GOOD PRACTICES ON INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES with European funding

Advocacy for Refugee Integration in Bulgaria Project, funded by UNHCR with the additional financial support of the EU
The Good Practices on Integration of Refugees with European Funding Collection has been developed by the Bulgarian Council on Refugees and Migrants under an UNHCR Project, with the additional financial support of the EU. This collection is a product of detailed study of a number of broad-based European funds and programs. It presents a compilation of projects and activities, implemented under various European funds and programs aimed at financing integration measures for refugees. The information is collected from publicly available sources.

The European Union provides multiple options for funding integration measures for refugees and migrants, where most of the eligible beneficiaries are the European municipalities and cities. An example of this are the many good practices presented in this Collection, which are the selected part of all that are implemented with European funding.

The presented good practices, due to their long-term effect, can be used as a starting point for planning and application for European funds and broad-based programs, available at both national and European level.

The guiding principle of the BCRM in the selection of good practices is that their implementation is beneficial for both refugees and the local population.
GOOD PRACTICES ON
INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES

with European funding
The Bulgarian Council for Refugees and Migrants (BCRM) is a civil society organisation working in the field of asylum and migration in Bulgaria.

The BCRM was founded in 2005 by the Bulgarian Red Cross, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and Caritas Bulgaria as a platform of their activities related to the refugee and migration policy, protection and integration of refugees and migrants.

The BCRM works for further strengthening of the cooperation between state institutions and nongovernmental organizations on national refugee and migration policy and practice.

The BCRM objective is to enhance the role of the civil society in the formation of a fair and just national and European asylum, migration and integration policy and practice.
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

Urban Innovation Actions is an Initiative of the European Union promoting pilot projects in the field of sustainable urban development. The Initiative provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges. Urban Innovative Actions has a budget of EUR 372 million for 2014-2020. Urban areas face multiple and interconnected challenges related to employment, migration, demography, water and soil pollution... But, they are also engines of new ideas and solutions, dynamic places where changes happen on a larger scale and at a fast pace.

To answer the increasingly complex challenges they face, urban authorities need to go beyond traditional policies and services - they need to be bold and innovative.

Vision

Although research on urban issues is well developed, potential solutions are not always put into practice because urban authorities are reluctant to use their money to test new, unproven and hence risky ideas.

Urban Innovative Actions offers urban authorities with the possibility to take a risk and experiment the most innovative and creative solutions.

The main objective

The main objective of Urban Innovative Actions is to provide urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test innovative solutions to the main urban challenges, and see how these work in practice and respond to the complexity of real life.

Cities are often the first entry points for migrants and refugees into the host society. A comprehensive integration policy is therefore an essential component of effective urban development. By providing quality services, infrastructure and opportunities, cities have the capacity to ensure the long-term integration of migrants and refugees into the urban fabric. However, fostering integration and
mutual trust is a difficult, complex and long-term process. If this integration into the urban fabric is poorly managed, it can fail to address basic needs and lead to the exclusion of migrants and refugees from the labour market, housing, health and education services etc. In turn social cohesion is put at risk. This is particularly the case when cities are asked to deal with sizeable and sudden population movements that place pressure on their services. The Urban Innovative Actions support cities to address these challenges.

The beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the Urban Innovative Actions are urban authorities. However, given the complexity of the urban challenges, they can't act alone. In order to design and implement effective and innovative solutions, urban authorities need to involve all the key Stakeholders that can bring expertise and knowledge on the specific policy issue to be addressed. These include agencies, organisations, private sector, research institutions, NGOs... Bold projects need them all.

The scope of support

The scope of supportFollowing the European Regional Development Fund scope of support, actions may cover a range of investments in social, health, education, housing and childcare infrastructure, regeneration of deprived urban areas, actions to reduce spatial and educational isolation of migrants and refugees, business start-ups and others. In order to reinforce the comprehensive nature of the activities, measures addressing human capital investment, such as vocational training, coaching, capacity building and skills development, could also be included. The following non-exhaustive list provides some examples:

Social infrastructure: actions could include the development of community-based social care, community centres, family centres etc.

Housing infrastructure: measures could invest in social housing which does not further reinforce the spatial isolation of marginalised communities. Investments should primarily focus on measures which simultaneously help to reduce and/or eliminate the physical isolation and improve the access to basic services.

Education infrastructure: From early childhood to higher education,
actions could target the accession and quality of educational services. They may also include the development of training and language courses.

Health: a focus on facilitating access to mainstream health services and on the provision of health services for those problems with more prevalence in newly arrived migrants and refugees such as physical injuries (hypothermia, burns, gastrointestinal illnesses, cardiovascular events, pregnancy- and delivery-related complications, diabetes and hypertension), as well psychological support and trauma healing is possible. Innovative actions could include investments in health infrastructure for prevention and primary health care services.
Within the refugee population, unaccompanied minors are the most vulnerable group. 378 unaccompanied young refugees between the ages of 17 and 21 currently get financial benefits from the social welfare system in Antwerp, but not the needed assistance. 17,000 people are on the list for social housing in the City of Antwerp.
The CURANT-project proposes a mixed use of a set of policy instruments. The project uses these instruments in a new integrated way to provide both a safe living environment as well as guidance. The CURANT-project not only provides a solution for affordable housing (rent being €250 a month per person), but also a guaranteed one-on-one integration approach.

A total of 75 cohousing units will be set up through purchase, renovation and private renting. In these units minimum 75 and maximum 135 unaccompanied young refugees cohabit with Flemish buddies for at least 1 year. The buddy helps the refugee with different aspects. For example: looking for a job, building a network, learning Dutch.

Furthermore, the refugees are intensively guided during the whole project, on different levels:

- social network and integration
- education
- independent living
- language learning
- leisure time
- psychological counseling
- professional activation

During the project, the University of Antwerp measures the impact of the cohousing and intensive support on the integration of the young refugees.

Stad Antwerpen
Solentra (Solidarity and Trauma) - unit of the psychiatric division of UZ Brussel
JES vzw - 'urban lab' for children and youngsters in Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels
Vormingplus - NGO
Atlas integratie & inburgering Antwerpen - NGO
University of Antwerp

The project aims to help the target group with education, training and work, creating a network of supportive relations and dealing with (war) trauma. The refugees transcend their status as welfare beneficiaries and are able to create a good future in Antwerp. In turn, their success stories set an example for their peers as they personify a successful
integration. Successfully integrating young refugees to society contributes to a more harmonious urban community and an increased public safety.

