

ADVOCACY REPORT

From research to outreach: engaging beyond academia to humanise migration policymaking

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AspirE – Asian prospects in (re)migration to/within the EU – is a three-year research project (2023-2025) that examines the decision making of aspiring (re)migrants from selected Southeast and East Asian countries (China, Japan, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam) to and within selected EU member countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Italy and Portugal).

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Masarykova univerzita, Czech Republic
Tampereen korkeakoulusäätiö sr, Finland
Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Università degli Studi di Milano (UniMi), Italy
Waseda University, Japan
Scalabrini Migration Center Inc., Philippines
Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Portugal
Mahidol University, Thailand
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From research to outreach: engaging beyond academia to humanise migration policymaking

Introduction

Migration has been a politically sensitive and publicly debated topic. Decisions in this area have profound consequences on migrants' lives, receiving and sending countries, and the institutions responsible for managing mobility. Yet migration policymaking is often shaped by abstract categories, aggregated data, and short-term political pressures, rather than by people's lived experiences and empirical evidence. As a result, policies risk becoming disconnected from the realities they aim to govern, which can make them ineffective. To contribute to a more grounded migration policymaking at the European Union (EU) and member states' levels, the research project AspirE has been adopting several outreach activities beyond academia since 2023.

AspirE is a European research project examining the decision-making of aspiring (re)migrants from selected Southeast and East Asian countries (China, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam) towards and within selected EU member states (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Italy, and Portugal). The project combines qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews, social network mapping, video diaries, and focus-group discussions, to capture aspiring (re)migrants' lived experiences, aspirations, and the fluctuations in their migration decisions over time. Beyond generating academic knowledge, AspirE is built on outreach activities through an active engagement with non-academic actors, defined here as policymakers and public authorities, civil society, including migrant-led organisations, service providers, and other practitioners directly involved in shaping, implementing, or experiencing migration policies. In this context, **outreach activities** refer to structured, research-based communication and engagement formats (e.g., webinars, stakeholder discussions, and practitioner-focused materials) that connect findings to policy and practice discussions.

The present advocacy report starts from a premise that migration policymaking cannot be fully humanised without grounding it in empirical realities. Research makes a difference when it connects with those who shape and experience migration policies. This requires early and sustained engagement with non-academic actors, supported by diverse and effective outreach activities.

AspirE's strategy for effective civic engagement

Engaged structure and methodology

The AspirE project considers that understanding migration decision-making requires more than academic expertise alone. Migration trajectories are shaped not only by policies and economic conditions but also by personal aspirations, family dynamics, uncertainty, and changing life circumstances. These dimensions are often difficult to capture through abstract indicators or detached analysis. Addressing these complexities calls for research structures that combine analytical distance with proximity to lived realities and policy

practice. For this reason, the AspirE consortium brings together academic partners (universities and research institutions) and non-academic organisations with complementary forms of expertise. These include The Foundation for Isaan Education and Popular Record in Thailand (The Isaan Record), the economic- and development-focused non-governmental organisation (NGO) “Asia Pacific Center” in Vietnam (VAPEC), and the think tank Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Belgium. Collaborating with these entities strengthens AspirE’s capacity to connect research with policy processes, field-based knowledge, and public-facing practices. It also enables continuous exchange between analytical work, on-the-ground experience, and institutional perspectives throughout the project lifecycle, enhancing both the relevance and the societal value of the research.

AspirE’s engagement strategy is also grounded in a [humanising and participatory research philosophy](#). Aside from policy content analysis leading to [11 country reports](#) and an [EU-level one](#), AspirE collected rich data through various forms of qualitative, longitudinal, and participatory methods over three years:

- Interviews and video diaries with aspiring (re)migrants: The research teams conducted 281 semi-structured interviews with 286 fully informed and consented study participants, which established participants’ migration aspirations and contexts. Building on this, 447 interviewees took part in social network mapping using [Network Canvas](#) to document their personal networks. This data collection led to a total of 149 sets of social network maps. To capture how the study participants’ aspirations and networks evolved, AspirE researchers embarked on video diary collection for a period of one year. Study participants recorded a 10-minute diary every three months, guided by open-ended questions on their (non-)migration decision-making. A total of 284 video diaries were collected.
- Interview and two-step focus group discussions with migration experts: AspirE first conducted 109 interviews with 119 migration experts (e.g., representatives of NGOs, governmental agencies, legal service providers, and journalistic media) to situate aspiring (re)migrants’ behaviours within existing mobility policies. Building on insights from these interviews, two-step focus group discussions were then organised with a subset of willing experts to collectively reflect on and refine understandings of the factors shaping aspiring (re)migrants’ (non-)migration aspirations and intentions. AspirE consortium collected and analysed a total of 21 pseudonymised transcriptions of these focus group discussions.

