

## Project Brief: Design Thinking for Social Innovation, Spring 2025, Nova SBE

This semester we will work on a challenge inspired by the 2019 BridgeBuilder challenge by GHR Foundation + OpenIDEO.

### The brief:

Today, more than 122 million men, women and children are forcibly displaced worldwide. This new reality is global and growing. In Europe, there has been an increase of migrants and refugees due to crises, wars and climate change. In 2022, Portugal received 121 000 new immigrants on a long-term or permanent basis (including changes of status and free mobility), 29% more than in 2021 (OCDE Report). While this new reality has created some frictions and fears, it also offers opportunities for meaningful engagement. In the end, “the history of humanity is made up of a succession of migrations” (Eva-Maria Geigl, researcher in palaeogenomics, Institut Jacques Monod, CNRS). On a more practical level, immigrants are critical to the European workforce. Catarina Reis Oliveira, the director of Portugal's Migration Observatory, wrote in the Observatory's Annual Statistical Report 2022 that “Immigrants play a fundamental role in the efficiency of labour markets, and it is clear that without immigrants, some economic sectors and activities would collapse.” Despite this fundamental role, im/migrants and refugees are often struggling to find employment, which is key to provide them stability and financial independence, and in the end, making a home in their new place.

“Adjusting to a new life is difficult, yet the journey is filled with possibility for a future. Those who have left home—too often labeled a refugee, migrant or, simply, displaced—bring with them the gifts of their lives, resilience and imagination to new neighbors. We are these neighbors: the cities, communities, families, and new friends that have potential to accompany people experiencing displacement along their journey, from places of first refuge to newly adopted homes. Whatever our differences, we are more connected than ever before. Our world is interdependent and we are experiencing this moment together.” And many of us in this class are, in some form or shape, people on the move, or might be one day. Thus – whether we are passing through, recently arrived in, or are an established member of a receiving community – it is important for us to start **imagining how we can build and repair bridges between people, organizations, issues, and beliefs to promote meaningful engagement and sustainable, community-led change.**

“With more people on the move today than in the past 70 years, and with women and children disproportionately impacted, diverse stakeholders must go beyond providing just a safety net for basic needs. There is immense opportunity to design approaches that enable individuals to create a life of meaning, filled with hope and dignity, and to support host communities in being their most welcoming. **How might we, as people on the move and neighbors, build bridges to a shared future of stability and promise?**”

### Our approach:

Because the issue is complex and requires a system-view, we will adopt a collaborative approach at the class level that allows to take a systemic approach to the problem. As a class we will discuss the different elements of the challenge, and different teams will focus on different issues. The final solutions won't be individual (competing) solutions, but they will leverage each other aiming to address the challenge in a systemic fashion. Using the design thinking process, we will work together to develop a holistic solution by focusing on one angle (opportunity area) of the problem. *The final outcomes can be a product, a technology, a service, an awareness or advocacy campaign, or a policy plan.*

### Three opportunity areas:

- **Sustainable Living:** Ensuring each person has access to food, shelter, and water is necessary, but not sufficient. Employment is a key dimension for people on the move to settle by providing them stability and financial independence. And despite the potential value of people on the move for the local economies, im/migrants and refugees are often struggling to find employment. When thinking of employment, it's also important to think

not only of jobs (something that you do for money) but also of careers (as a long-term endeavor). It's also important to remember that employment is a two-way relationship, where employers need to understand what skills are out there, and also be creative in developing these skills into work opportunities.

- *How might we create the conditions (programs, services, policies, and practices) to enable all immigrants to be better included in the workforce and thrive in the economy?*
- **Making a Home, Feeling at home:** Employment is key in providing sustainable living but also opportunities for connections and social interactions. Feeling at home is deeply related to human relationships and social connections. Isolation, loneliness, feeling of estrangement can have a toll on our mental health. It is therefore important to think about how to empower the entire human experience, providing people of the move with hope, joy, dignity and a sense of community – with their own communities as well as host communities. *How can we support people on the move to develop their full potential and feel at home?*
- **Equipping Diverse Communities to Foster Dialogues:** As people on the move arrive to new places, they encounter many kinds of communities. Most host communities share a spirit of hospitality with newcomers, but may not feel fully empowered or supported to capably welcome new community members. This might be amplified by lack of awareness, misinformation or difficulties faced by local communities themselves. In some cases, as new comers we might also not be equipped to make sense of our new communities. Diversity can be fruitful and generative only through dialogue. *How can receiving communities be engaged and equipped to foster their potential for hospitality while helping people on the move to connect better with receiving communities – thus fostering dialogues for the benefit of all?*

#### *Engagement Principles*

- Meet people where they are. Geographically, socially, emotionally, culturally, and otherwise.
- Build relationships. Build trusting relationships characterized by respect and compassion.
- Listen deeply. Listen with humility. Treat peoples' stories with dignity and respect. Recognize and honor lived experience as expertise.
- Collaboratively learn and adapt. Respond to changing contexts and emergent learning through reflection, co-creation, and co-implementation with individuals, partners and communities.
- Address Urgent Needs. Build and repair bridges between people, issues, and beliefs that promote meaningful engagement and greater social cohesion.

#### *Design Principles*

- Root Solutions in Community. Deeply root solutions in the context, cultures, knowledge, wisdom, needs, and aspirations of partner communities.
- Promote Equitable and Just Systems. Shift power structures, altering narratives, and moving the world in a more equitable and just direction.
- Promote and Protect Human Dignity. Go beyond meeting basic needs. Help people meet the needs of joy, hope, and dignity.

#### **Sources:**

BridgeBuilder Challenge: People on the Move: <https://www.openideo.com/challenge-briefs/2019-bridgebuilder-challenge>

UNHCR <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/figures-glance#:~:text=How%20many%20refugees%20are%20there,forced%20to%20flee%20their%20homes>.

OECD (2024), *International Migration Outlook 2024*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/50b0353e-en>.