



Urbagri4Women

Catalogue of Best Practices

Strasbourg, France
2017



Association Migration
Solidarité & Echanges
pour le Développement



urbagri4women



URBAGRI4WOMEN - Project n. HOME_2015_AMIF_AG_INTE_9098

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Introduction

To respond to the need to exchange best practices on migration issues at European Union and local levels, and to develop social and professional inclusion of migrant and refugee women through urban agriculture, seven European countries chose to take part in URBAGRI4WOMEN. These countries are Austria, France, Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and Italy, the latter having initiated the project. Their civil society partners are AIDGLOBAL in Portugal, AMSED in France, CARDET in Cyprus, GYROS in the United Kingdom, iED in Greece, SÜDWIND in Austria, and TAMAT in Italy.

Migration is a very current issue, and so is sustainable agriculture. This is why URBAGRI4WOMEN partners use the latter as a framework that will enable these women to gather around a common interest, gain technical skills and self-confidence, and therefore create social ties and foster professional inclusion.

This project consists in local urban agriculture initiatives such as composting and gardening workshops, workshops to learn new alternatives to develop urban agriculture, visits of different initiatives such as rooftop beehives, and technical and professional capacity building. These activities will later be transposed at national and transnational levels with, for instance, a transnational gardening contest. Ultimately, the lessons learned on the field will help harmonize the integration of migrant women all around Europe. This goal will be reached by establishing the present catalogue of best practices for effective management (shelters, professional and social integration initiatives, administration) of migrant women, because they are one of European societies' most vulnerable groups. Best practices have already been shared and discussed during a study visit in Strasbourg, France. Some have also been gathered at local level in the other six partner countries. The present catalogue is the result of that study visit and of a transnational network seminar, two events which both European partners and local civil society organizations attended.

This catalogue consists of an introduction to the project and its partners, and to migration policies at the EU, national and local levels. In a first instance, the best practices in Strasbourg concerning the welcoming and integration management of migrant people, and social and professional inclusion through urban agriculture activities, will be described. In a second instance, the best practices in the seven European partner countries within the URBAGRI4WOMEN project regarding social and professional inclusion will be presented. Lastly, there will be a conclusion with an analysis of the results obtained.

Context

Around 25 million people were born in a non-EU country, which amounts to 5% of its total population. For the EU to make the most of immigration, this population needs to be well integrated into European society. Since 2010, the inflow of migrants coming to Europe has drastically increased. In 2015 only, Europe faced a massive migration wave, welcoming over a million people mostly coming from the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, fleeing war, famine, dictatorship and economic crisis, abandoning their home and seeking shelter in safer and democratic countries. Amid the arrival of hundreds of thousands of immigrants, European countries reacted with different policies: for example, Germany welcomed as many refugees as it could with open arms, while countries at the borders of the Schengen area wanted to shut their doors.

Due to their geographical location, some of the countries involved in the project, such as Greece and Italy, are the most affected by this crisis, as the migrants land on their territory first. The Dublin regulation stipulates that the first member state an asylum seeker entered and was registered in is responsible for handling them. This regulation has been very criticized for placing too much responsibility on member states on the external borders of the Schengen Zone, especially Greece, Italy and Hungary, instead of introducing a burden-sharing system with quotas. The migrant crisis has also triggered a movement of right-nationalist parties in many countries, who demand more border control and changing their immigration policy. In 2015 the European Commission proposed to introduce quotas, even if Hungary and Slovakia were totally opposed to it. This decision was reasserted in September 2017 by the European Court of Justice, confirming that refugees would be relocated in all European Countries. This guideline from the European Union gives a direction to the member states but will need some time to be put into action.

In the meantime, refugees still need to be integrated in their foster countries, that is why non-governmental organizations came together in order to facilitate local integration, especially for women, who make up 52.4% of the total migrant population in Europe and often face discrimination. The global gender equality rate stands indeed at 68% and wage equality is expected to occur in 170 years. The project took shape at TAMAT, an NGO based in Italy. Six other organizations joined the project and contribute to it nowadays with their own particular skills, each one of them having a clearly defined task, adding value to the project. Furthermore, due to the current environmental issues of climate change, global warming and sustainable agriculture, they chose urban agriculture as a framework in order to connect the social and professional integration of migrant women with a current and important field, which will allow them to enter the labour market with useful skills and knowledge.

Partners

The main actors of URBAGRI4WOMEN are seven non-profit civil society organisations (CSOs), namely, AIDGLOBAL (Portugal), AMSED (France), CARDET (Cyprus), GYROS (United Kingdom), iED (Greece), SÜDWIND (Austria), and TAMAT (Italy). They each work directly with migrant populations or are specialized in migration management and migrant people empowerment according to the challenges their home countries face in this matter. While Italy, Cyprus and Greece are at the forefront of the migration crisis due to their closeness to the African continent and the Middle-East, France, the United Kingdom, and Austria have to face the influx of migrants who have already entered the Schengen zone. Portugal, on the other hand, has shown itself to be eager to welcome migrants for demographic reasons, but has received few refugees¹. Therefore, these associations have a wide range of skills and can address, thanks to their extensive experience in developing and implementing programmes focusing on integration, different types of migration-related issues. Moreover, most of these CSOs are members of the Mediterranean Migration Network (<http://www.migrationnetwork.org/en/>), which was co-founded by CARDET and involves more than 150 CSOs EU-wide and worldwide. The seven partner organisations have already worked together in previous successful projects and EU-funded programmes and have gathered experiences in project management and training activities. In a word, they are complementary and have strong dissemination capacities due to their closeness to migrant populations. It seemed only natural that they should form this partnership so as to address common issues collectively, share best practices and harmonize the way European Union countries handle current migration-related challenges.