---

**Main milestones**

- **February 2017**: The first cohousing units in urban patrimony are renovated, recruitment of the first buddy's and refugees starts, and the site for the modular units is found.
- **February 2018**: All cohousing units are ready and the maximum of 75 buddy's and refugees are matched and intensive guidance has begun.
- **April 2018**: First evaluation is ready and trajectories are adapted.
- **April 2019**: Second evaluation is ready.
- **October 2019**: Project finish with a press conference on project results and knowledge sharing.

---

**Fons Duchateau, Chairman Social Welfare Department, City of Antwerp**

"If social integration and inclusion in the host society is the end goal, cohabitation is the vehicle to get there, the volunteer buddy is the copilot and circular integrated support services provide the fuel to finish the road. With this Initiative, we want to ensure that young refugees have the opportunity to rebuild their lives in Antwerp. Our first priority is the integration of these youngsters who, like all youngsters, deserve that extra helping hand. Curant combines human compassion and social responsibility. We hope Antwerp can be a leading example for other cities."

---

**Contact of the project**

- **Jolien De Crom**  
  *Project Manager*  
  jolien.decrom@ocmw.antwerpen.be

- **Fabio Sgaragli**  
  *UIA Expert*  
  fabio@sgaragli.net
## Greece

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Athens, Greece</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>664,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title</td>
<td>Curing the Limbo – From apathy to active citizenship: Empowering refugees and migrants in limbo state to ignite housing affordability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>EUR 4,999,748.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>01/11/2017 – 31/10/2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Challenges addressed

20.12% of the City of Athens' population is without a job (Greece's unemployment rate is at 20.6%, the highest unemployment rate in the EU); 30, 85% of Athens' total housing/apartment stock remains vacant. The municipality has mapped over 1.800 empty buildings in the city center alone. 2.900 citizen led activities have been connected to the city's civil society platform “synAthina”. Within the last 4 years, 360 active community groups have been submitting their solutions to the local city needs.
The problem identified by Athens is the long-term inactivity that characterises a large part of its recently arrived refugee population, adding up to a similar condition of its own local unemployed people. This is one of the “limbo” aspects pointed out in the City of Athens, which in its eighth consecutive year of crisis witnesses a growing number of properties remaining vacant, topping to the overall isolation all of its inhabitants equally experience.

About 13,000 refugees reside currently in the municipality of Athens, a City they did not choose as a final destination, stranded after the closing of the borders. They need to find incentives and motivation to become part of the society, despite the unevenness of the surrounding reality, where the rate of local unemployment exceeds. The challenge is how to activate the refugee population, capitalising on the vibrant civil society of Athens that has been spreading in the City offering its intelligence to the emerging pressing urban needs. Using these invaluable results at the opposite end of the crisis we aim to overturn the established inertia and offer positive impact to the City at a wider scale.

The “Curing the Limbo” project capitalises on Athens' vibrant civil society to help refugees and the local unemployed to overcome the stage of inertia. The programme develops around a circular “gift” system, addressing the twofold issue of both housing and inactivity: Refugees receive affordable living spaces from the City's available housing stock and in return, they work for the public benefit, supporting the needs of the local community and participating in citizen-led activities that improve quality of life in Athenian neighborhoods.

Beneficiaries receive on-the-job training supervised by the University of Athens, which includes: language learning, psychosocial support, “street law” knowledge and other basic social and soft skills. These skills are tailored to beneficiaries' needs and are offered in an integrated way, during which other parallel activities are also gradually introduced. The modality of exchange is developed around the incentives given both to tax-paying proprietors of currently empty spaces as well as to the beneficiaries through their integrated inclusion in the City.
“Curing the Limbo” is an inclusive integration Initiative to help refugees and the underprivileged to move from apathy to motivation, create strong bonds with the local communities, acquire new skills, solve local problems together with active citizens, improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods and build self-confidence and self-respect, qualities essential for their development as responsible people and citizens in society.

At the end of the three-year period, programme beneficiaries will be given the possibility to afford housing, access to a network of active and engaged local people, and even the possibility to move on with some form of employment related to their newly acquired skills, with the support of professionals. 375 people are expected to be housed through 75 affordable housing units and more than 200 people will attend Greek language courses and ICT courses. It is however expected that many more people will benefit from the programme's cyclical exchange rationale. Seed funding and community work will help the programme beneficiaries interact with over 100 local Stakeholders and citizens' led initiatives, leaving an undeniable impact on the City.

**Partnership**

Municipality of Athens  
Athens Development and Destination Management Agency S.A  
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens  
Catholic Relief Services - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Greek Branch  
International Rescue Committee (IRC Hellas)

---

**Main milestones**

**October 2018:** Inauguration of the Limbo Exit Lab including the recruitment and training of the Limbo Lab staff and trainers.  
**December 2018:** Development of the “Options' Menu”. This includes language and ICT training, psycho-social and “street law” support, assessment of affordable housing and publication of users’ guide, networking and matchmaking guide with local active citizen groups.  
**February 2019:** Beneficiaries access the Limbo Exit Lab. A flexible menu of services classes start. The Housing Facilitation Unit is up and running.  
**September 2019:** Beneficiaries are connected to active community groups in a wide range of activities.
December 2019: Beneficiaries enter 75 Housing Affordable Units
February 2020: Beneficiaries receive support to seek employment.

"Curing the limbo' is a unique opportunity to connect the refugee population to the active citizens of Athens, in a cyclical exchange system that will also address pressing and recurring City needs. UIA financing also gives our City the chance to test an innovative model of social exchange, which will create powerful ties between citizens that wouldn’t otherwise interact. It is an investment in our human capital that builds upon the recognition of bottom-up approaches in resolving City challenges and, ultimately, enhancing social cohesion”

Contact of the project
Antigone Kotanidis
Advisor on Migration Policy
a.kotanidi@athens.gr
ITALY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Bologna, Italy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>386,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project's title</td>
<td>S.A.L.U.S. 'W' SPACE – Sustainable Accessible Livable Usable Social space for intercultural Wellbeing, Welfare and Welcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>4,998,429.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>01/11/2016 – 31/10/2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Challenges addressed

The flows of refugees have constantly increased and they are not expected to get reduced. In Bologna metropolitan area asylum seekers passed from 321 to 816 in 2015. This trend requires a new systemic and structural answer that involves also the third sector and the civil society, to make integration happen effectively. To achieve this goal a major cultural change is required. Reception centres must become new centralities, able to produce culture, solidarity, economic growth and
social wellbeing. Refugees need to feel part of the host community where they can activate their own unique abilities, qualities and skills, to build their self-reliance and autonomy.

