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NiCeR

Nouvelle approche pour renforcer l'Intégration Culturelle des jeunes Réfugiés

Beyond Welcome

Inspiring Projects Bringing Together Refugees and Local Communities in Europe

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Inspiring Projects Bringing Together Refugees and Local Communities in Europe

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Introduction

This document has been produced by the partners of the project NiCER – New Approacher for the Cultural Integration of Young Refugees. Project partners have clearly expressed their rejection of an approach to integration which is in reality assimilation, as well as their commitment to promote a human rights-based approach and the importance of developing exchanges and cooperation based on mutual respect between refugees and local citizens.

The partners of the NiCER project developed and piloted an innovative methodology for using artistic expression for bringing together young refugees and other local young people and this experience is reflected on the other publications of the project.

In addition, project partners engaged in a process of identification in their countries and analysis of other inspiring examples of projects and initiatives bringing together locals and refugees. The main purpose of this document is to share these projects and initiatives with all those interested in contributing to making Europeann societies address the issue of refugees properly, in coherence with the values of human dignity, human righs, cultural diversity, democracy, equality and rule of law.

There are an estimated 60 million people throughout the world who have been forced to flee their homes. The number of protracted conflicts has increased over the past decades. This has created more than 15 million refugees worldwide - but developing countries host over 80 per cent of people.

In 2015, the year when countries of of Europe received the largest number of people seeking asylum, more than half of the world's refugees (60 per cent) came from just five countries: Syria (4.2 million), Afghanistan (2.6 million), Somalia (1.1 million), Sudan (744,000) and South Sudan (641,000). However, during this peak year, only around one million people reached Europe in search for safety.

The presence of refugees is a hot issue on the political and social agenda of most countries in Europe and there are many voices which claim that integration is not possible or others who put the entire burden on the shoulders of the refugees. There are also many who come with a compassionate attitude towards refugees but remain in a paternalistic, top-down perspective, usually limited to providing social assistance. The examples presented in this document prove that real integration and inclusion are possible, that it is important to go beyond welcoming, beyond providing emergency help, and engage in a real exchange based on the recognition of the fundamental equality of worth of all humans and of the contribution that refugees can have for their host countries. These examples also point out that work is important to be done not just for and with the refugees, but also for and with the locals. The best impact is reached when cooperation based on equal status is organised between refugees and locals.

The examples selected come form the seven countries of the partners in the NiCER project: Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain and the UK. Because each project or initiative was implemented in a specific context, in order to undertstand the main elements of this context, brief presentations of the

situation and of the existing legal and institutional setting in the seven project countries are including in the first section.

The following section presents the examples selected. They are not to be taken as recipes to reproduce but as sources of inspiration for initiatives based on the principles and approaches mentioned above but adapted to the specific local needs ad possibilities.

Country contexts

BELGIUM

Persons granted refugees status, as well as those who receive subsidiary protection or regularization, can receive financial assistance at the local Public Centres for Social Actions (PCSA), a public structure which exists in all municipalities in Belgium.

The search for housing is the first step, but it is also the most delicate because the people concerned generally do not have any income. In this case, the PCSA of the place of residence has the task of granting assistance in order to enable the person to find a place to live in dignity through rental guarantee or the provision of an integration income.

Different organizations (governmental and non-governmental) offer their services to encourage the settlement and integration of foreigners in Belgium: help with finding housing, material assistance (furniture, clothing, etc.), language courses, professional training and job search, equivalence of diplomas, family reunification, etc.

The main organisations providing such services are: Caritas, Ciré, Belgian Committee for Aid to Refugees, and Convivial. On these sites you will find a lot of useful information:
http://www.vivreenbelgique.be/ and www.belgique-infos.be.

The different regions of the country also have integration centers: Brussels, Wallonia and Flanders.

In Belgium, asylum seekers are not entitled to financial assistance but to accommodation in a reception centre during the entire period that their application is being examined. This right applies once the asylum application has been submitted and expires at the end of the procedure. Asylum seekers are not obliged to stay in the reception structure allocated to them, although the majority of them do so. The reception centre is organised in as an open reception structure, managed by Fedasil or one of its partners. For further information: www.fedasil.be.

CYPRUS

Cyprus became an immigration country since the beginning of the 1990's, when the Council of Ministers authorized for the first time the employment of migrant workers. From then onward any discussions or debates around these issues and the need to adopt a comprehensive migration and asylum policy, as well as to address the needs of migrants and asylum seekers, have been limited and usually initiated by civil society organisations (NGOs), working in the field of antidiscrimination and asylum.

Although Cyprus has become a receiving country for the last at least two decades, the concept of integration has been a matter for debate only in the last years and mainly after the accession of Cyprus to the EU. This is associated with the fact that Cyprus has never actually drafted a comprehensive immigration policy with a long-term vision, much less a political scheme of integration of immigrants and refugees.

The notion of integration is quite new for the Cypriot society and the authorities, thus, any policy and practice directed towards the general objective of securing the integration of particular groups of non-Cypriots into Cypriot society are at an early stage of development. It has been prompted by the challenges perceived in coming to terms with the significant presence of non-nationals, the percentage of which is well above the EU27 average, as well as the demands imposed by the European Commission in advocating the implementation of an EU-wide integration initiative.

In 2010, the Republic of Cyprus, mainly the Ministry of Interior, adopted (for the first time) an ambitious plan for the integration of migrants for the period 2010-2012. The plan was developed by a so-called "special experts' committee", without the representation of migrants and refugees, nor of any NGOs. The plan focused on eight pillars: 1) Information-Service-Transparency 2) Employment- Training- Trade Unions, 3) Education and Language Learning, 4) Health, 5) Housing –Improving quality of life – Social protection and Interaction, 6) Culture – Civic – Key elements of political and social reality, 7) Inclusiveness, and 8) Evaluation – Annual and Total.

Definitely, the aforementioned initiative reflects the efforts made by the Republic towards a comprehensive national integration strategy. Unfortunately, the plan was not at all implemented due mainly to lack of political will, especially after the economic crisis. Since then, there have been no attempts to articulate a new National action plan. Nevertheless, some actions and specific aspects of integration have been moved on through co-funded projects under the European Funds.

During the drafting of the operational programmes under the current period (2014-2020), there was a lack of consultation by the competent authorities with refugee and migrant organisations and with NGOs that truly understand the needs of these groups. The main beneficiaries of funding under the integration Funds are consultancies, municipal authorities and universities. This combined with the indirect or even direct exclusion of NGOs from applying for funding, lead to the design and implementation of projects that do not meet the objective of effective integration and improvement of the asylum infrastructure.

On a local level, however, there are several NGOs that offer multidisciplinary support for the improvement of the situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Cyprus with the ultimate goal to make Cyprus a more inclusive and accepting host society. Good practices include, but are not limited to:

Future Worlds Center (FWC) offers homework help services and Greek language courses for young refugees. The **Homework Club** takes place twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays from 5:00pm to 7:00pm, where volunteers help young refugees succeed in school by providing knowledge and a supportive atmosphere.

The parishes of CARITAS CYPRUS have helped **feed, house, clothe,** provide **transport,** and arrange **medical care** for migrants and refugees in Cyprus. The CARITAS Cyprus Migrant Center has established an itinerant migrant legal/administrative/social advice service providing services to migrants on a regular basis. The organisation has set up **shelters to welcome refugees and asylum seekers**.

Men's shelter provided housing to 105 men in 2016 and it is expected to host about 100 men this year.

- Women's shelter started its operation in October 2016 and served 17 women so far. The shelter houses pregnant women and new mothers.

- The length of *period* a person can *stay is 3 to 4 months* until the government provides for benefits and housing.

KISA through campaigning aims to contribute and further enhance the efforts of migrants and refugees to claim their rights. A successful campaign organized aimed to support the struggle of a recognized refugees group in their struggle to be granted the Cypriot citizenship. KISA through actions supporting refugees themselves, lobbying with the relevant governmental bodies and through raising public awareness about the just demands of the refugees, has contributed significantly to the successful outcome of the campaign

GERMANY

While arriving at the German border or directly after arrival in Germany, any refugee has to report as seeking asylum to a state organisation: to a border, security or immigration authority, or to a reception facility. In any case, the asylum-seeker first goes to the nearest reception facility.

After registration, all asylum seekers in Germany get a proof of arrival, „an entitlement to draw state benefits, such as shelter, medical care and food“ and are allocated to one of the 16 Federal States and distributed to a reception facility where they can stay up to six months, until their asylum application is processed. These facilities provide asylum seekers with basic needs such as food, housing, heating, clothing, healthcare and personal hygiene, with benefits in case of sickness, pregnancy and birth, as well as with a monthly amount of money to cover the everyday personal needs.

If the status of refugee is granted, following an individual appointment for an interview, assisted by an interpreter, at a centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), a residence permit is issued, replacing the "proof of arrival".
This gives the legal permission to reside in Germany, but only in the district where the responsible reception center is located. For applicants „with good prospects to remain“, this residence obligation stops after three months and they can reside anywhere in the country. Depending on the decision of the Land authorities, the applicants can be provided with a „collective accommodation" or be allowed to find a flat.

After examination of the asylum application, the BAMF may decide to grant subsidiary protection, or a ban on deportation. Those who can remain in the country are assigned to a municipality, for integration. They have to take part in a language and integration course where participants learn German but also about Germany's history, culture and its legal system. The courses are compulsory and asylum-seekers who do not attend can face benefit cuts. Asylum applicants who have good prospect of being granted asylum can also take part in these courses.
Cities are also organising local guides whose role is to assist the asylum-seekers in getting settled locally. Many aid organisations and charities are also supporting them.

Beneficiaries of refugee protection have a residence permit for three years. This can be replaces by a settlement permit, after three or five years if other preconditions are met, such as the ability to make a secure living and adequate knowledge of German. They have unrestricted access to the labour market and are entitled to privileged family reunification, social welfare, child benefits, child-raising benefits and integration allowances.

Subsidiary protection is granted to individuals that are not entitled to refugee protection or asylum but are facing serious harm, threat in the country of origin. They receive a residence permit for one year, which can be extended twice for two years. Access to a settlement permit is possible after five years (the duration of the asylum procedure is included), if other preconditions are met, such as the ability to make

a secure living and adequate knowledge of German. They also have unrestricted access to the labour market but are not entitled to privileged family reunification.

Those for which the decision is a ban on deportation also receive a residence permit for at least one year, with repeated extensions possible, and are allowed to receive a settlement permit after five years (the duration of the asylum procedure is included), if other preconditions are met, such as the ability to make a secure living and adequate knowledge of German. Thye need permission from the immigration authority in order to have access to employment and are not entitled to privileged family reunification

On July 8th 2016, the German government passed the Integration bill based on the guiding principle „Support and Challenge“. It provides with more integration courses, employment and training opportunities. At the same time, the asylum seekers who refuse to take an integration course or who do not meet their duties to cooperate will have their benefits curtailed”, one can read on the website of the Federal chancellor.