TAMAT (<http://www.tamat.org/>) is an agriculture, environment, promotion of small businesses and international development NGO based in Perugia, Ancona and Tivoli, Italy. Its founding members are two agronomists, one economist and one sociologist who believe that strengthening personal skills is necessary to the improvement of living conditions of the world's citizens. In Italy, Tamat is active in the field of vocational training, development education programs and projects aimed at promoting the knowledge on cooperation and development issues. Moreover, it deals with activities of research and investigation and is involved in planning development actions both at national and international levels. TAMAT initiated URBAGRI4WOMEN.

AIDGLOBAL (<http://www.aidglobal.org/>) is an NGO for Development based in Lisbon, Portugal. Founded in 2005, it aims at contributing to a more just and sustainable world through education. In Portugal, it promotes Global Citizenship Education (GCE) with projects in schools, training courses for teachers and educational resources for educators. It also intervenes in the non-formal education sector, training practitioners and volunteers from civil society organizations on GCE issues. In Mozambique, it has been promoting access to the book and digital literacy, with the creation and equipment of libraries, reading activities and training of technicians and teachers.

AMSED (Association Migration, Solidarité et Développement, <http://amsed.fr/>), is a youth and popular education association with 150 members. It is based in Strasbourg, France, and was created in 1998. This association aims at promoting and implementing exchange and insertion activities involving young people with disadvantaged backgrounds, and at supporting them in the realisation of their ideas and projects. AMSED especially supports North/South exchanges in the form of international solidarity

¹ News Deeply, *Portugal's Openness to Refugees Makes Demographic and Economic Sense*, 10 February 2017. <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2017/02/10/portugals-openness-to-refugees-makes-demographic-and-economic-sense>

construction projects in Algeria, Morocco, Cameroon, Guinea, Nepal and Vietnam. Intercultural exchanges, local development, civil society participation and development cooperation are AMSED's main focuses.

CARDET (Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology, <http://cardet.org/>) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental, research and development organization based in Cyprus with partners around the world. CARDET is becoming one of the leading institutions in the Euro-Mediterranean region for research, evaluation and development, and has a partnership with Yale University. CARDET's mission is to inspire next generation education, and to promote research, innovation, and development through evidence-based practices, cutting-edge research, and empowered people. CARDET has participated in more than 130 projects in 40 countries.

GYROS (<http://www.gyros.org.uk/>) is an association that supports newcomers and migrant communities in the Great Yarmouth area, in the United Kingdom, to ensure their integration. GYROS works at minimizing the stress and potential dangers newcomers face and to relieve pressure which would otherwise fall on local service providers. GYROS's services encompass a walk-in and appointment service where free information, advice, guidance and advocacy is provided on a range of topics including, but not limited to, housing, benefits, debt, health, UK rights, immigration, police, education, substance misuse. Language courses are also offered.

iED (institute of Entrepreneurship and Development, <https://ied.eu/>) is a Greek Organization based in Larissa and committed to the promotion of innovation and the enhancing of the spirit of entrepreneurship. It was created in 2005 and has since then participated in more than 100 European projects. The vision of iED is the facilitation of all the necessary preconditions required for the creation of an environment that will cultivate entrepreneurship and subsequently, social and economic cohesion and development. In order to meet this end, iED invests in innovation and aims at offering custom-made, realistic solutions to enterprises and individuals in order to strengthen business culture and provide viable solutions to problems and challenges related to entrepreneurial activities.

SÜDWIND ("South Wind" in English, <https://www.suedwind.at/>) is an association financed through national and international public funds and private contributions. It is based in Vienna, Austria, and was created in 1979. Südwind's work in Austria is conducted by a network of regional offices and partners. At local, regional, national, and international levels, it cooperates with organizations and institutions in the fields of international development, education, environment, culture, and social issues, as well as with various civil society networks and important political figures. Südwind regularly carries out projects of its own, and makes its know-how available to other organizations and institutions.

Summary of the project

URBAGRI4WOMEN's *raison d'être* is migrant women. Indeed, they represent more than half of the total migrant population (52.4%), but, due to gender inequalities worldwide, they are more vulnerable to poverty and armed conflicts and less likely to integrate in another country's society. The issue of gender equality is tackled in the Council of Europe's and European Union's conventions on Human Rights, as well as in the UN Charter. On top of this, the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families contains a clause on the wives and daughters of migrant workers, and the UN's Sustainable Development Goal #5 sets the deadline for achieving gender equality worldwide to 2030. URBAGRI4WOMEN aims at empowering these women, who are the pillars of their families and communities.