Main challenges:
– to overcome the emergency approach in the refugees reception model and find new sustainable solutions, integrated into the social and economic framework;
– to prevent the conflicts and the perception of migrants and refugees as an economic and social burden;
– to fight the urban and social decay, caused by the economic crisis;
– to foster an open intercultural society, based on the generative welfare model and solidarity, by enhancing reciprocity between refugees and citizens and knowledge contamination;
– to deal with the demographic changes: aging population, low birth rate, migration of young people.

The project intends to use an integrated approach and the tools of social innovation. This experimentation is based on best practices at local level, coming from a twenty-year experience, concerning the whole partnership and the methodology (increase capability rather than pursuing subsidy policies).

Villa Salus aims to become a "think tank" of this new welfare model, offering training to social workers and becoming an European reference point for generative welfare studies.

The proposed solution can be summarized as follows:
1. creating a reception centre for refugees which is also a neighborhood centre, offering a pleasant and relaxing environment, educational gardens, artistic workshops, coworking, multiethnic restaurant and accommodation facilities; the centre provides a housing social mix in order to sustain social cohesion and avoid "ghetto effect";
2. turning threat into opportunity, supporting the refugees in their autonomy process and fostering micro-entrepreneurial development;
3. reusing abandoned areas as new lively spots for developing community based projects, trough a participatory design process;
4. creating employment support and self-entrepreneurial guidance, as
a unique field-training experience. The refurbishment itself is conceived as training opportunity

5. enhancing a balanced demographic structure within the City, giving the possibility to the refugees to become economic actors.

Cultural change: the integration will become a real achievement, based on exchange and collaboration between citizens and migrants, able to reduce conflicts and foster a new intercultural model of co-living and mutual support, where migration will be seen as resource and not as a threat;

Physical change: the project will bring an urban regeneration of the area, removing the risks of squatting and social decay and improving the environmental quality;

Economic change: the refurbishment will become an economic growth booster and an opportunity of field-training that will provide employment support to refugees. Villa Salus will offer entrepreneurship start-ups opportunities; an opportunity for all citizens to develop trust and self-motivation to face difficulties, overcoming individualism and competitiveness, feeling part of a larger community.

This project will create a replicable model of integrated community centers where the third sector and the citizens have an active role in supporting the reception and integration of refugees.

**Partnership**

Comune di Bologna  
Instituto per la ricerca sociale - Research Center  
ASP Città di Bologna - Public Agency  
Open Group Società Cooperative Onlus - NGO  
ICIE Instituto Cooperativo per l'Innovazione - NGO  
Antoniano Onlus - NGO  
Cooperative Sociale Camelot - NGO  
Associazione Cantieri Meticci - NGO  
Società Dolce - NGO  
Eta Beta Coop - Private Company  
CIOFS FP Emilia Romagna - Training Center  
Microfinanza SRL - Business support organisation  
CEFAL Emilia Romagna - Training Center
Main milestones

January 2017: Start-up of the participative planning. Press-conference and public meeting of the district council.
March 2017: "Concept" of Villa salus: Shared lay-out and guidelines are provided to the architect in charge of the design.
April-May 2017: The final design is accomplished and the project approved by the City council.
November 2017: The detailed design, that includes the structural interventions and the technological plants, is ready, and the call of tender is published.
April 2018: Beginning of the construction phase. The public selection process is ended and the contract signed by the company.
March-April 2019: End of construction phase. The building is delivered to the Municipality. Project social activities can be settled down.
September 2019: Kick-off public event. Villa Salus is opened to public. Big celebration for the opening.

Virginio Merola,
Mayor of Bologna

“When a City welcomes, it grows in culture, richness and humanity. Europe, through UIA, is with us along this journey.”

Contact of the project

Inti Bertocchi
*Project Scientific Coordinator*
inti.bertocchi@comune.bologna.it

Peter Ramsden
*UIA expert*
peterramsden2@gmail.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cities</th>
<th>Coventry, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, United-Kingdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>1,722,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project's title</td>
<td>MiFRIENDLY CITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A MiFRIENDLY Cities is a regional approach that will be underpinned by the voices, skills and passion of refugees and migrants themselves across the region. Coventry, Wolverhampton and Birmingham are parts of the West Midlands -the most diverse region in the UK outside Greater London and the second most diverse in the whole of the EU. With Coventry contributing to this diversity, it has the highest internal migration after London. Coventry is home to people arriving directly from abroad for economic reasons, seeking asylum and family reunion, the region is also home to many refugees and migrants who arrive from other parts of the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>EUR 4,280,639.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Challenges addressed

The Migration friendly cities will bring Coventry, Wolverhampton and Birmingham (other parts of West midlands) coming together to address the below challenges:

1. West Midlands urban authorities have seen up to 40% cuts from their budgets under UK government austerity measures.
2. Refugees and migrants in the region are twice as likely to be unemployed as non-migrants.
3. Knowledge of public health messages is consistently low among migrants and refugees in the region.
4. Prejudice in the WM towards refugees and migrants is rapidly increasing.
5. Refugees and migrants have low levels of awareness of rights and often struggle to access services.

## Solution proposed

A MiFRIENDLY Cities is a regional approach that will be underpinned by the voices, skills and passion of refugees and migrants themselves across the region.

1. New job opportunities/accredited training and upskilling employers for better engagement with refugees and migrants.
2. Health champions trained to deliver public health messages and raising awareness in the population to reduce unwanted demand.
3. Mentoring, financing and supporting social enterprises to tackle challenges identified in this proposal.
4. Activities supporting active citizenship and rights, including training refugees and migrants as Citizen Journalists and Citizen Social Scientists to evaluate success of the project.

## Expected results

1. Better use of limited financial resource driving long-term lasting change between 3 Local authorities.
2. The employment rate of refugees and migrants in the WM is increased by 15% over 3 years.
3. 20% more refugees and migrants in the WM accessing primary prevention healthcare screening including for latent TB, cervical cancer, breast cancer, HIV leading to improved community wide public
health outcomes.
4. Social participation of refugee and migrant communities in grassroots activities aimed at increasing solidarity by 10% and engendering improvements in feelings of belonging.
5. Awareness of rights and how to access them among refugees and migrants is increased by 10%, engendering increased feelings of active citizenship.
6. The MiFRIENDLY Cities approach is embedded within existing and future regional and City plans and public policy is positively influenced by MiFRIENDLY Cities activities.