The law stipulates:

Education and Training: Refugees can apply for training courses after 3 months in Germany, even if their asylum application has still not been processed. This measure does not apply to asylum applicants coming from countries defined by the Federal Government as “safe countries of origin”. If they have been living in Germany for more than 15 months, the refugees entitled to training can ask for money to take part in job training programms. The ones who have found a place are allowed to stay in Germany for the whole duration of their programm. After the training, they have six months to look for a job. If they find one, they get a residence status for two more years.

School-age refugee children are integrated into special welcome classes opened in the German schools. These classes should allow them to learn the language and open them the way to the traditional German school system.

Jobs: Refugees are not allowed to work during the first three months upon arrival. Then the „priority check“ rule states that they can accept a job offer only if no German or EU citizens are applying for the same job. Since July 2016, this regulation has been suspended for 3 years in areas with a low unemployement rate.

The Federal Government has also launched a “Refugee Integration Measures” programme for 100,000 asylum seekers. It created some 100,000 jobs for newscomers paid by a government subsidy of about 1-2.50 euros an hour, as a compensation on top of existing benefits. The ones who refuse to work can face benefits cuts.

The law was criticized by many organisations working with refugees. According to Pro Asyl, some measures such as obliging refugees to live in certain areas and reducing their social benefits could have a negative effect on their integration and violate the refugees' constitutional rights. In an open letter to the

Federal Governement, hundreds of artists, scientists and writers accused the law to be a *„withdrawal in the 80's“,* to *„split the society into Germans and Migrants“, „to foster mistrust towards refugees instead of creating equal opportunities, of promoting participation and career opportunities for all.“* [1]

[1] Sources:
Website of the BAMF, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
Website of the Federal Governement of Germany
Website Pro Asyl
Article „Merkel presents new refugee integration law as 'milestone'“, DW, 25.05.2016, Author: Ben Knight
Article „Dieses Gesetz spaltet“, Die Zeit, 5 Mai 2016

ITALY

Starting from the decentralized hospitality experience and network, built between the 1999 and 2000 by associations and NGOs, in 2001 the Ministry of the Interior, Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the Development of a "national asylum programme". This was the first public system for the reception of asylum seekers and refugees, spread throughout the Italian territory, with the involvement of central and local institutions, based on a shared responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior and Local Authorities.

The protection system for asylum seekers and refugees (SPRAR) is the network of local authorities for the realization of integrated host access projects. These local projects are supported by the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services. At local level, local authorities coorperate with third sector structures in providing "integrated reception", that exceed the mere distribution of food and lodging, providing also information, support, assistance and guidance through individualised pathways to socio-economic insertion.

The main features of the protection system are:

- a multilevel governance approach is used to ensure public resources from the Ministry of Interior to local authorities;
- local authorities participate in the network of hospitality projects on a voluntary basis;
- decentralization of interventions of "integrated reception";
- synergies initiated at local level with the so-called "management bodies" and the third sector, who make a vital contribution to the implementation of interventions;
- the promotion and development of local networks, with the involvement of all stakeholders and the key partners for the success of reception measures, protection, social inclusion in favour of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.

The SPRAR local projects are characterized by an active leadership, shared by large cities and small towns. Unlike the European approach, in Italy the realization of this kind of projects of small and medium sized - designed and implemented at the local level, with the direct participation of local players - helps to build and strengthen a welcoming culture at city communities and it favors the continuity of the pathways to socio-economic insertion of the beneficiaries.
Admission to the reception centers of the system, up to total exhaustion of available places (indeed not enough), is supported by the Central Service of reporting for individual local projects or third party entities (prefectures, police stations, associations).

All local projects, within the integrated reception measures provide for accommodation and basic needs but also social support activities, aimed at the knowledge of the territory and at the effective use of local services, including social and health care services. Activities are also planned to facilitate the learning and adult education, enrollment of children in school, as well as additional legal information actions on the procedure for granting international protection and on the rights and obligations of beneficiaries in relation to their status.[2]

[2] Source:
http://www.sprar.it/la-storia

ROMANIA

In Romania, the Asylum and Integration Directorate (IAD) of the General Inspectorate for Immigration, Ministry of Interior, has the responsibility for managing asylum cases and refugee integration. This is done mainly hrough the 6 Regional Centres for Accommodation and Procedures for Asylum Seekers, located in Bucharest, Galati, Giurgiu, Radauti, Somcuta Mare and Timisoara.

According to the General Inspectorate for Immigration at the end of the 2016 there were 3029 residence permits for persons granted a form of international protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection), in Romania. Out of this number, 1426 residents permits were issued for refugees living in Bucharest (capital city) followed by Galati District with 237 and Timis district (including Timisoara city) and Ilfov district, with 208 residence permits for each district.

Each refugee, once granted protection is included in an integration programme developed and supervised by General Inspectorate for Immigration, operated by an integration officer. Government Ordinance no.44 / 2004 on the social integration of foreigners who obtained a form of protection in Romania, defines social inclusion as the active participation of foreigners who were granted a form of protection or a right of residence in Romania, in the economic, social and cultural life of the Romanian society in order to prevent social exclusion, respectively to adapt to the conditions of Romanian society. The overall objective of the policy on integration of foreigners, who obtained a form of protection in Romania, is to capacitate them to become independent of the assistance of the state and of non-governmental organisations and actively participate in the economic, social and cultural life of Romanian society.

The refugees participating in the integration programme will be granted:

- Accommodation, upon request, in the centers of the General Inspectorate for Immigration, for the period of up to 12 months. To benefit from this service the refugees have to pay a monthly contribution toward the cost of utilities. Vulnerable people are exempted from this requirement, according to GO 44/2004.
- Romanian language courses;
- Cultural accommodation sessions;
- Material aid, for a period of two months;
- Social counselling which includes ensuring access to the rights they have in Romania: the right to employment, the right to housing, the right to health and social care, and the right to education.
- Counselling and psychological support;
- Material aid amounting to 540 lei (120 EUR) / person for a period not exceeding 12 months, provided under the condition of an active participation in the integration programme.
- After completing the programme, refugees can apply for financial support to pay for accommodation outside the center, settling up 50% of the accommodation costs for a period of one year.

International, national and local NGO's also provide inclusion services through Regional Integration Centers, co-founded by European Union, through the AMIF Programme. They offer free services such as:

- Social and Legal Counseling
- Romanian Languages Courses
- Cultural Orientation Classes
- Financial Assistance for Vulnerable groups
- Medical Assistance
- Recreational and social responsibility activities.

In Romania there are 14 Regional Integration Centers in the following cities: Timisoara, Oradea, Cluj-Napoca, Baia Mare, Sibiu, Tirgu Mures, Bucharest, Craiova, Brasov, Pitesti Iasi, Constanta, Galati and Vaslui.

The main non-governmental organizations that currently operate in the integration of refugees are: the Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania - AIDRom, the National Romanian Council for Refugees - CNRR, the International Organization for Migration - Mission in Romania - IOM, the ICAR Foundation, the Jesuit Refugee Service - JRS and a few other local organisations.

Also there are several Romanian websites that provide information regarding integration programs in Romania, contact dates of local authorities, learning Romanian online and news regarding migrant communities:
www.romaniaeacasa.ro
http://www.migrant.ro
www.vorbitiromaneste.ro.

SPAIN

Within the scope of the General Secretariat for Immigration and Emigration, the General Directorate of Migration is entrusted, among other functions, with the development and management of a system of comprehensive reception and integration of asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, temporary protection and other subsidiary protection systems.

This system aims to address the needs of applicants or beneficiaries of international protection in situations of vulnerability. It is made up of a network of public reception centers, Refugee Reception Centers (CAR) and Temporary Immigrant Stay Centers (CETI), and assists applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. The support services are managed by specialized not-for-profit entities, subsidized for this purpose by the General Directorate of Migration. Grants awarded to NGOs for the reception and integration of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection are financed from the budgets of the General Secretariat of Immigration and Emigration, with co-financing in some programmes from the European Union.

Refugee Reception Centers (C.A.R.) are public establishments intended to provide accommodation, maintenance and urgent and primary psychosocial assistance, as well as other social services aimed at facilitating coexistence and integrating in the community persons who seek asylum in Spain or obtain refugee status and who lack the financial means to attend to their needs and those of their family.

The overall purpose of the CAR is to foster the residents's capacity for integration into Spanish society, and the Centre thus acts as a mediator in this integration process.

Services Offered:

- Room and board.
- Information and counselling on residents's new situation.
- Guidance for incorporation into the educational, health and social systems.
- Specialised psychological and social assistance.
- Information on courses for learning Spanish and basic social skills, as well as orientation and mediation for vocational training and finding employment.
- Leisure activities.
- Awareness raising campaigns targeting the host society.

UNITED KINGDOM

Facts and figures

There are an estimated 117,234 refugees living in the UK. That's just 0.18 per cent of the total population (64.1 million people). In 2015, the UK received 38,878 asylum applications (including dependents). This was less than Germany (431,000), Sweden (163,000), and Hungary (163,000). Just 45 per cent of cases were granted asylum and allowed to stay once their cases had been fully concluded. Many are initially refused because it is difficult to provide the evidence needed to meet the strict criteria of a refugee. The UK Refugee Council stated that at least 580 Syrian refugees came to the UK under a family reunion visa between January and September 2016, including 280 children. Many arrived directly from areas of conflict, including Aleppo. During the same period at least 487 refugee children from other countries, including Iraq and Sudan, arrived in the UK after being granted a family reunion visa.

Following a campaign led by the Refugee Council and considerable public pressure, the Government announced in January 2014 that it would set up a special resettlement scheme to help Syrian refugees. For the first 18 months of its operation, this scheme was pitifully small in scale, resettling just over 200 refugees. In September 2015, the Prime Minister announced the scheme would be significantly expanded to resettle 20,000 refugees by 2020. The number of Syrian refugees resettled in Britain stands at just 2,898 since the conflict began.

In January 2016, the government announced that the UK will offer safety to more refugee children and their families. The UK has asked the UN's Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to identify 'children at risk' – including unaccompanied children and those at risk of forced marriage - currently living in the Middle East and other conflict zones who could benefit from being resettled in the UK. This is in addition to the Government's pledge to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020. As of September 2016, none of these children had arrived in the UK.

How does resettlement in Britain work?

The UN's Refugee Agency UNHCR identifies refugees in need of resettlement in the region. They then submit these candidates to the British Government who decide which cases to accept.

Refugees who are to be resettled to Britain receive health assessments and cultural orientations prior to arrival and the International Organisation for Migration ensures their safe arrival into Britain.

A great deal of planning happens before resettled refugees arrive in Britain; local councils, service providers and charities like the Refugee Council all work together to ensure that everything is in place to ensure a smooth transition.
Resettled refugees are always met at the airport by organisations such as the Refugee Council. They are taken to their new homes – usually private lets – and they are helped to adapt to their new surroundings.

Organisations like the Refugee Council, The Red Cross, and Refugee Acting provide legal advice and support for refuges and asylum seekers.

Refugees being resettled through Britain's Gateway programme arrive with indefinite leave to remain, in acknowledgment that the only reason they are coming to the UK is because the UN's Refugee Agency has decided it's not safe for them to keep living in a refugee camp or precarious urban situation and there is very little hope of them ever returning home.