In the absence of effective EU and national immigrant integration policies, URBAGRI4WOMEN aims at fostering the integration of migrant women, who suffer from lower integration rates than men, in the receiving society thanks to urban agriculture labs, paving the way for future effective policies and practices that would give local governance mechanisms a central role in promoting intercultural dialogue and a culture of welcoming communities. Urban agriculture has proven to bring economic, environmental and social benefits to cities. It helps reinsert marginal and neglected areas into the urban landscape, and is a good way of creating a socially-inclusive ecosystem for disadvantaged populations such as migrant women. URBAGRI4WOMEN foresees activities for project management and coordination, dissemination and knowledge transfer, transnational knowledge sharing on urban agriculture and capacity-building of beneficiaries on better integrating migrant women, and start-up immigrant integration support programmes for European municipalities.

The seven partners involved in URBAGRI4WOMEN offer migrant women a wide range of activities, such as language lessons, jam-making, composting and gardening workshops or visits of rooftop beehives. On top of extensive communication between the different members of the transnational network and e-learning material, a study visit and a transnational network seminar have taken place and resulted in shared good practices, in the form of the present catalogue, and a *Migrant Women Integration Manifesto* will be elaborated to track all the possible steps that the European Union could take to build up a coherent and comprehensive approach to reap the benefits of, and address the challenges deriving from, migration. A final conference will be held in Lisbon.

Beneficiaries, in the short term include Civil Society Organisations and municipalities. They will learn to better collaborate at integrating migrant women into social and professional life, notably thanks to programmes inspired by URBAGRI4WOMEN's best practices. Beneficiaries in the medium and long term include local officials and policy-makers at national and European level, to whom suggestions will be made so as to how to politically tackle integration of migrant women.

The results that are expected include, but are not limited to: increased technical skills in the field of urban agriculture, increased socio-economic integration and more active participation in society, increased self-confidence and integration in local communities, and better cross-cultural understanding of migrant women; increased technical skills on entrepreneurial monitoring and social inclusion at local staff level; increased opportunities for the socio-economic integration of migrant women, awareness of the local socio-economic integration opportunities for migrant women, enhanced multi-level dialogue towards a common European approach to asylum and immigration, and promoting intercultural dialogue and a culture of welcoming migrant populations at the systemic level.

Migration policies at the European Union level

- **Migration crisis**

Around 25 million people living in the EU were born in a non-EU country, which amounts to 5% of its total population. Since 2010, the inflow of migrants coming to Europe has drastically increased. There are numerous triggers such as the Arab Spring and the bursting up of the Syrian inner conflict. The latter grew more and more until Bashar el-Assad took up weapons to repress its opposition and the protesters exposing its authoritarian Regime. In 2012 there was a massive wave of people fleeing the repression and the rising Islamic State, increasing the number of refugees stood by 235.300 according to the UN Refugee Agency. Other causes are also war in Iraq, authoritarian regimes and extreme poverty in Africa leading to wars, famine and a lack of economic prospects for the people.

Angela Merkel, Germany's Chancellor, said she would welcome all the refugees coming to Germany, hence encouraging them to undertake a very long journey hoping they will find a shelter and decent living conditions at the end of it. In order to do so, many used the now-called "Balkan route", risking their lives crossing non-open borders and living in terrible conditions. The route begins once arrived in Greece, going then through Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary and Austria. In October 2015 Hungary closed its borders with Croatia, hoping to stem the flow of migrants going to Germany and thus deviating their path toward Slovenia and Croatia. The same year, over one million people arrived in Europe over the sea, landing in Greece, Italy and Malta, overwhelming the administrations of those countries, who are calling for solidarity among European countries, not being able to face this burden alone. Awareness was raised by the Pope himself and actions were taken in order to avoid more people dying in the Mediterranean Sea. Between 2014 and 2016, more than 12.000 people drowned trying to reach European coasts².

Amid the arrival of hundreds of thousands of immigrants, civil society's awareness was raised and actions were taken at the European level in order to help the countries face the flow of migrants coming their way. The European Commission also imposed decisions in favour of solidarity between the states in order to share the burden of the global crisis.

According to the UNHCR's latest update on the number of arrivals by sea to Europe in August 2017, the countries most represented among shelter seekers are: Nigeria (13.8%), Syria (9.7%), Guinea (8.5%), Ivory Coast (7.9%), Bangladesh (7.3%), Gambia (5.2%), Eritrea and Senegal (4.6%).

- **Progression of migration policies**

At the beginning of the migration crisis, countries responded to it individually, taking into account their own needs in order to face the inflow but none of the European Union members were ready to take that much people in, and were far from imagining the extent of the crisis. Countries like Germany, Sweden, Spain and Portugal said they would take more refugees in. On the contrary, countries located at the border of the Schengen Zone, like Slovenia and Hungary, wanted more border control and to find relocation solutions.

The Dublin Agreement came into force in July 2013. It's a key achievement that contains sound procedures for the protection and rights of asylum seekers (e.g. the right to remain on the territory during

² UNHCR (<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>)

a judgement, free legal assistance if requested, reunifying possibilities of minors with their family, etc.) and setting rules for asylum applications. The central point of the agreement being that the first country migrants arrive in is responsible for their registration and asylum application. This put a heavy burden on coastal states such as Italy and Greece. Those countries were calling for help and solidarity, while others refused to implement a quota policy at a European level. In 2016, the European Commission proposed a revision of the agreement introducing more solidarity between the host countries, more than needed after the migrant flow peak in 2015. By the end of 2015, the EU as a whole had received indeed over 1.2 million first-time asylum claims, more than double the number registered in 2014 (563.000). Germany also became the single largest recipient of new individual asylum claims, with 441.800 registered by the end of 2015³.