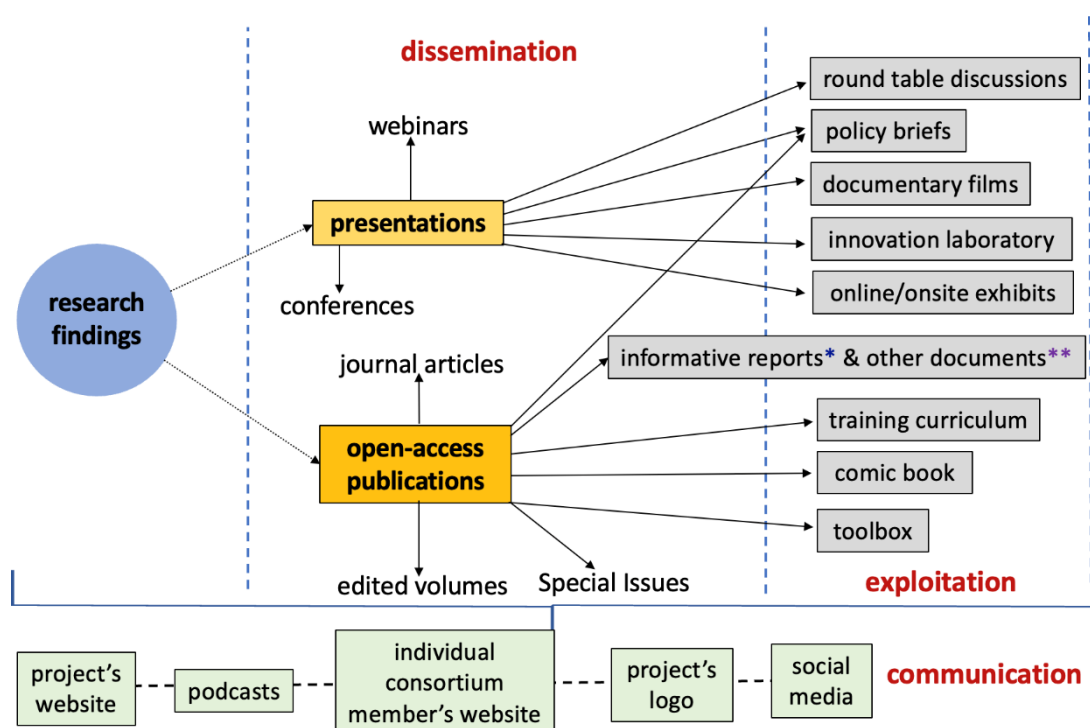
A humanising approach to migration research means placing aspiring (re)migrants’ perspectives at the center of analysis and taking into account all their pertinent life dimensions in gender, relational, cognitive, emotional, and temporal terms. AspirE focuses on how people understand, experience, and navigate their own trajectories. Therefore, its methodology prioritises narrative, context, and reflection. Participants are central in the research process, allowing, on the one hand, aspiring (re)migrants to explain their aspirations, constraints, and choices in their own terms and, on the other hand, giving space for migration experts to share their knowledge. Video diary method went a step further by enabling longitudinal engagement. They allowed aspiring (re)migrants to document how

their plans, expectations, and decisions evolved across different moments, capturing uncertainty and change that are often missed in one-off interviews. Participatory elements were included wherever feasible and appropriate. Despite the fact that participants were instructed not to show their faces in their video diaries as part of data protection related to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), their video recordings gave them considerable agency over how they would share and explain their thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Regarding the collaboration with migration experts, these people were first identified and interviewed individually, then invited to take part in the first round of focus-group discussions. Considering participants' time constraints, a smaller group was subsequently re-invited for a second round, allowing for continuity, deeper reflection, and collective discussion of emerging findings. Overall, AspirE treats research as a two-way process. Knowledge is produced through interactions, reflections, and exchanges rather than through one-directional information extraction. This methodological choice supports more grounded, nuanced, and human-centered evidence for migration policymaking.