Syrian refugees arriving through the Government's Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme are granted five years' Humanitarian Protection. Unlike refugees from other countries who are resettled through the Gateway Programme, Syrians have been displaced for a relatively short period of time and the British Government hopes that in the future they will be able to return to Syria.

What rights do resettled refugees have?

All refugees, including those who are resettled through both the Gateway Protection Programme and the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme are able to work and access mainstream services. However, Humanitarian Protection means the Syrians resettled here have slightly different entitlements e.g. to higher education.

How is resettlement different to asylum?

Fundamentally, there is little difference between resettled refugees and refugees who are granted asylum: they are often fleeing exactly the same conflicts, exactly the same persecution though their journeys to safety are very different. However, refugee resettlement and asylum request are separate processes.

Refugees who are resettled are usually identified as refugees in camps near to their country of origin, before being flown to the country where they are being resettled. They are already recognised as refugees prior to their arrival in the UK, and they do not go through the asylum system.

Under international law, anyone has the right to claim asylum in the UK. However, as with most other European countries, a person has to have already arrived in the UK before being able to make a claim for asylum. Unlike resettled refugees, people who claim asylum in Britain have often undertaken a perilous journey at the hands of smugglers before arriving on UK territory. UK's asylum system is tough and complex and refugee protection is only granted to asylum seekers who can show the Government that they have a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country. There are many flaws in the Government's decision-making process, and many people have to appeal to the courts in order to be recognised as refugees. People who are granted asylum receive five years' refugee protection, after which they can apply for indefinite leave to remain.

The other main difference between refugees who are resettled here and refugees who are granted asylum is the support they receive once they have been recognised as a refugee.

None of this support is available for refugees who have been granted asylum and they are left to fend for themselves. Many newly granted refugees find themselves homeless and destitute precisely at the point when the British Government accepts they need protection.

Good practice examples

WeCanHelp (Belgium)

WeCanHelp centralizes offers from citizens, companies and associations on an online platform, to ensure easy access for refugees and associations. „The solidarity we are witnessing is real!"

WeCanHelp.be was created in October 2015, when the influx of refugees became more important and the Belgian population wanted to mobilize to help them. The help was not organized and there was a lot of energy loss. The idea of WeCanHelp is to connect refugees and citizens. Wecanhelp.be collects the offers of goods or services of the inhabitants of Belgium to make them visible and available for newcomers, asylum seekers, refugees and the associations that accompany them when they need them.

The objectives are diverse: a dignified reception of newcomers, solidarity, human encounters, the fight against exclusion, the help towards the employment of the refugees and thus a better integration. The organization believes that these encounters are rich and make it possible to free people from prejudices.

The main activities of the organization are:

- gathering the offers, validating and sorting them by category or by location, to make them easily accessible
- looking for the information on the ground concerning the needs of the asylum seekers or refugees
- making the public aware of the dignified welcome of the newcomers and fighting in this way the prejudices, through participation in conferences, media and social networks
- teaching refugees how to use the site and its offers and to promote them
- support for our partners and working together on various projects such as sending humanitarian aid to the Syrian population, looking for sponsoring families, collecting food / clothing
- meeting with business partners to encourage them to open their doors to refugees
- meet and maintain a relationship with our partners so that we can work together in a more organized way.

With the help of the Roi Baudoin Foundation and the League for Human Rights, the organization has created flyers that are distributed in reception centers, Public Centres for Social Welfare, and other partner organisations such as Convivial or Ciré. They help explain the way the website works and are translated into English / Arabic / French and Dutch.

Looking for a job on the Belgian official sites is a puzzle even for the Belgians! Creating a curriculum vitae is not easy for refugees. They do not have recognized diplomas, nor do they have certificates that can help them validate their experience. But since they have good skills that can be interesting in the job market,

the organization aims to help them highlight these skills, and show the variety of professional profiles they have. And also try to change the minds of entrepreneurs in this respect.

The first difficulty for the organization was to find its place in an area of big NGOs and not to overstep the borders of other, better-known NGOs. Front-line people, such as employees from the reception centers, were overwhelmed by the situation and did not have time to look into a possible collaboration. But the offers were piling up and they saw that WeCanHelp was doing what they had promised. The organization was not looking for profit either, just efficiency. After a year of meetings with the other members of the refugee network, WeCanHelp was able to show how their project could come to reinforce the work of other NGOs, how they were covering a missing piece and how they could easily be used for more effectiveness in supporting refugees.

Another difficulty is the fact that prejudices of the population are something that cannot be eliminated in a short period of time. The organization is trying to address this issue through awareness campaigns they support and participate in. They aim to show people that even with not much, they can do a lot! As the fear of terrorism is unfortunately never far away, the awareness of the population is essential so that people do not have in their minds only the sensational news.

The observable results of the organization are rather individual but numerous: dinners between citizens and refugees that turn into lasting friendships, a French language course between a Belgian citizen and an Iraqi newcomer who has now been happening for many months, an afternoon of beauty treatments for women in the reception center, offered by a citizen, who has been the subject of very moving exchanges, etc. The feedback from people who have made one or more offers and had an exchange or (often) several with refugees is overwhelmingly positive and encouraging: this often leads to activities together, the links are prolonged, more help is given, and a relationship of trust has been created and helped one another.

The organisation believes that networking and working in complementarity with other actors involved in the integration of refugees is essential for making a difference in a more holistic way. Moreover, it is important to have a partnership with the media, to draw its attention to the positive steps that are being taken, to be visible, proactive, to invent and create new ideas regularly.

In the medium and long term, the organisation aims for a better integration of refugees in our society because they are convinced of the openness that it brings to the whole society, because it avoids the formation of ghettos, excluded population, frustration. They are aiming for a welcoming society for the people who are suffering and they are hoping to really represent a society where people can find refuge.

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Open Kitchen (Germany)

Newcomers of all backgrounds as well as locals interact, socialise and share recipes through a number of cooking projects

In this project, the organization Give Something Back To Berlin (GSBTB) enables newcomers of all backgrounds as well as locals to interact, socialise and share recipes through a number of cooking projects. We see cooking and food as an exceptional platform to break down barriers and get to know people and their culture.

The idea is simple: refugees come together with other Berliners to cook, eat, share and hang out. Since they started in summer 2013, they've regularly enjoyed traditional dishes from Sudan, Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia and many other places from all over the world. Their regular gatherings give newcomers the chance to make new friends, offering an escape from what is often a difficult life at the refugee camps. The Open Kitchen takes people out of their isolation in a new city and gives newcomers a chance to get to know new people through relaxed but purposeful activity, where everyone has something to contribute.

The project also creates professional opportunities for the group that got invited to serve up delicious international dishes at pop-up cooking events like Bite Club, United Street Food and Markthalle Neun, and has even catered at a Berliner Philharmonie event. Here GSBTB runs with the big guns, dishing up delights alongside some of the city's best-known street food vendors. In this way the Open Kitchen provides chefs with a refugee background the opportunity to lead a team of volunteers to set a menu, shop, cook and deliver delicious food to hundreds of people – an excellent opportunity for growth in their new home. In this way, several people in the community have trained to work in gastronomy, got their first work experience in Germany in restaurants and one has even opened his own street food stall.

It has a far-reaching local and international impact and will continue mid- and long term. Scaling will depend on funding.

The main focus of the organisation Give Something Back to Berlin (GSBTB) is on:

- Running an accessible online platform to inspire and mobilize social engagement and participation for global migrants new in the city.

- Facilitating diverse range of volunteer work aimed at creating social impact and fostering community integration all throughout Berlin.

- Initiation of own innovative social projects and collaborations through co-creation with individuals, companies, NGO's and GSBTB's network of refugee communities.

- Organizing events to allow newcomers and neighborhoods to meet and establish networks for intercultural understanding, shared solidarity and citizen participation.

- Extensive online story-telling sensitizing the newcomers for local socio-political topics and long-term residents on themes of migration and refugee discourse.

The main target group of the project is represented by people living in refugee shelters across Berlin or other groups who stay in isolation and are subjected to enormous stress, exclusion, anxiety and loneliness. A secondary target group is represented by people who are new in Berlin, mostly international, from the creative, start-up, tech and University scene. A third target group consists of participants and German / long-term residents. These groups would normally seldomly meet.

“Since 2013 we have become a key player in Berlin’s social, creative, start-up scenes as THE project involving both refugees and ‘privileged’ migrants. By building partnerships, relationships and dialogues between people from the comparatively cosmopolitan art, creative and start-up scene with local NGOs and projects, we are also creating a new form of sustainable urban integration. We enable disadvantaged local groups to profit more from the globalized creative, tech and start-up industries settling in the city. We call it ‘making worlds meet working together for a better city!’”

Give Something Back To Berlin has grown organically into a huge community, both online and offline, comprised of hundreds of skilled volunteers in over 60 social projects all over the city. The projects can be anything from homeless centres, mentorship programs for underprivileged youth, working with the elderly or creative work with children. In 2017, GSBTB also runs six weekly GSBTB refugee programs yearly, reaching 14474 participants, creating 14064 volunteer opportunities through 19980 volunteer hours.

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Living Room (Germany)

Both newcomers and members of the local population are encouraged to host social events in their own homes thus dissolving the idea of only the local population receiving the newcomers as guests.

The Living Room events aim at creating a room for newcomers and local population to meet and remove mutual stereotypes and prejudices. The program is coordinated by SINGA organization.

The format allows anyone to take part and build a more inclusive society.
The three current Living Room formats are:

- LR Storytelling (exchanging stories on a preset topic)
- LR Cooking (hosts cook a meal to share and talk about with their guests)
- LR Cinema (a movie is watched together and leads to a follow-up discussion)

Other formats are in the making and new ideas are constantly generated by the community itself.

Every month there are 2 - 4 Living Room Events hosted by different hosts, and with these occasions, newcomers and locals are meeting on an equal footing and dissolve stereotypes.

Some of the difficulties involve finding a Living Room host for each week, as well as involving members of the society who lack intrinsic motivation to encounter newcomers.

To ensure a regular conduct of Living Room events, the organisers actively contact potential hosts from the SINGA organisation's community. Hosts are encouraged to invite at least one guest who might otherwise not have personal contact with newcomers or the local population.

Throughout the implementation of the program, the organisers have found that the presence of at least one of the members of SINGA Team to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and integrated is a great help for the hosts. Another lesson learnt is that announcing the event at least one week in advance is a requirement to ensure that enough guests sign up.

The program is based on the strong belief of the organisers that the more people participate in the active encounter with the other group, the less people will base their opinion and judgement on stereotypes towards people they have never had contact with.

The series of events is designed to not have a fixed project time frame and can continuously be further developed. In the same time, it can be easily replicated, which is strongly encouraged.

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Open language (Germany)

Free language learning for German and English, in a social setting.

The organization Give Something Back To Berlin (GSBTB) offers free language learning for German and English. As an addition or alternative to more traditional language classes, the meet-ups provide the chance for newcomers to practice their language skills in a social setting. Some people partner off with regular tandem partners, while others make friends by chatting in groups targeted to their language level. Native speaker volunteers are on hand to provide guidance and more targeted learning for those who desire it.