“When it comes to managing the refugee crisis, we have started to see solidarity. I am convinced much more solidarity is needed. But I also know that solidarity must be given voluntarily. It must come from the heart, it cannot be forced”.

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Parliament, 2016⁴

2016 has been an important year for the evolution of the European migration policy as two major measures have been taken. Firstly, In March the European Union and Turkey signed a deal concerning the migration crisis. What’s expected from Turkey is to take back non-asylum seekers or asylum seekers whose claim has been rejected. With this deal, the European community hoped to discourage migrants to make a dangerous journey between Turkey and Greece and thus relieving the country from the thousands of migrants stuck on the territory. In exchange, Turkey received €3 billion funding and visas to enter the Schengen Zone for its population. Unfortunately, the deal is still controversial and takes time to be implemented on a logistic point of view. The second measure was implemented the same year in May, concerning the relocation of migrants on a European scale. Because the massive arrival of migrants put a strain on the Common European Asylum System, the Commission proposed a draft to revise and improve the Dublin System, implementing quotas in order to deal more effectively with disproportionate pressures put on member states. Quotas are determined according to the countries’ size and wealth, establishing a maximum number of applications, above which any further asylum request will be relocated in another state. If the member states don’t want to take part in the relocation, they would have to make a solidarity contribution of €250.000 for each application they didn’t take care of.

• Current situation

The European continent currently hosts 17% of the world’s refugees. As of 11 October 2017, 141.311 people had put their lives at risk while trying to reach Europe since 1 January 2017. 2.858 people had been reported missing or to have drowned since 1 January 2017. Out of all the migrants that arrived in Europe in 2017, 847 (less than 1%) had landed in Cyprus, 12.420 (~9%) in Spain, 20.931 (~15%) in Greece, and 107.113 (~75%) in Italy.

³ International Organisation for Migration, 2015 (<http://gmdac.iom.int/global-migration-trends-factsheet>)

⁴ European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/2-years-on-migration_en.pdf

In almost every region of the world, people are more likely to be in favour of migration than against it. The one, notable exception to this is Europe. As of September 2017, only about one third of the 100.000 places of the 2015 programme to relocate migrants travelling through Greece and Italy had been filled. The European Court of Justice ruled on 6 September 2017 that countries reluctant to accept migrants, such as Hungary and Slovakia, must live up to their commitments to the quota system. According to the International Organisation for Migration, “the negative opinion of migrants and the obstacles laid upon migrants’ ways may, in part, account for the fact that the number of assisted voluntary returns from the EU exceeds that of forced returns⁵”. On top of this, “ongoing recession and uneven recovery in a number of European destination countries has contributed to a worsening of the public perception of migrants and asylum-seekers, which, together with the rise of xenophobic rhetoric and initiatives, has degraded public discourse and exacerbated the economic and social marginalization of some migrants. At the same time, in the context of an ageing Europe and with the general political shift from austerity towards a more pro-growth stance, discussion on improving labour mobility and tackling rising youth unemployment has become more prominent, thus presenting opportunities for countries in the region to gain an edge in the global competition for workers”.⁶

- **Our solutions**

An active and common commitment of the civil society; NGO’s, particulars, companies, private organisations to stop these innocent deaths. A more united and rational plan for the management of this migration crisis. A consultation between the public sector; the governments, EU politicians and the private sector; NGO’s, EU population etc. More support to women, being a vulnerable public; adapted programmes by considering their situation and obstacles; taking care of children, availabilities, transport complications... During this seminar, all the partners were sharing the idea that there should be a real analysis of the situation, interest, profiles of migrant women to adapt the programme and support them efficiently.

⁵ International Organisation for Migration, 2015 (<http://gmdac.iom.int/global-migration-trends-factsheet>)

⁶ IOM, *European Economic Area* (<https://www.iom.int/european-economic-area>)

Migration policies at local and national level

- **Italy**

Italy manages the phenomenon of migratory flows from non-EU countries through policies that combine reception and integration with actions to combat irregular migration.

Entry into the territory of the State is permitted at border crossings to holders of a passport or equivalent document, and a visa. The State regularly schedules with the decree of the President of the Council of Ministers, the so-called 'decree-flows' introduced by law no. 40/98, the maximum allowances of foreigners to be admitted on Italian territory for subordinate and autonomous employment.

State, Regions and local autonomies, in collaboration with associations of the sector and authorities in the Countries of origin, promote the integration of foreign nationals who are regularly resident in Italy (Article 42 of the Testo Unico Immigrazione) through programs that: provide information on rights and opportunities for integration or reintegration into the countries of origin; promote language, civic and professional training; facilitate entry into the labour market.

