



European
Philanthropic
Initiative for
Migration

Philea

Philanthropy
Europe
Association

Migration and Belonging Network

A Funder Convening Space co-curated by EPIM and Philea

Concept Note

1. Summary

The Migration and Belonging Network is a joint initiative by EPIM and Philea to convene a light-touch, practice-informed community of mutual interest for philanthropic foundations across Europe. Through two in-person convenings and two online calls annually, the network will offer space for strategic reflection, peer learning, and informal collaboration on the topics of migration, democracy, and belonging. This initiative builds on the legacy of the Diversity, Migration and Integration (DMI) network and responds to renewed interest from foundations in aligning efforts around migration in a way that is intersectional, systemic, and grounded in lived experience.

2. The Need

Migration is a defining societal issue in Europe, intersecting with climate, democracy, racial justice, and social cohesion. Yet philanthropic responses often remain siloed, reactive, project-based or disconnected from broader systemic change. Existing approaches — rooted in advocacy, legislation, and adjudication — have struggled to address the deeper structures of exclusion and othering.

To move forward, we need new forms of strategic collaboration that:

- Bring together philanthropic experience covering the diverse topics that intersect with migration
- Cross borders, sectors, and institutions
- Build relational and imaginative infrastructure
- Advance narratives and structures of belonging that benefit all of society

Philanthropy has a critical role to play in this shift — not only through funding, but by convening, learning, and seeding transformation across the ecosystem. The Migration and Belonging Network offers a space for foundations to explore this role together.

3. Migration Philanthropy: Role, Relevance, and Emerging Directions

Foundations have long played a vital role in responding to migration in Europe — from emergency relief and community-level support to advocacy, capacity building, and long-term integration efforts. Their work spans diverse areas such as education, employment, entrepreneurship, and rebuilding lives with dignity. However, migration intersects with many other issues — including gender, racial justice, youth development, and democracy — making it difficult to address in isolation. Most funder networks remain either geographically focused or issue-specific, with few dedicated spaces that would reconnect migration to larger societal issues.

There is growing momentum to fundamentally rethink how migration has been approached over the recent decades, and to shift from reactive funding to more strategic, systemic approaches. This includes:

- Reframing the migration narratives to better reflect their connection to larger issues of democracy and belonging

- Supporting movement-building and leadership by those with lived experience and shifting decision-making power and resources
- Grappling with questions of an ecosystemic nature and philanthropy's evolving role in the broader migration ecosystem.

Migration philanthropy is increasingly seen not just as a response to crisis, but as a lever for broader societal transformation — one that requires intersectional thinking, inclusive leadership, and collaborative infrastructure.

This network provides the relational infrastructure to support this work, offering a unique space for Foundations directly engaged in migration and equality, as well as those approaching these issues through other lenses—such as the arts, agrifood, education, health, climate, democracy, and more.

4. Format & Activities

In-Person Convenings

- **Philea Forum 2026 (Copenhagen, 18-21 May)**
We will integrate the topic of migration and belonging across different sessions with members of the network potentially speaking and exploring the intersection of migration, environmental displacement, and systemic resilience, aligned with the Forum's climate theme. This is designed to foster cross-thematic dialogue and connect migration funders with broader philanthropic communities.

In addition, we aim to host a drinks or lunch gathering, as part of the informal additional programming for the network, during the event.

- **EPIM Forum 2026 (November)**
A funder-only gathering to reflect on the year's collaboration, share insights, and explore future directions. This session will also serve as a checkpoint to assess the network's value and consider next steps for 2027-2028.

This half-day event will take place the afternoon prior to the EPIM Forum, followed by drinks/dinner. As with the Philea event, we will aim to bridge across intersections by potentially inviting local actors and guests to join the group, bringing in fresh perspectives.

Online Calls

- **Call 1: Introducing the Migration and Belonging Network, Onboarding, Framing, Intentions, Understanding How We Want to Work Together (December 2025)**
Strategic Framing & Responsive Funding – Understanding how migration intersects with democracy, climate, and belonging – and how philanthropy can respond effectively.
- **Call 2: Funding Belonging across Sectors (February/March 2026)**
Using labour pathways as a starting point, we will explore how the concept of belonging intersects with migration and other societal challenges and reflect on how adopting a belonging lens in our funding strategies can help build more inclusive and resilient communities.

In addition, EPIM and Philea will support the Migration and Belonging Network by maintaining its social and digital infrastructure – including funder relationships, network development, and outreach through a dedicated webpage and social media channels

5. Learning Objectives

- Foster peer exchange and mutual support: create a trusted space for funders to share experiences, challenges and insights, strengthening relationships and building a funders community around migration and belonging
- Advance collective learning: facilitate ongoing learning through curated discussions, thematic deep-dives and enhance funders' understanding of migration and belonging, and innovative funding approaches
- Enable cross-sector collaboration: bridge silos by connecting funders working in migration and equality with those in adjacent fields such as education, health, climate, and democracy, to explore intersectional approaches and encourage collaboration.
- Promote strategic funding alignment: strengthen the coordination and alignment of funding strategies to maximise impact and support systemic change across geographies and sectors