The free weekly GSBTB Sprachcafé (or language café) offers a friendly, non-school setting to learn German, with the opportunity to sit together over tea and snacks, talk, make friends and find tandem partners.

Give Something Back to Berlin had been running a weekly English teaching group. The idea for the class was a wish from the refugee community GSBTB worked at that time who, due to the threat of not getting their asylum applications accepted, and not having been provided with German classes, felt that better English skills would increase their opportunities to establish themselves in Germany, or possibly in other countries.

With time, the classes grew and people of various levels and reasons joined in. This included English literature academics from Iraq who wanted to keep their level of English from before they migrated, Japanese ladies who wanted to raise their communication skills, Syrian high school students who didn't want to forget English while learning German, Eritreans needing an academic level of English in order to be accepted to university, and eager Afghans taking every opportunity to learn.

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Team Ups (Germany)

Monthly community events where refugees, newcomers and Berliners of all kinds come together to create offline connections.

Every month the organization Give Something Back To Berlin (GSBTB) organises a community event where refugees, newcomers and Berliners of all kinds – Germans, recently-settled, longtime neighbours – come together to meet, mix, learn and share. The idea is as simple as any Facebook page or LinkedIn group, but playing out in real life. With this project, GSBTB creates connections of all sorts: social, professional, business, and possibilities for finding people for one's awesome project, idea or cause. Being new in the city often means people won't yet have an established network of friends, family and helpers – the ones locals often take for granted, not realising this is one of their greatest resources.

During the Team Ups, newcomers can create or expand their local networks while building bridges between different communities and worlds, creating mutual underderstanding and respect. Through a little chatting a lot of things happen naturally. People get to know each other, hear about job opportunities, find a spot in a flat, get their first internship, find a project to get involved in, meet old and new friends and get to know some familiar faces that add up to a sense of home.

Give Something Back To Berlin doesn't run any traditional mentoring programs. They believe in organic mixing and matching. They also believe that, with enough interesting and open people in the community, magic can happen. The Team Up events have seen up to 200 people attend in one evening in a friendly and inclusive environment with people from all over the world. At every Team Up there are special guests. These might be projects they want to present or specialists in the Berlin job market offering workshops. Also, at every event there is an open stage for everyone to pitch an idea or project.

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Professional Mentoring (Germany)

Professional Mentoring is a program that connects newcomers and local professionals from the same fields in a 1:1 mentoring relationship.

SINGA Deutschland connects newcomers, often unexpectedly coming to Germany as refugees, and locals by creating opportunities for them to participate in and co-create projects and activities together.

On a professional level, despite the fact that many newcomers are experts in their fields and speak multiple languages, they are often unable to rejoin their profession, landing instead in positions that do not reflect their experience and qualifications. The German labour market is also in need of a qualified and motivated workforce and many employers are open to hiring from this new pool of talent. This has however proved more challenging than desired, due to a severe lack of contact and information. Among other things, there are not enough structured opportunities in which newcomers and potential employers or colleagues can meet on eye level and exchange necessary information and social capital.

The SINGA Professional Mentoring is a program that connects newcomers and local professionals from the same fields in a 1:1 mentoring relationship for four months (doctor with doctor, engineer with engineer, cook with cook etc.). By building on the interests and skills of the community, all members are able to contribute to the creation of a truly inclusive society through a variety of innovative programs, enabling the social and professional exchange of information, ideas and networks.

While building a new life in Germany, the opportunity to connect with local networks for social and professional development is exceptionally important for many newcomers and locals. As new people come together, the potential for new and innovative projects increases, as does the need for the right space in which people meet on eye level and with mutual respect.

Mentors are people who have minimum 3 years work experience (preferably senior), strong professional network and willingness to open it, interest in meeting and connecting with newcomer colleagues on an equal level, time (for weekly or biweekly meetings).

Mentees are people who fit the following criteria: newcomer living in Berlin (refugee or asylum seeker status), trained professional in a particular field, work experience, English or German on a conversational level, interest in connecting and exchanging with local professional, time (for weekly or biweekly meetings).

The mentoring program has some clear steps to be followed:

Step 1: Recruitment, Application, Matching: Mentees are recruited from the community and invited to in-person Info Events, through partner networks. Mentors are recruited through the SINGA networks, cold calling and increasingly through corporate partnerships. People interested can apply on the SINGA website by filling in a questionnaire that allows the organisation to create professional profiles for each person.

SINGA then calls each person to learn more about their interests/needs. And then matches mentors and mentees (using excel/trello) based on similar field (or field the mentee wants to pursue) and personal compatibility (our judgement based on phone calls or meetings).

Step 2: Training, Evaluation & 1st meeting: Before meeting, SINGA offers mentors a 1 day training and mentees a ½ day training to prepare them for the program – mentoring goals and roles, communication skills, practical tools, goal setting, sensitive questions, potential challenges and solutions, asylum procedure and labour market access (for mentors) and role play of first meeting. During the training, everyone is asked to fill out a questionnaire to be used for evaluation "before" and "after" the program. SINGA divides the pairs amongst its team so that each pair has a specific SINGA contact person for the duration of the 4 months. That person then sets and accompanies the first meeting between mentor and mentee.

Step 3: Launch Event: Once all pairs have had their first meeting (usually within 2 weeks of the trainings), there is a big Launch Event. This is the first time all mentors and mentees in the cohort meet (good for networking). There is 2 hours of team building exercises before opening the event to external guests (family of mentors/mentees and strategic partners for SINGA): briefly presentation of SINGA to everyone, hear testimonials from past mentors/mentees and then celebrate together with finger food, drinks and music.

Step 4: Accompaniment, Events during 4 months: SINGA follows-up with pairs a few times by phone or in person during the 4 months and usually receives emails or calls when issues of communication, need for legal advice or other questions come up. They organise 2-3 meet-ups just for mentors, 1 with everyone and 2 job-search or CV writing workshops during the 4 months.

Step 5: Closing Event, Evaluation: The 4 months are formally ended with a closing event that is more personal than the opening event – only with participants. Once again, everyone is asked to fill out an evaluation questionnaire. SINGA does reflection, forward-looking and feedback activities and then end with food, drinks and music. Evaluation process takes place by comparing results from the responses "before" and "after" as well as overall stats ex. how many people found a job or internship, how many will continue meeting etc. Many couples wanted to continue meeting and the organization encouraged this, however they made it clear that the official program (intense support from SINGA and commitment to each other as mentor/mentee) was over, in order to manage expectations and not to burden either to continue weekly meetings forever.

A few characteristics of the relationship between mentors and mentees are:

- Mentors and mentees exchange sector specific information, know-how and experience, discuss similarities/differences in daily work culture

- Mentors introduce mentees to colleagues and other contacts so that mentees can build up their professional network

- Mentees are familiar with job application processes and may have already applied for jobs in this time; know their professional next steps following the 4 months; more confident overall and in applying for jobs/interviews

- Mentors act as door openers for mentees or other people in the future; are sensitised for positive potential of newcomers, are more informed about the topic of labour market access/barriers for newcomers – and spread this information/experience in their networks.

In April 2017, the project has started with the 3rd phase. In total it has reached 160 persons: 80 couples. In the first phase of four months, 21 couples (42 mentors/mentees) were involved. 4 mentees got a job, 7 got an internship, 3 decided to go back to university, a few decided to take part in additional trainings. Only 2 couples dropped out. The feedback from mentors and mentees is generally positive, some of them would like more time, and others find it too long, depending on their personal situation. Many mentors (about half of them) are willing to continue, to have a second mentee.

During this project, SINGA has managed to increase its network in the community, to attract more companies and not only individuals, to attract more money from foundation and corporate money (it is useful to reach the company where the individuals work because they can sponsor the program, give leads to other companies that could have interest).

Perhaps the most sensitive difficulty that the mentors face is the issue of trauma – there is a need for more psychosocial support (between life coaching/counselling format and psychological treatment; it helps individuals and communities to heal the psychological wounds and rebuild social structures after an emergency or a critical event.): it looks at the individual situation of the person and try to find solution together). SINGA managed to get a few psychosocial advisers on board, but on a volunteer basis and the next challenge is to find funding to make this initiative more sustainable.

Another challenge is for SINGA to find real matches between mentors and mentees, as sometimes the SINGA network does not include a suitable mentor. To tackle the problem, SINGA organized Calls for new mentors, and continuously tries to find new mentors and reach out to people as early as possible to make sure that they are available when you start the process.

Funding, as for every project, is also a challenge for SINGA Proffesional Mentoring. The organization is working strategically to look at the local context and think about who have an interest to fund this kind of project.

Lessons learnt and pieces of advice:

- Look at the person at a whole – take into account one's personal situation, not only professional situation. Really look at what people have done in the past and what they want to do in the future, to find the perfect match for them.

- Word of Mouth is the best mechanism to build your network. It is helpful to talk about your project in various settings and to have the users of the program talk about it.

- Reliable communication/ Expectation management: be very explicite who is having what kind of role and what kind of expectations people have from each other. Make sure that participants do not have too high or too low expectations, so that you find motivated people on both sides, that is why training is important.

- Continuously build a network with very different profiles, reaching out people as early as possible.

There is also a SINGA France and a group of people have started a pilot phase in Heildeberg, Germany.

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Cricket with refugees (Romania)

In Timisoara, a migrant from Cashmir organised a cricket team and founded a cricket club.

In Timisoara, the largest city in the West of Romania and home to four major universities, there are every year students at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy coming from India and Pakistan. Some of them chose to stay in Romania after graduating and contribute to compensating the shortage of doctors generated by the emigration of many Romanian medical professionals to Western Europe.

Timisoara is also hosting both one of the six Romanian reception centres for asylum seekers, and an International Relocation centre managed by the UNHCR. A few years ago, a group of refugees from Sri Lanka were hosted in the centre.

While cricket is a very popular sport in the countries of South Asia, it is virtually unknown in Romania and unti recently there was no activity related to cricket in Timisoara.

Considering the presence of refugees from Sri Lanka, a migrant from Cashmir had the idea of organising a cricket demonstration, involving both students and refugees and inviting Romanian students and young people, as well as journalists to assist at the event.

The event had multiple immediate positive outcomes. First of all it made the young refugees from Sri Lanka feel welcome and appreciated for something they can bring to the local society in Timisora. It also made the Indian and Pakistani medicine students cooperate in organising the event and feel proud that they can do something that has never been done before in the city. They gained confidence that they can have an active involvement in the local society and that their cultural background can be seen as an asset for Timisoara. Last but not least, the evet was widely reflected in the local media and portrayed both students and refugees in a positive light. Many local young people leerned about cricket and became interested to discover more.

On the medium term, based on the success of this initiative, the Indian and Pakistani students contributed to setting-up a cricket club in Timisoara, called Banat Lions Cricket Club, which is still active.

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We will succeed together (Romania)

In the town of Somcuta Mare, Romania, there is a Refugees Centre managed by the Ministry of Interior, where refugees from various countries are being accomodated. The local school organises every year in collaboration with the Centre different activities where pupils and refugees meet and do things together.

