representatives from the immigrant communities. This model was also used for specific initiatives during earlier crises.



Women in focus: Aarhus Municipality did not target women specifically for the corona guides programme, but many of the corona guides turned out to be women, either from the organisation of Neighbourhood Mothers or local individuals. For Aarhus Municipality, it was important to educate as many corona guides as possible with as varied backgrounds as possible, i.e. someone who could represent the various target groups, being it their religion, culture, gender, or something else.



Purpose: The corona guides programme is an example of the close cooperation and dialogue between Aarhus Municipality and the immigrant communities in Aarhus. The intention behind the education of corona guides was to make sure that the newest restrictions and information about COVID-19 from the Danish health authorities would reach the groups at risk. The purpose with the general and close cooperation between Aarhus Municipality and key representatives from immigrant groups (which was established prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) is to have a pipeline with a crucial stream of important knowledge and information running in both directions.



Target group: With the corona guides programme, Aarhus Municipality wanted to disseminate information to immigrants who lived in areas with an overrepresentation of infections and hospitalisations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The target group had a low rate of testing and later a low rate of vaccination. Statistical data from the Danish Patient Safety Authority (an institution under the Danish Ministry of Health) showed there was a need to act with extraordinary initiatives in relation to these specific target groups. The education itself was targeted at resource persons who represented their local communities, and who could thus help disseminate the information directly to the target group.



Main focus: Specifically, the corona guides were responsible for communicating with the target groups and provide feedback to Aarhus Municipality about the needs of the people in areas with high infection rates. Aarhus Municipality had weekly meetings with representatives from the local communities, civil society organisations etc. At the meetings, it was decided to educate individuals from the local communities and equip them with knowledge on health. Through three course sessions which were facilitated by nurses, the corona guides were more able and well equipped to answer questions about COVID-19, testing, isolation, vaccinations etc. The guides' experience working in the community was then fed back into innovation in the programme: Through the knowledge and experience that the corona guides gained in the field, Aarhus Municipality was able to produce better targeted communication contents like flyers, posters, and other content intended for Facebook and WhatsApp.



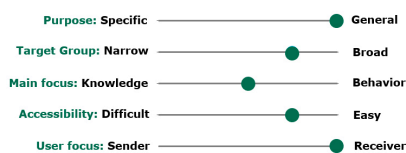
Accessibility: The feedback and input from the corona guides who were educated influenced both the content and the choice of communication channels. As a result, videos about how to isolate correctly and the vaccination programme were for example produced in a way that was targeted immigrant groups.



User focus: There was a heavy user focus on the choice of languages, level of complexity, and communication channels. As immigrant groups are very diverse, for example when it comes to different mother tongues, Aarhus Municipality had to include corona guides who spoke different languages. Also, the communication material produced had to reflect the language diversity in the local communities. Furthermore, the content produced was primarily targeted for WhatsApp and Facebook which are the social media channels that are mostly used by the target groups. The corona guides also knocked doors and delivered flyers directly to the target group. Therefore, Aarhus.

Municipality made sure to produce the flyers in different languages, with clear, readable messages without a lot of text.

Case analysis – *Corona Guides Programme*



In the Aarhus Municipality, the corona guide initiative had a **broadly defined purpose and target group** (a score of 5 and 4, respectively). With the purpose of disseminating information on COVID-19 to citizens speaking other languages than Danish and living in areas with high contamination risks, Aarhus Municipality addressed many COVID-related topics and issues at the same time, leaving no one out of the target group and remaining open to potential changes in the situation.

The primary focus with the corona guides, both regarding the training curriculum and the content of the materials, was to share knowledge and inform the target group about the current situation and restrictions. However, the initiative also aimed, in partnership with the corona guides and civil society, to encourage behaviour change among the target group to help prevent infection, for example by encouraging handwashing and testing. The focus was thus **knowledge-based with behavioural change as a secondary focus** (score of 3).

Together with the corona guides and in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders from the civil society, Aarhus Municipality made an effort to create communication products with **content that was accessible to the target group** (score of 4), e.g., with emphasis on visual content such as illustrations and videos as well as short, readable text-based messages. The message was thus readable to those in the target group struggling with reading long texts, either due to illiteracy or lack of understanding of Danish. Both the senders and recipients of the content from the municipality additionally agree that an emphasis on visual elements is helpful when communicating to the target group.

The corona guides helped Aarhus Municipality increase their user focus. The content of the communication products disseminated with help from the corona guides was developed with a **clear focus on users and their needs** (score of 5). Through the direct collaboration with the civil society and representatives from the target group, the municipality could gather feedback on an ongoing basis and adapt the content and messages of their products to better reflect the needs of the target group. In Aarhus Municipality, they already had an established contact and close collaboration with the civil society, and this made it easier for them to quickly reach out to the civil society for help at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.



It was not just a collaboration; it was more engaging than that.

– Representative from Aarhus Municipality, sender behind the corona guide initiative

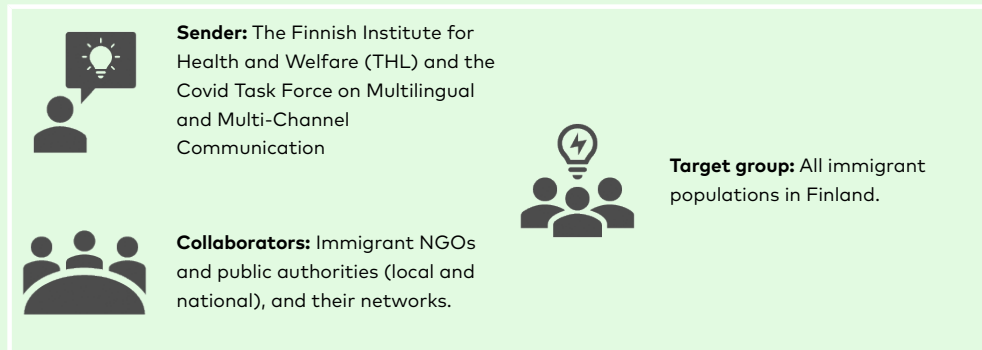
Learning points from this case:

- Cooperation with the civil society and representatives of the target group is vital when it comes to extent and dissemination of important information during times of crises. Through good connections to key stakeholders, mutual trust is built both with the authorities and immigrant communities. Active cooperation and connections should thus be built, maintained, and prioritised outside times of crises.
- When communicating to immigrants, it is necessary to think about how to reach them. Think about which kind of channels the user group already uses and try to target the messages to them. This includes reflecting over cultural and language barriers, level of complexity in produced communication, as well as choice of communication channels.
- It is vital to keep an ongoing dialogue about good solutions with local NGOs and key representatives from the communities. Their knowledge about the target group is key when it comes to producing the right content.
- Public authorities need to think outside the box and be open to new types of initiatives and communication methods. This is necessary to have a fruitful collaboration with the civil society and to build trust to the target group.

FINLAND

Case overview – *Roundtable discussions* The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Finland

Finland's public agencies and immigrant-community NGOs work together on communication initiatives via roundtables



OVERVIEW

The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) gathered immigrant NGOs and public authorities in roundtable dialogues at the national and local levels to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccinations, and multilingual communication to immigrant communities. This was one third of an initiative that also included two other roundtable discussions: one for the health and social sectors and one for communication professionals.

The roundtables were established by the cross-ministerial Covid Task Force on Multilingual and Multi-Channel Communication in the late spring of 2020.

The NGO roundtable held meetings at various intervals depending on the situation. At the beginning, meetings were held once a month. Often the planned agenda had to be rewritten due to urgent and rising needs.

The NGO roundtable was considered a success as it helped to create a dialogue between the actors, to brainstorm ideas, and to initiate concrete actions and products. For the public authorities, the concrete-added value was the chance to understand the needs of the immigrant communities in Finland. This helped to create relevant materials for different channels.

The roundtable became important in creating and strengthening trust between the immigrant NGOs and communities and the various public authorities. At largest, in 2020-2021, there were approximately 25-30 participants. As of 2022, there are around 10 participants.