Partnership

Coventry City Council
Wolverhampton City Council
Birmingham City Council
Coventry University
Interserve - multinational company
Migrant Voice (MV) - local migration network
Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC);
The Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC);
Coventry University Social Enterprises (CUSE)
Central England Law Centre (CELC) - NGO
Migration Work (MW) – NGO

Main milestones

March 2018: Launch of project/ Project implementation starts with communication.
June 2018: Citizen Social Scientists recruited. Architectural design for Hope house agreed by refugees and migrants. Lease agreed for pop up furniture shop.
February 2020: Health Champions trained with an accreditation. 300 Refugees and migrants complete accredited training.
December 2020: 100 Local volunteers working in fab labs to upcycle furniture pieces and complete home make overs for 100 homes. Health checks for migrant rights completed/Work placements are started. Social Enterprise start ups.
March 2021: Hope house completed. Migration Friendly Project closure celebration.

_Cllr Abdul Khan, Deputy Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities_

“Coventry has a long and proud history of opening its arms and welcoming people who choose to make the City their home. I’m delighted with this award and I’m excited about the projects it will help deliver not just in Coventry but across the West Midlands. The MiFRIENDLY Cities project recognises the valuable Contribution refugees and migrants make to our communities and how we can all benefit from their integration.”

_Sunairah Miraj_
_Programme Delivery Manager_
_Sunairah.miraj@coventry.gov.uk_
SPAIN

Fuenlabrada, Spain

198,132

MILMA Project – Migrants Labour Integration Model based on Acculturation Project

3,593,342.20

01/03/2018 – 28/02/2021

Fuenlabrada is a young working City located in the South of the metropolitan area of Madrid that in the last four decades has almost tripled its population as a result of an intense migratory process both national and international.

In the City, unemployment is especially high among lower skilled young people. The access to employment is one of the principal elements of the City's social inclusion policies. Registered unemployment, in November 2017, was 14.225 people (5.889 men and 8.36 women), 1.834 of them are migrants (12.9%).

GOOD PRACTICES ON INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES
One of the main challenges of the City is the integration of people at risk of social exclusion, especially unemployed people. In this sense, the objective is to generate opportunities for the inhabitants, both local and migrants, in a collaborative way to access to the labour market.

As a result of this collaboration process the project expects to facilitate migrants' social inclusion, as well as increase the possibilities to get a job or create a start-up company for unemployed people.

The project will promote the integration between cultures through acculturation innovative programs. This will be based in a collaborative way in which local inhabitants and migrants will work together to increase their employability.

Business Challenges Labs (BC Labs) will be created with an active role of social economy companies, where the target groups will receive training oriented to generate the capacity and hopefully provide new opportunities in the labour market for participants.

The project will promote the integration between cultures through acculturation innovative programs. This will be based in a collaborative way in which local inhabitants and migrants will work together to increase their employability.

Business Challenges Labs (BC Labs) will be created with an active role of social economy companies, where the target groups will receive training oriented to generate the capacities (technical/practical skills) in niches of employment with present and future potential employment opportunities (Green Production, Urban Creation and Recycling, Communication and Production/Multimedia development, Integration and Installation of Devices, Digital Production, Provision of Elderly Care and Catering).

BC Labs will also improve the employability as well as foster entrepreneurship (by promoting the development of products and services demanded in the real job market).

The MILMA project expects that the BC Lab will strengthen social cohesion, both increasing the integration of migrants (collaborative actions with local citizens) and their labour opportunities.
**Main milestones**

- **November 2016**: SOCIUSYouth received the keys to their new homes from the Deputy Mayor during an official event.
- **February 2017**: Start of Entrepreneurship courses and English lessons for neighbourhood members and asylum seekers.
- **Summer 2017**: Open House event for the neighbourhood, asylum seekers, U-RLP partners and important Stakeholders.
- **Spring 2018**: The first results of the project and experiences will be presented in Utrecht to other European practitioners and scientists.
- **Spring 2019**: Presentation of the Evaluation and research results of Oxford University and Roehampton University.

**Fco Javier Ayala Ortega, Mayor of Fuenlabrada**

“Fuenlabrada has a strong europeist vocation. Our main goal is that Fuenlabrada became a symbol of an open and inclusive city thanks to our social policies. UIA-MILMA Project is a great opportunity in order to achieve the integration between migrant and local population and de labour inclusion of unemployed people.”

**Contact of the project**

Juan Carlos Hernandez Navas  
*Project Manager*

[MILMA-UIA@ayto-fuenlabrada.es](mailto:MILMA-UIA@ayto-fuenlabrada.es)
## GOOD PRACTICES ON INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES

## NETHERLANDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Utrecht, Netherlands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>334,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project's title</td>
<td>U-RLP Utrecht Refugee Launch Pad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>EUR 2,778,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>01/11/2016 – 31/10/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Cities play a crucial role in the reception and integration of asylum seekers in local communities. Within Europe there has been a growing number of welcoming voluntary activities combined with sometimes openly hostile but at least concerned reactions towards the reception and integration of refugees. Especially in deprived neighbourhoods there is a risk of poor social inclusion of new migrants where residents already themselves face problems of high unemployment and lower levels of education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Solution proposed

The Utrecht Refugee Launchpad seeks to develop a new way to deal with reception facilities for refugees in neighbourhoods by introducing an inclusive approach. The project aims to create a combined learning and living environment for both refugees and the local community. It offers the neighbourhood a vibrant and enigmatic centre with a SOCIUS community. A group of carefully selected youngsters with a strong connection to the neighbourhood and it's improvement created trendy living quarters in the same building where the refugee shelter is located. Youngsters are of mixed levels of education, occupation, gender, age, colour and background. Their common ground is the intent to create a community with the asylum seekers within the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood members are invited to follow international entrepreneurship training or Business English classes together with the asylum seekers, followed by peer to peer coaching and introductions to local businesses. The lessons learned in the URLP could be both used within the Netherlands or elsewhere. This way the approach ensures a future proof investment into the participants' lives, which could be built up in Utrecht or elsewhere if the asylum request is denied or when refugees may want to rebuild their home country when the war is over. The project seeks to offer asylum seekers and neighbourhood(youth) alike an active and entrepreneurial environment. The core target group remains, of course, the refugee community. However, by mixing refugees with neighbourhood participants, potentially opposing groups are thought to bridge a gap and experience mutual support instead of growing alienation.

Partnership

Gemeente Utrecht
Socius Wonen – SME
Universiteit Utrecht - School of Economics (U.S.E.) and Centre for Entrepreneurship (UtrechtCE).
Stichting Volksuniversiteit Utrecht - Division of English courses
Social Impact Factory – NGO
Vluchtelingenwerk Midden-Nederland – NGO
University of Oxford - Centre on Migration, Policy and Society
Roehampton University
The experience of living, learning and developing together will create a shared social capital between newcomers and residents. These new experiences may launch social change and will hopefully provide new opportunities in the labour market for participants.