The existence of a Regional Center for Accommodation and Procedures for Asylum Seekers in Șomcuta Mare, and the fact that for a number of years the community has been witnessing many asylum seekers from Asian and African countries, has led some teachers from the local school to reconsider their attitude towards other cultures and to initiate a local project which would bring together local community members (students, parents, teachers, local authorities) and asylum seekers/refugees living in the Regional Center. Their desire was to promote an intercultural dialogue in order to increase the quality of community life.

The objectives of the project are:

- Fostering interest in extracurricular activities;
- Involving educational institutions in developing skills of students from different nationalities in aim of their social integration;
- Developing the ability to communicate with others;
- Stimulating curiosity for what is different from one's culture and accepting the new, accepting diversity;
- Developing life skills and awareness of their own cultural determinations, stereotypes and prejudices;
- The formation of relational skills;
- Development of mutual attitudes of respect and lasting friendship;
- Cultivating interest in dance, music and sport;
- Learning Romanian language in non-formal and informal activities.

The teachers used non-formal and informal activities, complementary to formal educational activities, (initiation in Romanian language and elements of Romanian culture and civilization) such as: living library, dance, "tunnel of trust", games, traditional shows, trips, etc. The activities are various: roundtables on migration, traditional music and dance performances, ecological activities, hiking, sports competitions, gastronomic activities, and trust building activities, Children'Day, Mother's Day, and Refugee Day.

The main outputs produced within the project are a series of artworks carried out together with the asylum seekers /refugees from the regional center. These productions have been exposed over the years. There are many pictures, CDs, films, articles published in the local and national press.

The organisers think that the most important achievement of the project is changing the attitude of the local community towards the issue of migration and accepting diversity as a source of progress.

The biggest problem the highschool teachers faced was the lack of funding. They have never had any official funds for the project, but they managed to run the activities from their own funds, a few sponsorships, or with the help they received from several NGOs. Fortunately, most of the time, the community understood the need and supported the project with food, products, short distance trips, accommodation, etc.

For the organisers, teamwork has come up with many trials and all the members of the team have won. They learned to communicate effectively, organize themselves, find solutions where there were difficulties, overcome the main problem of lack of funds through enthusiasm and stubbornness, but the most important was the life lesson they learned from the asylum seekers and refugees from the Center. Their experiences, many of them traumatic, have forced the organisers to reconsider their attitude towards their own language, culture, country or even their own family. “All this experience, the meeting of different cultures, has enriched us.”

“The biggest change has been in the community’s attitude towards the issue of migration. As far as we are concerned as a teaching institution, we are glad that our students have developed intercultural communication skills, accepting and appreciating diversity. In our school we have for years now students from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Cameroon. Some of them have adapted so well that they are constantly earning prizes at the end of the school year. Their Romanian colleagues admit that they are ambition models, real lessons of life, and being colleagues is an inspiration to them. In return, foreign minors appreciate the friendship of their Romanian colleagues, the openness and support they are willing to offer. The experience of approaching other cultures is beneficial to everybody and constitutes a source of progress, personal evolution for each of them.”

The project is already part of the school life and it is a tradition for the whole community.

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Multicultural Festival (Romania)

The festival is built together by members of the migrant communities and locals, the activities are managed by community teams and the public is as diverse as the city itself.

A local NGO in Cluj-Napoca, the largest city in the region of Transylvania, Romania, the Ligue for the Defense of Human Rights, is coordinating each year the organisation of a local Festival of Multiculturality. The festival is built together by members of the migrant communities and locals, the activities are managed by community teams and the public is as diverse as the city itself.

The idea for the festival started in 2010 with a one-day event, called "Migration and Human Rights Festival (MIDO)", consisting of a public debate, a book launch and a theatre play, all aiming to raise awareness of the local public towards the issue of migration, as well as to host a discussion on the most important problems and needs of the communities of migrants living in Cluj-Napoca.

The festival grew year by year and received a lot of support, ranging from public authorities, to NGOs and companies, to educational institutions, the press and to the migrant communities, as well as embassies and international organisations. In 2016 for example, the events covered five days of activities involving direct encounters between migrants and the locals. A few examples of events from the last three years of Multiculturality Festival include:

- Multicultural Caravan - Promotion of cultures from a wide range of countries, in several schools in the city. Migrant intercultural mediators or leaders of migrants' communities from countries outside the European Union present the traditions of their countries of origin to high school students.
- Street exhibition of traditional objects from different cultures
- Concerts with music from different countries
- Dances from different countries
- Africa Day
- National Conference on the topic of migration, involving all the most relevant NGOs and institutions who work with migrants, refugees, asylum seekers in Romania
- Living library – event that connects locals with migrants 1:1, in a setting where the migrant is a living book that the local person can "read"
- Multicultural party with festive moments of expressing gratitude inside the community participating in the festival.

The innovative approach that this festival porposes is the fact that various communities of migrants organise to coordinate specific activities. In this way, the coordination team is experiencing interculturality to the same extent as it is promoting it, which is providing the festival with credibility from the public and also ensures real sustainability of the project, since it doesn't "belong" to a certain organisation, but to a large network of groups of people, either organised as NGOs or informal.

The event highlights the cultural values and traditions of immigrant communities in non-EU countries as well as the existing integration programs for them. At the same time, it celebrates interculturality as a means of building relations between cultures through education, communication, linguistic pluralism and the interaction between minority and majority populations.

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Open Art Shelter (Germany)

Art, craft, music, theatre, dance, storytelling and literature are used to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers and foster peace.

The Give Something Back To Berlin Open Art Shelter is a safe, creative space for the free expression of emotions, intercultural dialogue and trauma healing.

The idea calls upon the old tradition of arts and crafts circles that is found in nearly every culture across the globe, in which people used to spend evenings telling stories, making music and doing handcraft. The project offers a comfortable and non-shaming form of being together and doing something creative where everyone brings value, rather than a stigmatising charity that creates barriers between "us" and "them".

The activities include:

- a weekly womens-only space with family and kid-friendly activities at the Tempelhof Airport refugee shelter. This takes place every Monday with up to 150 women and children.
- weekly Open Art Shelter and Creative Cooking for smaller groups and families. These take place in Sharehaus Refugio or in different refugee homes. This project is providing psychosocial support to a number of refugee families.
- designing and painting murals at different refugee homes
- letter exchanges between refugee kids and volunteers
- pop-up Open Art Shelters allowing connections between refugees and locals at festivals and in public parks
- urban gardening on the Klunkerkranich rooftop every week (during the summer)
- city and nature trips for individuals and families, enabling contact with local culture through visits to theaters, museums and cinemas
- creative language exchange (the participants teach each other German, English, Farsi, Arabic and Russian by singing, drawing and doing calligraphy).

The project and community is developed by a multicultural team of locals, migrants and refugees, from teenagers to senior citizens.

Pedagogy and psychotherapy professionals are part of the group as free expression often triggers difficult memories and emotions. The Open Art Shelter is a safe space for respecting and caring for people living with trauma and depression and has the diagnostic function of identifying people (children and adults)

who may need more individual, specific, professional care. For this reason, emphasis is put on the creation of community as a prime source of belonging, support and stability.

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Open music school (Germany)

A musical skill-sharing community and platform with a focus on the integration of less-privileged newcomers into Berlin's world famous and diverse music scene, which can sometimes be intimidating and hard to access.

The organization Give Something Back To Berlin believes in the power of music to create meaningful relationships that cross cultures, while encouraging healing, self-expression and community engagement.

They offer a variety of completely free, weekly group classes run by talented volunteers who are musicians themselves. These groups focus on providing supportive and creative environments for people of any gender, nationality, ethnicity or migration status to learn together. More advanced students are often encouraged to act as teachers' aids and/or translators, thus creating a communal skill-sharing group free from hierarchy, where everyone has something to offer.

They currently run groups and workshops in Acoustic Guitar, Piano Keyboard, Bass-Guitar, Social Singing and Music Tech (all things electronic), and this list grows every month.

In addition to these weekly classes, they also work in collaboration with other initiatives from the music industry and civil society to organize events and concerts. They seek to create opportunities that focus on people forging new connections and sharing information about all things musical in Berlin. There are a lot of talented musicians living in refugee camps and other isolated parts of this city and GSBTB want to empower them to become active participants in this city's music scene. A regular meet-up called The Tent was founded in collaboration with a Syrian musician and CreAid and utilises existing musician meet-ups across the city in locations such as the Klingendes Museum and Noize Fabrik to support newcomer musicians in accessing the mainstream Berlin scene.

GSBTB is creating a database of recording studios, music venues, professional music schools, private tutors, youth centres and other people and organisations that they can collaborate with to empower Berlin's musical newcomer community.

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Mestizo Space - through urban dance (Spain)

An initiative to generate a space for expression and communication based on free creation, imagination and innovation.

"Mestizo Space" has grown out of the commitment to combine artistic languages, minors at risk and community, in the project "Building My Future" that Juan Soñador Foundation carries out in the city of León, Spain.

It is Mestizo because it brings together different cultures among its members, but also because this initiative seeks to gather teenagers from three marginal neighborhoods of León.

The main objectives the foundation is pursuing are to:

- generate a space for expression and communication based on free creation, imagination and innovation.
- Generate driving force for social and cultural cohesion within the city of León.
- Raise the expectations of the future and meaning of life through free creation.
- Conduct a real survey on the most attractive artistic languages for teenagers.
- Generate a model of citizenship concerning adolescents and in connection with the community background.

The Foundation usually addresses migrants, refugees, people at risk of social exclusion such as children and teenagers, as well as the general population.

The Foundation works methodologically from three levels of action:

- individual level, where social and educational accompaniment and individual empowerment techniques are used;
- group level, where they use group dynamics techniques; and
- group empowerment and community level, through social and community animation.

Each year members of the Foundation prepare the Plans of Action for all projects. The action plan explains what it intends to do that year with objectives, indicators and expected results among many other sections. Besides, each January, the annual reports are made, in which they analyse the degree of adequacy of the objectives and the degree of compliance of each one of them.

Espacio Mestizo 1 (November 2010 to June 2011) was organised from a graffiti workshop proposed by a group of teenagers. This lead to a workshop self-managed by these youngters in MUNICIPALIA 2011, (Community action on sport and leisure, held on May 21 2011 by the Department of sports of the City of León). They carried out a graffiti show and a 20 meters mural grafiti with a clear message: "There is only one race, the human race."

Espacio Mestizo 2 (October 2011 to June 2012) began with an assembly in which they decided to make a workshop of Break Dance and Contemporary Circus involving the youngsters of Espacio Mestizo. A break dance workshop was held in the YOUTH WEEK, "Actors in a better world" (April 2012), and the recording of a video clip. In May they performed for the Third EAPN Meeting of Castilla y Leon region at the closing ceremony, where they were seen by more than 150 people. In June, they performed in the Cathedral of León in front of 250 people at a religious event.