Women in focus: The role of women was important and was discussed during the NGO roundtables throughout the process. The importance of women as node communicators was recognised especially within the Arab, Somali and Kurd communities. It was important that such efforts were planned jointly and openly with the people from the communities. Consideration was also given to the location of specific information, other communication activities, and discussions, so that the location itself also enabled participation by acting as a neutral and safe space for all participants. Municipal buildings, NGO office or other places were chosen for the location to be accessible to all groups and subgroups.



Purpose: The overall purpose was to link the authorities and immigrant NGOs together. A two-way dialogue process was facilitated to disseminate information and discuss the needs of the target group as well as possible solutions and how to distribute good practices. In addition, the roundtable helped distribute information about various multilingual materials and good practices within communication and outreach. In addition, it also served the purpose as a peer group that supported its members. In this way, the roundtable aimed at becoming a win-win model by enabling a two-way dialogue that could bring benefit to both the immigrant NGOs and the public authorities.



Target group: The target group for the initiatives and products discussed at the NGO roundtable was the immigrant populations in Finland.



Main focus: The NGO roundtable was an important element in trying to create and improve multilingual communication overall. As the responsible authority, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) decided to support and coordinate multilingual communication that was at the level of practice carried out by the various municipalities responsible for social and health services, and the different NGOs on their part.



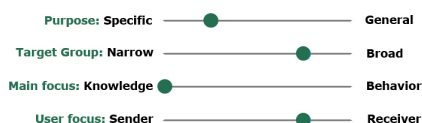
Accessibility: The roundtable communicated in Finnish. Special stress was given to language awareness and clear language, however, the discussions at the roundtable were not translated. The NGO roundtable was targeted at culturally diverse NGOs which could reach out to various immigrant target groups. Thus, for example traditional Finnish NGOs (without a specific focus on immigrants) were not included in the roundtable, as they were not seen to be able to reach out and communicate to target audiences.

Generally, the idea was to have communication coming from various directions and channels. Some more specific efforts were also made in this respect. For example, for the Somali community specific smaller "roundtables" were organised so firstly there was a joint discussion and then subgroups for men and women separately to facilitate discussions in accordance with cultural understandings. Certain themes within multilingual communication were also highlighted by the THL as a result of the roundtable discussions (for example distribution channels in immigrant media such as radio and tv, and the need to send information and make cooperation guides with the mosques).



User focus: The NGO roundtable was targeted at culturally diverse NGOs which could reach out to various immigrant target groups. As the roundtable evolved, it also helped to anticipate what was coming. For example, the authorities could explain what kind of data would be released with regard to how COVID-19 spreads in the immigrant population and how the vaccination efforts were going with immigrant communities. The NGOs were able to anticipate which needs and concerns would probably arise as roll-out of vaccination evolved.

Case analysis – Roundtable discussions



With the roundtable discussions between public authorities and immigrant NGOs, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) wanted to strengthen the link between the public authorities and civil society in Finland and facilitate a dialogue with a two-way communication stream on how to disseminate information to immigrants. This is considered a rather **specific definition of the purpose** (score of 2), although adaptable to non-COVID-19 specific situations. As an example, the roundtable brought up a new topic in the spring of 2022 on multilingual communication in the face of the war in Ukraine.

The target group is broadly defined as immigrant communities in Finland (score of 4). A sub-roundtable was then created when the need for more specific targeting emerged, e.g., an increased focus on women or on the Somali community. The main focus of the roundtable discussions was for public authorities and the civil society to share knowledge and gain a better understanding of the target group. In interviews with the THL and collaborators involved in the roundtable, it is evident that the improvement of multilingual communication was discussed more than the change of behaviour among the target group. In general, discussions were more centralised around how the senders of communication initiatives could improve their content and better reach the target group. Thus, **the main focus of the roundtable discussions themselves is considered knowledge-based** (score of 1). However, since they were focused on building capacity for more effective communication, it is likely that they in turn enabled communication initiatives that included objectives related to behaviour change.

A broad range of culturally diverse immigrant NGOs were invited to participate in the roundtable discussions. Instead of including the large Finnish NGOs, the THL focused primarily on NGOs with a close link to the target group. Additionally, it was important that the NGOs included in the roundtable discussions were representative of the cultures, religions, and languages. In general, it was important for the THL that the roundtable discussions, both in terms of the participants and the topics discussed, reflected the target group and their needs. This indicates **a clear user focus centralised around the needs of the target group** (score of 4).



The Round Table was about understanding the needs of all COVID-communication recipients better.

– Representative from NGO, collaborator in roundtable discussions

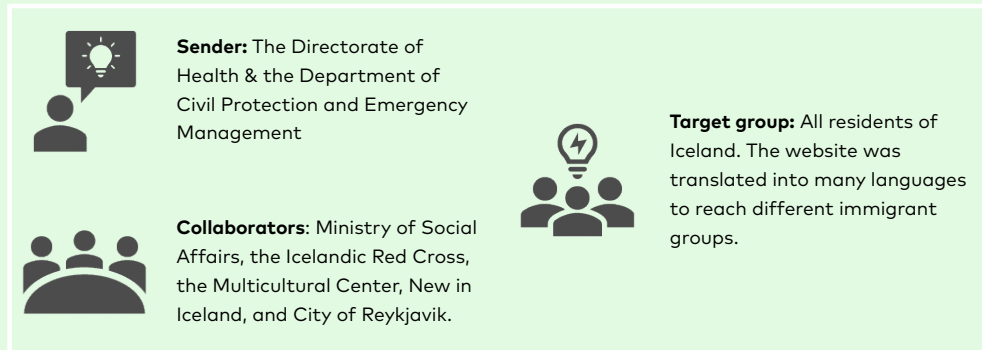
Learning points from this case:

- It is vital to bring in more actors to the table when attempting to find good solutions for how to communicate to specific target groups. Bringing immigrant NGOs into a coordinated setup with public authorities in Finland has helped the two-way information stream and it is important for the mutual trust of both parties – especially during times of crises.
- It is essential that the authorities cooperate with the NGOs who have better possibilities of accessing knowledge about target groups. The NGOs can possess good knowhow on how best to create media and communication contents that can target these groups and have an impact.
- Short videos are generally a good way to reach out, not only to immigrant populations, but also to the general public. Videos are easy to distribute in the various channels that different target groups use and follow.
- It is crucial for the target group's receiving of contents to keep a clear language and low level of complexity (if it is not possible to be multilingual). It is especially important to signal diversity in all visual elements. The latter is necessary also when one communicates in the native tongue.

ICELAND

Case overview – *Covid.is* The Directorate of Health & the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management, Iceland

With a website as a "one-stop shop" the citizens of Iceland found help with navigating the COVID-19 pandemic



OVERVIEW

The Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management built a web platform along with The Directorate of Health to gather all needed information about the COVID-19 disease and related information.

The idea with the website covid.is was a "one-stop shop" place where everyone could get all the relevant information, they needed about COVID-19 as residents of and tourists in Iceland. This included updated information about the virus itself, updated restrictions, isolation guidelines and requirements, and related statistics. The website also gathered material with guidelines that organisations could download, print, and put up in their workplaces.

All the information on the website was available in Icelandic, English and Polish. The most important information about restrictions and how to reduce the risk of contracting the virus was also made available in Arabic, French, Farsi, German, Kurdish, Lithuanian, Spanish and Thai.



Women in focus: Covid.is had a focus on increased domestic violence in situations like the COVID-19 pandemic where many people needed to stay at home. The responsible authorities for covid.is had information about where to reach out regarding domestic violence and this information was translated to the other languages. However, civil society organisations such as the Red Cross and others worked more closely with victims of domestic violence during the period than the sending organisations themselves.



Purpose: The purpose of covid.is was to gather all COVID-19 related information in one place. Although not all information was translated into all languages, it was important for the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management to signal to immigrant communities that they are equally a part of society and not forgotten during times of crises.



Target group: Immigrant groups constitute a small proportion of the overall target group and are small populations overall, as the immigrant groups constitute approximately 15 % of the combined population of less than 400,000 in Iceland. The Polish community is the largest of these, accounting for approximately 40 % of the immigrants in Iceland.



Main focus: The Directorate of Health & the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management initiated campaigns in Icelandic, including posters communicating COVID-19 recommendations and advertising the *covid.is* website on social media and around the cities, for example at bus stops. On the website, detailed information was provided in at least 15 subpages describing topics like *Information and statistics on vaccinations against COVID-19*, *Testing due to symptoms*, and *Recommendations*. There were also subpages on, for example, *Quarantine*, *Travel*, *If you have COVID-19*, *After COVID-19 infection*, *Effective restrictions on gatherings*, and *Iceland's response*.

