



EU-Belong: An Intercultural Approach to Migrant Integration in European Regions

Peer Review of Replicable European Good Practices

**The EU-Belong project is
funded by the European
Union's Asylum, Migration
and Integration Fund**



**An Intercultural Approach to Migrant
Integration in Europe's Regions**

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About the project

The [*EU-Belong: An Intercultural Approach to Migrant Integration in European Regions*](#) is a project funded by the European Union's Asylum and Migration Fund. The project is led by the Assembly of European Regions (AER) in partnership with eleven European regional authorities and two technical partners. This project aims at improving migrants' socioeconomic inclusion and sense of belonging through a strong intercultural approach, focusing on the principles of equality, diversity and positive interaction.

Moreover, the EU-Belong project supports the development, adoption and implementation of eleven innovative regional integration strategies, based on a multi-level and multi-stakeholder framework that will apply the intercultural approach at the regional level.

About the peer review of European replicable good practices

The Assembly of European Regions within the framework of the project *EU-Belong: An Intercultural Approach to Migrant Integration in Europe's Regions* has carried out a preliminary peer review of innovative and successful experiences from European regions on the topic of the participatory design, implementation and evaluation of intercultural integration strategies at the regional level.

A total of **10 experiences** have been selected, analysed and presented. The selected good practices are presented in a user-friendly booklet, which is published and disseminated among the partners of the project, international organisations, and European institutions.

These examples concern actions in key areas that have an intercultural goal or dimension—such as education, access to labour market, sports, and culture—adopting a holistic approach in that each of the practices places a focus on the wellbeing and personal integration of the individuals, who are guided and supported in making their way into the society through tailored counseling, coaching, training and active participation and involvement. This means that the actions seek to promote equality and non-discrimination, the acceptance of diversity and acknowledgement of its positive potential, and to foster meaningful interaction between people of diverse backgrounds.

In view of this, the review does not cluster the practices in specific areas of integration, but rather focuses on the transversal and cross-cutting guiding principles underlying the policy and practice choices. Using an intercultural approach means reviewing all sectors of regional policy, as ultimately all services and places can be designed in a way that rethinks inclusion, ensures meaningful interaction, and creates cohesive and prosperous societies.

The review focuses on the partner regions of the EU-Belong project and the [*Intercultural Regions Network \(IRN\)*](#), as well as on relevant experiences from other European regions that have been selected through the networks of the Assembly of European Regions and of partners and associated organisations.

The relevance of the activity is due to the scarce existing data related to experiences and practices carried out at the regional level. As recognized by the European Commission's [Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027](#), this important administrative level is often poorly analysed and no repository of good practices is currently available.

This being said, the good practices published in these factsheets will feed into the European Commission and Committee of the Regions' work on improving evidence and data on integration at the local and regional level, including the Integration Initiative actions, contributing to its databases on integration at the local and regional level, as well as its activities for the exchange of experiences for local and regional authorities.

Methodology & criteria for the selection of good practices

This peer review of replicable European good practices has been carried out taking into consideration the intercultural approach as defined by the [Intercultural Cities Programme of the Council of Europe \(ICC\)](#) of the Council of Europe.

The practice examples that have been collected in this booklet are based on the three key principles of the intercultural approach: diversity, equality, and interaction. These three principles will guide the overall EU-Belong project methodology and its main deliverables, such as the design of regional integration strategies. The practices are organised according to proximity of topics/policy area.

The intercultural approach has been defined and implemented by the Council of Europe in 143 cities and it is an international standard approved by the Council of Europe's Member States. Although there are different integration approaches in place, interculturalism specifically recognises the importance of culture as a key factor in building cohesive communities, accessing rights and realising opportunities. This methodology will be tailor-made by the regional partners of EU-Belong, targeting regions as key players for a successful localisation of integration processes of migrants, combined with a multi-level approach involving other administrative levels while ensuring that the competences of regions on these policy areas are fully taken into account in integration strategies.

Furthermore, the multi-stakeholder approach and the participatory co-design methodology have been also taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the collected practice examples. Last but not least, the hereby regional good practice examples have been collected with the aim of being replicated in other regional, national, and local administrations, that are willing to address with sustainable solutions the existing needs related to the integration of third nationals in their territories. These practice examples, with their innovative character, have the purpose of supporting the achievement of desired systemic change in those areas of improvement key for the social, and economic integration of migrants and asylum seekers.

About the participating organisations

AUSTRIA

- **Diakoniwerk Salzburg**

The [Diakoniwerk](#) is an Austrian innovative company working in the fields of social and healthcare sector in Austria and in the international environment. It provides modern services for people with disabilities, for people of old age, in health and education. The development of new, social space-oriented living concepts is in the foreground.

In carrying out the project the Diakoniewerk Salzburg combines two lines of expertise. First, the organization runs a school for social care professional careers, daycare centres for elderly people and homes and support schemes for people with disabilities. Secondly, since 2015 the Diakoniewerk is also engaged and compromised in working with refugees. Currently, the organisation offers German language training and support in integration for refugees and migrants funded by the “Land Salzburg”.

- **KULDI**

[KULDI](#) stands for art, culture, diversity, integration and inclusion and is a non-profit association based in Germany. KULDI sees itself as an art, culture and educational initiative, supporting peaceful coexistence, for example, through German courses with meaningful added value through the promotion of social skills, violence prevention and professional coaching.

Moreover, KULDI has a particular focus on promoting self-determined working and living conditions for women and men living in the province of Salzburg, regardless of their age, origin, culture, religion and first language. Gentle and uncomplicated practice in an informal atmosphere to strengthen self-confidence, and independence through process support for helping people to help themselves and to give women tools to prevent violence and abuse.

ITALY

- **Emilia-Romagna regional authority**

[Emilia-Romagna](#) is an Italian regional authority which according to the Italian Constitution has its own legislative power, exclusive and concurrent, in the framework of national laws.

The Emilia-Romagna region manages exclusively those competences mostly related to the welfare of its citizens. Therefore, integration and social policies are planned and ruled for and by the territory, with local authorities comprised within the region of Emilia-Romagna.

- **Mondinsieme Foundation**

[Mondinsieme Foundation](#) is an Intercultural Centre funded by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, in Italy. Its main mission is to promote the value and respect for cultural diversity in different social contexts.

The organization's main areas of work are focused on diversity in the economy; intercultural education; second-generation empowerment and participation; and intercultural communication.

Mondinsieme has become, over the years, an important institution, accredited at various levels—local, regional, national and international. The result of the organisation's strong intercultural competencies is geared towards developing constructive intercultural relations between people with migrant backgrounds and Italian origin with the main focus on preventing situations of cultural marginalization or discrimination.

ROMANIA

- **Timis County Council (RO)**

The Prefect Institution of [Timis County Council](#) in Romania was established in 1992 to represent the national government at the local level. Therefore, the main responsibility of this institution is to contribute to the implementation in Timis County of the strategy and objectives contained in the Government Programme, proposing and adopting appropriate measures.

The Prefect manages the decentralized public services of the ministries and other central public administrative bodies. Moreover, is in charge of the county emergency committees.

- **Intercultural Institute of Timisoara (RO)**

The [Intercultural Institute of Timisoara](#) (IIT) in Romania is a non-governmental organisation that promotes intercultural values, active citizenship and respect for human rights. The main policy fields of their work include intercultural education, democratic citizenship and human rights education, migration, Roma population, youth, culture, cross-border cooperation, diversity, media, consultancy and training.

Intercultural education is a key component of their activities. Since its establishment, IIT has advocated for the introduction of intercultural education in the school curricula in Romania, Europe and beyond. In this sense, their team of experts and trainers develop pilot projects and activities to promote intercultural education in schools targeting students and teachers, such as training, and development of educational resources and studies.

SPAIN

- **Ministry of Equality and Feminism of the Government of Catalonia (ES)**

The [Ministry of Equality and Feminism of the Government of Catalonia](#), in Spain, is responsible for the promotion of equality and accessibility policies. As well as fostering equal effective opportunities at work and guaranteed access to rights and non-discrimination; the development and implementation of policies related to the LGBTI+ group, and policies for women, migrants and asylum seekers; and the promotion and defence of human, political and civil rights.

Within the framework of this Ministry, the Directorate-General for Migration, Refuge and Anti-Racism is the executive body responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating those policies related to the promotion of migrants' rights.

- **General Directorate of Migration Policies of Navarra (ES)**

The [*General Directorate of Migration Policies of Navarra*](#), in Spain, is composed of the *Karibu Service* and the *Ayllu Service*. These services focus mainly on the promotion of intercultural coexistence and the fight against racism and xenophobia; as well as support the reception and accompaniment of migrants and refugees.