### Expected results

- **November 2016**: SOCIUSYouth received the keys to their new homes from the Deputy Mayor during an official event.
- **February 2017**: Start of Entrepreneurship courses and English lessons for neighbourhood members and asylum seekers.
- **Summer 2017**: Open House event for the neighbourhood, asylum seekers, U-RLP partners and important stakeholders.
- **Spring 2018**: The first results of the project and experiences will be presented in Utrecht to other European practitioners and scientists.
- **Spring 2019**: Presentation of the Evaluation and research results of Oxford University and Roehampton University.

### Kees Dipeveen, Mayor of Utrecht

“Cities play a crucial role in the reception and integration process of asylum seekers. The way we receive newcomers into our society has an impact on its future shape and prosperity. The Utrecht Refugee Launchpad is an inclusive approach to facilitate integration from day one by introducing a shared living concept in which local youth and asylum seekers live together. It aims to create an innovative reception facility which is built upon social networks within the neighbourhood developing future proof skills together with asylum seekers. After the determination of an asylum status participants will have developed skills in self efficacy and resilience which can be used both in the Netherlands or elsewhere.”

### Contact of the project

- **Imara Antonius**
  - i.antonius@utrecht.nl
- **Daniel De Torres**
  - dani@antirumours.com
AUSTRIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Vienna, Austria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>1,797,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project’s title</td>
<td>CoRE – Centre of Refugee Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>EUR 4,786,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>01/11/2016 – 31/10/2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Last year we saw a dramatic increase in the number of refugees coming to Austria and to Vienna in particular. With almost 90,000 applications for asylum in Austria, the number was one of highest in Europe in relation to the population size. In 2015, Vienna's demographic growth reached a plus of 43,000 – more than twice the already high average of the last decade, posing huge challenges to social welfare and social housing systems as well as to the labour market. Under these circumstances, integration of such a high number of refugees into the urban society is a task which cannot be fulfilled by one public authority. This calls for new, innovative solutions and new models of cooperation.
CoRE will address integration challenges by implementing innovative solutions. The project aims at providing refugees with integrated support to facilitate their integration in Vienna, by focussing on three aspects:

Firstly, CoRE is an empowerment fabric jointly planned, utilized and operated by public institutions, NGOs, civil society initiatives and refugees. By pooling resources and knowhow and by making refugees equal partners instead of passive beneficiaries, it helps to initiate smart transformation processes for the whole integration system.

Secondly, CoRE is a physical infrastructure in the form of a CoRE building, which will be adapted to the needs of the project. The CoRE building will be a location that offers community spaces as well as service spaces. Through new forms of cooperation of a broad range of Stakeholders, CoRE will be the venue for a variety of integration activities to take place.

Thirdly, CoRE is a think tank, which monitors, analyses, and innovates policies and develops and tests new solutions.

CoRE aims at strengthening the whole integration system and at making it fit for new challenges. CoRE develops and provides new integration offers, which address the needs of asylum seekers and refugees in Vienna. CoRE also contributes to the adaption and optimisation of instruments and services in order to make them more user-oriented. Thanks to the innovations implemented within the project, existing ruptures and breaks in the integration process will be overcome.

CoRE's focus on skills and competences ensures that already during the asylum procedure, refugees' competences will be routinely assessed and documented in a newly developed data base. Activities in the field of career planning, competence development and specific trainings facilitate refugees' readiness for the labour market. As a result, refugees' preparation for the labour market starts already during the asylum procedure.

With a focus on peer mentoring and information offers in refugee's native languages, CoRE ensures that asylum seekers' integration in
Vienna starts right after they settle in Vienna. Thus, refugees will sooner be able to understand basic issues of life in Vienna, such as housing, education, health care, law, rules and codes for living in the City, etc.

Finally, CoRE shows a wider public that - despite the existing challenges - integration of refugees can be successful and can add to the prosperity of the City. CoRE contributes to making diversity a success in Vienna – by finding solutions to current challenges and by thinking ahead and therefore preparing the City for future challenges.

**Partnership**

Stadt Wien  
Fonds Soziales Wien - Public Agency  
Wiener ArbeitnehmerInnen Förderungsfonds - Public Agency  
Wirtschaftsagentur Wien - Business Support Agency  
Stadtschulrat für Wien - Europa Büro - Training Center

**Main milestones**

*February 2017:* The CoRE building was selected.  
*July 2017:* A competence database was developed in a cross institutional structure.  
*October 2017:* The core group of refugee peers was selected and trained.  
*January 2018:* The health promoting programme was successfully implemented.  
*March 2018:* The first fact finding missions in other European countries were conducted.  
*August 2019:* Min. 200 refugees were provided with accommodation through the Housing First Platform

**Jürgen Czernohorszky,**  
City Councillor for Education, Integration, Youth and Personnel

“The CoRE project is meant to support the implementation of innovative approaches and methods in integration work. With this project, the City of Vienna will build upon existing services to allow for the even faster and more needs-oriented integration of refugees. The project focuses on close cooperation with partner organizations and, most importantly, with the very people who are trying to make a new home in Vienna. CoRE allows us to explore new paths together with the European Union, and to promote positive examples of successful integration."
Contact of the project

Birgit WACHTER
Project manager
birgit.wachter-wallner@extern.wien.gv.at

Christoph Reinprecht
UIA expert
christoph.reinprecht@univie.ac.at
European Regional Development Fund
URBACT Programme

URBACT Programme

For about 15 years, the URBACT programme has been the European Territorial Cooperation programme aiming to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe. It is an instrument of the Cohesion Policy, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the 28 Member States, Norway & Switzerland.

Mission

URBACT's mission is to enable cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges, by networking, learning from one another's experiences and identifying good practices to improve urban policies.
The city of Ghent is facing a growing number of refugees. In Belgium, the number of asylum applications doubled within one year. 60% receive asylum status. As a local government, Ghent believes in a proactive approach, starting the integration process from Day One.

The moment asylum-seekers arrive, they are brought into contact with relevant organisations. In this way they can quickly access language courses, volunteer work, leisure activities. This is a two-sided approach speeding up the integration process, and allowing organisations and citizens to get to know newcomers. It also addresses negative stereotypes and prejudices against refugees.

To coordinate this, a Refugee Taskforce was set up involving everyone who can play a role in dealing with the growing number of new arrivals. This is a cooperation between the political level, city administration,
The Refugee Taskforce allows us to tackle challenges on diverse fronts.