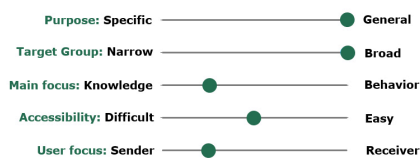


Accessibility: The languages chosen for covid.is were based on the assessment of whether members of a particular ethnic group were able to understand the information in English. Not all content was available in all languages, but it was a big priority to make the most important information accessible in all languages. Apart from immigrant groups, the senders also wished to make information on covid.is accessible to people with disabilities and vulnerable groups who needed support.



User focus: The website contained an online chat forum where citizens could ask questions. Aside from this, the Directorate of Health & Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management was not in direct contact with the target group. The direct contact with the target group was mainly done by civil society organisations such as the Red Cross.

Case analysis – Covid.is



The purpose of disseminating information through the covid.is website was, for the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management in Iceland, to provide general information on the COVID-19 pandemic to the whole population. The translations on the website contributed to the overall and **broadly defined purpose** (score of 5) and helped to reach out to a **broad audience** (score of 5), also those speaking other languages than Icelandic.

With a primary focus on sharing knowledge and spreading the most necessary information to the whole population, **the main focus of the website was entirely knowledge-based** (score of 2). Here, citizens could become updated on the latest travel restrictions, testing information, recommendations for self-isolation etc. However, more efforts in regard to changing the behaviour of citizens did not appear through this website.

The content on the website became more accessible to the target group throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. At the beginning, the target group found it difficult to navigate the website and the translations were insufficient and inadequate. In general, the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management struggled with finding a good approach to the translations that had to be published soonest possible after the introduction of a new regulation. **The content of the website was thus not made entirely accessible to the target group** (score of 3) although it appears in interviews with recipients of the translations that the accessibility improved throughout the pandemic.

The entire website and its content were primarily developed with point of departure in the main messages of the sender. Users were not involved and feedback was not collected. It is evident from interviews with recipients that they would have appreciated to be more involved. Had representatives from the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management for instance visited the mosques or reached

out to the religious leaders, the community would have been made more aware of the website and the information available through there. **User involvement was thus low** (score of 2) and only occurred indirectly through a third party, such as the Red Cross.



With time, I became less and less dependent on other individuals. I knew more and more how to use the website.

– Representative from the target group, covid.is website


Learning points from this case:

- A prerequisite for reaching different groups in society is to translate important information into other languages, not only the main language of the country (Icelandic in this case) and English. Choose the languages that it makes sense to the target groups in your country/local area. Statistical data and dialogue with the target groups can support the choice of languages.
- Translations are not enough. Make information available in an accessible way for the target group by e.g., being aware of the level of complexity in the information provided.
- Find out how to reach the different target groups, for example through mosques, churches, Facebook groups, schools etc.


NORWAY

Case overview – *Dialogue Meetings* The Norwegian Institute of Public Health (FHI), Norway


Dialogue meetings between authorities and minorities open for two-way communication and learning



Senders: The Norwegian Institute of Public Health (FHI), the Norwegian Directorate of Health (HD), the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi), Oslo Municipality: City Council for Work, Integration and Social Services.



Collaborators: CARITAS, Islamic Council (Islamsk Råd), The Organization Against Public Discrimination (OMOD), The Cultural Consultant (Kulturkonsulenten), NorSom News, Resource and Integration Center for Afghan Refugees (RISAF) and others.



Target group: Minority and immigrant groups characterised by high infection rates and low vaccination rates.

OVERVIEW

The Norwegian Institute of Public Health (FHI) established dialogue meetings with immigrants and their descendants as these groups were heavily overrepresented among confirmed cases of infection, hospitalisations, and deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic. To reach the target group with the relevant COVID-19 information, it was necessary to gain knowledge and input from the target group itself about how to target and adapt communications in terms of language, channel selection, and content. The knowledge and input from the target groups, it was believed, would help strengthen the ability to spread information more effectively and to make sure that necessary COVID-19 information would reach at-risk groups.

The actors involved were governmental organisations, municipalities, voluntary organisations, and resource groups from the Norwegian society. The meetings were held digitally via Microsoft Teams.

The dialogue meetings consisted of various online Microsoft Teams meetings where all participants (public agencies, NGOs and other community actors) were invited. Since the first meeting in June 2020, 38 dialogue meetings have been held.



Women in focus: Women and men were involved to an equal extent in the dialogue meetings. However, women have proved to be an important contributor in spreading health information within immigrant and minority communities, as they often have opportunities to engage in different networks and channels to spread information. But fundamentally, it is crucial to make use of resource people and micro-influencers in local environments, including both men and women who can represent the target groups.



Purpose: The purpose of establishing the dialogue networks was to obtain knowledge, input, and advice on how the health authorities could reach immigrant communities with information about the corona virus to limit infection and the burden of disease. The dialogue meetings enabled cooperation between immigrant communities and health authorities to jointly design more adapted measures to reduce infection. In addition to this, the dialogue meetings established an important arena for further sharing of infection control measures, vaccination, and other measures within the immigrant communities' own channels and networks.



Target group: The target groups were minority and immigrant groups characterised by disproportionately high infection rates, morbidity, mortality, and low vaccination rates in the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. Authorities referred to updated statistics on overrepresentation of nationality groups among those diagnosed with infection and hospitalised to form the selection of participants to invite. Certain groups were particularly affected, including immigrant groups from Pakistan, Poland, Somalia, Iraq, Turkey, and Afghanistan.



Main focus: During the meetings, information was provided about the corona vaccination programme and the authorities' work in terms of communication measures aimed at the immigrant population and monitoring and following-up of vaccine coverage. The participants also shared information about their activities related to the pandemic, and they provided input on possible barriers about testing, tracing, quarantine and isolation. But also understanding of illness, consequences of absence from work, in addition to information about and understanding of TISK (testing, isolation, tracking and quarantine) and availability for testing. The dialogue meetings resulted, among other things, in closer cooperation between health authorities' communication

departments and minority media channels.

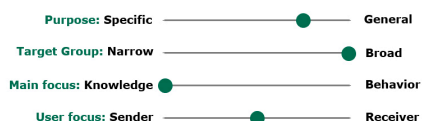


Accessibility: Through the dialogue meetings, it was possible for the health authorities to receive input and knowledge about the immigrant groups' different needs and thereby adapt the information they would send out to the target group. Feedback and input from the dialogue meetings have influenced the content and form of communication about COVID-19 and the vaccination programme to better reach immigrant groups. The dialogue meetings made it possible to collaborate with many of the resource persons and organisations in their own communication efforts by providing concrete input and quality-assured information which they then distributed through their own channels and networks.



User focus: Participating minority organisations and community representatives indicated that their needs were heard, and that the input given was considered by their public-sector dialogue partners. They experienced that the dialogue meetings contributed to an experience of inclusion, and that the gap between immigrant groups and authorities has narrowed as a result. This has built trust between the minority representatives and the authorities. Despite this, they also expressed a demand for better management and anchoring of the process, so that input could be implemented to a greater extent.

Case analysis – Dialogue meetings, The Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Norway



The dialogue meetings organised by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (FHI) had a **broadly defined purpose and target group** (score of 4 and 5, respectively). In interviews with the sender of the initiative and the NGOs involved as collaborators, the purpose is not clearly defined but is rather described as a knowledge-sharing forum established because of the public authorities' dependence on the civil society and their connection with the target group. Additionally, it is evident that the purpose was to reduce infection among immigrants and their descendants, but it was not specified further. Even though the target group was broadly defined as all immigrant groups, it is important to point out that in dialogue meetings it was sometimes decided to focus on more specific target groups based on regularly updated statistics on infection rates and hospitalisation.