Espacio Mestizo 3 (September 2012 to June 2013) Youngsters of Espacio Mestizo were asked to perform a special performance for Migrants' Day, and together with a contemporary circus company from León (Cirkofrénicos). They proposed to play "El viaje de Juan". Moreover, in 2013 they carried out more than 10 performances with the company Cirkofrénicos.

The members of Espacio Mestizo are networking with the associations and public institutions of the city, collaborating in festivals, organizing workshops carried out by the adolescents of Espacio Mestizo, organizing joint events and approaching problems of the city. They can count on the municipal resources of almost all the City Council's Departament (sports, youth, culture, social action, etc.) and, above all, on the civic centers of the most excluded neighborhoods.

They are currently preparing Mestizo Space 4. They are planning to expand from 2 to 4 hours a week and intend to continue with the urban dance and start the first rap workshop.

Some of the most relevant outputs can be viewed here:
http://hekalon.wordpress.com/espacio-mestizo/
http://www.leonoticias.com/frontend/leonoticias/Integracion-A-Ritmo-De-breakdance-vn112271-vst216

In these three years of activity, more than 60 teenagers have participated in Espacio Mestizo, through artistic processes, based on workshops. They have carried out more than 15 performances in front of different kinds of audiences, collaborating with neighborhood entities, associations and the local administration.

The coordinators of Espacio Mestizo have achieved an impact in the increase of self-esteem of the youngsters who participated in it, creating strong ties with the community, creating models of citizenship, and it is c lear that they have opened channels of positive social promotion for boys and girls.

One of the most widespread difficulties that organisations face with their projects, the lack of financial resources, was overcome by accessing different public grants (80%) and the resources of the Foundation (20%).

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http://fundacionjuans.org/cauce-leon/espacio-mestizo/

La maison des arts Globe Aroma (Belgium)

Globe Aroma is an open House of Arts where refugees, newly arrived artists, Brussels residents, stakeholders active in the integration sector or in the arts meet. And all these people are inspired by each other.

La maison des arts Globe Aroma (Belgium), open and accessible to all, is a meeting platform where newcomers and inhabitants of Brussels develop participative artistic projects, supervised by a professional artist. Globe Aroma is also a workshop and an alternative presentation venue for new arrival artists. Specific methodologies allow newcomers, refugees and city dwellers to participate in different ways and rhythms in the organization, in its projects and in the ones of its partners. Globe Aroma is an open House of Arts where refugees, newly arrived artists, Brussels residents, stakeholders active in the integration sector or in the arts meet. And all these people are inspired by each other.

The mission of Globe Aroma is based on three interrelated pillars:

1. Globe Aroma, an open house of art
Reception and meeting: As a permanent and living exhibition, Globe Aroma wants to be a place where refugees, newly arrived artists, local people from Brussels and stakeholders from the sectors of migration, integration, and the arts meet, inspire and stimulate artistic creation. Alternative location, Globe Aroma's new building allows it to engage more in presentation and mediation with the public. A Globe Aroma user working group is responsible for organizing and programming. The spaces of the house are open to external artistic projects (artistic institutions and schools).

2. Globe Aroma, a participatory and multidisciplinary creation site
Long-term participatory artistic projects: Each year, Globe Aroma works with a professional artist in residence who conducts an artistic process with a diverse and varied group of participants. The audience of Globe Aroma participates in these projects, with participants from the neighbourhood and the rest of Brussels.
Globe Aroma in the neighbourhood: Social welfare organizations in the disadvantaged and super-diverse neighbourhood of Rempart des Moines report that there is a great need for cultural activities. From 2016 on, Globe Aroma hopes to develop extramural cultural activities in partnership with organizations, street educators and neighbourhood residents.

3. Globe Aroma, a crossroads in the world
Newcomers associate themselves with the cultural offer in Brussels: Culture Line Every year, Globe Aroma organizes 90 cultural trips in Brussels for newcomers from the Petit Château and the non-profit association BON (Brussels Office for Civic Integration). Developing transnational artistic networks, Globe Aroma is a pivot in a transmigration network. Some of the newly arrived artists only stay temporarily in Belgium and travel, sometimes in a planned manner, other times unexpected, to other cities where they can continue

their artistic practice. Globe Aroma wants to explore how these networks can be maintained. To this end, methodologies must be developed to facilitate, strengthen and open up these exchanges.

The activities taking place in Globe Aroma are quite diverse. Three of the most relevant are described below.

Cultuurelijn Cultuurlijn / Ligne Culture aims to help the inhabitants of the Petit Chateau and the newcomers to discover Brussels artistic offer in a relaxed way through the non-profit association BON (Brussels Office for Civic Integration): different art houses, artistic disciplines and festivals. Supervised by a large group of volunteers, asylum seekers and newcomers can benefit from the offer of dance, visual arts, music, cinema and theatre. A large number of activities in Brussels are for free and that refugees can also go on without the accompaniment of Globe Aroma. Globe Aroma organizes a monthly show of Ligne Culture, which takes place at the Beursschouwburg. Participants come together with volunteers - the ambassadors of Ligne Culture - to meet and discover the program of next month. Everyone can register for 2 to 9 different activities. Next, 2 to 3 volunteers take a small group of newcomers to an inspiring evening of cultural experience and encounter. The ambassadors of Ligne Culture are a group of committed volunteers who regularly accompany the participants. Among the volunteers, there are also several refugees, who themselves discovered the project as participants and then became accompanying persons.

Super Aroma!
With the SuperAroma! project, Globe Aroma wants to promote living together in diversity in the Brussels context, with particular attention to intercultural and intergenerational relations. Six times a year, in collaboration with three local service centers - Cosmos, De Harmonie and Forum (LD³) - an intercultural, interdisciplinary and interactive event is organised. Each of these events allows local people to get acquainted with the flavors of a specific culture through a creative art or music workshop followed by an acoustic concert. During these events, participants can also discover traditional cuisines.

“REGARDE CE QUE JE VOIS” - Look at what I see
There is very little reflection of refugee women in the media. And when information is published about them, it most often carries stereotypes. Women are portrayed as vulnerable, maternal and dependent. But the reality is much more colourful, complex and especially much more interesting. This diversity and these nuances are depicted in the exhibition “REGARDE CE QUE JE VOIS” - LOOK AT WHAT I SEE, portraying images of women refugees. Four duos, each consisting of a woman who had fled her country and a photographer, get to know each other better, making a series of unusual images. The focus is not on the narrative behind the refugee or on the background and origins of these women, but on what these women want to tell, what they want to say, what they like, the way in which society welcomes them and interacts with them, their curriculum The surprising result is exhibited from 1 to 18 October at the Maison des Arts open Globe Aroma, 26 rue de la Braie, 1000 Brussels and then in other places in Flanders.

The most important outputs in Globe Aroma include events-meetings, exhibitions, shows constructed with refugees, publications, exhibitions, presentation of refugee artists. A book has been published for the 10 years of the association “Se ma fami”, which traces the significant events, gathers testimonies, extracts of press, stories etc.

The impact of this type of projects is difficult to measure. The ecnounters are happening, the creations are born, the people involved are transformed, but ultimately it is “each who knows” and one can never know if what is happening in the lives of people (equally from a practical point of view as well as from the internal development) is linked or not to the proposed activities. A permeability/opening appears, that’s clear, but the fate of the people and the neighbourhood does not show a miraculous effect. Policies of exclusion against foreigners continue in a Belgium, led by a hard right government, the future of refugees (recognized or undocumented) remains unenviable and marked by insecurity, fear of the local population is maintained. All these do not prevent the initiators of this type of project from believing (and seeing) the power of change of their work for the people who frequent Globe Aroma and the local community in which the association is located.

Such projects are dependent on the subsidies allocated to them or not. Every year, the search takes a considerable time. And in many cases, subsidies are not guaranteed for more than a year. The population still too often sees foreigners as a threat. We must fight against a mentality of closure and rejection. In the words of Globe Aroma: “Superdiversity is the foretaste of the world of tomorrow, but in our society there is a deep and widespread consideration that this reality poses a threat.” The policy of welcoming newcomers to Belgium makes their integration into a local community unstable. Many, when they arrive, stay in first reception centres (such as the Petit Chateau). If they get papers, they are “distributed” in the various communes of Belgium. They are therefore obliged to start again the whole process of insertion into a new community, to be accepted by a population sometimes restive. Children have to change schools, re-adapt to a new environment. Sometimes they have to change several times. At the present time, reception camps are closing in Wallonia and Flanders, and people and families are sent to other camps, after months of building up a new life. The “undocumented” (people without papers) live in fear of being sent back to their country. They are sometimes suspicious of people who come to meet them, afraid of being trapped or tricked. It is necessary to build up trust before being able to collaborate.

The project is a long-term project. Globe aroma is open every day and all the activities described continue. Artists come to work there, the workshops are open, various exhibitions are on display. The links with the neighbourhood, its Belgian inhabitants and the less recent immigration are cultivated. The audience is renewed according to arrivals in Belgium and the personal situation of each person. The association aims to keep as much contact as possible with those who have to leave the district, Brussels or even Belgium.

Boubakar became ambassador for the Cultuurlijn project. “My motivation is just to bring something to the ‘new arrivals’. When they arrive in Belgium, they feel a little forsaken. I also felt helpless, but it was thanks to Globe Aroma that I could go out and discover Brussels. I was able to explore a bit Belgium and meet a lot of people. At the beginning, as a participant, when they came to pick me up at the Petit Chateau, I was worried. Afterwards I was reassured. So with my tour I would like to offer to the newcomers the welcome I enjoyed. Especially the people who live in the camps, they are what motivates me: when they see the enthusiasm they’re happy. When you’re here, you forget your worries.”

Contact:
http://www.globearoma.be

ARCA Migrant's Club Bucharest (Romania)

In the capital city of Romania young refugees and other migrants come together in educational, artistic and cultural activities based on long life training principles.

The migrant club opened in September 2012 and provides social inclusions services for migrants in Bucharest. The club is organised by ARCA - Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants, which is a non-governmental organization founded in 1998, with the aim to protect and promote fundamental human rights, in particular those of refugees, asylum seekers, repatriates, and other categories of migrants.

The main objective of the ARCA Migrant's Club Bucharest is a better integration in the Romanian society through activities of cultural orientation targeting the young refugee people who are willing to participate to intercultural exchanges with other young migrants (asylum seekers, third country nationals, etc). Bringing together migrants of all legal status, that share the same cultural background brings down the stigma atached to refugee status. Also, migrant comunity suport relationships are built, and one-to-one integration steps are shared from the participants' own experience.

The target group consists of migrant children and young people under 18 years old (unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers, refugees, stateless and third country nationals). Single women, monoparental families and vulnerable groups also participate in the project.

The activities with and for refugees are developed on three 3 directions:

- Non-formal Education
- After School Activities
- Outdoor Activities.

The activities are based on the long life learning principles for community development and on European values. The educational activities use creative and interactive instruments for teaching and accompany the migrant children in taking small steps towards integration in the Romanian society: art activities, learning through games, with the aim of raising self-awareness, identifying hobbies and building healthy life principles. The educational activities are structured in 12 modules: Democracy and Freedom; European Union; Romanian Geography, Hystory, Religion, Traditions and Culture; Ecology; Food health; Tehnlogy and Comunication; Creative Days; Romanian Culture; Good manners.