Among the main activities and programmes developed and implemented by the Navarra General Directorate of Migration Policies, it is to be highlighted the services offered in terms of intercultural mediation, legal advice for migrants and refugees, awareness-raising campaigns to counter-fight racism and xenophobia, training programmes on anti-rumour agents, and the hosting of young people and women.

- **Ministry of Equality and Inclusive Policies of the Generalitat Valenciana (ES)**

The [*Ministry of Equality and Inclusive Policies of the Generalitat Valenciana*](#), in Spain, is a ministry or department of the regional authority of Valencia with competences in matters of social benefit policies, social services, dependency, people with disabilities, family, adults, children, adoptions, youth, women, equality, migration and social volunteering.

In this regard, the Directorate General for Social Inclusion and Diversity is responsible for the planning, monitoring and implementation of the regional plan for inclusion and social cohesion; as well as for the management and promotion of social benefits, in cooperation with local administrations, aimed at social inclusion, the generational break in impoverishment and the redistribution of wealth, and coordinate the inclusion policies for migrants with respect for interculturality.

1. Kideak Social Mentoring Service – Integral Care for Young Migrants without Family Support

Description of the good practice

The Directorate-General of Migration Policies of Navarra (ES) developed and implemented the Social Mentoring Service within the *KIDEAK Integral Care Programme* addressed to young unaccompanied migrants.

This programme aims at promoting the integral development of unaccompanied migrant minors that arrive in Navarra, Spain, through established methodologies based on accompaniment and social mentoring, always taking into consideration the gender perspective.

The *KIDEAK Integral Care Programme* enhances the process of autonomy and emancipation of these young people by facilitating their integration into adult life through the provision of a wide range of support and intervention in at least one of the following areas: language skills, education and professional training, social- relational, psychological-emotional, legal-administrative, and housing.

The main objectives of this practice example are:

- ▶ Enhancing and accelerating autonomy and emancipation processes of the target population through individualised intervention plans, considering young unaccompanied minors as active subjects in their own process of change.
- ▶ Facilitating the access of the target population to institutional and social resources of the local community.
- ▶ Fostering processes of access to citizenship based on a shared responsibility approach; promoting women's empowerment to combat gender inequalities.
- ▶ Combatting gender inequalities, by the facilitation of training in egalitarian masculinity.

Concerning the **target group**, this is two-fold depending on the role they will have during the action, and if they are mentors or mentored. For instance, mentoring activities are addressed to young migrants between the ages of 18 and 23, who find themselves without family support in Navarra and in a vulnerable situation.

Social mentoring is understood as the relationship between those who volunteer to provide support to others who find themselves in a vulnerable situation. In this regard, the KIDEAK Programme is based on social accompanying and mentoring as key tools for achieving sustainable integration and inclusion.

Whereas when it comes to the mentors, the target group are mainly local people, who will benefit of a deeper understanding of the reality of young unaccompanied migrants and are eager to improve their communication and intercultural skills.

Methodology and design process

This practice was developed by the Directorate-General for Migration Policies of the Regional Government of Navarra, and implemented with the support of [Zabalduz](#), a civil society organisation working on social inclusion. This program is being financed by the European Union [REACT-EU](#) fund, from June 2020 to September 2023.

Young people face many difficulties in carrying out a process of autonomy with guarantees. In the case of young migrants, these difficulties are aggravated by the following elements: the lack of formal and informal support, their administrative situation that restricts their access to employment and limits their income, the language barriers, their educational level, and existing prejudices and stereotypes. In the face of this accumulation of vulnerability factors, it has been shown that local accompaniment from an integral approach and the design of personalized integration itineraries are essential tools to guarantee access to adult life under equal conditions.

The main actions implemented during the programme were:

- Mentoring activities (recruitment, selection and training of volunteers, management of matches and their follow-up).
- Elaboration of an individualized intervention plan, with the active participation of each young person, according to their age and capacity.
- Implementation of actions in at least the following areas of intervention: language skills; educational and labour-training; social-relational; psychological-emotional; legal-administrative; and housing.

The program promotes the development of egalitarian relationships based on respect and good treatment. Based on the profile of the young people (mostly male), issues such as the construction of new masculinities, diversity, equality, and egalitarian relationships will be addressed in order to prevent sexist behaviour and encourage them to play an active role in the face of aggressions towards women. In the case of young girls accessing the program, sexist violence will be expressly addressed from an empowerment approach.

Regarding the **psychological care** that is offered to these young people, it incorporates gender and intercultural perspective throughout the process, taking

into account the difficulties they may have to ask for help in this area (especially men due to stereotypes and gender roles).

The program based its intervention on social accompanying and mentoring as two aspects key in the integration field of young migrants. In this regard, the following process of implementation was followed:

- *Firstly*, the mentoring matching process is carried out with the volunteers in a cross-cutting manner for six months. During this period, a face-to-face meeting is held once a week between the mentor and the mentored. For this purpose, volunteers are trained in social mentoring awareness workshops. In these workshops, three young people from the programme share their own experiences and are trained in social mentoring.
- *Afterwards*, the officers will assess the suitability of the volunteers for this type of mentorship programme and will proceed with the matching process.
- *Once* the matching is done between the mentor and mentored, they get to know each other by meeting once a month during six months with the technical support in mentoring and with the mentor's educational referent for a group follow-up.
- *Finally*, when the mentoring programme is over, it is expected that the relationship framed in the programme becomes a natural relationship, which is perpetuated over time, with the objective of forming broader affective connections for these young people.

The following conditions and technical characteristics have been applied during the process:

- The young people who enter the programme assume the commitment to actively participate in the program for a period of one year. Participation in the program may be extended exceptionally for two periods of six months, up to a maximum of two years. However, the program may be terminated early in the event that the autonomy objectives established in the individualized intervention plan are achieved, or in the event of repeated failure to comply with the commitments made at the time.
- A maximum of 50 places was proposed, with the possibility of offering accommodation up to a maximum of 35.
- An exhaustive process of suitability assessment is carried out once the person shows interest in participating in the programme. The process has several phases that the person goes through, the last one being the training phase.

- The participants' process in the programme, and their social, personal, psychological, emotional, and personal situations are taken into account. In order to participate it is required motivation, as well as a commitment to their participation. The assessment of suitability and participation is done by the whole team.

The following **obstacles and challenges** were identified when designing and implementing the practice example:

- Bureaucratic difficulties as a public administration to implement the program.
- Ensuring the continuity of the programme once it is over in 2023, and the implementation of it as a service provided by the public administration of the Regional Government of Navarra.
- The difficulties and demands of making a social diagnosis of the target group, in order to know what needs and expectations were to be offered during the mentoring process.

The programme could be replicated in other regions where the administration wants to promote actions that encourage co-responsibility between citizens and administration.

Main results and outcomes

Currently, 13 awareness-raising workshops have been held in Community Centres in Navarra. And 26 disseminations in training, university and community centres in the region. With the aim of publicising the project and recruiting volunteers for mentoring in the programme.

A total of 312 people have participated in these awareness-raising and dissemination activities. And a total of 33 people were trained. To date, there have been 7 training sessions for mentors in the Kideak programme.

Main outcomes of the programme in the mentored young person:

- Development of confidence and improvement of self-esteem.
- Increase the feeling of belonging, stability and socio-emotional support.
- Participation in real processes of social inclusion.
- Expansion of the social and affective network and discovery or encounter from positive referentiality.
- Development of roles and social norms in the host society.
- Development of linguistic and cultural competences of the host society.

Discovery of new personal and social opportunities.

- Increase in perceived levels of security.
- Development of active/constructive listening, communication, towards assertiveness.
- Internalization of the positive perspective on interculturality.
- Assimilation of the opportunity that entails the creation of a relationship based on learning and reciprocal creation.

Main outcomes of the programme in the mentor:

- Broadening of collective consciousness and overcoming prejudice, stereotypes, stigmas and fears.
- Development of co-responsibility.
- Development of the necessary skills for the creation of horizontal relationships.
- Discovery and identification of different cultural codes resulting in Increased social sensitivity and empathy.
- Development of active/constructive listening, communication, towards assertiveness.
- Internalization of the positive perspective on interculturality.
- Experiential learning about migratory movements and processes.
- Assimilation of the opportunity that entails the creation of a relationship based on learning and reciprocal creation.