The dialogue meetings were **primarily focused on knowledge-sharing**. Instead of looking for ways to change the behaviour of the target group, the FHI was open to receive information from the NGOs on the target group, their needs and experiences when being communicated to. The main focus of the dialogue meetings is thus considered entirely knowledge-based (score of 1)

With their involvement of the NGOs and representatives from the target group, the FHI wanted to establish a more direct connection to the target group. The NGOs were able to pass on information from the FHI to the target group but could also return the feedback from the target group to the FHI and in general help the FHI keeping a user focus. In interviews with collaborators involved in the dialogue meetings, being NGOs and representatives of the target group, they point out that the dialogue meetings succeeded in making the target group feel heard and involved. However, the collaborators also point out that they not always saw their input implemented in the final products of the FHI. In an interview, the FHI acknowledged that they experienced difficulties with meeting the needs of the target group and the user focus of the dialogue meetings is thus given a score of 3, reflecting **both a user-oriented and a sender-oriented approach** (score of 3).



The dialogue meetings were based on curiosity.

– The Norwegian Institute of Public Health (FHI), sender behind the dialogue meetings

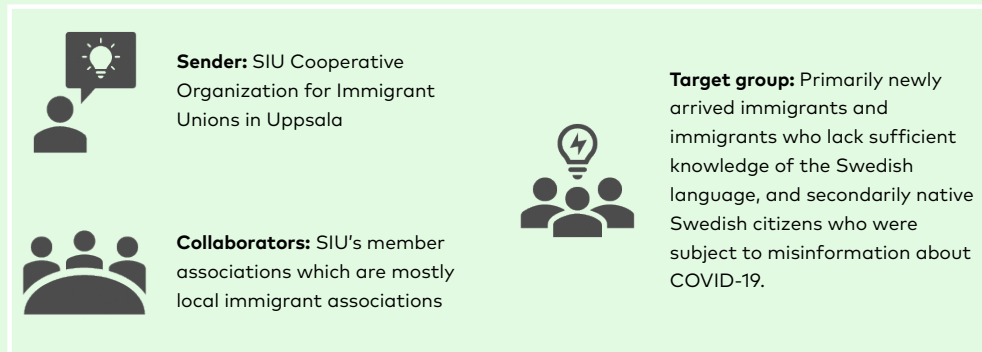
Learning points from this case:

- Establish dialogue meetings with representatives from immigrant groups to create an important arena for gaining valuable insight, information, and input from these communities, in addition to creating trust in the authorities and an experience of inclusion.
- Establish and maintain dialogue meetings in advance of a pandemic or crisis. Having established trust and credibility at the forefront will contribute to the involvement of immigrant communities and the early initiation of measures.
- Create managerial anchoring and ensure that there are financial resources that can create a foundation for initiating communication and information measures in order to reach the immigrant population.
- For future crisis preparedness: Use knowledge from dialogue meetings in health prevention to ensure that information reaches minority communities.
- Use dialogue meetings in other areas of society: work and welfare, police/crime, child and family protection, health, etc. to obtain valuable information and to reach out with important information to minority communities.

SWEDEN

Case overview – Local WhatsApp Outreach SIU – Cooperative Organization for Immigrant Unions in Uppsala, Sweden

Saving lives with reliable information at the right time



OVERVIEW

The Cooperative Organization for Immigrant Unions in Uppsala (SIU) received daily information about the COVID-19 virus and restrictions directly from Uppsala Region who are responsible for health care in Uppsala and the surrounding area, and sent it in a succinct form to approximately 15 of its member associations, which translated it to various languages. Volunteers from the member associations then disseminated the information through WhatsApp groups to the target groups.

The SIU is an umbrella organisation for approximately 40 immigrant associations in Uppsala and has operated since 1986. The SIU started the initiative with the WhatsApp group when they noticed that disinformation about the Covid pandemic was spreading within their members' local communities, predominantly through WhatsApp.

The initiative was also partly a reaction to the news that the Somali community in Stockholm was heavily affected by COVID-19, with five of the first 15 confirmed deaths in Stockholm being Somali Swedes. The reasons for the heavy death toll among Swedes with a Somali background are not yet known, but it has been suggested that the lack of accessible information might be a contributing factor. Other factors may include many Somali Swedes' housing situation (typically small flats and/or intergenerational housing) and the labour market position (impossibility of working from home and/or extensive contact with clients/patients/visitors while working).

With this initiative, the SIU targeted many different communities. Information was provided in more than 15 different languages and sent through various WhatsApp groups. Through the WhatsApp groups, members could find fast and reliable

information in their own language daily. The SIU also broadcasted messages through its radio channel and produced communicative posters with translated and easily accessible information about current restrictions.

The SIU cooperated with both Uppsala Region, Uppsala Municipality, and the County Board of Uppsala, receiving daily updates from them about the pandemic and public restrictions, and later vaccinations. The SIU did not receive any additional funding for their communication efforts, and all the work was done by volunteers engaged in member associations and local communities. As the SIU does not have any health care expertise, it was important for the organisation that the information and facts they disseminated came directly from Uppsala Region.



Women in focus: Interviewed sending organisations, NGOs and target group members did not mention any particular gender-related aspects in relation to this case.



Purpose: The reason for the SIU to set up the WhatsApp groups was to work against false information which was being widespread in several immigrant communities in Uppsala. False information started spreading especially on WhatsApp with misinformation that did not correspond to facts about the new COVID-19 virus and the official restrictions to stop the spreading of the virus. Working by the motto "Right information at the right time saves lives", the SIU intended to make sure the individuals in immigrant communities could stay safe and act according to public restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, by spreading updated and official information in an accessible way. As WhatsApp groups can include up to 512 people, and as people often forward chain messages, it was easy to target large crowds among the target group by using this communication platform.



Target group: The target group of the initiative was broadened by targeting both newly arrived immigrants and immigrants who lack sufficient knowledge of the Swedish language (primarily) and ethnic Swedes who were subject to misinformation about COVID-19 (secondarily). Both men and women of all ages and ethnicities were thus included in the target group and not only people with immigrant backgrounds. Basically, the initiative targeted all people who needed accessible and easy information in different languages.



Main focus: The content of the messages was focused on information from Uppsala Region and contained facts about COVID-19. Each language had its own WhatsApp group. People could join the groups to access updated and reliable information about the spread of the corona virus and the recommendations from the health authorities and experts. It was even possible for the target group to ask questions in the groups and receive answers in their own language, based on information from Uppsala Region. In some cases, the SIU association also gathered the members' questions and hosted a meeting with a senior doctor at the local hospital who answered the questions with the help of a translator.

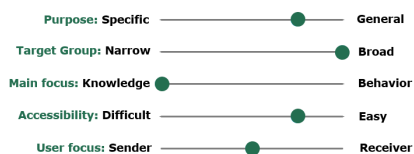


Accessibility: The messages were translated into 15 languages to reach as many groups in society as possible and the texts were short and precise in their formulation. WhatsApp was chosen as the main channel as it was routinely used by many in the target group, and because it was important to compete against the many messages with misinformation about COVID-19 circulated through WhatsApp by distributing reliable, timely information.



User focus: As disinformation about Covid-19 spread in local communities, it became difficult for some people to distinguish between reliable and unreliable information. Some individuals in the target group also received information from other countries and sources other than the Swedish authorities, with the potential risk of increasing confusion over health-care restrictions. The SIU decided to start the WhatsApp groups to prevent and eliminate confusion. Volunteers also made personal contact with people that they knew to have difficulties receiving or could not understand written information. In addition, translations were made with the target group's cultural interpretation in mind. The messages were thus not simply translated but also adapted to the cultural background of the target group.

Case Analysis – WhatsApp groups, Cooperative Organization for Immigrant Unions in Uppsala (SIU), Sweden



With the purpose of providing fact-based information and avoiding the spread of misinformation among immigrants with limited understanding of the Swedish language, both the **purpose and the target group are considered broadly defined** (score of 4 and 5, respectively) for the WhatsApp groups organised by the Cooperative Organization for Immigrant Unions in Uppsala (SIU).

As the WhatsApp groups were centralised around communicating correct and fact-based information, **knowledge is considered the main focus** of the initiative and the content provided in the text messages (score of 1). SIU made an effort to keep improving the accessibility of the translated messages sent through WhatsApp (score of 4). In an interview with the SIU, the importance of shortening and translating texts is highlighted as a contributing factor to the accessibility of the messages. They learned the importance of formulating short texts and to translate the messages into the languages of the target group. Additionally, when a misleading or confusing translation was brought to their attention, they made sure to change it. In general, they discovered that they should be careful with the words selected for the translations when making messages accessible to the target group. It then became important to have translators with an understanding of the language and culture.