Some of the most interesting recent activities (2016-2017) include:

- Decorating Eggs, inspired from the Romanian tradition for Easter
- Say 'No' to Depression outdoor event

- International Woman's Day, with oriental food tasting
- Laser Tag Day
- Human Rights Day in Romania 2016
- Game and competition Event
- Cinema & Birthday Party (for a 8-year-old
- Ice-skating day.

Some of the main results achieved:

- A stronger community built in Bucharest among migrants.
- An average of 40 young immigrants participate in weekly activities in ACRA Migrants Club Bucharest
- Easy access to social inclusion programs for adult migrants offered by public institutions or other NGOs.
- Over 2300 followers on Facebook that participate in dissemination information regarding the 12 modules of long life learning program for community development.

Some lessons and inspiration ideas:

- Cultural and recreational activities can work as an inclusion instrument.
- Migrants' self esteem and empowerment is built by coming together as a group, acknowledging the cultural similarities and assessing cultural differences in the host country.
- Presenting the host culture in informal ways (visits, social media, multicultural party) is an achievement in working with young migrants.
- Young refugees are perceived as foreigners with same needs of inclusion without adding stigmatization to the notion.
- The host country (Romania) can learn about the cultural heritage of migrants through open events for the Romanians and foreigners.

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Multicultural Day Brasov (Romania)

A community event creating dialogue and opportunities for direct encounters between refugees, migrants and locals.

The Multicultural Day Brasov, the fourth edition, was held on 8th October 2016 in Brasov, a city in the Transylvania region of Romania, surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains, with a population of over 275000 people. According to the Romanian Imigration Office, at the end of 2016 there were 147 refugees and almost 400 third country nationals living in Brasov.

The purpose of the Multicultural Day Brasov is to create dialogue between foreign comunities from Brasov and the local community, trough cultural exhibitions about foreign countries and artistic performances: traditional dances, traditional songs, country presentations, theater plays etc.

The event is organised by the Migrant Integration Centre Brasov that provides inclusion services for migrants and refugees since 2010, in partnership with IOM – International Organisation for Migration. The NGO organises Romanian language classes, offers social assistance and legal counselling, financial emergency help, cultural and recreational activities.

Over time, the Multicultural Day Brasov benefitted from the participation of the foreign embassies in Romania: Palestinian, Iranian, Korean, Jordanian, Tunisian, South African, Algerian, Indian, Egyptian, Syrian, as well as from the support of different local partners such as: Reduta Cultural Center, Brasov Confucius Institute, Bessarabian Youth Association in Brasov, i2 Step Dance School of Salsa, Festival of European Regions - Tradition and Multiculturalism.

The Multicultural Day, organized every year since 2012, grew up from 100 participants (foreigners and Romanian people) to over 300 participants. From 13 represented countries to over 20 represented countries and, of course, the represented foreign embassies in Romania. An opening attitude regarding the foreign cultures, coming from the local community, has been noticed by the organisers trough the years.

The Migrant Integration Centre Brasov noticed, following the The Multicultural Day, an increase in the number of requests coming from third country nationals and refugees for Romanian language classes, information requests, requests for direct assistance or requests for financial help.

Lessons learnt and pieces of advice:

- A more significant promotion of the foreign cultures which can be found in Romania is necessary.
- It is necessary to remove the stereotypes which are present in the comunity. Direct interaction with the foreign people help breaking stereoptyps and change the locals' negative opinions regarding migration, mostly built by the mass media or based on poor information.

- It is necessary to have functional Information Points for migrants all over the country.
- It is necessary to provide correct and honest information for mass media and educate the audience regarding migration.
- It is necessary that the local authorities are also permanently informing the migrants regarding their obligations and rights in Romania.

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Maison Babel (Belgium)

The Babel shelter aims to better prepare young people for independent living and self-sufficiency, to better promote their qualification and better accompany them after their stay within Federal Centers.

The aim of Maison Babel is to support unaccompanied foreign minors (UFM) to improve their personal autonomy and self-sufficiency. The professional team offer tailor-made support to build a life project, respecting the young people, their development and their own culture. Once the minor has a regular legal status and their turning 18 is imminent, it is necessary to think of a situation in which he can continue to live independently and in a responsible way. Aware of the issues related to the support of unaccompanied foreign minors for whom the end of the support by the Federal Centers happens when they become adults, the Babel shelter aims to better prepare young people for independent living and self-sufficiency, to better promote their qualification and better accompany them after their stay within Federal Centers.

Babel Shelter proposes a transitional regime and period in between the taking-over of Federal support up to the age of 18 and the complete autonomy when entering in the age of adulthood. The main objective is to set up a hosting structure for supporting the young people by offering advice and assistance by a team of professionals (health workers, social worker, psychologist, social and cultural facilitator) to help these young people to enter working life without difficulties. In the end, the minor is effectively and completely independent and responsible, without help of public welfare.

Target groups of the Babel shelter include:

- Unaccompanied foreign minors holding a stay permit in Belgium
- Young people from 15 to 20 years old
- Young men

The shelter is working on two main components:

- Individual coaching: Customized assistance and support
    - Information sharing, listening and guidance on housing, education, training, employment, help with administrative tasks, etc.
- Community action: Group educational work (within groups) and development of a dynamic social network
    - break isolation of the young people
    - developing an active citizenship
    - promote integration in the society.

The main activities undertaken by the Babel shelter team are:

- Hosting unaccompanied foreign minors in a cozy home setting;
- Providing a transition period between the taking-over of the Federal Centers and the complete autonomy of the young minors;
- Offering adapted support to young people wishing to realize a personal life project and giving advice for sustainable solutions;
- Proposing a warming framework for sharing and listening.

All of the above are taking place in the framework of the following specific objectives:

- Implementation of activities aiming at better empowerment of unaccompanied minors
- Contribution to the development and fulfillment of youth in exile;
- Reinforcement and development of social integration and inclusion of young people leading to active and responsible citizenship.

The main obstacle to the implementation of the project was to find an adequate infrastructure to implement this service of accommodation and accompaniment. At the initiative of a group of citizen volunteers, the period of prospecting a place to carry out the project proved to be complicated without financial means. After several meetings, at different levels and in several sectors, the initiators were able to set up a concrete partnership with the municipality of Forest (Brussels) which provided an infrastructure. After some renovations, the project has really started. The project really started to accommodate young people in February 2017.

In 2015, more than 5000 UFM arrived in Belgium. Most of them are between the ages of 15 and 18, although the trend seems to rejuvenate (minors to be younger) in recent months. These minors arrive in Belgium for a number of reasons: they are fleeing a state of war, but also famine, violation of their rights or physical injury, an extremely difficult economic situation, etc. These children arrive in Europe from all over the world. Separated from their community of origin, unaccompanied foreign minors find themselves confronted with a culture that is unknown to them and with the loss of their social references and networks. The three-phase reception system offers accommodation for all UFMs, but due to an actual lack of places, not everyone receives the required accommodation and adequate accompaniment for their needs. Often, the team of Babel shelter cannot find an adapted reception for UFMs with special needs, which then fall through the cracks of the youth protection system. While the reception offered to the UFMs is supported at the federal level by the existence of structures designed to welcome these exiled populations, the current events reveal the impossibility of responding to the main purpose of this mission: the accompaniment of young people in a global project. To correct this situation and deal with these obstacles, a transitional reception is necessary for many young people on the verge of setting up a life project. The massive influx of young people in 2015 predicts that reception in quantity and high quality

must be provided for the coming years. Faced with these situations, society has everything to gain from the independence of these young people during a crisis of reception at the institutional level.

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Merseyside network for change (UK)

An initiative aiming to bring together various agencies to improve the lives of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

The Merseyside network for change was setup in 2001 and its aim is to bring together various agencies to improve the lives of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Liverpool is a city of sanctuary and this city wide project is to encourage and support these groups.

Their objective is working towards a vision of a just society by the provision of services to individuals and organisations who come from or represent the following priority groups within the population:

- Black and Minority Ethnic Communities
- Asylum Seeker, Refugee and Migrant Worker Communities
- Those otherwise suffering discrimination, particularly in the field of economic opportunity
- Those otherwise resident in the poorest local communities as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The values promoted by this initiative:

- Empowerment - helping people to empower themselves by istening, reflecting, understanding and responding
- Inclusiveness -Striving to be inclusive, acting with respect, treating people equally and fairly, and recognising the whole person within the family context
- Restoration - Restoring their health and wellbeing, promote their human rights, and regain their confidence and autonomy.

One of the main projects, that has had big successes, has been Asylum Link. Asylum Link is a drop-in centre for asylum seekers and refugees providing tea, coffee and a place to meet. They aim to give a warm welcome, friendship, help and advice to Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the city. They encourage the participation of asylum seekers and refugees in the service we provide and the centre is run by a small number of paid staff and around 60 volunteers. Asylum Link is offering:

- A warm welcome – tea, coffee, table tennis, table football and a place to relax
- Advice and Guidance – Immigration (OISC 3) and welfare benefits casework
- Furniture and Clothing distribution
- English and Cookery Classes

- Computer Access

- Destitution support – cash grants, food, a postal address, toiletries, laundry and shower facilities and temporary bag storage

- Destitution Road Show – a mobile display showing the life of destitute Asylum Seekers

- Health and Well Being programmes including – Healthy Cooking sessions, Porridge4Breakfast, Soup4Lunch, Friday Fruit and access to allotments, garden and cycling projects

- Volunteering opportunities

- Conversation/Poetry Groups

- Student placements and research opportunities.

An interesting project implemented through this agency is the Family Refugee Support Network Allotment. A number of refugee and asylum seekers each received a small plot of land, and in this plot they can grow their own vegetables and fruit, but all the families take turns to look after each other's land. The agency decided that everyone has the common goal of eating and it transcends all language barriers. It also offers a therapeutic effect because they can tend to the land and see something positive grown from it. It also helps families who are hungry to feed themselves healthy food.

The project has been nominated for a national diversity award. The main result has been more refugees and asylum seekers working together and supporting each other.

The main difficulty of the Merseyside network for change is the transient nature of refugees. They are often moved on from their homes to different parts of the country. So they start a project with them and then they are moved on. It is also very difficult to work with minors, because often if they are teenagers they are unaccompanied minors and as a result they tend to dissapear out of the school/social service system quickly after arriving in the UK. Or they tend to be very young children who have travelled with their families but the only way to work with them is through the schools that they are placed in. Funding is also a constant issue, although the city council has granted income to organisations within the city of sanctuary. Dealing with trauma is a major issue with refugees, and the agencies that support this are specialist in their approach to counselling and guidance. Some people need grief counselling and others have post traumatic stress. The system demands that they tell their story over and over again for the authorities in order to gain asylum and this can cause even more upset and emotional damage.

The city of sanctuary and the Merseyside network for change is continuing but they are constantly fighting for funding. The projects, particularly the allotment project is easily replicated anywhere in the world.