Multiple outreach formats for better impact

Reaching non-academic publics requires more than solely simplifying academic results. Different audiences operate under different information focus and needs, specific time constraints, and professional logics. Policymakers may require concise, actionable insights linked to regulatory debates, whereas practitioners may rather focus on operational relevance. Civil society organisations and migrant-led groups may prioritise representation, fairness, and practical implications. Media actors and wider public audiences often engage more readily with narrative and visual formats. For this reason, AspirE adopted a multi-format engagement strategy (see Figure 1 below) rather than relying on a single outreach channel.

Figure 1. Boosting impact of the AspirE research project



Spread across communication dissemination and exploitation efforts, these multiple formats include presentations of findings in written and oral formats (open-access publications, webinars, conferences), policy-oriented events (roundtable discussions, innovation laboratory, meetings), engaging materials (informative reports, policy briefs, toolbox), and multimedia storytelling outputs (podcasts, comic book, online/onsite exhibitions, documentary films). This diversity of formats increases the likelihood that research-based knowledge can circulate across sectors and be meaningfully interpreted within different professional and social contexts. It also reduces dependence on written academic-style communication, which often limits accessibility.

Using varied engagement formats also serves an epistemic purpose. Migration debates are frequently shaped by polarised narratives and selective representations. By presenting research findings through multiple lenses (analytical, narrative, visual, and dialogical), AspirE encourages more reflective and critical engagement with evidence. Different formats invite different types of attention and interpretation, creating space for more balanced and informed conversations about migration.

Ethical principles guiding engagement

AspirE treats research participants as individuals whose stories require contextualisation and protection. Because the project works with personal migration experiences and aspirations, outreach and engagement activities must carefully manage questions of consent and potential harm.

Considering the diversity of countries involved in AspirE, each team was encouraged to adjust the ethics-related documentation (e.g., information sheets, consent forms, guides for interviews, video diary recordings, and focus group discussions) to the local context. [Completing ethical reviews had been a challenging endeavour](#), but necessary to ensure high ethical standards. Upon obtaining ethics approvals, research participants were walked through informed consent procedures and were given agency over how their contributions would be collected, recorded, and shared. Additional measures were taken along the ethical review process with regard to the video diary collection: filming only avatars (e.g., objects, landscapes, sceneries) representing the study participants' emotions and state of mind, direct pseudonymisation of video diary transcriptions, and doubling the original voices in the recordings to pseudonymise participants. These measures decrease the possibility of reidentifying participants. AspirE's engagement approach is also guided by proportionality and responsibility. Not all findings are suitable for all audiences, and not all preliminary insights should be widely circulated without sufficient validation and context. Decisions about what to share, when, and in which format are made with attention to accuracy, sensitivity, and potential misinterpretation. In a politically charged field such as migration, responsible engagement requires careful framing and transparent communication about research limits as well as findings.

Humanising perspectives, participatory elements, multi-format outreach, and ethical safeguards are mutually reinforcing dimensions of the AspirE project. This conceptual foundation informs the concrete outreach activities adopted during the lifetime of the project.

Multi-level outreach activities

Involving policymakers and practitioners

Dialogue with policymakers and practitioners was embedded in AspirE's research and engagement strategy from the outset. Rather than treating policy engagement as a final dissemination step, the project created structured spaces for dialogue throughout its implementation, enabling exchange between research teams and non-academic actors. Through a combination of targeted tools and interactive formats, AspirE sought to support evidence-informed reflection, mutual learning, and the co-development of policy-relevant insights.