The user focus of the WhatsApp groups is given a score of 3, indicating a **balance between involving the perspectives of the target group through the NGOs and similarly having a clear and predefined message**. The user perspective was mainly used to provide correct translations and to ensure an understanding of the needs of the target group.

”

We were able to understand the language and summarize the information in an understandable language for the target group.

– Representative from NGO, collaborator in the WhatsApp groups

Learning points from this case:

- To reach the target group, you must enter the terrain they already interact with. In the example of this case, WhatsApp was an important communication channel to enter, as it was routinely used by many in the target group for communication and receipt of information from existing networks.
- Civil society is an important resource that needs to be activated, especially during crises. Municipalities and regions should be aware of this and take advantage of key representatives from immigrant communities who can serve as gatekeepers. National government authorities should reach out and explore how to use civil society's knowledge, connections to and trust within local communities.
- It is vital to adjust and tailor important information in the right way when reaching out to immigrant communities. This can be expressed through the choice of language, level of complexity, and choice of communication channels. In addition, it is not sufficient to translate information word by word, as the original tone or message may be altered depending on the target group's cultural background.

4. LEARNING FROM COVID-19: TRANS-NORDIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic are in the following chapter summarised in a set of trans-Nordic policy recommendations with the aim of providing public authorities with recommended actions on how to reach and disseminate public information to immigrants. The recommendations are meant to help public authorities in their preparation for when the need for communicating to immigrants emerges again, as it did during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The trans-Nordic policy recommendations have been developed based on the mapping of communication initiatives across the Nordics, the analysis of trans-Nordic challenges and learnings, and the case study with an in-depth analysis of collaboration models and communication products. The recommendations thus bring the different parts of the analysis to a close.

4.1.1 Continuous development of communication strategy and collaboration forum

The above-mentioned collaboration models and communication products have in common that they were developed amid a societal crisis where decisions had to be made quickly and the need for immediate and effective solutions grew as infection rates increased. A recurrent point made by both collaborators and senders of collaboration models and communication products is **the importance of having a communication strategy ready when the need for disseminating information to immigrants emerges.**

In interviews with the actors involved in collaboration models and communication products, they express that they did not have a clearly defined communication strategy when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the need for launching communication initiatives with a specific focus on immigrants emerged. The communication strategies behind the collaboration models and communication products were instead developed in a process with several trials and errors resulting in a number of setbacks. In Aarhus Municipality in Denmark, for instance, they made several attempts to reach out and target immigrants. They created different types of communication products and distributed them both to the civil society and to the target groups directly to make it more likely they would reach the target groups and be interpreted as intended. This is highlighted by the THL and the NGOs involved in the roundtable discussions in Finland as well. It took time to build trust among the actors involved and to achieve a two-way dialogue where everyone felt they could participate on equal terms. In their belief, had the THL already established a strategy and structure for how to engage with the NGOs, they could likely have saved time and been able to react instantly to the COVID-19 crisis.

The lack of preparation and the limited knowledge of how the situation during COVID-19 would evolve is partly reflected in the broad definitions of purpose and

target group of the collaboration models and communication products highlighted in the cases. In interviews with actors involved, both senders and collaborators, it is evident that the purpose behind their initiative is difficult to define. Their descriptions are not only broad but also vary from each other. In general, the definitions are clearly impacted by the fast-paced development of the situation during the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainties faced by society in that period.

The broadly defined target groups and purposes for most of the collaboration models and communication products also reflect **a degree of flexibility and adaptability of the communication strategies**. The broad definitions are partly explained by senders' lack of knowledge and ability to predict the situation as it evolved during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also by their work adapting to changes and remaining open to emerging needs of the target group as they developed and adjusted their initiatives – in terms of the groups targeted as well as the communication channels and products used.

The flexibility of communication strategies helped senders ensure a degree of accessibility in their communication products. To make a poster or a WhatsApp message accessible to the target group, including making it easy to interpret and readable for people with limited language skills, it was essential for senders to receive input and feedback from the civil society and the target group itself on how to improve the products. This is exemplified in the case of WhatsApp groups organised by the SIU in Sweden where they continuously adjusted the translations based on feedback from the civil society and the target group. Additionally, in Aarhus Municipality in Denmark, the flexibility and adaptability of their communication strategy contributed to the accessibility of their communication products. Through regular meetings with the civil society and dialogues with the corona guides, the municipality welcomed new input and perspectives on how to make products more accessible to the target group.

In the highlighted cases, the **need for creating a strategy that represents the target group, their cultural background, language, religion etc.**, is singled out by senders as well as by collaborators and receivers of collaboration models and communication products. In all cases the user focus is either balanced between the sender's message and the recipient's needs or almost entirely centralised around the recipient's needs. Although it is evident that the senders in the highlighted cases had great focus on the needs of the target group they were concurrently challenged when it came to mirroring the target group, building trust and making sure that the target group felt seen and represented in the communication initiatives and products. There are several ways of making sure the strategy reflects the needs of the target group and one is establishing and maintaining a close relationship with the civil society.

Another way of ensuring that the communication strategy reflects the needs of the target group is for the public authorities to increase diversity in their teams responsible for the dissemination of public information to immigrants. This not only helps strengthen trust between the public authorities and the target group but also makes the development of communication products and collaboration models more effective. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became clear that the processes of translating materials on an ongoing basis were time consuming and resource demanding for the public authorities. Collaborating with the civil society and resource persons on translations helped the public authorities, but it is evident that they would have benefited from internal resources with good knowledge and

understanding of the culture and language of the target group.



The public authorities should get out of their comfort zone and discuss how we should really cooperate with the NGOs and the immigrant communities. And this should be done when there is no crisis going on.

– Representative from NGO collaborator in the roundtable discussions

The Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management in Iceland had to prioritise among the languages when translating the material on the covid.is website. They decided to only translate the most important messages into all languages and instead focus on Polish and English for the majority of the website content. Additionally, they were challenged when it came to following the pace of changes in restrictions and recommendations to be published on the website, and this would be reflected in the final translations which in some cases were difficult to understand.

In several of the cases, senders of collaboration models and communication products benefited from their existing contacts and relationship with the civil society. **Having and activating existing contacts enabled them to reach out to relevant actors early in the process** and include their perspectives in the development of communication products, making use of their knowledge of and contact to the target group. This was the case for the dialogue meetings held by the FHI in Norway, which were established on the basis of an existing network of NGOs. Similarly for the corona guide initiative, the first move of Aarhus Municipality was to reach out for help among existing contacts in the civil society.

When collaborating with the civil society, public authorities should be aware that these organisations operate differently, they are often driven by volunteers and have limited resources. While the public authorities are dependent on the civil society to reach the target group and develop communication initiatives and products that are representative of the target group, the civil society organisations are equally dependent on the capacity and resources of the public authorities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the public authorities had access to recent statistics and the latest knowledge of the situation which they then distributed to the civil society who helped translate and shorten down the messages.

Finally, some representatives of the public authorities who were involved in the development of communication initiatives recommend that valuable insight can be gained through the establishment and use of collaboration networks between public authorities at different levels of government and across different areas, for example between different national and local governments, between different local governments, and between agencies working in different areas of responsibility. As many of the principles and good practices which are for effective communication to immigrants are likely to apply across as well as within national contexts, an

important role may also be filled by international fora of public authorities, including trans-Nordic networks.

In table 4-1, the recommendations for how the public authorities ensure continuous development of their communication strategy and collaboration forum.



It was a bit unclear and sometimes a difficult language. I sometimes had to read it a few times to understand it.

– Representative from the target group, receiver of the covid.is website

Table 4-1. Trans-Nordic policy recommendations for continuous development of communication strategy and collaboration fora

	Recommendation	Description
	It is recommended that decision-makers ensure that their own organisations are structured and resourced in a way that enables effective communication to immigrant communities:	
1	Allocate resources and establish a team in your organisation whose main responsibility is to revise the strategy, monitor collaboration with external partners and disseminate the information to the target group.	It is important to be prepared for situations when the need for launching a communication initiative targeting immigrants emerges. Having a pre-defined team with allocated resources ready for when a launch becomes relevant is essential for the public authorities to be proactive and situate themselves ahead of any unforeseen challenges and barriers.
2	Increase diversity in your teams. The teams should be diverse and, to the extent possible, include team members with understanding of the different cultures and languages of the target group.	With a diverse team, the public authority gains better understanding of the target group. Formulating the strategy and developing the communication initiative as well as translating the material becomes more efficient when internalising the work. Additionally, the target group's reception of the messages improves when they feel represented and heard.