- **France**

In the last few years, just like its European counterparts, France has been receiving hitherto unseen numbers of incomers. Between 2012 and 2016, the rate of requests for asylum rose by 40%⁷. Additional to immediate response measures, the French government has established a comprehensive action plan focusing on France's tradition of sheltering refugees and role as a solidary partner to other EU-countries, and on reducing waiting periods for management of requests for asylum and quickening the process of effective removal of the people whose requests have not been granted. France has also, as has Germany, been supporting the reinforcement of national mechanisms of EU-countries towards greater convergence. France has committed to helping Greece in terms of capacity building for its migration-related infrastructures, to use fully and accelerate the European relocation and reinstallation mechanism of migrants in Italy, and to keep delivering asylum visas. In October 2017, France promised to take in 10.000 refugees by October 2019. 3.000 of these will come from protection missions in Niger and Chad. In August 2017, at a summit, French President Emmanuel Macron offered to "identify" Niger and Chad nationals "who are entitled to asylum" in order to "keep them safe"⁸. However, in 2016, France only welcomed 1.330 refugees, whereas it had promised to take 30.000 of them before January 2017⁹. In the Strasbourg area, several initiatives were taken to address both the inclusion of migrants and gender inequalities, as municipalities are granted €1.000 a year for these purposes. *Cimade*, a nationwide NGO helping migrants find accommodation, jobs, and file requests for asylum, has an office in Strasbourg; and the *Notre Dame* shelter has similar activities. A notable urban agriculture project that existed prior to URBAGRI4WOMEN is *Jardin de la Montagne Verte*, whose members can enter professional life by growing vegetables and selling them to the public.

⁷ French Interior Ministry, 12 July 2017 (<https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/Accueil-des-etrangers-en-France>)

⁸ UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 9 October 2017 (<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/news/16577>)

⁹ Kombini.com, *Le nombre de réfugiés accueillis par la France en un an ? 1 330 sur 30 000 promis*, 2016 (<http://www.kombini.com/fr/tendances-2/nombre-refugies-accueillis-par-la-france-1-330/>)

• Portugal

Since August 2017, someone coming to Portugal only needs a “promise of an employment contract” to become legal. (SEF, Foreigners and Borders Service, was against this measure.) However, it takes a very long time to get an appointment at SEF.

The High Commission for Migration - Public Institute (ACM-IP), is a public institute that concentrates all the policies that are developed in Portugal regarding this matter. The ACM-IP brings together several centres throughout the country that support the integration of immigrants - CLAI – Local Centre of Integration and Support of Immigrants (Centro Local de Apoio à Integração de Imigrantes), who provides support not only in documentation/legalization, but also in several other public areas (healthcare, entrepreneurship, Education, etc.)

The ACM also offers, through the Employment and Professional Training Institute, a free (and certified) Portuguese Language course and a Technical Portuguese course for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Portugal also has an Asylum, Integration and Migration Fund, which finances a big variety of migrant’s integration projects.

At the moment, 21 municipalities have already created their Municipal Integration Plan for Immigrants and are implementing it. It has various measures to support the migrant community in their local town.

At the same time, the country has several non-profit immigrant support institutions with a major role, as CPR – Refugees Portuguese Council and does a lot of solidarity campaigns

• Cyprus

In view of new developments in migration integration, as a result of the refugee crisis in 2015, Cyprus, following the international and European trends, considers the migration phenomenon as a high priority issue at all levels (i.e. social, cultural, financial, political, educational, language, etc.). The governmental failures and inadequacies in supporting and maintaining an appropriate context for the migrants’ integration in general and young migrants in particular, have made the migrant issue not a theoretical but a real problem to address to nowadays.

Barriers such language and high cost of living, lack of opportunities for employment; lack of welfare services and psychological support; lack of migrant information contact points/ centres; the –at times– unnecessary bureaucracy in the administration and/ or negative attitude towards migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; etc., create major gaps towards the goal of migration integration.

With initiatives and actions at a voluntary, private and NGOs level, there is an emerging need to support migration integration initiatives deeply and rigorously. Within this framework, there is an emergent need for good practices that will smoothen migrants’ early (and later) days in the hosting countries that will mitigate barriers, issues and obstacles holding the integration goal back.

- **Greece**

The last few years in Greece, there has been an unprecedented presence of migration waves. These people, in their effort to reach Central and Northern Europe and settle there permanently hoping for a better life for their families and themselves, pass through Eastern Europe and the Balkan Peninsula, which make them more of a “transition zone”. As a result, Greece has become the “threshold” for migrants and refugees in entering the European Union due to its lengthy coastline.

However, in many cases migrants “get stuck” in Greece, thus creating different needs and lines of response for the social inclusion. According to statistics published for the 2nd semester of 2016, the migrant population constitutes 6% of the total population in Greece. The situation is changing by the day, as more and more people arrive to the Greek Islands. For example, currently (September 2017) in the island of Samos, there are 3.700 migrants and refugees, with 850 underage children, of whom 90 are alone with no relatives. All these people are in a camp, or “hotspot”, which has been designed for 800 persons.

Therefore, the need to create alternative ways and initiatives for inclusion is more present than ever. The people must be provided the incentive and motivation required to “move forward” and actively participate in Greek society. However, they need to know that they have options and they can contribute actively, without the language being always an obstacle.

- **Austria**

Austria is the first western European country that asylum seekers from Asia will cross, though as a transit country for people heading to Germany on the so-called Western Balkans Route—which has now largely come to a standstill after the EU-Turkey deal—but also as a destination country. Since July 2016, over twenty-nine thousand asylum applicants have been filled in Austria, one of the highest numbers on per-capita basis in the EU.