Sustainability check: The General Directorate for Migration Policies in the regional government of Navarra is currently working to incorporate the Kideak program as one of the benefits of the Social Services portfolio. If so, and if it is considered a guaranteed benefit, sustainability over time will be guaranteed.

2. The Intercultural Manifesto for Institutional Communication, Emilia-Romagna (IT)

Description of the good practice

The Intercultural Manifesto for Institutional Communication ([*Il Manifesto della Comunicazione Istituzionale Interculturale*](#)), is a communication tool co-designed by the Emilia-Romagna region as a result of a participatory process. This Manifesto aims to be the milestone framework and main guidance for civil servants working in the sector of institutional communication and willing to apply it from an intercultural approach.

Therefore, this intercultural institutional communication is to be achieved thanks to the provision of indicators to integrate the intercultural perspective into the communication strategies for public authorities; as well as to provide useful tools addressed for public administrations to improve their commitment towards enhancing the intercultural approach in their communication strategies and information sessions addressed to their citizens coming from a wide range of origins and cultures.

The Manifesto focuses on nine main principles:

1. Recognizing the Intercultural agenda
2. Promoting a stereotype-free narration
3. Fostering inclusive language
4. Adopting an integrated communication approach
5. Listening to the communication needs of foreign citizens
6. Enhancing active participation and exchanges with foreign citizens
7. Promoting networks of intercultural communicators
8. Fostering trainings and upskilling
9. Monitoring and evaluating progress made on intercultural communication

Methodology and design process

This communication tool was created during the training sessions undertaken as part of the “Regional Memorandum of Understanding on Intercultural Communication”, which was launched as a result of the commitment of the region of Emilia-Romagna to enhance the institutional communication addressed to foreign citizens.

The Manifesto aims to raise awareness on the intercultural approach thanks to a shared tool fostering a common language and a common communicative perspective, as well as managing the complexity that underlines institutional communication, particularly when addressed to a wide range of citizens who have very different skills, beliefs, and knowledge.

In this regard, the participants of the training course—mainly journalists, and communicators working in public administrations—suggested drafting this manifesto in collaboration with external experts and advisors.

A wide range of local multi-stakeholders participated in the co-design and implementation process. For instance, Emilia-Romagna region together with the Regional delegation of the National Association of Italian Municipalities of Emilia-Romagna, and the regional health authorities, local municipalities, chambers of commerce, universities, and intercultural centres.

This practice is considered to have an innovative character due to the fact that it is based on a bottom-up approach taking into consideration the reality in which each communicator and journalist is involved. Furthermore, the Manifesto is the result of successful exchanges and discussions among civil servants working on the field of communication in their public administrations.

The elaboration of the Manifesto counted with three main activities:

- Organisation of a session where the topics of the training course were introduced.
- Organisation of 12 thematic territorial workshops addressed to working groups on the following topics:
 - The languages of the Public Administration and communication planning: the effective relationship between citizens and institutions
 - Communicating on the web and social communication: the role of social media
 - Information sources and the role of local communities in the creation/reworking of information sources

On the occasion of these workshops the Manifesto was conceived and elaborated. It is the result of the sharing of good practices among different experts in institutional communication. Moreover, in order to ensure effective external communication, expert professors on communication from the University of Bologna were involved in the final process of the design of the Manifesto.

- A final workshop where the participants shared the results of the working groups and the presentation of the final draft of the “Intercultural Manifesto for Institutional Communication”.

Although this Manifesto was elaborated during the COVID-19 Pandemic its elaboration did not experience major obstacles.

The Manifesto is presented as a reference tool in the communication field among the different projects promoted by the region of Emilia-Romagna which focused on the integration of foreign citizens.

The Manifesto has been highly appreciated and has already been adopted by numerous local public entities in Emilia-Romagna, thanks to the dissemination and awareness-raising campaigns carried out by the Region and by the Regional delegation of the National Association of Italian Municipalities of Emilia-Romagna.

For instance, the Manifesto will be applied to the project entitled "Common Ground". This project aims at tackling illegal employment and labour exploitation of foreign workers and will be implemented for the next three years by the region of Emilia-Romagna, in partnership with other Italian regions—Piedmont, Liguria, Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia.

Moreover, within the framework of the project AMIF "CASPER II", it was launched the first edition of "Narrazioni Comuni" (Common narratives), a regional award aiming at recognising the intercultural institutional communication activities, for instance, projects presented by municipalities working on the intercultural field. This award has been granted to those initiatives with an innovative character, and that goes in line with the Manifesto.

Sustainability check: An important step for the region will be the inclusion of the Manifesto as a qualifying element in the soon-to-be-approved and launched 2022-2024 Program for the Social Integration of Foreign Citizens.

3. Refugees Sponsorship, Valencia (ES)

Description of the good practice

The programme on refugees sponsorship has been developed within the framework of the reception and integration system of the region of Valencia in Spain.

This programme aims at promoting the reception and integration of refugees from Lebanon who are being resettled in Spain. This strategy is developed through individualized integration itineraries, whose purpose is to facilitate the progressive autonomy of the recipients and their social and labour integration into the host society.

The community sponsorship initiative contributes to the improvement of shared responsibilities, by expanding the use of Community Sponsorship as an instrument for the integration of refugees in need of protection and support, while at the same time encouraging the expansion of resettlement, strengthening the capacities of states, civil society actors, and citizens.

In this regard, this programme is aimed at beneficiaries of international protection, who have been transferred to Spain within the framework of refugee resettlement programs or other initiatives aimed at opening legal ways of access to protection for refugees, at the proposal of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, through the Secretary of State for Migration.

The purpose of this pilot programme is two-fold:

- *Firstly*, it aims at promoting the local languages—Spanish and Valencian—, as well as at fostering diverse cultures and at pursuing vocational training, and school courses.
- *Secondly*, adults are encouraged to find a job so that they can consequently achieve housing autonomy. In line with the Human Rights based approach, beneficiaries are entitled to make their own decisions, as participation is key to the success of this programme.

Housing and other daily expenses (such as clothing, transport, school fees, leisure activities and utility bills) are covered by the partner NGOs which receive financial aid from the Valencian Regional Government. Eluding a charitable approach, all families are allocated a monthly grant—the precise amount depends on the number of individuals encompassing each household—for personal expenses. This way they can learn how to save and manage their own finances.

The Community Sponsorship programme provide means to mobilize citizens to offer direct support to refugees and encourage a broader political debate that supports the protection of refugees.

Moreover, this initiative is part of the principles established by the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 19 September 2016 and which responds to the deficiencies observed in the reception and integration of migrants and refugees.

Methodology and design process

This pilot experience is based on a previous one developed by the Basque Government, in order to grasp the lessons learnt from it and find areas of improvement. Community sponsorship of refugees is a novel experience that tries to be applied in other regions, so it can be replicated and extendable to other territories.

The involved parties in this community sponsorship programme are the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the Regional Vice-presidency and Ministry of Equality and Inclusive Policies, two non-governmental organisations—Jesuit Service for Migrants Spain, and Diocesan Caritas—, and local volunteers which supported and accompanied five refugee Syrian families in their day-to-day.

This initiative takes into consideration the intercultural approach since community sponsorship offers citizens the opportunity to participate directly in the work of welcoming and integrating refugees. Community Sponsors are committed to providing social, material and financial support to newcomers during their integration process into their new communities.

The Agreement between the Regional Government and the organizations in charge has a stipulated duration of two years, although, at any time, before the end of the envisaged period, the signatories to the Agreement may unanimously agree to its extension for biennial periods up to a maximum of four additional years.

On 8 March 2021 an agreement was signed between the Spanish Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations, the Valencian regional government, UNHCR and four charities: Jesuits Service for Migrants Spain, Diocesan Caritas of Orihuela-Alacant, Diocesan Caritas of Segorbe-Castelló and Diocesan Caritas of València. This agreement targets five refugee Syrian families residing in Lebanon who are to be resettled in the Valencian Community.

The main activity is to welcome refugees and help them with their first steps in the new towns where they are going to live. For instance, this would imply helping families when looking for a flat or a house, for educative purposes for them and

their descendants, for language courses, and even guiding them on how to open a bank account or how to receive help from Social Services.

This programme applies a multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach:

- At the international level, UNHCR identifies the refugees in the first countries of asylum in need of resettlement based on risk criteria.
- At the national level, the government of Spain approves an annual national resettlement programme to be managed by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, with the support of UNHCR Spain.
- At the regional level, a proposal is developed and an agreement is signed for the creation of the second pilot project in the Valencian Community by the Vice-Presidency and Equality and Inclusive Policies Office.
- At the local level, the allocation of families in municipalities takes place, with the support of local charities and community sponsorship of local groups. The starting date of this process was on the 5th of October 2020. The municipalities that hosted refugee families were Valencia, Alaquàs, Almassora, Concetaina, and Calp. Each of them hosted 5 beneficiaries.