It is recommended that the public authorities strengthen their capacity for effective communication with immigrant communities by increasing collaboration with other actors, including civil society organisations with connections in immigrant communities as well as relevant experts in fields relating to essential communication campaigns:

3	<p>Establish and monitor a collaboration forum with the civil society and key stakeholders who are representatives of the target group and who can provide ongoing feedback on communication initiatives and products.</p>	<p>The collaboration forum can be recommended to engage in an ongoing way, for example through periodic meetings. These can be held either online or in person and should include stakeholders, such as NGOs, civil society actors and locally engaged individuals who can link the public authorities directly to the target group and provide a two-way communication path helping the public authorities reaching the target group and returning any feedback from the target group.</p>
4	<p>Create a clearly defined system or structure for your collaboration with external stakeholders, e.g., a catalogue of relevant stakeholders to reach out to when needed and a schedule for meeting regularly in the collaboration forum.</p>	<p>A catalogue can help public authorities keep an overview of relevant stakeholders across languages and cultures. The catalogue should be updated on a regular basis and include the names and contact information of stakeholders.</p>
5	<p>Offer training and capacity building of civil society organisations involved in the collaboration forum to increase efficiency and facilitate streamlining of internal structures and workflows.</p>	<p>While civil society organisations have the knowledge and network needed for the public authority to reach the target group, they lack resources and capacity limiting them in their work. Here, the public authorities should support the civil society and ensure that they have the necessary capacity to act in situations when a new launch emerges.</p>
6	<p>Establish dialogue and a cooperation network between public authorities to facilitate common brainstorming and sharing of good practices between different public authorities.</p>	<p>The public authorities within the country as well as across the Nordics may face the same challenges when launching a communication initiative, and they can thus benefit from sharing good practices and advice with each other. This could be beneficial on a municipal and regional level as well as on a Nordic level.</p>
<p>Building on the steps above, the authorities are advised to focus on developing, adjusting and tailoring a strategy:</p>		
7	<p>Develop and regularly revise your strategy for dissemination of public information to immigrants in the period before and after the need for launching a communication initiative</p>	<p>It is essential to have a strategy ready for when the need for launching a communication initiative emerges. In the periods between the launch, the public authorities should revisit their</p>

	targeting immigrants.	strategy, collect feedback from the civil society and the target group and engage in an ongoing development of the strategy.
8	Formulate a strategy that is fit for unpredictable and sudden changes in the circumstances affecting the communication initiative, e.g., the needs of the target group or the content of the messages included in the communication initiative.	The public authorities may find themselves facing situations with uncertain and unpredictable outcomes when it will be necessary to quickly adapt to changes in the needs of the target group or suddenly adapt the main message of their communication product.

4.1.2 Activation of strategy and collaboration forum

A predefined strategy and an established collaboration with the civil society can help the public authorities in their preparation for situations where the need for communicating to immigrants emerges. The work in this regard should be ongoing and monitored to the extent possible before a new situation emerges. When a new situation emerges, the public authorities are then equipped to react and activate their strategy and develop effective communication initiatives and products.

As mentioned above, having a flexible strategy with the ability to adapt to sudden changes is essential when facing uncertain and unpredictable situations. **A broad definition of the purpose and target group can help increase the flexibility of a communication strategy** as illustrated in the highlighted cases. In the roundtable discussions organised by the THL in Finland, the broadly defined target group was occasionally divided into sub-groups when needed. At some point a specific roundtable was organised for the Somali community, which consisted of a joint discussion followed by a sub-discussion for men and women separately. Similarly, when infection increased or low vaccination rates were observed, Aarhus Municipality in Denmark would concentrate their effort around the particular area or the specific sub-group in focus.

Many of the senders presented in the cases had little knowledge of how to construct a communication product that the target group would receive and understand, and they were unable to predict the evolution of the situation during the COVID-19 pandemic, but with time they transferred their learnings into new products with a better reach. This became possible by **welcoming feedback from the civil society and representatives from the target group and by directing focus on sub-purposes and sub-target groups when needed.**

As already mentioned, collaboration with the civil society and resource persons representing the target group is a prerequisite for reaching the desired target group. In this regard, it is necessary for the public authorities to **make sure they partner with the relevant collaborators** when focusing on a sub-target group or a sub-purpose.

In the roundtable discussions held by the THL in Finland, they made sure to involve

immigrant NGOs who were representatives of the diverse target groups. Thus, the THL could gain insights into how the target group would want to be communicated to and what they needed to be aware of in terms of religion, language and culture of the target group. The same is pointed out for the dialogue meetings held by the FHI in Norway where they were attentive towards inviting resource persons who could represent the recipient. Choosing the right resource persons when disseminating information to a particular target group, became relevant, for instance, in the dissemination of public information to women during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the dialogue meetings, women played an important role in the dissemination of information to women.

In table 4-2, the recommendations for how public authorities can activate their strategy, when the need for communicating to immigrants emerges, are presented.



Women were absolutely necessary. Basically, it's about choosing the right resource persons.

– Representative from the IMDi, collaborator in the dialogue meetings

Table 4-2. Trans-Nordic policy recommendations for activation of strategy and collaboration fora

	Recommendation	Description
	<p>When a situation arises that necessitates a coordinated communication to and with immigrant communities, the strategy and collaboration forum may then be activated to prepare and empower effective communication:</p>	
9	<p>Identify and narrow down the specific target group and tailor the communication content to the specific needs, cultural and religious backgrounds, and languages of the target group.</p>	<p>Immigrants represent a diverse group of people with various needs and different cultural and religious backgrounds. Therefore, when the public authorities decide on a broad definition of the purpose and target group, it is essential for them to be prepared for situations where they need to focus on a particular sub-target group or zoom in on one specific sub-purpose.</p>
10	<p>Intensify your work in the collaboration forum by identifying the most relevant stakeholders who represent the specific target group, increasing the number of meetings and gathering feedback from stakeholders and the target group on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>With a pre-defined strategy, the public authorities are prepared and ready to intensify their work and activate their collaboration with the civil society when a situation escalates and the need for disseminating information to immigrants arises.</p>

4.1.3 Launching communication products

The choice of content and channels are of decisive importance when launching effective communication products to the desired target group. This became evident during the COVID-19 pandemic where the public authorities developed their communication strategy along the way while figuring out which type of content and what channels most effectively helped reach the target group.

Not only the choices regarding collaborators for a collaboration model, but also the choice of channels for distributing information and the content of the communication products impact the degree to which the target group feels represented. The cases demonstrate the importance of reflecting the needs of the target group with the content of the communication products. With translations, limited text, videos and content that show consideration of the cultural background of the target group, the senders of the communication products in the highlighted cases aimed to mirror the needs of the target group to the extent possible.

Culturally informed translations are a prerequisite for getting the message across when targeting immigrants and their descendants. It is therefore important to **identify the relevant languages within the target group** and decide on which languages to prioritise. For the covid.is website by the Directorate of Health &

Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management in Iceland, all information was translated into English and Polish, which are the two main secondary languages in Iceland and were thus a priority for the sender. Additionally, the most important messages were translated into other relevant languages in Iceland. Translations were also an explicit priority for the messages on the WhatsApp groups by the SIU in Sweden, where the member associations and other resource persons with knowledge of the relevant languages of the target group were involved. Some of the languages included in the initiative were Dharia, Swahili, French and English. Dharia, for instance, was chosen as many Dharia-speaking women were isolated at home with their children.



Use the language. Make people feel more involved, that they are welcome in the country and a part of it. Then they would want to be more compliant.