» Shelter. Due to the refugee crisis a new refugee shelter was set up. Cooperation between the three shelters was established; as such, information, experiences and good practices can be exchanged.

» It's important to have an information exchange with citizens. Information sessions and a dedicated web site give people the chance to visit the shelter. By giving accurate information and involving society from the beginning we can demystify stereotypes and raise awareness.

» A coordinated approach guarantees quick and effective access to housing, education and work. The moment asylum seekers arrive in Ghent, they are brought into contact with relevant organisations to start language training, do volunteer work etc. The integration process starts immediately, while waiting for recognition. This is a win-win for both newcomers and host society.

» Engagement of civil society. The refugee crisis brought about a huge wave of solidarity: NGOs, volunteers and citizens offer their assistance. As a local authority, we can align these initiatives and offer professional guidance, fill the gaps, and foster solidarity with other vulnerable groups.

This proactive, holistic approach fast-tracks the integration process and makes sure that refugees are included within the host society. By giving them immediate access to language training, volunteer work, leisure activities, assigning a local buddy, newcomers are being empowered socially and economically. Refugees contribute to the host society with their skills and talents.

A coordinated Refugee Taskforce involves all the relevant stakeholders: city services (e.g. Service on Asylum and Refugee Policy, Service of Welfare and Equal Opportunities), the Public Service for Social Welfare, local NGOs and independent volunteers. By involving volunteers, NGOs and refugee shelters, the actions we take as a local authority are based
on the needs of the people. The refugee crisis brought about a huge wave of solidarity: NGOs, volunteers and citizens all wanted to give a warm welcome to refugees, by offering assistance, donating materials, inviting people to their houses - taking various initiatives to make them feel at home. As a local authority we can align all these initiatives, e.g. by setting up a dedicated web site.

Refugees are finding their way through the Ghent society, they know the organisations that can be of help, they have been able to establish a social network, they speak the language and a lot of them are active as volunteers. There has been a huge wave of solidarity towards the refugees, no major negative reactions to these new arrivals. 57 buddies were assigned to asylum seekers to help them with their administration, make sure they get to know Ghent and practice their language skills. The Centre for General Wellbeing assigned 56 housing buddies, who help the refugees looking for homes. In September 2016 an ESF project was started; the target of this project is to turn volunteer work into paying jobs for 320 asylum seekers. During the summer of 2016 a social-artistic NGO was able to set up volunteer work for 80 asylum seekers during the summer festivals in and around Ghent. Because this was such a success, it was turned into a project called "Refu interim". This approach leads to sustainable change. The cooperation installed between city administrations, NGOs and civil society leads to new alliances that can also prove efficient and interesting.

Today, many cities are facing the same challenges as a result of the large and rapid inflow of migrants. A locally coordinated proactive approach can be set up in other cities as well. By giving immediate access to social rights as housing, education, work, healthcare and leisure activities, not only the integration process is being fast-tracked, but negative stereotypes and prejudices against refugees are also addressed.

We are convinced that the Ghent approach is affordable for other cities. It's a matter of making smart connections in an already existing field of stakeholders. By adding targeted coordination you can maximise the impact, which makes it possible to speed up the integration process.
Moreover, this approach leads to sustainable change. The cooperation installed between city administrations, NGOs and civil society leads to new alliances that can also prove efficient and interesting in other contexts. It's actually a mindset one instils that's not only applicable to refugees. Therefore, it can inspire other cities to adapt this practice to their own context.
### SPAIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Avilés, Spain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>78,989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Project’s title

**Local group on immigration. Coordinating local work for immigrants' social inclusion**

The City of Avilés (ES) runs a permanent local network to coordinate actions related to immigration. Set up in 2006, the Avilés Local Group on Immigration, pays special attention to factors that make immigrants vulnerable. These include difficulties entering the labour market, access to housing and health care, recognition of studies and qualifications, language barriers, administrative hurdles, discrimination and lack of support networks, to name a few. The group's main objectives are:

- Analysing, planning and territorial coordination between Avilés City Council and other social agents and organisations that provide services to immigrants;

- Share knowledge, promoting exchanges and discussing immigrants' social reality in Avilés;
• Support immigrants' social inclusion in the area, promoting activities that guarantee human rights, enhance respect for differences and make their presence visible.

Social exclusion is a complex phenomenon that requires a comprehensive approach and cooperation between local agents, especially those working at different administrative levels, social agents, volunteers and citizens' associations. The organisations involved in Aviles Local Group have extensive experience in intervention with people in or at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion. Each organisation's identity is respected while sharing a common objective: working for social rights and social inclusion.

Being a plural organisation, the Aviles Group strengthens this network by promoting:

» A comprehensive knowledge and joint situation analysis of the immigration phenomenon in the area;

» Guarantee of human rights through the principle of standardisation and access under equal conditions to public services;

» Improvement of social assistance and procedures within the immigrant population: coordination, complementarity, and optimisation of local resources;

» Joint actions with an emphasis on raising awareness and preventing discriminatory practices by engaging other organisations, the educational community, associations and citizens;

» Joint development of materials: studies, guides on rights and available resources in the city; audio-visual materials for awareness; educational and teaching materials on immigration.

The Aviles Local Group is crucial for the good coordination of all the actions seeking to guarantee civil rights and civic, social, economic and cultural participation for immigrants arriving in the area and who become part of our community. Shared principles:

• Universality: by guaranteeing assistance to immigrants who turn to our organisations for help;
• Standardisation: by ensuring social rights and promoting access under equal conditions to public services;

• Cooperation between local agents and complementarity of the available resources, avoiding duplications and looking for efficient interventions;

• Comprehensive approach to tackle problems by enhancing integrated development pathways;

• Vertical integration: it includes different actors;

• Territorial integration: Avilés municipality;

• Sustainability: all organisations involved in the Aviles Local Group share social inclusion as a common objective. As for the Avilés City Council, it has participated in the different agreements signed and the Social Promotion Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

As a local coordination network, the Aviles Group uses a participatory approach:

• Plurality of local actors involved: Avilés City Council; Accem; Africanos Asociados del Principado de Asturias and AMA; APRAMP; Cáritas; CC.OO. Unión Comarcal de Avilés; Centro Municipal de Atención a Personas sin Hogar; Cruz Roja-Asamblea Comarcal de Avilés; FSG Fundación Secretariado Gitano; Grupo Emaús; Servicio Público de Salud; XURTIR;

• Participatory process and consensual agreement on the activities to be developed as a group. All decisions are agreed upon by every organisation represented in the group;

• Internal operation: two working separate groups: Main Group. Permanent group. It holds monthly meetings which all representatives must attend. It is a platform for information, coordination, analysis, debate, proposal and decision-making regarding immigration;

• Working commissions. Created on the initiative of the Main Group, they are non-permanent and are in charge of specific tasks, depending on the activity to be developed. The Main Group is informed of the work undertaken and carried out by the commissions and validates the final result. Some examples:
• Programme of activities on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the group;
• Minutes of the agreements for the establishment of the three working commissions for 2017.