The services provided in each sponsorship community are diverse: access to decent housing, support in the search for potential housing upon the finalisation of the programme, language learning, children schooling, adult vocational training, recognition of academic diplomas application assistance.

During the implementation process no obstacles were experienced as such, although a couple of difficulties were encountered due to the novelty of the experience, as it was a pilot project.

Main results and outcomes

Currently, five Syrian families from the Lebanon refugee camps are benefiting from this program. The selection of the candidates was based on the risk criteria established by the UNHCR (persons at legal or physical risk, survivors of torture, women and girls at risk, medical cases, etc).

The sponsoring organizations are giving them their full support: teachers to teach the language, counsellors to help them manage their finances and, most importantly, a network of contacts to promote their full integration into the community.

The experience is yet ongoing, therefore there are no results identified yet. The programme started on 5 October 2020 and it is foreseen to finish on 5 October 2022.

Currently, the pilot project is in the final stages of implementation. The duration initially established for the reception of families was 18 months, extendable to 24. By unanimity of all the signatory parties to the agreement (ministry, UNHCR, the three Caritas and the Jesuit Migrant Service) it was decided to extend stays at 21 months for two of the families, who have already achieved autonomy, and 24 months (maximum) for the other three families, who still need the continuity of the program to consolidate the progress. In any case, at the end of the program, all five families will continue to enjoy the support of sponsoring organizations and local volunteer groups as needed.

A research group from the University of Valencia, as part of a European project (MERGING), carried out an evaluation of the operation of the pilot experience coinciding with the completion of the first year of stay. We are now preparing the commission for a final evaluation to help us draw conclusions for the future.

Sustainability check: The region of Valencia is working on the idea of re-editing the experience on a larger scale, with the organizations already involved and involving new actors, such as local entities and the families themselves benefiting from this first experience, which could be voluntary in the second.

4. Fighting Intolerance through Intercultural Education in Schools, Intercultural Institute of Timișoara (Ro)

Description of the good practice

Fighting Intolerance through Intercultural Education in Schools, is a co-financed initiative by the Romanian Government's Department for Interethnic Relations and the Romanian-American Foundation.

The programme came through as a result of an existing need. In 2018, the Ministry of Education of the Government of Romania developed and implemented new School Curricula for Intercultural Education, based on the general recommendations and approach from the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture adopted by the Council of Europe in the same year.

The project aim is to elaborate and disseminate an Intercultural Education Guideline for Teacher in Romania, to develop competences and increase the democratic and inclusive culture of schools and teachers.

In this regard, the IIT decided to launch this project which took place between August and November 2019 and had the overall aim of elaborating and disseminating an Intercultural Education Guideline for Teachers in Romania. This guide offers direct support to teachers who teach intercultural education as part of the new compulsory subject introduced in the new framework curriculum for secondary education and social education. The innovative character of the guide is mainly related to the use of project-based learning in intercultural education and this innovative character was also recognised by research conducted in 2020 by the Catholic University of Valencia, Spain, with funding from the European Union Joint Research Centre.

The guide is based on the provisions of the school curricula for intercultural education and responds to three types of needs of teachers teaching this subject:

- The need for conceptual clarification, in particular, clear and simple definitions of basic concepts mentioned in the curricula;
- The need for support in carrying out annual teaching planning that is coherent and meaningful from the pupils' perspective;
- The need for inspiration and suggestions on how to carry out learning activities, with a focus on project-based learning activities, a new element in the social education curricula, of which Intercultural Education is part of.

Methodology and design process

In order to support teachers to develop their competences to teach intercultural education –a subject recently introduced in the Romanian national curriculum for 6th graders (12-13 years old)– the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara conducted a participatory process in which teachers, representatives of national minority

organisations and intercultural education experts worked together to develop an educational resource for teachers, called Guidelines for Intercultural Education.

One national conference and several regional meetings were held throughout the country. During these meetings participants worked together to develop educational activities, analyse them in various contexts and make sure they are adapted to the level of 6th graders (12-13 years old).

To sum up, the following process was followed for the design of the resulting Guide:

- A public call for interested teachers and school inspectors was published, with the invitation to submit ideas and proposals of educational activities for the guide.
- Selected participants were invited to a national conference, where the conceptual references, methodological aspects and the structure of the guide were discussed and agreed.
- Three regional consultations were then organised to discuss a first draft of the guide and identify specific needs and bring in various perspectives, including those of organisations representing minorities and migrants.
- The final version of the guide was then elaborated.
- The guide was widely promoted and disseminated among education professionals, schools, school inspectorates and teacher training institutions.

The activities proposed to take into account the fact that in some schools diversity is present, while in others the school population is quite homogeneous. Students are encouraged to explore diversity at local, national, European and international levels, to challenge their stereotypes and develop their intercultural competence.

The following challenges were identified during the design and implementation process due to its innovative character and lack of previous experience:

- Combining intercultural education and project-based learning;
- Designing meaningful learning activities on intercultural education for grade six, covering cultural diversity at local, national, European and global levels;
- Designing learning activities that can be used in mixed schools with national minorities or migrants, as well as in homogeneous schools, with the only majority or only minority pupils.

Other challenges relates to the context of the Romanian education system and stakeholders involved:

- Identifying the right stakeholders and ensuring a good balance in terms of contributions and representation;
- Reaching out to the teachers that teach Intercultural Education during the project and for the promotion of the publication;
- Ensuring support for teachers to use the Guide on a regular basis in their teaching practice.

This programme can be easily replicated in other countries, especially in those with a higher migration rate. A good example of impact and replication is the fact that the guide and the process that led to its development were taken as reference in the Republic of Moldova for the development of a set of handbooks for teachers in cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Council of Europe.

Main results and outcomes

The result was the publication of a resource that offers teachers a general framework based on the CoE Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, as well as innovative activities for teaching intercultural education through the use of the project-based learning methodology.

The publication contains a short introduction to the main concepts and principles of intercultural education, methodological suggestions and a series of educational activities that are in line both with the National Education Curricula and with the Council of Europe's Reference Framework on Competences for Democratic Culture.

The activities proposed to take into account the fact that in some schools diversity is present, while in others the school population is quite homogeneous. Students are encouraged to explore diversity at local, national, European and international levels, challenge their stereotypes and to develop their intercultural competence. The Guidelines are currently used by teachers throughout the country.

Although it is designed as a working tool for teachers teaching intercultural education to sixth graders, the guide may also be useful for school inspectors and school principals, to understand how they should work with the school and how to support the work of colleagues who teach intercultural education, as well as mainstreaming intercultural education to other subjects and school areas.

Sustainability check: The Guidelines are currently used by teachers throughout Romania. They have been used as the main reference for a course on intercultural education that is part of the initial training of teachers at the West University of Timisoara. During the school year 2022-2023, it will be one of the references in an online course for Social Education teachers.

5. Coaching by Women for Women (Kuldi,

DE) Description of the good practice

The Coaching by Women for Women was developed as victim work for women endangered by their husbands or life partners in order to provide them with the necessary tools and skills to help themselves to face these critical situations. The aim of the project is to restore the mental health of the women as far as possible through a one-week all-day workshop and subsequent weekly individual coaching, psychological counseling on personality development, in order to support these women in leading a self-determined private and professional life again.

The target group is aimed at women with a migration background as well as from the local population. It is important that this project is easily accessible for all women who are in need, regardless of their origin, religion or ideology.

Many migrants and local women are not aware of the rights they have in Austria or in Europe. For example, they do not know that they could work even if their husband does not allow it, nor do they know that they could get a divorce without their husband's consent. Because of this lack of awareness, many women suffer from their husbands' abuse and they do not dare to take their lives into their own hands. The coaching project was developed to give women back their dignity, and independent lives.

This project was initiated by KULDI and was funded by the state of Salzburg (AT). Further plans have been established to expand the project and turn it into an EU project, as the demand for this project is very high.

Methodology and design process

This project has an intercultural approach as local and migrant women grow and develop together, while learning from each other. Women of different cultures work together; they go on excursions together to get to know the local culture and there is a mutual cultural exchange.