– Representative of the target group, receiver of the covid.is website

In addition to translating the content of communication products into the relevant languages of the target group, the cultural background and thus, the cultural and symbolic translations of the products need to be considered as well. This is the case when choosing the right words for the translations as well as when using visual elements, such as icons, pictures, and colours on posters, in videos, and in brochures. The target group may interpret the content of the products differently compared to the remaining population due to cultural references and experiences that in some cases differ meaningfully from those of many other Nordic citizens.

Experiences from developing and launching communications initiatives related to the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the importance of **shortening messages and ensuring readability of texts**, especially when trying to reach immigrants and their descendants. In general, visualisations and short messages were useful when communicating to the whole population during the pandemic as the disease spread rapidly and information therefore had to be disseminated fast across the countries. However, when many in the target group speak a different language from the rest of the population and some are also illiterate, it is not a matter of simply shortening texts. Instead, it is about choosing a few words that can help getting the main message across. This was highlighted by the civil society and representatives from the target group in their feedback to public authorities.

In Aarhus Municipality they condensed the material received from the national authorities to get the most important messages across to the target group. In some cases, they sent out short messages through WhatsApp or Facebook. As illustrated in the box below, these texts would be no longer than "You can get vaccinated at..." or "Vaccinations have been moved to..." or as in the box, "Get tested and stop the spread of infection".



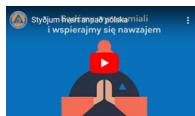
You need cultural context and understanding to make the information accessible and understandable for the target group.

– Representative from an NGO, collaborator of WhatsApp groups



Example from Social Media Post by Aarhus Municipality

Visualisations became a useful tool as well and were implemented by Aarhus Municipality in Denmark and the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management in Iceland, for example. On the covid.is website, the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management placed videos with translated messages as illustrated in the example below. A similar approach was taken by Aarhus Municipality, who also made several videos in collaboration with the civil society and the target group.



Example of video from the covid.is. The videos can be found here: <https://www.covid.is/plakaty>

Additionally, face-to-face communication became a useful tool for reaching the target group and avoiding barriers caused by language differences and illiteracy. By being present in the local community, senders of communication products could deliver their messages directly to the target group and receive immediate reactions and feedback from the target group.

Face-to-face communication became an essential tool for building trust, something which proved to be necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the target group has demonstrated a lack of confidence in the public authorities before, a fear of stigmatisation and abusing of minority groups emerged among parts of the target group. It was helpful in this regard to make sure that the target group felt seen and heard by the public authorities to address the fear of stigmatisation and shaming.

An example of effective face-to-face communication is illustrated by the corona guides in Aarhus Municipality in Denmark. The corona guides were present in the local communities of the target group. They went to knock on doors in the neighbourhood, stood at the local test centre and participated in local events, always with the opportunity for the target group to ask questions.

Face-to-face communication was challenged due to the restrictions regarding social distancing and physical assemblies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Attempts were made to add elements of face-to-face communication in digital solutions, such as chat functions, virtual meetings and live transmissions on Facebook. This was especially useful when communicating to the younger generations of the target group.

The choice of channels for the WhatsApp groups by the SIU in Sweden and the corona guide initiative by Aarhus Municipality in Denmark exemplifies a user focus oriented to the needs of the recipient and helps to illustrate how channel choice can contribute to reflecting the needs of the target group. The SIU chose WhatsApp to combat the spread of misinformation among the target group as this is a communication form commonly used by the target group. Thus, the SIU met the target group in a terrain they already knew well and used often. Similarly, Aarhus Municipality decided to use alternative channels compared to other initiatives they have run, communicating through Social Media channels such as WhatsApp, as well as through face-to-face meetings. The corona guides, for instance, helped knock on doors in the local community and participated in local events to disseminate information about COVID-19. These types of channels were new to most public authorities but also became a necessity for reaching the target group.

Recommendations for how to achieve an effective launch of communication products are presented in table 4-3

Table 4-3. Trans-Nordic policy recommendations for launching communication products

	Recommendation	Description
When public authorities and their civil society partners launch communication initiatives targeting immigrant communities, they can take specific steps to enhance their effectiveness:		
11	Identify and translate the most important messages into all relevant languages of the target group based on an understanding of the cultural background of the target group.	By providing culturally informed translations in the languages relevant to the target group, public authorities can address one of the main issues of communicating to immigrants, namely the language and cultural barriers.
12	Pay attention to the proportion of the target group with no or low reading skills* by limiting the amount of text and increasing the use of visual elements in communication products.	It is essential for the public authorities to realise the difference between immigrants and the remaining population when it comes to their reception of communication products. It will not be enough to translate the content of communication products when representatives from the target group have difficulties reading in their

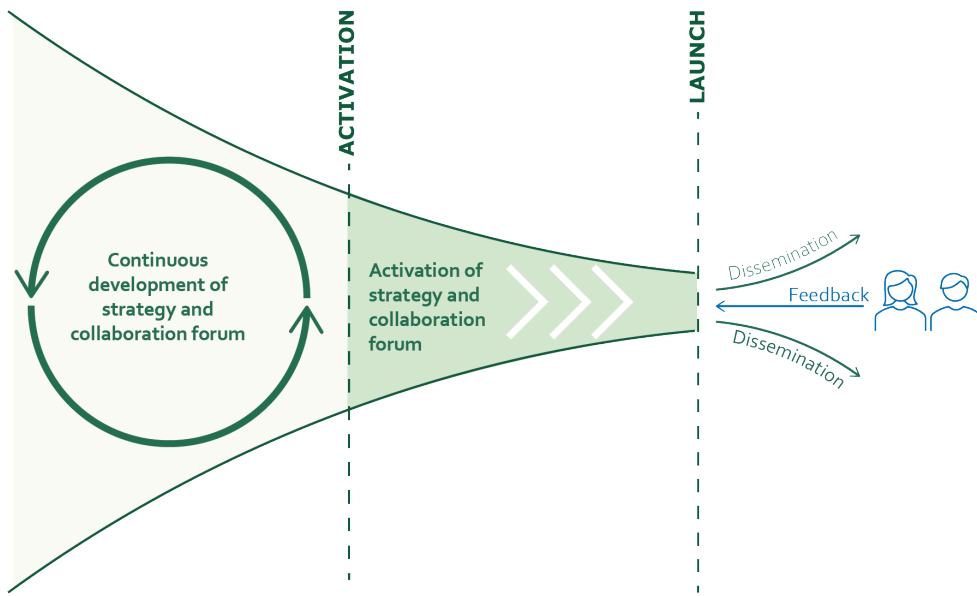
		mother tongue.
13	Create visual content using symbols and objects that are familiar to the target group, and which correspond with their cultural and religious background(s).	As with text-based communication products, the cultural context of the target group is essential for how they interpret visualisations.
14	When using text-based communication products, make sure that sentences are uncomplicated, short, and precise with emphasis on the main message.	Texts sometimes need to be shortened to 1-2 sentences containing just one main message in order to reach the target group and ensure that the message is interpreted as intended.
15	Select alternative channels such as social media and face-to-face communication to cater to the target group in surroundings that are more familiar to them.	Public authorities will benefit from choosing channels that are different from what they are used to as immigrants get their main information from non-traditional channels. It is therefore essential for the public authorities to be open to new and alternative channels when distributing the message to the target group.

4.1.4 Summary of trans-Nordic policy recommendations

When the need suddenly emerges for disseminating public information to immigrants and developing effective communication initiatives and products, the public authorities should be prepared and ready to act fast. In interviews with public authorities and NGOs, it is evident that the public authorities were challenged by their lack of preparedness and limited experience with communicating to the target group during the COVID-19 pandemic. The public authorities learned that they need to have a pre-defined strategy ready for when situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic arise. Additionally, they need a flexible strategy that is adaptable to sudden changes in the needs of the target group and that reflects the needs of the target group, both in regard to the organisation around the initiative, the collaborators involved, the choice of channels and the content of the communication products.

This can be achieved by following the policy recommendations that are summarised in figure 4-1.