Austria is at the moment taken out of the relocation Program of the EU, reason for this being that Austria has already welcomed a lot of asylum seekers in 2015, during the top of the crisis. Back in those days, the civil society in Austria had a welcoming reaction towards the migrants. A lot of help initiatives were launched at that time. Among them, “gardening” and language trainings.

Progression of migration policies

The migration policies are very changing. 26 times since 2005. It will be difficult to describe them in this framework. In the publication of the International Organisation of migration, THE ORGANIZATION OF ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICIES IN AUSTRIA 2015, financed by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the European Commission, it states on the point about legislative Framework: “*The Austrian migration law has been amended several times in recent years and has, therefore, become one of the most complex legal materials*”¹⁰.

The legal regulations however make a difference between asylum and migration. Each with other under categories. There are 12 cases of residence permit in Austria (Without Asylum), some residence permits with access to the labour market, others without. Residence permits are always granted for a specific purpose. Foreign people can only change their purpose of residence during their stay in Austria in case they meet the conditions of the residence permit they apply for and the respective quota has not been exhausted yet where required.

¹⁰ http://www.emn.at/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/organisation-study_AT-EMN-NCP_2016.pdf

Without a working permit issued by AMS (work Mark Service) there is no legal way foreigners are allowed to work. But here again, there are some nuances.

The Legal Information System of the Republic of Austria is a platform and data base providing information on Austrian law. Its main contents are legislation in its current version (federal and state), law gazettes (federal and state) and case law. The Legal Information System also serves as the framework for the authentic electronic publication of the Federal Law Gazette and of the State Law Gazettes¹¹.

Current situation

At the beginning of this year, the Federal Minister of foreign affairs presented the report on the Austrian foreign policy for 2015. In the context of migration; the report stresses the importance of integration. It states that Austria is a land of opportunity and offers migrants numerous opportunities regardless of their origin, skin colour or religion. The aim should be to integrate persons entitled to asylum and those entitled to subsidiary protection as quickly as possible and to make them self-sustaining quickly. In addition to language acquisition, the promotion of education and the entry into the labour market, it also requires the teaching of the Austrian basic values, stands for Federal Minister¹².

Nonetheless, there is a crucial need to set and run supportive activities, on the part of the Austrian civil society to achieve the goals of the Austrian Government. Persons with a migration background are less active in the labour market. The employment rate of 15- to 64-year-olds with Migration background was 63% in 2016 and 74% of non-migrant peers. This difference is largely due to the lower labour market participation of migrants (58% versus 71% for non-migrant women)¹³.

Our Solutions

Support the initiatives of the civil society in their effort to welcome migrants.

Empower migrants

Encourage Migrant to empower themselves

Facilitate intercultural encounters.

Facilitate migrants' participation in cities affaires.

• United Kingdom

The UK has a long history of migration into the country and equally emigration out of the country. Currently there are four ways someone can legally enter the UK: free movement within the EU, as asylum seekers or refugees, through a points based system and for family formation and reunification. Since the 1970s the UK has increasingly introduced stricter policies and procedures around migration. It runs a 'hostile environment'.

At a local level migration can influence the size and make of the population, which in turn can impact on service provision and learning. National Policy and Procedures for migration filters into local level. For those migrant communities which cannot access public funds or any support third sector and faith based organisations are relied upon to bridge the gap of support and often support people to achieve access to the most basic of human needs and rights- food, shelter etc while they wait on immigration decisions.

¹¹ <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/defaultEn.aspx>

¹² https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/PR/JAHR_2017/PK0017/

¹³ Statistik Austria, Migration and Integration Zahlen.Daten.Indikatoren 2017, Vienna 2017

BEST PRACTICES IN STRASBOURG

- *Welcoming and integration management of migrant people*
-

Practice 1

Providing multiple services within one organisation.

Methodology

Keeping in mind that every migrant is unique the structure provides a variety of services, offering therefore a personalised welcoming to each migrant.

Resulting benefits

The diverse offered services are all gathered in one structure allowing a more efficient resolution of the various problems that migrants can meet - and enable a sustainable support of each individual for a more effective integration.

Risks

One of the risks can be the difficulty of management of the numerous different services by the staff that will require a suited organisation.

Moreover - in some countries as in France for example, some services are funded by the government which is not the case in every country. For instance, Foyer de Notre Dame has the status of “public utility” - it has applied to an offer of the Bas-Rhin department regarding the massive influx of migrants and the necessity to take actions, then enabling the structure to benefit of public funds which would not be possible in the UK for instance, NGOs usually never working hands in hands with the government. However, the issue remains the dependency of the structure on the government’s instructions.

Comparative analyse with other EU countries (situation, specificities...)

Migration information centres are more or less the same in every country. However, In Portugal for example, the separation of services provided to migrants complicates their comprehension and access to the whole. The government needs to pave the way for the unification of services in order to facilitate their access to migrants. But, one can say that a strict organisation and separation of the services by the government can lead to the creation of a greater number of structures which can harden their access to migrants – Sweden was mentioned as an example in relation to this case.

Workable-transferable practices

In countries where services are separated, governments need to pave the way for the unification of services in order to facilitate their access to migrants and provide a long-term support

Practice 2

Providing a personalised support to satisfy the migrants' different needs.