This project is currently being implemented in the city of Salzburg, afterwards, it will be implemented at the regional level, and also beyond the borders of other countries. So far, there has been no accompaniment in a protected framework for personality development for women in the group, who can grow together and support each other as well as provide professional psychological advice in individual sessions and thus help them to help themselves.

KULDI was solely involved in the design process and implementation. Women without a financial income can also take part, as this project is fully funded by Land Salzburg Integration.

The target audience is Austrian women and women inside and outside the EU. Until now there have been women from Austria, Germany, Ukraine, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Iran, Mexico, Myanmar and Syria.

The overall topic of the five-day workshop is very demanding and challenges the participants enormously, since major life changes are initiated, so it is absolutely important to let the dramaturgy of the workshop flatten out at times, by giving the women space to paint with therapeutic support using a healing soul painting method.

In order for this workshop to be a positive development for the participating women in the promotion to achieve self-determined working and living conditions, it is extremely important to work with them in a block of several days in order to give the participants the opportunity to establish group dynamics through mutual support in a familiar, protected growth space. In a methodologically entertaining variety, there are short easy exercises on the respective main topics and understandable inputs, followed by role plays to give the women the opportunity to be able to empathise with the respective situations and, above all, approach themselves with solutions that they can use in everyday life.

The main languages used during the overall course are German and English. The workshop for joint group work lasts 5 days of 8 hours each. Following this intensive week of growing and developing together, each woman can take advantage of individual coaching units of 2 hours each, one day a week for a total of 20 weeks.

The course thematic programme is structured as follows:

- 1st day: Energy thieves, energy sparks, stress regulators, self-regulation, self-care, dramaturgy of the dispute;
- 2nd day: Non-violent communication, gaslighting, prevention of violence;
- 3rd day: AVOS soul health, soul painting, individual talks;
- 4th day: Self-love, self-confidence, civil courage, one-to-one talks;
- 5th day: Women's rights, mindfulness, appreciation, competence check, application training.

During this five-day course, movement exercises for emotional first aid and stress regulation are used to carry out self-regulation. Instructions for exercises that the participants can do at home alone or can imitate with children are also handed out.

The workshop takes place in a seminar house with a pleasant, homely atmosphere. The associated garden also provides relaxation after the strenuous exercise. The women taking place in the course were invited to pernoctate in the seminar house in order to avoid every-day commuting. This fact also led to creating informal situations in the evenings, for instance, further discussions in a relaxed atmosphere. The seminar room is on the ground floor with direct access to the garden, so exercises can also be done outdoors. If a

participant has to start crying because of the challenging topics, she has enough time and space to go to the park, alone or accompanied, as desired.

Main results and outcomes

Thanks to this workshop the participating women stand with both feet firmly on the ground and live a more peaceful, freer, happier life privately and in the working world, they can be more independent again. For instance, through the five-days workshop women are helped to regain their self-esteem and their skills, thereby enabling integration into the labor market. Perspectives for their lives are developed with the women so that they are mentally able to take care of themselves and their children.

Moreover, KULDI works in contact with women's shelters. If necessary, women are helped to separate from their partners and are temporarily accommodated in a women's shelter. Women are also supported in the event of a divorce.

Sustainability Check: This is a sustainable project because it promotes life-changing measures. Through all the knowledge and insights acquired, the participants develop their personalities quickly, become bolder and have more confidence in themselves.

It is on the one hand important to continue this project with new participants, and on the other hand it is beneficial to create dialogues between former and new participants.

6. Vocational Counselling Training, Timis County Council (Ro)

Description of the good practice

The Vocational Counselling Training is an initiative launched with the overall aim of fostering the social integration of migrants from different backgrounds, as well as enhancing their familiarization with the working environment in companies based in Timis County, and raising awareness on the opportunities to access the labour market in the region.

The objectives of this practice example are two-fold:

- On the one hand, promoting the dissemination of information for beneficiaries of international protection regarding the requirements to access the labour market;
- and on the other hand, fostering their familiarisation with specific work-related tasks, while enhancing communication and teamwork skills.

The Vocational Counselling Training was carried out within the project “[AIM 5-Actions for the Integration of Migrants in Region 5](#)” funded by the European Union Programme on Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. This project was implemented by [AIDRom](#), the Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania, in partnership with the Prefect’s Institution of Timis County, the Regional Integration Centre of Timisoara, Caras- Severin County, Bihor County, and the Oradea Philanthropy Association.

Methodology and design process

The training was targeted to beneficiaries of international protection (BPI) and third- country nationals who had been granted the right to stay in Romania on the basis of a short-term or long-term residence permit; and who needed support for integration in Romania. Ten participants were selected from the following countries: Syria, Lesotho, Rwanda, Egypt, Pakistan, Iran, Nigeria, Guinea, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Sao Tome Principe.

The vocational training took place on the 25th of June 2021 in Timisoara, Romania, and was followed by a one-day job shadowing that took place on the 30th of June 2021, in which the participants visited the company [Continental Automotive Romania](#).

- **Vocational counselling training**

The aim of the vocational counselling training, which took place in 2021, was to provide the participants with information regarding access to the labour market in the Timis County Council, Romania.

The training was organized for ten beneficiaries of international protection who were interested in improving their professional skills in order to be able to access the labour market in Romania.

During this occasion, a representative of the Timis County Agency for Employment presented to the participants a wide range of job opportunities, and existing professional training; as well as provide them with some advice on how to write a curriculum, and how to perform in a job interview.

- **One-Day Job Shadowing**

The participants of the training got to know insights into the work carried out by a Romanian private company, Continental Automotive Romania, during the one-day job shadowing that followed the training. This way, they could put into practice what they had learned during the training.

The Prefect's Institution of Timis County asked the management of Continental Automotive Romania to ensure the presence for one day in the company of a number of ten people, foreign citizens with the right of residence in Romania, who had previously participated in vocational training.

During the one-day job shadowing, the beneficiaries visited the company Continental Automotive Romania, getting acquainted with the specifics of this company's main activity. Together with representatives from the company, participated in the activities carried out by employees from various departments. The participants visited the production section and the human resources department, learning what it meant to work on the production line and the production process, as well as how to recruit and train employees.

By engaging in this activity, the participants became familiar with specific work tasks, tested and practiced their communication and teamwork skills and had the opportunity to learn new things. At the end of the activity, they received a certificate of participation from the company.

These two activities were implemented through the intercultural approach. They promoted equality and non-discrimination by ensuring equal access to the labour market, the acceptance of diversity and acknowledgement of its positive potential by launching information campaigns towards employers about the advantage of a diverse workforce, fostering meaningful interactions, and schemes to invite employees to become mentors for newly arrived migrants.

Although the results of both activities were very satisfactory and achieved their main objectives, there were some hurdles experienced throughout the implementation of the project mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, difficulties in finding volunteers, as well as companies willing to get involved.

Main results and outcomes

As a result of the implementation of both activities—the vocational counselling training and the job shadowing—the ten beneficiaries developed their labour market integration skills, as well as were familiarized with specific work tasks, tested and practised their communication and teamwork skills.

Among the main results, it is to highlight the dissemination of information for beneficiaries, which was relevant and useful to access the labour market in Timis County more easily. Moreover, the beneficiaries of the project had the opportunity to pass on the information acquired during the project to their families, acquaintances, and other beneficiaries of international protection looking for integration into the labour market in Romania.

Sustainability Check: This project has not ended yet, and a third phase is expected to take place by the end of 2022. This project can easily be replicated in other regional authorities, particularly those welcoming a high number of migrants.

7. Diversity Lab Programme, Fondazione Mondinsieme (IT)

Description of the good practice

Within the framework of the [2020-2024 Strategy on Intercultural Integration](#) of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Mondinsieme launched the *Diversity Lab* programme in order to identify the advantages of cultural diversity, with particular reference to new plural economies and open innovation processes.

The [Diversity Lab programme](#) (D-Lab) aims at disseminating a renewed vision of diversity management, able to effectively combine inclusion and valorization efforts, through the implementation of diversity management and diversity marketing strategies. .

This programme promotes a general understanding of diversity management related to cultural diversity and systemic actions on cultural diversity promotion in the workplace.

However, Mondinsieme's commitment to promoting cultural diversity within workplaces is prior to this institutional programme. Over the last six years, the Foundation carried out various projects on the topics of diversity management and intercultural entrepreneurship. It offered more than twenty companies consultancy services and training opportunities to strengthen managers' intercultural competences and foster the development of diversity management policies and practices. Furthermore, Mondinsieme has organised a series of thematic public events and launched a call for the establishment of new businesses based on an intercultural perspective.