Figure 4-1. Summary of trans-Nordic policy recommendations



Continuous development of strategy and collaboration forum

- 1** Allocate resources and establish a responsible team
- 2** Increase diversity in your teams
- 3** Establish and monitor a collaboration forum
- 4** Create a clearly defined system for your collaboration forum
- 5** Offer training and capacity building of civil society organisations
- 6** Establish a cooperation network between public authorities
- 7** Develop and regularly revise your strategy
- 8** Formulate a strategy fit for unpredictable and sudden changes

Activation of strategy and collaboration forum

- 9** Identify and narrow down the specific target group and tailor the communication content
- 10** Intensify your work in the collaboration forum

Launching communication products

- 11** Identify and translate the most important messages
- 12** Pay attention to the proportion of the target group with no or low reading skills
- 13** Create visual content using symbols and objects that are familiar to the target group
- 14** When using text-based communication products, make sure that sentences are uncomplicated, short and precise with emphasis on the main message
- 15** Select alternative channels such as social media and face-to-face communication

5. LITERATURE

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APPENDIX 1 – DATABASE WITH COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES

The database can be found in a separate Excel-file and includes a total of 43 communication initiatives which have been mapped with detailed descriptions of each initiative's target group, main strategy, core components, main challenges, main lessons learned and effects (if known). The initiatives were identified through the aforementioned literature review and interviews with stakeholders.

APPENDIX 2 – DATA AND METHODS

Appendix 2 contains a detailed description of the data and methods applied. The section is structured with a description of data and methods applied in phase 1 followed by data and methods applied in phase 2.

PHASE 1 – DATA AND METHOD

Methods Applied

Rambøll has conducted a mapping of communication initiatives across the Nordics, which has been summarised in a database containing a description of communication initiatives as well as the strategies, methods, challenges, and lessons learned of each initiative. The database is based on a trans-Nordic literature review and on data from semi-structured interviews with relevant organisers of various communication initiatives targeting immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data has been collected by local teams of consultants in Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Iceland in the local language of the respective countries to bring local knowledge and insights into the analysis⁶

The communication initiatives in the database have been analysed on the Nordic, country and stakeholder levels and the analysis takes its point of departure in a qualitative assessment based on five parameters, on which each communication initiative has been assigned a score from 1-5. The five parameters are: purpose, target group, extent, flexibility and communication stream. The parameters for each initiative have been assessed and qualified in an iterative process by Rambøll Denmark, with comments and input from colleagues in the other Nordic countries. A description of the parameters and their scoring can be found in Table 5-1 and with more details in Figure 5-1.

6. The colleague focusing on Iceland is located in Sweden

Table 5-1. Description of the five communications parameters

PARAMETER	DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS (SCORING)
Purpose	How well defined the communication initiative is and whether the purpose is mirrored in the communication products.	Specific (1) → General (5)
Target group	How well defined and specific the target group is defined.	Narrow (1) → Wide (5)
Extent	The extent of the initiative based on the number of components and the potential reach of those components.	Small (1) → Large (5)
Flexibility	The extent to which target groups were involved in the production of the initiative e.g., through feedback, ongoing dialogue or collaboration.	Fixed (1) → Flexible (5)
Communication stream	The direction of the communication stream when approaching the target group and choosing channels.	Pull (1) → Push (5)

Figure 5-1. Detailed description of the five communications parameters



Mapped Communication Initiatives

The database includes a total of 43 communication initiatives which have been mapped with detailed descriptions of each initiative's target group, main strategy,

core components, main challenges, main lessons learned and effects (if known). The initiatives were identified through the aforementioned literature review and interviews with stakeholders, who were typically representatives of national and local authorities (municipal and regional level), as well as civil society organisations (NGOs).

Despite an almost equal number of interviews in each of the Nordic countries, the number of identified communication initiatives and the sources from which the initiatives have been identified vary between countries. The distribution of relevant initiatives identified across the Nordic countries is displayed by country and information source in Table 5-2. Across the Nordic region, the number of identified communication initiatives are almost equally distributed between those identified through stakeholder interviews (21) and those identified via literature review (22). Overall, three different stakeholder types have been identified as having initiated relevant communication initiatives: national authorities, local authorities and NGOs. The distribution of the number of identified communication initiatives for each country across initiating stakeholder type is seen in Table 5-3. The initiating stakeholder type varies across countries, where almost two thirds of the communication initiatives from Sweden and Iceland are initiated by the national authorities, while a more equal distribution is seen for Denmark across stakeholder type.

In total, almost half of the identified communication initiatives are initiated by the national authorities while the local authorities account for approximately one third. This means that 79 pct. of all identified communication initiatives have been initiated by a public authority. It should, however, be taken into account that some NGOs are involved in initiatives initiated by either national or local authorities. This could explain the smaller share of communication initiatives initiated by the NGOs (approximately 21 pct.).

Table 5-2. Mapped communication initiatives, by country and information source

Country	Stakeholder interviews	Literature Review	Total
Denmark	4	10	14
Finland	4	0	4
Iceland	4	4	8
Norway	5	1	6
Sweden	4	7	11

Table 5-3. Mapped communication initiatives, by country and organising stakeholder type

Country	National authorities	Local authorities	NGOs	Total
Denmark	4	5	5	14
Finland	1	2	1	4
Iceland	5	1	2	8
Norway	3	2	1	6
Sweden	7	4		11
Total	20	14	9	43

PHASE 2 - DATA AND METHOD

Methods Applied

Based on the mapping of communication initiatives across the Nordic in phase 1, Rambøll has conducted an in-depth analysis of good practice in the Nordic countries to gain insight into the communication methods, lessons learned and the reception and impact among members of the target group. The analysis includes 5 good practice cases across the Nordic which have been selected in consultation with the Nordic Council of Ministers. Each case is based on knowledge collected in phase 1 supported by semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and members of the target group. As in phase 1, data has been collected by local teams of consultants in Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Iceland in the local language of the respective countries to bring local knowledge and insights into the analysis.⁷

To cover all the relevant topics and aspects of good practice to disseminate information to immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 26 interviews have been conducted across the Nordic and was targeted at three different groups: senders, recipients, and collaborators. In the interviews with the sender of the communication initiative, the main focus has been on gaining in-depth understanding of the communication strategies behind the collaboration models and communication products. In the interviews with recipients, being immigrants in the Nordic countries, the aim was to include perspectives of the target group and gain knowledge on whether the communication strategy worked as intended. In addition, interviews were conducted with collaborators to gain insight into how public authorities and civil society worked together during the COVID-19 pandemic and gain in-depth understanding of the role of the civil society in collaboration models and around communication products.

The number of interviews varies across the three groups, where the most interviews have been conducted with collaborators, followed by interviews with senders of the

7. The colleague focusing on Iceland is located in Sweden

communication initiatives. It was relatively challenging to find interviewees whom the communication initiatives were aimed at. This is reflected in the relatively low number of interviews carried out with representatives of the target group as they often have difficulties with the language.

Based on the interviews, and partly knowledge gathered in phase 1, each case has been analysed and takes its point of departure in a qualitative assessment based on four to five parameters, on which each communication initiative has been assigned a score from 1-5. The five parameters are: Purpose, target group, main focus, accessibility, and user focus. The parameters are used similarly across the five cases. However for the cases in Finland and Norway, the parameter accessibility is excluded as this refers to the content of communication products, while the Finnish and Norwegian cases evolve around collaboration models. The parameters for each initiative have been assessed and qualified in an iterative process by Rambøll Denmark, with comments and input from colleagues in the other Nordic countries. A description of the parameters and their scoring can be found in Table 5-5 and with more details in Figure 5-2.

Table 5-4. Number of interviews conducted with key stakeholders and the target group

Country	Senders	Receivers	Collaborators	Total
Denmark	2	1	1	4
Finland	2		4	6
Iceland	3	3		6
Norway	2		5	7
Sweden	1		2	3
Total	10	4	12	26

Table 5-5. Description of the five communications parameters

PARAMETER	DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS (SCORING)
Purpose	How well defined the communication initiative is and whether the purpose is reflected in the communication products.	Specific (1) → General (5)
Target group	How well defined and specific the target group is defined.	Narrow (1) → Wide (5)
Main focus	What is the main focus of the initiative – is it on imparting knowledge or promoting/ changing a certain behaviour.	Knowledge (1) → Behaviour (5)
Accessibility	How accessible the content is to the target group - is it easily accessible or more difficult.	Difficult (1) → Easy (5)
User focus	How the focus is on the users and their needs – is it based on the sender’s message or based on the needs of the recipient.	Sender (1) → Recipient (5)

Figure 5-2. Detailed description of the five communications parameters



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