Results: consolidation of the Aviles Local Group as a long-term permanent local coordination network on immigration; improvement of assistance for immigrants; immigrant-led associations are represented in the Aviles Local Group to facilitate their integration; optimisation and complementarity of resources and actions; raising awareness of immigration in Avilés (municipal web page and news writing in collaboration with the municipal Communications Department).

The Aviles Local Group participates in projects organised by other territories:
• Collaboration with other organisations to develop inclusive projects in the city: “Municipios sin racismo. Pueblos por la inclusion” and “Escuelas sin Racismo. Escuelas para la Paz y el Desarrollo”. Active European Citizenship programme;
• Encouraging joint working methods between organisations at the Aviles Local Group (open call for welfare and social cohesion grants);
• Integrating immigrants in open calls for grants (housing);
• Promoting the exchange of experiences and the transfer of knowledge; making the group's work visible and receiving recognition for its work (good practice);
• Development of materials: study of immigrants in Avilés (http://aviles.es/web/ayuntamiento/diagnostico-y-estudios); guides on rights and resources available in the city (http://aviles.es/web/ayuntamiento/inimmigrantes); awareness audiovisual materials, (http://aviles.es/web/ayuntamiento/inmigracion); and didactic and teaching materials.
The immigration phenomenon is posing several challenges for European member states. Promoting their social inclusion at a local level is a must. For this purpose, collaboration among different local agents is necessary. Main characteristics:

- Promote local networking as a place for sharing knowledge, analysis and discussion on immigrants' problems (collaborative studies);
- Build alliances among different local actors sharing common objectives.
- Improve reception, assistance, intervention and counselling procedures provided to immigrants, favouring the integration of procedures and optimisation and complementarity of resources;
- Greater impact on society of the activities carried out;
- It is not bound by any legal framework, which facilitates its adjustment to any territorial context;
- Readily accepted and welcomed by citizens, as it promotes social inclusion and integration of immigrants into community;
In reaction to the sudden arrival of tens of thousands of refugees in the city of Hamburg (DE) in 2015, the Lord Mayor requested the CityScienceLab (CSL) at HafenCity University to facilitate a public discussion and decision-making process on locations for refugee accommodation in Hamburg neighbourhoods.

With highly sensitive socio-political implications, this project demanded a well-designed technological and procedural approach. CSL employed an innovative Human-Computer Interaction tool, CityScope, to facilitate public participation and urban decision-making. Running from May to July 2016, the FindingPlaces (FP) project enabled about 400 participants to identify 160 locations accepted by Hamburg's citizens, out of which 44 passed legal confirmation by the authorities.
The solutions offered by FP are twofold: 
1) a methodological solution (workshop process) and 2) a technological solution (CityScope tool).

The methodological solution is a participatory workshop concept, designed especially to enable the direct involvement of citizen groups in the decision-making process concerning the allocation of refugee accommodations. As the task of establishing such accommodations (emergency and long-term) used to stir up heated debate and controversy, a detailed interaction format was designed that comprised moderated group discussion and co-creation sessions, proceeding stepwise from the review of basic urban data towards precise locations of residential housing.

The technological solutions consist of a novel tool for Human Machine Interaction (HMI): an interactive modelling table, based on the CityScope technology developed by the Changing Places Group of the MIT Media Lab, Boston. CityScopes are able to represent various urban data (e.g. cadastre plans, functional zoning, accessibility information) on large projection tables, which can be augmented by simple building blocks (e.g. Lego bricks) as carriers of design information, in this case, construction of refugee shelters. The visually coded blocks are scanned and digitised by cameras from beneath the table. Thus, the effectiveness and impact of the modelled solution on the cityscape can be computed and projected as a real-time response.

Overall, the project facilitated the collaborative interaction, raising awareness and a sense of ownership among participants.

The project supports sustainable urban living by solving pressing hardships on refugees and cities alike. It ensures quick and liveable accommodation in urban neighbourhoods, reduces social exclusion by locating refugee communities within urban neighbourhoods – with the direct participation of residents and neighbours who have decision-making power in the overall process.

The project places maximum interest on engagement and involvement of local citizens who act as debaters and decision-makers. For the
workshop, participants from all city wards of Hamburg were invited to maintain a fair and balanced distribution of accommodation across the city. The project earned wide public attention. It is envisioned to adopt the public participation processes as a basis for all public urban development projects in the future.

The project followed an unusual comprehensive approach and horizontal integration by bringing together qualitative and quantitative methods of urban development, novel information technology and participatory approaches. In terms of vertical integration, it connected the Lord Mayor’s Office, city administration, universities, local city wards and civil society, which were all involved with dedicated roles and activities.

In the project, more than 400 citizens followed the widely published invitations to nearly 40 workshops, hosted and facilitated by HafenCity University’s CityScienceLab. For each city ward, multiple workshops were carried out. The invitations were publicly announced via the Hamburg website, newspapers, and social media. Workshops were free and open to everybody to attend. In the workshop sessions, participants were asked to suggest and debate locations potentially suitable for refugee accommodation in their respective city ward. To supply the workshops, rich urban information about local conditions of the plots (quantitative data, legal constraints, emissions, zoning law etc.) were prepared by the CityScienceLab and made available on the interactive CityScope tables. That way a shared and objective basis for discussion was given and a well-informed pre-selection of potential sites for refugee shelters could be made. In following steps, pre-selected sites were discussed and commented in detail and enriched with expertise from municipal authorities and planners.

In the final step of the workshops, the participants decided on specific locations to be listed for the city government to execute the construction of refugee accommodations. Several urban authorities were involved in the project, including Hamburg's Authority for Urban Development, Authority for Refugee Coordination and Authority for Science and Research.
The project demonstrated how citizens could quickly find suitable solutions for urgent social and urban problems, in this case the massive accommodation of refugees. The project has directly involved about 400 Hamburg citizens in workshops, who experienced a straightforward and future-looking form of citizen participation in a socio-politically highly relevant topic.

The final success of the project, with 44 locations being found, created a sense of ownership among all participants. Throughout the city, the project has created awareness about the acute issues of appropriate refugee accommodation and a sense of collaboration. It further created a public understanding of the fairness issue in respect to distributing the loads and responsibilities between all city wards (independent from their social and economic status).