➤ Translating research into policy recommendations

AspirE has published [policy briefs](#) throughout the project lifecycle, upon finalising sets of data collections. The policy briefs served as intermediary tools translating AspirE's empirical findings into concise, accessible, and actionable messages for policymakers. They created a shared reference point for dialogue, enabling evidence-based discussion, critical feedback, and the refinement of policy-relevant recommendations through interaction with non-academic stakeholders. More precisely, they offer exploitable research-based insights, unveiling the place of migrants in EU policies concerning human spatial mobility, the way these policies affect aspiring migrants' decision-making, and the general challenges they pose to European (im)mobility regulations.

AspirE identified gaps between existing migration policies and lived realities on the ground, drawing attention to under-addressed issues, unintended consequences, and areas where current frameworks fall short. By grounding recommendations in policy content analysis, experts' insights, and migrants' experiences, the policy briefs propose evidence-based directions for more responsive and inclusive policy approaches. They were used as facilitation tools during policy-oriented events, structuring discussions around key findings and recommendations.

➤ Putting evidence to the test

The [AspirE Policy Lab](#), entitled "Aligning EU-Asia Migration Policy with Aspirations and Lived Realities", was organised at CEPS on 26 September 2025 to foster direct dialogue between AspirE researchers and a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from European institutions, trade unions, civil society, and academia, with the shared objective of grounding policy discussions in empirical evidence and lived experience.

The format combined brief presentations of two AspirE policy briefs: (1) [Regular migration from Asia to Europe](#) that maps administrative and procedural barriers faced by aspiring migrants and (2) [Enhancing migrant support systems](#) that highlights the role of social networks and institutional supports. The presentations were followed by interactive discussion sessions that invited participants to reflect on the practical relevance of key findings. Participants explored implications for current EU debates on mobility governance and identified opportunities to make policy frameworks more responsive to the realities of migration trajectories.

The event underscored the value of collecting nuanced feedback on research outputs and strengthening their policy relevance, while also revealing a notable gap in engagement with EU Member State representatives, who are actors whose implementation powers are crucial for translating EU-level intentions into actionable change. These insights highlight the importance of broadening future policy labs to include national policymakers to better inform multi-level migration policymaking processes.

➤ ***Creating spaces for dialogue and exchange***

Throughout the project, AspirE was involved in events with policymakers, practitioners, and other relevant stakeholders at the local level. Rather than relying solely on the dissemination of results at the end of the project, AspirE partners engaged in policy-oriented events that allowed for discussion, feedback, and contextual interpretation of findings as they emerged.

Each partner organised and/or participated in at least one policy-oriented event, using a variety of formats (e.g., roundtable discussions, targeted meetings, seminars, panels, workshops, webinars, conferences), depending on local opportunities, audiences, and policy contexts. These events gathered between 6 and 85 participants and were held in local languages or in bilingual formats (English and local languages), which facilitated meaningful participation and accessibility. Depending on objectives and sensitivities, some events were open to the public, while others were organised as closed-door or invitation-only meetings to enable more focused discussions. Across contexts, participants included representatives of government agencies and ministries, embassies and consulates, EU missions, local policymakers, international organisations, and NGOs.

In 2024, four local events were organised in [Italy](#), [Vietnam](#), [Finland](#), and the [Czech Republic](#), largely centered on WP2 findings and the discussion of published policy briefs in relation to national and local migration policy debates. In 2025, preliminary and final findings from WP2, WP3, and WP4 were shared through a diverse set of local initiatives: (1) targeted institutional meetings in the [Czech Republic](#), [Vietnam](#), [Hong Kong](#) and [Belgium](#), (2) public policy-oriented events in [Italy](#), the [Philippines](#), [Germany](#), [Japan](#), and the [Czech Republic](#), (3) hybrid formats combining research discussion with exhibitions in [Thailand](#), [Portugal](#), and [Belgium](#). The impact of AspirE's work and selected locally organised events can be illustrated with the following examples:

- In the Italian context, following a [press conference](#) at the Italian Senate, the Italian government introduced changes to its labour migration policy [in late 2024](#) and then [in 2025](#) to limit abuses and exploitative practices of migrant workers.
- In the Finnish-Thai context, recurrent focus on the prevention of human trafficking generated in-depth discussions and led to further targeted follow-up exchanges with embassy staff, policymakers, and other stakeholders, and eventually, to [new changes in the legislation](#): foreign berry pickers are subject to the seasonal work rules starting on 17 February 2025.