Methodology

A personalised approach to the different needs of the migrants is valued by mean of the creation of groups and the freedom of migrant women to choose their own topics of discussion. Support and solidarity are provided as well. Such activities and commitments need to take place regularly for a more sustainable logic of continuity as part of the objective of integrating migrant women.

Firstly, migrant women must be identified according to their needs, then the programme needs to be adapted in consequence as well as the creation of partnership with the different stakeholders.

Resulting benefits

As a result, motivation will grow in each woman as well as the feeling of belonging and women will motivate one another to take initiatives, plus the mastering of the local language will be strengthened.

Risks

Staff can face difficulties regarding the management of the groups.

Comparative analyse with other EU countries (situation, specificities...)

In France refugees have to take 200 hours of French courses unlike the 600 compulsory hours imposed in the past. In Austria asylum seekers can have access to German language courses only once the permit to stay is acquired - for migrants, expenses are demanded. In Portugal, lessons are free for refugees, but the start usually takes time. In the UK, English courses are not funded by the government and are open to everyone within charities while in Austria people need to have a legal situation, otherwise it is NGOs that provide free lessons through subventions. In Cyprus lessons are offered, though not regularly.

Workable-transferable practices

In every country, it is possible to provide language courses funded by the government.

- *Social and professional inclusion through urban agriculture activities*
-

Practice 1

Offering migrant women a wide range of activities to select according to their wish

Methodology

The method used is the flexibility to the women's need by proposing a range of activities to the women and letting them pick the one that appeals them the most.

Resulting benefits

The benefits of workshops are the gain of new competences by migrant women. Not only do they have an opportunity to practice their French thanks to the national volunteers of the project, but they also grow in confidence through their participation and are lead to take initiative.

Risks

The difficulty is to retain in the programme due to the different local context of each country. It also takes time for women to enter in a logic of commitment – This is why they need contextualisation and to understand the benefits of committing to the project.

Besides, management difficulties of the groups are likely to be faced by the staff regarding the 23 requested participants of the project.

Comparative analyse with other EU countries (situation, specificities...)

In terms of competence analysis, Sweden has high expectation of migrants whereas the integration process should be done at pace by the state according to the partners of the project. In France there is a more voluntary approach. Administrative procedures might be complex and demanding for migrants, but there is a principle of helping people in difficulty. The approach depends on the politics. For example, the department of Bas-Rhin was more open towards the influx of migrants compared with Paris and Calais where it became a political matter and the issue became more significant.

UK's approach shows more concern and is oriented towards integration and the handling of migrants.

Workable-transferable practices

We should specify migration specificities. Firstly, each context being different, partners need to proceed step by step – at first, by starting with the welcoming of the migrants, then carrying on with the management of the migrants and resulting with their social and professional inclusion.

Practice 2

Providing migrant women a professional training in the field of urban agriculture

Methodology

Offering a personalised help through the making available of an empty space to everybody.

Resulting benefits

50% of the workers eventually find a job and the benefit of the initiative is a gain in various professional competences.

Risks

The risk is to find migrants being left alone after their internship as a consequence of a not fully accomplished social integration. Indeed, migrants' professional integration being a slow process the sole professional integration of migrant women is not enough – in the case of Les Jardins de la Montagne Verte, migrant workers are all gathered in a same structure for their professional integration – despite the successful initiative, this nevertheless comes up against their prime necessity, that of social integration with the local people.

Comparative analyse with other EU countries (situation, specificities...)

In Portugal as well as in Austria there are community gardens available for local organisations' projects. However, in Portugal, more services are available for asylum seekers than migrants.

Workable-transferable practices

The government should keep paying the workers after their immersion contract – or – the workers should remain in the same structure as employees after their internship contract, so that their integration can be considered as successful. In addition, the same empty space should be used for other activities through the involvement of other organisations.

Practice 3

Riace: as the ghost village has become a country integration model

Riace, is a town on the Ionian Calabrian side, that became protagonist of an incredible hospitality experience of immigrants and refugees. The presence of foreigners has in fact repopulated and given new lymph to the small town, increasingly abandoned by the local population, which emigrated also for better living in northern cities.

The idea of the Mayor Domenico Lucano asked owners who live far away to restore their abandoned medieval homes to use for residential or tourist purposes. In many of these, the Mayor has put refugees on board, providing them free food and lodging, including electricity, in exchange for asking them to learn Italian and work. Women are dedicated to craftsmanship and men restructure homes that are rented out to tourists.

Methodology

In 1998, with the disembarkation of 200 refugees from Kurdistan to Riace Marina, the Città Futura association (dedicated to the Sicilian priest Don Giuseppe Puglisi, killed by the mafia) decided to help

migrants just landed giving them access to the old houses abandoned by the owners, far away from the country.

From there began the story of Riace, the country of integration: The Mayor, Domenico Lucano, directed its efforts to integration of refugees and irregular immigrants by opening schools, funding micro activities, but also by making laboratories, bars, bakeries and even the separate door-to-door waste collection, carried out by two non-EU boys and transported through the use of donkeys. Cultural mediators make a bridge and a special currency helps immigrants for their daily spending while waiting for European funds.