In this regard, the Municipality of Reggio Emilia has acknowledged the positive impact that these initiatives have had on social cohesion, in order to reduce social fragmentation and to reach a greater impact, thus, the municipality invited Mondinsieme to integrate them into a permanent structure: the *Diversity Lab (D-Lab)*. This permanent lab is directed by Mondinsieme and is composed of the main local and socio-economic actors — trade associations, companies, trade unions, and start-ups.

Methodology and design process

This Programme offers to a wide range of local stakeholders—private enterprises, startups, public institutions, collaborative spaces—customized training opportunities, as well as the possibility of participating in awareness-raising events and collaborative initiatives.

The main objectives of this programme are:

- To facilitate the implementation of already existing informal practices and to support their replicability in other organisations active in D-Lab;
- To foster the application of complementarities among existing businesses (including businesses owned by people with a migrant background) as part of joint Diversity Marketing strategies and proving the so-called Diversity Advantage;
- To strengthen a public-private partnership in bidirectional exchange, for instance, public organisations can learn from private companies how to include and value cultural diversity, while removing all administrative obstacles that could prevent companies from being inclusive.

All the activities are periodically planned and revised with the overall aim of providing a general offer taking into account the following three main thematic focus: Diversity Management initiatives addressed to private organisations; Diversity Management initiatives addressed to public institutions, and Diversity and Innovation initiatives to support new innovative and intercultural startup ecosystems.

The Municipality of Reggio Emilia has contributed to the co-design of the main activities under this programme, for instance:

- Public events on diversity and innovation, also organised in partnership with institutional stakeholders (e.g. workshop on diversity and inclusion in the human resources of healthcare organisations), organised in collaboration with the regional healthcare agency;
- Training on Diversity Management and Diversity Marketing for an effective valorisation of human resources with a cultural background. Main target group managers and employers;
- Training on intercultural competences. Main target group employees.
- Social hackathon for the development of joint actions and/or new business with intercultural attention and sensitivity.

Mondinsieme implements in all its activities the intercultural integration approach developed by the Intercultural Cities Programme of the Council of Europe. All the organisations joining Mondinsieme go through initial training on this intercultural approach. In addition, the diversity of each organisation is measured and assessed through a tool, also acknowledged by the Council of Europe, the “Diversity Rating tool”.

This assessment is fundamental for organisations to plan and implement and monitor any further Diversity Management action. Actions are not only implemented to reach a competitive advantage but also to create a more welcoming work environment and a more cohesive and diverse team.

Main results and outcomes

According to the Italian legislation, qualifications acquired in the educational systems of non-EU countries are not automatically recognized and have to go through a complex process resulting in the frustration of applicants and resignation to accepting underqualified jobs.

In this regard, many individual projects and practices have been put in place by a wide-range of local organisations thanks to the *D-Lab*, challenging the current legal system of Italy. For instance, the *D-Lab* launched a mapping of qualifications obtained in non-EU countries which specifies the underlying competencies and skills acquired through each qualification. As a result, many companies participating in the *D-Lab* started mapping and recognising, where possible, these competencies.

The example described above proves that the aim of the Diversity Lab Programme has been reached. All practices, although implemented in a business-oriented environment, not only have an impact on the company itself but on the whole political and social context. As a matter of fact, the activities led by *D-Lab* are also beneficial to the public interest as witnessed by some companies.

For instance, the managers of a waste management company discovered that some of their workers with a migrant background were teaching their compatriots during their free time and using their mother language on how to correctly recycle. The managers decided to value this experience by promoting these workers to environmental educators. While previous initiatives addressed to migrant communities in order to raise-awareness on recycling had failed, this initiative not only valued workers with a migrant background but also impacted the broader community. This is the kind of impact the programme tries to reach.

Sustainability check: Although this initiative was initially launched within the framework of the policy planning 2020-2024, it will remain in place as it is considered a permanent programme.

8. Acol Line – Work and Training Programme

Description of the good practice

The Work and Training Programme, [ACOL Line](#), is an active employment policy, whose main purpose is to carry out projects to improve the employability of the active population with particular vulnerability and difficulties in accessing the labour market.

The Work and Training Programme, ACOL Line, subsidises the working contracts of those migrants who cannot work in the region of Catalonia, Spain, as they are in an irregular situation. The main consideration to take into account is that the employment contract offered must have a minimum duration of one year.

For those irregular migrants who can prove their stay in the country for more than three years, the Catalan government can issue a so-called “social rooting report”, which is mandatory to accredit social integration in the Spanish process of obtaining a temporary residence permit for social integration. To apply for this procedure, one of the main requirements is to find a job for the minimum duration of one year and to present an employment contract from a company to prove it.

In this regard, it was established the programme ACOL Line, aimed at migrants who, being in an irregular administrative situation, are in a position to apply for social integration, or “social rooting” as denominated by the Catalan Government.

In 2017, around 70.000 migrants were in an irregular situation in Catalonia, which increased to approximately 85.000 in the next year and reached around 128.000 in 2019. In 2020, it was estimated that the number escalated to 181.000 people.

As a matter of fact, lacking a work permit prevents access to the labour market, and this situation pushes people to carry out precarious jobs in the informal economy. This situation makes this group invisible to public policies, excluding it from active social participation. Still, other forms of discrimination associated with origin, phenotype, culture, provenance or religion exacerbate this exclusion.

Initially, this Programme only offered financial funding to NGOs in order for them to hire irregular migrants who could prove that they had been living in the country for three years or more. According to the national Spanish legislation, in order for their situation to be regularized, it was a necessary requirement for them to be employed.

The main objectives of this programme are to dignify the working conditions of the labour sectors with significant participation of people from minority or vulnerable groups; and to tackle the administrative irregularity of migrants through the development of legal and secure immigration routes, social rooting and employment.

Nowadays, this financial funding is also available for local administrations. The ACOL Line is co-financed 50% by the European Social Fund.

Methodology and design process

The ACOL line fosters the recruitment of people with a migrant background in a situation of vulnerability and prevents segregation in this space. Essentially, initiatives such as this one contribute to dignifying precarious employment niches occupied mainly by vulnerable groups. The ACOL line is aimed at migrants who, while in an irregular administrative situation, are in a position to obtain a certificate of social rooting. Migrants in an irregular administrative situation are one of the most vulnerable groups, implying that they are at a high risk of social exclusion.

This action seeks to promote equality by dignifying jobs and fostering the regularisation of people in an irregular administrative situation through labour inclusion. When it comes to diversity, it targets locally established entities willing to hire migrants. Regarding positive interaction, it encourages the recruitment of people from diverse cultural backgrounds and prevents segregation in the workplace.

The design of this programme was carried out by the Government of Catalonia and its relevant departments and offices with the support of legally constituted non- profit entities based in Catalonia.

The General Employment Plan of Catalonia, namely the [*Catalan Strategy for Employment 2012-2020*](#), identified as priority groups for its intervention migrants with special difficulties in integrating into the labour market, and who find themselves in an irregular administrative situation and are in a position to apply for a certificate of social rooting.

This social rooting report is mandatory to certify social integration in the Spanish process of obtaining a temporary residence permit for social rooting. The social rooting report includes, among other things, the length of stay registered in the territory, the economic means available, the links with family members residing in Spain, and the integration efforts through the monitoring of socio-labour and cultural inclusion programs.

Within the framework of this strategic priority, the Work and Training Program, ACOL Line, has the purpose to facilitate the access to the job market to migrants in a vulnerable situation by improving their employability and providing them with

professional competences and skills through training programs and work experiences in a real productive environment.

This active employment policy provides migrants who can obtain a temporary residence permit due to exceptional circumstances of social rooting the possibility to obtain a 12-month full-time employment contract and carry out training actions. This policy effectively contributes to their social and labour market integration.

Training actions can be divided into:

- Professional certificate training actions: minimum of 80 hours and maximum of 200 hours. The professional certificate training actions include, among others, learning related to areas such as management, electronics, hospitality, chemistry, textiles or transport.
- Transversal training actions: minimum of 60 hours and maximum of 80 hours. The transversal training actions include, among others, teamwork, communication skills, basic digital skills or information processing.

The selection procedure for recipients is a free procedure by the beneficiary entities. However, entities must respect, in any case, the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

Beneficiaries must meet the following requirements:

- Not be citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area or Switzerland or relatives of citizens of these countries to whom the European Union citizen regime applies.
- Proof of continuous stay in Spain for the last 3 years, the last 24 months of which in Catalonia. If an interruption in employer registration is detected, only cases in which it is equal to or less than 120 days is accepted.
- Not have a criminal record in Spanish territory.