Taken together, these local events enabled contextualised interpretation of AspirE's findings, strengthened relationships with key stakeholders, and supported the integration of research insights into ongoing policy discussions across different governance levels through flexible, open-ended exchanges rather than formal consultation processes.

Empowering practitioners and civil society

To complement direct engagement with policymakers, AspirE prioritised strengthening the capacity of practitioners, civil society actors, and other migration agents to interpret and apply research in real-world settings. The [AspirE Toolbox](#) was developed as an accessible, reusable repository of practical research outputs that translates complex findings into formats tailored for everyday use by non-academic audiences through succinct policy briefs, reports, podcasts, methodological guides, and training materials.

By foregrounding clear pathways into core project resources and offering methodological orientation (including ethically grounded qualitative methods, social network mapping, and open data practices), the Toolbox serves not just as a repository of results, but as a mechanism for transferring research methods and reflective practices directly to those working with or for aspiring (re)migrants. This resource supports practitioners in designing interventions, advocating for evidence-informed approaches, and engaging with policy frameworks with greater confidence and contextual awareness. Importantly, its structure and public availability also enable replication and adaptation beyond AspirE's lifetime, multiplying the project's impact by facilitating sustained capacity building in migration research and practice long after funding ends.

Reaching wider publics through creative and narrative formats

To humanise migration policymaking, research must circulate beyond academic and policy arenas and engage the public who shape the social and political context in which policies are debated. AspirE therefore invested in formats that translate research processes and findings into accessible, engaging, and emotionally resonant forms. By using audio, visual, and storytelling-based approaches, the project sought to amplify migrants' voices, highlighting lived experiences, and fostering broader public understanding of migration realities.

➤ Listening to research

The [AspirE podcast series](#) translates research findings and field experiences into conversational episodes that foreground personal trajectories, methodological reflections, and key themes emerging from the project. Each series builds on the previous one: the first introduced the project and its overarching goals, the second highlighted the first phase of data collection (policy content analysis and interviews with migration experts), and the third explored the second phase (interviews with aspiring (re)migrants and social network mapping). The fourth podcast series of the project focuses on the final phase of data collection, including video diaries and focus-group discussions with migration experts.

By giving the AspirE team (mainly its early career researchers) the floor to share their experiences in their own words, the series combines narrative storytelling with scholarly insights, making the research accessible, engaging, and relatable beyond academic and institutional settings. The audio format, intentionally simple and conversational, makes the content easily shareable and accessible beyond academic and institutional settings, while highlighting the human dimension of migration research.

➤ Illustrating research

In parallel, in collaboration with an independent cartoonist and anthropological linguist, the project is developing a comic book as a visual and narrative medium to communicate

migration experiences and research insights in a format particularly suited to non-specialist audiences, including students, educators, and the general public.

The comic draws on a selection of stories shared by migrant interviewees, translating their personal trajectories and experiences into engaging visual narratives. The comic book offers an accessible, relatable, and emotionally resonant way to bring the human dimension of migration to life through the combination of selected research findings with storytelling and illustrations. The project targets the early part of 2027 as the publication date of its comic book in open access format.

➤ **Experiencing research**

AspirE translated its research into immersive [online and onsite exhibitions](#), turning findings into multisensory experiences that bring the voices and lives of migrants directly to diverse audiences.

The online exhibition, [Asian Lives in Europe: A Visual Journey](#), provides a permanent digital space where personal stories, photographs, symbolic objects, and video diaries from migrants across 11 countries are presented, allowing visitors worldwide to explore the emotional and symbolic dimensions of migration beyond the project's lifespan. The onsite exhibition in [Lisbon](#) complements the online experience, combining curated objects, films, and interactive installations to create physical encounters with migrant narratives. Thematic exhibitions were also held in [Khon Kaen](#) and [Bangkok](#), highlighting the case of Thai berry pickers going to Finland. By centering migrants as authors of their own stories and using visual and sensory storytelling, the exhibitions exemplify how research can be communicated beyond academia and engage audiences in meaningful dialogue about migration, identity, and belonging. The AspirE consortium also recreated the key elements of the exhibitions previously held in Thailand, Portugal, and online through an exhibition in Brussels entitled [Journeys beyond research](#) from 12 December 2025 to 31 January 2026. The video diaries catalogue, showcasing the carefully curated “avatar objects”, was the core of this exhibit. The exhibit will be then showcased in campus Solbosch of the Université libre de Bruxelles (AspirE's coordinator institution).