Of the approximately 1800 current inhabitants of Riace, 400 are foreigners. For every migrant, the administration receives 30 euros a day, which is used to provide them with a home, money to spend, and for somebody a job.

To ensure that money is not dispersed but remains within the community, migrants are not given money, but bonuses of a different currency that are only accepted in Riace. In this way the town's anesthetized economy is slowly turning around.

Most migrants are well integrated into Riace. There is someone who translates and acts as a cultural mediator, who cares for the flowers and plants of the old town, who makes the separate waste door-to-door waste collection, who is restoring an abandoned valley to make a livestock and who cares about the cleanliness of the beach at Riace Marina.

Resulting benefits

- effective integration of migrants into the local community
- repopulation of the city
- reactivation of the local economy

Risks

- Sustainability: suspension of funds (current issue).

Currently the funds have been suspended because some expenses have been considered ineligible. Specifically, the funds related to bonuses and work grants.

The appeal "Io sto con Riace" (I am with Riace), supported by the Network of Solidarity-based Municipalities and already signed by the founder of Libera don Luigi Ciotti and by the Comboni Missionary Alex Zanotelli, recounts the specificity of the "innovative formulas, which for sixteen years have fallen into the characteristics of the project indeed, they have become a model: bonuses and work grants. ". Bonuses are a "local tool to allow them to take advantage of purchasing power among traders who have accepted this system" to "supersede the historian's delays in public contributions". The work grants, however, allowed us to restart an economic fabric and give a working response to those families of asylum seekers who wanted to stop at Riace, build a future and rooting, thus creating crafts of ceramics, embroidery, glass, weaving.

In France the documentary "Un paese di Calabria", which tells the integration system of Riace, has been successful. The film in Italy did not find a distributor.

- Problems with the elderly community (there are no significant problems to this day).

BEST PRACTICES URBAGRI4WOMEN

- *Social inclusion*
-

Practice 1

Hosting different projects from other organisations in a same empty space

Methodology

Hosting different projects on a same place with different specialists.

Resulting benefits

This initiative results in the gain of experience of the migrant women and the gain of expertise for the hosting structures.

Risks

Some countries do not benefit of municipality and government funds for socio-cultural centres.

Comparative analyse with other EU countries (situation, specificities...)

In the UK, people do not want to get involved in NGOs where the state is involved for safety reasons due to their illegal status. Furthermore, this kind of practice exists in other countries - In Italy, municipalities host cultural activities. However, there is no financing contrary to Greece, for example and Austria where there are funds fir churches.

Workable-transferable practices

The activities add bargain to the centres. Transferring cooperation with churches would open more opportunity to lead activities.

- *Professional inclusion*

Practice 1

Fostering migrant women to take initiatives by letting them teach their peers

Methodology

Giving freedom to migrant women to teach their peers in order that they become experts of their own integration

Resulting benefits

The resulting benefits of this autonomous experience will be the gain of confidence and autonomy of migrant women. Women will be more confident in finding jobs on their own.

Risks

The lack of laptops and of the internet often prevents migrant women of undertaking the initiative to look for a job on the internet by themselves. Furthermore, partners need to be cautious and aware of the cultural disparities of many migrant women's where the role of the women in society is not the same compared with European countries – as a consequence, many women are not acquainted with the concept of working.

Comparative analyse with other EU countries (situation, specificities...)

Due to their culture many migrant are not accustomed to the idea of working and are not aware of the concept of contract. The context of each country is divergent but still provides good practices in general context. Each partner deal with the same problem but the national context, then the unlike experiences of each country vary. Above all, it the dissimilar national interpretation of migration as a result of history that puts change on the current migration context of each country - as for France and the UK for example, which have a history on migration whereas Austria has any. It is a good experience for each partner to find out about the experience of the other and to improve its own best practices.

Workable-transferable practices

The study visit taught the partners about local workshops that are being carried out in Strasbourg and reminded them of their core purpose, that of letting the women's voice being heard. Indeed, it was agreed during the coordination session that interactive methods are to be favoured by all partners. In parallel, regarding the expertise of partners with migration, it must be reminded that by the end of the project some partners newly working with migrants will have gained significant expertise on the topic thanks to the project, however, this does not mean that they all will be experts by the end.

Conclusion

▪ *Analysis*

URBAGRI4WOMEN, throughout its many activities, discussions and visits, empowers migrant women and has a positive impact on the urban landscape and the environment.

Since 2015, the European Unions has been going through an unforeseen migration crisis which has challenged its unity, as the EU's common migration policy is disputed and its member states each have different implementation systems and ways of dealing with migration management (e.g. the judiciary, daily life management...). Far from nationwide and Europe-wide political considerations, which seem to be at a standstill, local activities cope daily with the core problems of the populations in need on a human scale. Therefore, the success of the project lies in the hands of committed local civil society organizations and their close cooperation and cross-fertilization.

▪ *Results*

The seminar and study visit helped the partner civil society organizations share their experience and successes. The good practices shared in this catalogue constitute a model to be followed by all actors of migration management, such as civil society organizations, and policy makers at local, national and European levels. Because, ultimately, the EU tends towards greater union in all areas, including migration management. This will be partly enabled by the exchanges of best practices that led to this catalogue.

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See also: Study visit report and Transnational Seminar report

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