The assessment to obtain the subsidy is carried out through a scale system and is by competitive competition. This system consists of scoring the participants according to the family, social, economic and housing circumstances that are accredited in a social report.

Main results and outcomes

In 2020, 194 grants were awarded to migrants in order for them to gain work experience and carry out training actions for a period of 12 months, and in non- profit organisations located in Catalonia. This represented a 49,23% increase compared to the 130 grants granted in 2019.

The migrants hired through the programme gained work experience essential to access the labour market and prevent social exclusion. In this sense, the ACOL line has been established as a tool aimed more than ever at implementing employment measures that improve the employability of this social group.

Beneficiaries of the ACOL line have been able to prove compliance with the requirements to apply for a residence permit through social rooting.

However, some challenges and obstacles were experienced while implementing the ACOL Line. On the one hand, one of the requirements to apply for social rooting is holding no criminal background records, neither in Spain nor in your country of origin, during the past 5 years. Sometimes, countries of origin take a long time to issue those certificates which may arrive outside the deadline. The regularisation process has remained halted in such cases, and so has the programme itself.

On the other hand, the recent onset of COVID-19 exacerbated the risk of social inclusion of the most unprotected groups of people.

Sustainability Check: The good results obtained in terms of the socio-labour inclusion of the participants show that it is necessary to continue implementing and strengthening employment policies such as this.

9. Integration into Social Care Professional Careers – Information and Training Programme for Asylum Seekers, Salzburg

Description of the good practice

The EU-Project "*FIER-fast track integration in European regions: Integration into social care professions; Information and training program for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of subsidiarity protection*", has the overall aim at improving Austria's labour shortage in the caretaking sector and at the same time to provide a sustainable job market for refugees. In this regard, interested refugees are informed about possibilities and requirements for working in the care sector, as well as creating awareness for the needs and wishes of elderly and disabled persons, so that possible discrepancies concerning care taking systems in countries of origin dissolve.

This project was developed taking into consideration the existing reality of the region of Austria. On the one hand, the social and health sector in Austria shows a lack of caring personnel either working with elderly or mentally and physically disabled clients. On the other hand, due to the influx of refugees in 2015 and 2016 there is a new potential in the workforce. However, these individuals lack the needed qualifications or experiences. In the years 2015-2017 roughly 150.000 refugees came to Austria seeking Asylum, around 80.000 of them stayed for the time being. Also, Austria is in need of about 75.000 nurses and other personnel in this field until 2030. In many countries of origin nursing homes and centres for disabled persons are organised and operated differently, the quality standards are sometimes lower.

Migrants and refugees arriving to Austria, who are interested in caring professions and realise the chances and opportunities working in this field offer, for instance, It is an opportunity to achieve a very sustainable education, have a secure, well-paying job with great options for personal development. However, in order to start an education most of them may need to get higher qualification first, and improve their German and IT skills before they can even apply at a school.

Thanks to this project, migrants and refugees who are interested in working in the field of caring professions can get information about the specific education system, entrance requirements or practical training. Furthermore they can improve their German and IT skills. They have the possibility to get to know work in a nursing home first handed through taster days (single days of passively being part of a regular workday in a nursing home) and peer-talks (group or individual discussions with peers who are already working in the caring sector and share their valuable experience). Moreover, participants are supported to prepare their job or internship applications and can get support if accepted into a school for caring professionals.

The project aims to pursue the following objectives. Reaching both goals will lead to an improved public welfare:

1. Informing refugees about the professional long-term expectancies in caring professions and guiding them with taster days, internships and preparation classes into fitting education. In the long run the target group will be able to integrate in the labor market and start an independent life in Austria.
2. Reducing the lack of qualified personnel in caring professions in the region of Salzburg. This will lead to more jobs in the region and secure a higher capacity in the named services

The main target group of our action included refugees from various nations and backgrounds, who wanted to receive further information about the professions in the caring sector and how the training system in Austria works. The project addressed both women and men in an equal way. However, in contrast to the actual situation in the health care sector in Austria, a disproportionately high number of men showed interest in these types of professions.

Methodology and design process

This project was envisioned and developed through the intercultural perspective from the beginning. The three dimensions of the intercultural approach according to the call for expressions are discussed below:

1. *Equality*: The project decreased missing informal networks and knowledge about educational and vocational possibilities for migrants. This was accomplished through information events and detailed individual and group counselling sessions, which were developed according to the needs of the participants.
2. *Diversity*: Acknowledgement of participants and their skills and competences is a core requirement in the approach towards the target group. Part of the individual counselling sessions is to uncover - sometimes even unknown – competences and making the participant aware of them. It is important to make them realise that their already acquired skills and experiences can be used in many contexts and that they transcend language and cultural barriers.
3. *Interaction*: The participants come from very diverse backgrounds. Some of them have been living in Austria for a longer time and can share their experience with newcomers. Also through taster days and different communication channels schools and homes for the elderly are made more aware of the potential migrants have in this current crisis in the care-sector. They come to see them as an asset and are more willing to meet them. Participants learn to trust their skills, identify and achieve goals, which supplies them with self-efficacy and more self esteem communicating with various stakeholders.

The starting point for the project "FIER - Fast Track Integration in European Regions" tracks back to the refugee movement in 2015 and the consequent challenges with integrating this target group into the labor market. Despite increased efforts by EU Member States, third-country nationals experienced a harder time in integrating into the EU labour market. In this regard, and under the lead of the Västra Götaland region, in Sweden, a consortium of partners came together to develop a joint project to address these issues. The project was submitted to the EU Program for Employment and Social Innovation 2014-2020 (EaSI) and was one out of five projects to be approved and funded (29 projects submitted in total).

The overall project counted on a budget of approximately € 2.5 million. In the project period of 2018/2019 the province of Salzburg counted with a total budget of € 175,266.00. Thanks to the funding provided from the European Union and Land Salzburg everything could be offered free of cost for the participants of this project.

The project "FIER" makes it possible to get to know good examples of rapid labor market integration across borders, launch new projects or test new measures. Changes in the political framework at federal and state level as well as changes in the legal basis and drastic changes in the financing of labor market measures have led to delays in activities in the province of Salzburg.

During the implementation process of this project, the following stakeholders were part of it: NGOs working with refugees, the network of volunteers guiding refugees in Salzburg who are part of the Diakoniewerk-network, and the employment and social care office of Salzburg.

The design and implementation process of this case study was composed of the following phases:

- Phase 1 – selection process: Information events and conversations with translation and Taster days in retirement homes. In this first phase, interested persons from the target group could inform themselves about possibilities working in the caretaking sector and generally about the caretaking system in Austria and identifying the main differences to their countries of origin. Taster days were single days where participants could accompany nurses at an elderly home in order to get some realistic insight and first-hand experience of this field of work. Above that, peers, refugees who had already successfully completed their education and could give very valuable information and accounts of their experiences, were invited to the organised information sessions.
- Phase 2 – course preparations & trainings: In this phase they took place the preparations of the wide range of courses offered by this project, mostly on learning the German language for caring professions (B1+), IT basics, trainings in homes for the elderly (20-40 hours), and the ongoing individual counselling as needed.

- Phase 3 – entrance examinations: In this third part of the project, it was provided support to the participants in registering and applying for the entrance examinations at schools of social care professions, as well as offered guidance while searching scholarships or funding for the following school attendance. Furthermore, to those project participants, who did not manage to pass the entrance examinations, support concerning a long-range planning of needed courses and experiences (for example, voluntary work or further German classes) was provided.

The combination of training, language course, IT skills for the social care sector for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection in Austria adds on the innovative character of this project.

Main results and outcomes

One of the difficulties in arranging the classes constituted the fact that some of the interested refugees had other obligations at the same time. Individual arrangements had to be made, either to get the permissions from the employment office or to arrange for childcare. In total the project reached 42 beneficiaries with refugee background (including 25 women) and counted with the support and involvement of 36 stakeholders based in Salzburg.

Thanks to the information sessions and the “taster days/tours”, participants were able to decide if they wished to start a professional career in the health care sector. However, most of them decided against pursuing a career in this field. Among the reasons for not pursuing this career, misunderstandings of what it takes to be a professional of the social care sector was identified; instead, some expressed an interest to provide counsel to families and/or do other kind of social work.

As a result of the participation in the project, the beneficiaries could make a first step in their career path. The coordinator of this project provided further information and contacts to some of them who, despite not wishing to pursue a career in the health care sector, were interested in receiving further consultation about other professional sectors and the required qualifications. Other participants decided to work on their German language proficiency which is the minimum requirement to access any profession in Austria.