➤ **Documenting research**

AspirE produced a set of documentary films as a medium to connect research with wider publics. One documentary film with a duration of 37 minutes, entitled [Songs of Leaving](#), focuses on aspiring migrants' self-recorded audiovisual testimonies (video diaries) and avatars. This film, made by the ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon team, shows materials collected by each AspirE's local teams. In line with the project's commitment to ethical storytelling, the use of avatars and voice doubling was deliberately adopted to protect participants' anonymity and comply with GDPR requirements, while still preserving the emotional depth and narrative agency of the speakers. Through layered storytelling and visual intimacy, the film puts forward migrants' voices, extending AspirE's mission to bridge research and art and reaching new audiences through film festivals, cultural venues, and educational platforms.

The other three documentary films of AspirE were produced between 2023 and 2025 by The Isaan Record and focus on the migration of Thai berry pickers to Finland. [Bloody Berry \(2023\)](#) examines the promises and pitfalls of seasonal berry picking, revealing how some workers, particularly from Thailand's Isaan region, return home burdened by debt after journeys that

failed to deliver the expected financial security. [The film received two awards](#) from the Issara Amantakul Foundation, which promotes freedom of the mass media in Thailand, as well as an award from Amnesty International Thailand. [The Berries Blues \(2024\)](#) further explored these labour migration dynamics and was screened in Finland, fostering dialogue with European audiences. Finally, the documentary film [Blood Berries \(2025\)](#) reveals the realities behind the so-called “gold rush” of Thai berry picking through sustained and on-the-ground engagement. Screened across Thailand and in several European countries (Belgium, Finland, Germany, and Greece), the film places migrants’ voices and perspectives at the center of the narrative, emphasising self-representation, long-term engagement, and ethical documentary practice. This last documentary film recently won the [Best Human Rights award](#) at the Montreal Women Film Festival.

Taken together, AspirE’s multilevel activities show that research impact is not produced through a single channel or audience, but through a combination of policy dialogue, practitioner-oriented tools, and public-facing narratives. By investing in storytelling and creative formats alongside policy briefs, policy labs, and targeted events, the project lowers barriers to accessing evidence, strengthens the capacity of practitioners and civil society actors, and brings aspiring (re)migrants’ lived experiences into public debate. These efforts contribute to more nuanced and empathetic discussions on migration, helping to create the social and institutional conditions in which policy choices can be informed by human realities rather than abstract assumptions. Building on this experience, the following section distils key lessons and formulates recommendations.

Cross-cutting lessons and recommendations

Humanising migration policymaking requires sustained proximity to lived experiences

Lesson: Migration decision-making is shaped by uncertainty, relationships, aspirations, and changing circumstances that cannot be captured through static indicators or short-term data collection alone. Longitudinal and narrative methods make it possible to understand how decisions evolve and why policies are experienced differently across contexts.

Recommendation: Migration research should invest in methods that allow for continuity, reflexivity, and temporal depth. This includes supporting longitudinal qualitative approaches and recognising their added value alongside quantitative evidence. Policymaking processes should draw on such evidence to better anticipate unintended effects and to design measures that reflect migrants’ real-life trajectories.

Research structures matter for policy relevance

Lesson: The inclusion of non-academic organisations within the AspirE consortium strengthened the project’s ability to connect analytical work with policy processes, field realities, and public-facing practices. Continuous interaction between different forms of expertise enhanced both the relevance and usability of research outputs.

Recommendation: Research consortia should be designed to integrate complementary forms of expertise from the outset, including policy-focused organisations with practitioners and community-based experience. Funding schemes should explicitly support such collaboration.

Dialogue is more effective than one-off dissemination

Lesson: Policy briefs and policy-oriented events, including the policy lab, appear effective when they are presented as tools for dialogue rather than as final products. Early exchanges with policymakers and practitioners helped test findings, refined interpretations, and situated evidence within concrete policy debates. Gaps in participation, particularly from national-level actors, also revealed structural challenges in multi-level governance engagement.