Supported by large public attention and press coverage, the project has changed the general attitude of Hamburg’s citizens towards refugees – from a perspective of passive hardship to an objective problem-solving attitude. Evidence was given on these results by track research carried out by the CityScienceLab (thesis projects of students, scientific publications, data analysis), by feedback from the public and from the media (local and national newspapers, social media, TV coverage).

The project is relevant and transferable to other European cities. The issue of massive refugee influx and their ad hoc accommodation is a challenge shared by many cities across Europe. In this context, the availability of validated and transferable methods and technologies is highly valuable.

The methodology with its sequence of participatory planning and decision-making workshops can be applied in a similar way in other European cities. Similarly, the key tool – the CityScope – is ready for mobile application in other places too (in fact, it has been applied worldwide already, yet to different tasks of urban development tasks than refugee accommodation).

The team of the project made great efforts to exemplify the process and procedures of the project in a way that it could be easily adapted to other places too: manuals, guidelines and visual description were created. In face of unstable political conditions, further inflows of
refugees are possible in near future. It will be necessary to have quick and effective means to solve urgent challenges such as a rapid finding of appropriate refugee accommodations. The project has delivered a blueprint for quick and successful action.

In a more general sense, the practice and technology of the project and CityScope can be applied to a broad range of similar urban problems, especially the identification of appropriate locations for specific uses.
European Social Fund

The ESF is Europe's main instrument for supporting jobs, helping people get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens. It works by investing in Europe's human capital – its workers, its young people and all those seeking a job. ESF financing of EUR 10 billion a year is improving job prospects for millions of Europeans, in particular those who find it difficult to get work.

The European Union is committed to creating more and better jobs and a socially inclusive society. These goals are at the core of the Europe 2020 strategy for generating smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU. The ESF is playing an important role in meeting Europe's goals, and in mitigating the consequences of the economic crisis – especially the rise in unemployment and poverty levels.

For more information: [www.ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp](http://www.ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp)
Integration Halland aims to develop a common learning platform so that six local municipalities can exchange good practice on delivering quality services to refugees.

The project is also developing a range of activities to help migrants settle in. A key goal is to help them into the jobs market through the provision of training opportunities, internships and supported employment schemes. In addition, efforts will be made to improve migrants' educational attainment and skills so that they are better placed to find work.

On an organisational level, the project will work closely with the Public Employment Service and the municipalities as they try to support individual refugees looking for jobs.

Integration Halland also addresses a range of other needs associated
with migrant health, language skills, age and gender. For example, health services will be provided that can deal with the stress and trauma some refugees have suffered while fleeing their homelands.

The project promises not just general services for refugees and asylum seekers, but tailored interventions to ensure each individual receives the correct support.

Contact of the project

Emma Gröndahl
Emma.Grondahl@hylte.se
Mainz, Germany

Population

209,779

Project's title

Building a better future for refugees

Aims of the project

The incorporation of refugees into the labour market is necessary for their successful integration into society. However, access to the labour market is restricted during the asylum process. This period should therefore be used to take some first steps towards integration into the labour market.

An initiative implemented across Rhineland-Palatinate, the Refugee employment pilot scheme, an ESF-backed initiative, is providing refugees with opportunities to take that step. Sharing a common framework, different communes and cities run dedicated projects with specific budgets. 26 of these ESF funded projects were launched in January 2016.

The target group includes refugees who are fit for work, have already left the initial reception centre, and have some educational or professional qualifications.
As part of the outreach work, educational/professional competencies are assessed and recorded, and refugees are given information regarding the German market for training and employment. The employment pilot scheme serves as a guiding force and helps to steer refugees towards suitable sources of support. It will demonstrate how the time until the conclusion of the asylum process can be used in a meaningful way.

Contact of the project

Regina Wicke
Telephone number: 06131 16-2351
regina.wicke@msagd.rlp.de
### GERMANY

#### City
Koblenz, Germany

#### Population
112,586

#### Project’s title
Integrating refugees into the region

#### Aim of the project
Various bodies in the region of Koblenz, Germany, concerned with job market integration and refugee counselling have united in the project network 'FaiR'. The aim of this project, which is partly financed by ESF, is to provide guidance to refugees and help them improve their qualifications and make a successful start in the German job market.

The regional social welfare offices, immigration authorities, job centres, the Agency for Employment, various honorary offices and collective living quarters raise awareness of the project and arrange consultation sessions on site.

Refugees are supported individually and, if needed, are given placements in career-related language courses, professional orientation and qualification schemes in inter-company training areas and in cooperating businesses. Linguists and interpreters are on hand to overcome potential language barriers.
In addition, programmes for businesses, public institutions and other establishments are provided in order to structurally improve access for refugees to employment and training. For this purpose, seminars and conferences or workshops are offered to the afore mentioned bodies in northern Rhineland-Palatinate.

At the end of January 2016, 90 persons had already benefited from such tailor-made support and 30 had been transferred to other projects. The project aims to support 900 persons by 2019.

Contact of the project

Gregor Hülpüsch
huelpuesch@caritas-koblenz.de
Dornbirn, Austria

Population 48,067

Project's title Helping recognised refugees to fit in and find work

Aims of the project

By the end of 2015, more than 90,000 people – mostly from Syria and Afghanistan – had applied for asylum in Austria. One of the most important elements for anyone wishing to integrate in a new country is the ability to find a stable job. That's why Caritas Vorarlberg - part of the international Caritas organisation – has developed Start2Work. Participants spend up to 10 weeks on an intensive German language course, which is followed by one-to-one and group employment training, and the opportunity to take part in work placements.

Many project participants have work experience, so Start2Work builds on the skills they've already gained. Those with professional qualifications from abroad are offered support to get their certifications from their home country formally recognised.

The Start2Work project has so far been very successful. Around 400 people a year, all of whom have been through the asylum process and
are now entitled to stay in Austria, are receiving specialist support to find work.

Migrants are benefiting greatly from the new language skills and professional training that Start2Work offers. Employers too, are benefiting from access to a new workforce who are not only motivated but have received appropriate, practical training.

And the statistics speak for themselves: so far, two-thirds of participants have found a stable job before completing the course.

Contact of the project

Karoline Mätzler
*(Caritas Vorarlberg)*
start2work@caritas.at
Previous publications
of the Bulgarian Councils on Refugees and Migrants

Online Information Resources:

www.refugee-integration.bg
mapping.refugee-integration.bg
database.refugee-integration.bg
niem.refugee-integration.bg


GOOD PRACTICES ON INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES

with European funding

www.bcrm-bg.org