For those persons who wished to continue the health care path, the celebrated information sessions helped them to learn about the required qualifications and possible funding, while attending the professional school. Due to the taster days, two participants were directly offered an internship at retirement homes.

The German course was a great opportunity for the participants to gain more insights into the health care sector as well. The teacher was not only experienced in this field, but also in teaching to refugees. Therefore, she was able to provide further guidance and support for the participants. Moreover, the project coordinator was able to discuss each participant's progress and situation with the teacher. Cooperation on the part of the project coordinator was not only important concerning the German lessons, but also when working with other NGOs, e.g. women or counseling organizations. This helped to find the best solution for each person's educational path towards acquiring a health care job.

The IT classes were very important for the overall training. Some of the participants were not able to write an email and therefore would have great difficulties while attending a school for health care professions (as a matter of fact, a lot of the exercises and projects carried out during the training classes are done through online learning platforms), while others had very good computer skills, but were not familiar with the German terminology and how to handle a computer in German language. This was a great challenge for the teacher, but nevertheless both groups of learners reported great benefits. Moreover, they received a specific certificate "Basic IT", only for students who are still learning German. This way they are able to study the topic further.

Three participants were able to pass the entrance examinations immediately. The others still lacked German proficiency and faced an increased competition from Austrians/other migrants for the school acceptance due to changed financing conditions. Therefore, in addition to the planned activities, the project coordinator organised counselling events for career perspectives, including immediate job possibilities (e.g. domiciliary nurse) or renewed attempts at an entrance examination at a later stage of time. Three participants opted for immediately taking up lower entry-level jobs in the health care sector and to go to school part-time. Another ten participants definitely planned to start a career in a health care profession and thus will try again in accessing the exams. For those who need to work on their German proficiency the Diakoniewerk organised volunteer German language training, one for getting to know different examination formats and another for the general german skills.

Sustainability check: The information sessions along with the results of the project were published in local media and the website and social media platforms of the Diakononiewerk and the FIER project in Salzburg itself.

10. Inersport – Sport as Social Inclusion Tool (Catalonia, Es)

Description of the good practice

The INERSport programme consists in offering sports courses to young people at risk of social exclusion in order to promote healthy habits amongst them and, at the same time, provide them with professional certificates which enable them to become sports instructors or referees, among others. Therefore, not only the project allows them to acquire knowledge regarding sports but also authorizes them to work and, thus, facilitate their labour integration.

The programme is organised by the Union of Sports Federations of Catalonia (Unió de Federacions Esportives de Catalunya, UFEC), which cooperates with NGOs and public sector authorities in order to deliver a comprehensive education and enable working on transversal competencies.

Currently, more than 30% of young Europeans are unemployed, in Spain, this figure is even higher. Indeed, according to the UFEC, in Catalonia, the unemployment rate for the youngest population reaches 143,600 inhabitants. According to the Statistical Institute of Catalonia (Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya), the 2019 unemployment tax for people aged from 16 to 24 was 26.2%, for 2020 it was 34%, while for 2021 it was 28.9%.

The purpose of the initiative is to develop the necessary capacities of students and provide them with an official certificate so that they can become sports instructors. Thanks to this project, participants will be able to enter the labour market and boost their professional careers, since the ultimate goals are to integrate them in the labour market and to encourage them to continue with their studies.

This programme has the objective of allowing young people from vulnerable communities to join the labour market, through this training programme, which also pretends to educate them on relevant issues other than sports such as health habits, diversity and other transversal competencies. In this regard, the programme is implemented in collaboration with educators and psychologists who are in charge of their personal and professional development. The specific target group are teenagers and young adults who are at risk of social exclusion and live in complex socioeconomic situations.

Moreover, this project is based on the intercultural approach:

- **Equality:** The programme offers equal opportunities for formation and labour integration regardless of the participants' gender, nationality or religion.

The INERSport is a programme aimed at fostering inclusion, education and social and labour Integration of teenagers and young adults who are at risk of social exclusion.

- **Diversity:** One of the programme's aims is to include as many nationalities as possible and to facilitate a positive link between young people of different nationalities, religions or conditions.
- **Meaningful interactions:** Through group sessions in which participants have the opportunity to know and to get closer to each other, the programme provides a space where teamwork, community and union are core values.

Methodology and design process

The programme uses sports as a mechanism to educate students in the field of emotional intelligence, patience, perseverance, acceptance of defeat, cooperation, respect and solidarity; while at the same time it supplies them with the necessary knowledge and capacities to become instructors or referees. In this context, once the theoretical classes, the practical courses, and the exam is completed, they obtain a certificate whereby they are enabled to hold a job position, thus contributing to their development.

The following stakeholders were involved in the design and implementation process of this programme:

- UFEC (Catalan Sports Federations Union)
- Other Catalan Sports Federations (volleyball, football, soccer, basketball, baseball,
- wrestling, sports for persons with cerebral palsy, subaquatic activities and hockey)
- Private sector (Incorpora – Fundació La Caixa)
- Local stakeholders (NGOs, social foundations, and associations)
- Public Social Services

The programme consists of offering sports courses. In 2019, the available domains in which the students could specialise were volleyball, football, soccer, basketball, baseball, wrestling, sports for persons with cerebral palsy, subaquatic activities and hockey.

Students attend to theoretical and practical classes related to the sports they have chosen, and obtain the respective certificate. This course is complemented by a psychosocial competencies training which can be useful for both the labour world and for interpersonal relationships.

The following design process has been applied:

1. Initial contact with sports federations
2. Contact with local NGOs, associations and entities.
3. Registration of potential participants (teenagers and young adults)
4. Interviews with the participants.
5. Programme kick-off and implementation: sports federation referee course (theoretical and practical) and transversal competencies group sessions.
6. Final course test and evaluation.

Many challenges were detected during the design and the implementation of the programme, such as:

- Lack of involvement of female participants in the project;
- High rate of dropouts during the course;
- Lack of involvement of project participants in other sports activities with a social impact;
- Lack of understanding of the theoretical contents of the course due to language barrier, the complexity of the material, sports rules and implications, etc.;
- Lack of reconciliation between studies and the sports programmes.

The aim is to overcome these challenges in the future in order to keep the programme growing and improving.

Main results and outcomes

The programme was first implemented in 2017, a year in which 85 young participants, 10 federations and 20 entities of the third sector participated. In 2019 the programme reached its maximum impact when there were 280 participants, 14 federations and 45 third-sector entities collaborating. Last year (2021), 84 participants, 6 federations and 44 entities of the third sector collaborated with the initiative.

Since the implementation of the programme, its main impact has been the labour inclusion of the teenagers and young adults who participated. Thanks to this programme most of the participants have become official referees of the sport in which they were trained. This allowed them to immediately access the labour market and start working as such in the corresponding sports federation. Moreover, the participants also obtain an official certification of the formation they have completed.

Sustainability Check: The INSERSport programme will continue in 2023 in collaboration with other sports federations and new participants from across the Catalan territory.

Additional Resources

- <https://sociale.regione.emilia-romagna.it/intercultura-magazine/comunicazione-e-centri/comunicazione-interculturale-1/il-manifesto-della-comunicazione-istituzionale-interculturale>
- <https://sociale.regione.emilia-romagna.it/intercultura-magazine/comunicazione-e-centri/comunicazione-interculturale-1/manifesto-della-comunicazione-istituzionale-interculturale-multilingue>
- <https://www.intercultural.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Ghid-Educatie-Interculturala-web.pdf>
- www.intercultural.ro
- <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC122560>
- www.kuldi.org
- <https://www.comune.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/PESDocumentID/77A66BFDADE239AFC12586D10036308B?opendocument&FROM=mbtDvrstyLb1>
- <https://www.mondinsieme.org/diversity-management.html>
- <https://serveiocupacio.gencat.cat/es/detall/article/Trabajo-y-Formacion-Convocatoria-2022>
- <https://serveiocupacio.gencat.cat/es/detall/noticia/Abierta-la-linea-de-ayudas-ACOL-del-Programa-Trabajo-y->
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4uQcBxH-3A>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4uQcBxH-3A>
- www.journey-integral.at
- <https://ufec.cat/insertsport/es/>
- <https://cejfe.gencat.cat/ca/publicacions/cataleg-activitats-justicia/detalls/fitxa/insert-sport>

**EU-Belong: An Intercultural Approach to
Migrant Integration in European Regions**

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