Recommendation: Policy-oriented research should prioritise interactive formats that enable feedback, debate, and mutual learning over time. Efforts to engage EU-level actors should be complemented by targeted strategies to involve national and local policymakers, whose role in implementation is crucial for meaningful policy change.

Capacity building extends impact beyond the project lifecycle

Lesson: The [AspirE Toolbox](#) aims to make research accessible and reusable by providing practitioners and civil society actors with evidence from the ground. The availability of findings and methods in a format other than a scientific publication can strengthen long-term impact of a research project.

Recommendation: Research projects should allocate resources to developing open, practitioner-oriented tools that enable adaptation, replication, and sustained use. Funders should recognise capacity building and methodological transfer as core impact pathways, rather than as ancillary activities.

Public narratives shape the conditions for policymaking

Lesson: Creative and narrative formats (podcasts, comics, exhibitions, and documentary films) played a critical role in amplifying aspiring (re)migrants' voices and fostering more nuanced public conversations. These formats can help counter simplified or polarised representations and created spaces where migration could be discussed with greater empathy and complexity.

Recommendation: Research and policy actors should invest in narrative and creative approaches as legitimate forms of knowledge communication. Impact should not be assessed solely through direct policy uptake, but also through contributions to public understanding, social debate, and the cultural contexts in which policy choices are made.

Ethical responsibility is integral to meaningful impact

Lesson: Working with lived experiences in a politically sensitive field requires careful attention to consent, protection, and proportionality. AspirE's experience shows that ethical safeguards are not constraints on impact, but conditions for responsible and credible engagement.

Recommendation: Ethical considerations should be embedded throughout research and outreach processes, with flexibility to adapt to local contexts and evolving risks. Policymakers and funders should value ethical reflexivity as a marker of quality and trustworthiness in migration research.

Conclusion

This advocacy report argues that migration policymaking cannot be humanised without sustained engagement beyond academia. AspirE's experience shows that research makes a meaningful contribution when it is grounded in lived experiences, organised through inclusive research structures, and communicated through formats that allow dialogue, reflection, and public understanding. Humanising migration policymaking is not only a matter of producing better evidence, but of rethinking how knowledge is generated, shared, and mobilised across policy, practice, and society.

Through its engaged consortium structure, participatory and longitudinal methodology, multi-format outreach activities, and strong ethical safeguards, AspirE demonstrates a shift from linear knowledge transfer towards relational and context-sensitive research practices. Dialogue with policymakers and practitioners, capacity building through practitioner-oriented tools, and the use of narrative and creative formats all played complementary roles in ensuring that research findings were not only accessible but meaningful and usable across different contexts.

The lessons presented in this report point to broader implications for migration research and governance. Policy relevance emerges through continuity, interaction, and trust rather than through one-off dissemination or narrow indicators of impact. Public narratives and social debate shape the conditions in which policies are developed, just as much as institutional processes do. Ethical responsibility underpins the credibility and legitimacy of research-based engagement in politically sensitive fields. From these lessons, several key recommendations follow:

- **For research consortia:** include non-academic partners from the outset, integrate participatory and longitudinal methods, and produce ethical, multi-format outputs that enable two-way exchange and lasting impact beyond the project lifecycle.
- **For funders:** recognise the value of non-traditional outputs (e.g., podcasts, exhibitions, and interactive tools), support sustained engagement activities throughout the project lifecycle, and provide sufficient research duration of more than three years for broad projects with several deliverables involving multiple actors and institutions in many countries.
- **For policymakers and practitioners:** create structured spaces for dialogue with research, remain open to nuanced and human-centered evidence, and consider how policy decisions intersect with lived realities.

By combining these approaches, research can reach multiple audiences, strengthen capacity for evidence-informed decision-making, and amplify the voices of aspiring (re)migrants in ways that are both ethical and actionable. Ultimately, AspirE illustrates that building human-centered migration governance requires commitment not only to producing evidence, but to sharing it meaningfully and responsibly across society, institutions, and policy processes.