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www.asylumlink.org.uk
http://www.familyrefugeesupportproject.org.uk/
https://cityofsanctuary.org/
https://cityofsanctuary.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/ANNUAL-REVIEW-2015-16-FINAL.pdf.

Barikama (Italy)

A small scale agricultural farm set up by a group of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Italy.

Barikama Cooperative is a small scale agricultural farm set up by a group of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Italy. The farm takes up organic farming and the producers are supported by Solidarity Purchase Groups. Barikama is a project of social inclusion through micro-revenues generated by the production and selling of yogurt and biological vegetables.

The project was started by a group of African people who had just arrived to Rome after having escaped from Rosarno riots against racism and agricultural workers exploitation. Like thousands of others, they worked in vegetable fields and fruit orchards in conditions that have been described as exploitative and slave-like by rights groups and labour unions. In January 2010, while they were picking oranges for 20 euro a day near the town of Rosarno, in the southern Calabria region, a gang of white youths fired air rifles at a group of African migrants returning from work, injuring two of them. The shooting set off riots that led authorities to evacuate more than 1000 migrants from the town, who had been living in abandoned factories with no running water or electricity. The group ended up homeless in Rome, where they decided to have a go at producing organic yogurt.

With 30 euro borrowed from an Italian friend, they bought 15 liters of milk and tried their luck. Six years on, they are running a small organic farming business, that United Nations experts say is an example of sustainable agricultural development, which if replicated could help feed the growing global population.

The project was called Barikama, which in Bambara (a language spoken in Mali) means “resilient” because, facing so many problems, before and after their arrival to Italy, they believe they can resist, grow and help other people.

The main objectives of Barikama are:

- To guarantee minimum income to unemployed people who face diffiulties in getting a job.
- To regain self-confidence, trust, initiative and gratification.
- To build a network of social relations.
- To provide an opportunity of learning Italian language trought the on-going interaction with people and the probelm-solving.
- To provide an opportunity to discover Rome, though a map, a bicycle and the public transportation

The project is addressed mainly to:

- The group of migrants living in Rome

- Italian consumers, especially those organized in Solidarity Purchase Groups and/or interested in social/organic branded products

- People with special needs. Since 2004, an Italian boy, affected by Asperger syndrome, is collaborating in the Barikama cooperative for IT and graphics

The main activities in Barikama Cooperative are:

- a Micro-loan of 30 euro to buy 15 liters of milk and start the yogurt production in Martignano, in the surroundings of Rome. The yogurt produced is mainly sold among the network of friends.

- a Regional co-funding of 20.000 euro and a private fund raising of 26.000 euro to increase the production and buy the equipment (ex. bicycles, carts, professional refrigerator, thermal boxes etc.).

- Investment of revenues in yogurt production and organic farming.

- Selling and distribution of products (by bicycle or by public transportation) in the city of Rome and in the surroundings, mainly using the channels of Solidarity Purchase Groups, Fair Markets and Web Site.

- Recycling materials, particularly the glass of yogurt jars.

- Organizing dinners and social events to promote the products and facilitate the socialization among migrants and local citizens.

- 2 Internships with 2 young people with vulnerabilities (affected by Asperger syndrome)

The main results of Barikama are:

- Setting-up of a cooperative for social inclusion of people living in vulnerable situations

- Italian language learnt

- Self-Employment Opportunities generated for 8 people (7 migrants and 1 Italian)

- Effective network established for selling and distributing the products

- Kiosk-bar in Nemorense Park (Rome) appointed to the cooperative. In addition to the bar the cooperative manages the Park maintenance and cleaning

- Internship and job opportunities provided to 3 young people affected by Asperger syndrome (AS)

Initially the Barikama people struggled to overcome Italian customers' distrust. "It's not easy to do business in Italy if you come from Africa and have a dark skin. Many didn't trust us, believing we had poor hygienic standards." The product gradually grew in popularity thanks to its distinctive taste and its makers' friendly attitude.

A distinctive characteristic for this project is that the ethical approach and sympathy for food producers have been essential. The produce is more expensive than mass produced food, but is cheaper than the branded organic products. The strength of this local model of development is that the producers and the consumers know each other, rendering alternative to certification and such standardizing processes to organic food.

The combination of enterpreneurship, quality, solidarity, job and social inclusion of vulnerable people, enviromental and civil rights respect has been the key of the success: http://barikama.altervista.org/chi-siamo/

The project is working since 2011, gradually generating new opportunities and networks (see, for example, the Acknowledgment and the Prize assigned by Confagricoltura for the project of Social Agriculture including migrants and people with AS).

Many not-for-profit organizations, based in Italy, have been contacting Barikama, asking for technical assistance to replicate the successful experience in other cities (such as Genova, Rimini and Pisa).

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Riace (Italy)

Repopulation of small village Riace with refugees.

The main idea of the project was to repopulate Riace, a small village in Reggio Calabria province, whose local inhabitants mostly migrated to the north of Italy or abroad, with the refugees escaping from dramatic problems in their country of origins (wars, persecutions, social uprooting, torture, and insecurity).

The mid-term objective was to provide hospitality in restored houses and relief to migrant people, keeping the mind and body engaged in constructive activities.

The long-term objective was to facilitate the work integration, indipendence and social inclusion.

The main activities of the action focused on:

- Restoration of old and abandoned houses of Riace for housing or touristic purposes.
- Housing for refugees, who receive free board and lodging.
- Activation of Italian language courses and craft workshops for refugees.
- Engagement of migrant women in craft workshops and migrant men in building renovation

These activities produced the following results:

- 220 migrant people hosted in the houses of Riace.
- 7 crafting laboratories activated: wood, ceramics, glass, knitwear, embroidery, weaving, chocolate.
- Small businesses and new jobs created.
- Deserted houses restored and made inhabitable.
- Closure of local schools avoided.
- Riace village repopulated (in 1998 900 inhabitants, in 2016 2.800 inhabitants, 400 out of 2.800 are migrants from 20 countries)

The main difficulties were related to mafia intimidations and threats. But even so, the village of Riace has faced an increase of population since 1998 up to now. In 1998 it had 900 inhabitants. Today there are 2800 people, out of whom 400 are migrants from 20 nationalities. 5 different associations and 1 cooperative are currently working on different projects of hospitality, asssistance, protection and integration of refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied foreign minors. The model was already replicated in 4 municipalities in Calabria region: Caulonia, Stignano, Monasterace, Badolato.

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The Silent University

A solidarity based knowledge exchange platform by refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

The Silent University is an autonomous knowledge exchange platform by and for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, who are not practicing their profession due to the limitatons of their status, although they come from a highly qualified professional background.

It engages the participants in a process of exchanging knowledge and experience, promoting the idea of a democratic education beyond the social and political hierarchies and class distinctions.

The Silent University was encouraged by the necessity to exchange knowledge beyond the limitations of citizenship: many people who have academic background and qualifications and travelled to EU are not recognized as academicians or knowledge producers. So, starting in September 2012, Ahmet Öğüt, together with a group of lecturers and consultants, worked out a structure that makes possible to activate academic knowledge that is rarely employed in the context of fleeing, asylum, and immigration.

The Silent University raises questions of autonomy in the field of education. How can we find alternative ways of practicing knowledge in the context of migration? How can we celebrate different cultures without creating alienation? The exchange of knoweldge and skills is thereby employed as an alternative currency that creates a mutually beneficial exchange based on the concept of education as a value as opposed to a service.

The Silent University aims at establishing knowledge exchange by a group of lecturers, consultants and research fellows who wouldn't have the opportunity or the legal rights to work in their own professions due to their being asylum seekers, refugees or migrants.

The general objective of Silent University is to address and reactivate the knowledge of the participants and make the exchange process mutually beneficial by inventing alternative currencies, in place of money or free voluntary service.

The Silent University's aim is also to challenge the idea of silence as a passive state, and explore its powerful potential through performance, writing and group reflection. These explorations attempt to make apparent the systemic failure and the loss of skills and knowledge experienced through the silencing process of people seeking asylum.

The Silent University is addressed above all to those who have completed their academic and professional education in their native country but are unable to use their skills or pursue their profession due to their being asylum seekers, refugees or immigrants.

The Silent University is led by a group of lecturers, consultants and research fellows. Each group contributes to the programme in different ways, which include course development, specific research on

key themes as well as personal reflections on what it means to be a refugee and asylum seeker. The contributions can range from “The history of Kurdish literature” and “Didactics for learning new languages” to “Ten types of Arabic calligraphy” and “The history of food preparation through visual arts”.

The lecturers choose and develop their seminars based on their academic and professional background and current interests. The lecturers are always asylum seekers, refugees, undocumented participants with an academic background that they are unable to use in their current situation. The priority is given to lecturers struggling with unresolved asylum cases who cannot meet their basic needs.

The Silent University disregards both language and legal barriers. Lecturers develop courses in their native or preferred language, and get something back in return – a new way of creating income opportunities whenever possible, as well as an exchange of skills and time with the users.

The University involved consultants who are community leaders and academics, and have experienced the process of being asylum seekers, refugees or undocumented migrants, but now have a recognized qualification. They supervise the lecturers and work on developing the Silent University’s structure. They can provide materials, resources and support to prepare the lessons and publicize the public lesson/event. To supplement the lecturers’ efforts and broaden the exchange, international guests can be invited to public lectures and discussion panels.

The Silent University is a challenging institution within different host institutions, which establishes its own ad-hoc structure while being fully recognised by the hosting institution. Decentralisation and participatory horizontal models of transferring knowledge are its inevitable priorities. Even if many cultural institutions want to take this challenge and collaborate with the Silent University, their bureaucratic and administrative structures often rupture or slow down their engagement.

The Silent University is a long-term project, initially started in London in 2012 in collaboration with Delfina Foundation and Tate and later hosted by The Showroom. Since then, it spread in Europe, run by its own participants. In 2013 the Silent University was established in Sweden, in collaboration with Tensta Konsthall and ABF Stockholm, and in France at Le 116 in Montreuil, Greater Paris Region. In 2014 the Silent University was established in Hamburg, Germany initiated by Stadtkuratorin Hamburg in partnership with W3 – Werkstatt für Internationale Kultur und Politik. In 2015 the Silent University Ruhr – initiated by Impulse Theater Festival in coproduction with Ringlokschuppen Ruhr and Urbane Künste Ruhr – opened its doors in Mülheim. The Silent University was also established in Amman, Jordan, initiated by Spring Sessions from May 2015 on, and in Athens since December 2015.

It exists as long as it has its own active autonomous community and continues to establish transformative and progressive collaborations with other institutions.

Red Barcelona Antirumores (Spain)

Barcelona's City Council's strategy to counteract negative rumours related to cultural diversity.

In 2010 Barcelona's City Council initiated a process focused on counteracting negative rumours related to cultural diversity. It combined a series of strategies including the creation of an "antirumour citizen network", a public relations campaign, the creation of antirumour agents and a variety of educational activities. The impact this campaign has had both locally and internationally has highlighted the importance of tackling this reality at grass roots through innovative approaches and methodologies.

The general objectives of the strategy develoed are the preservation of social cohesion and fostering of positive interaction and intercultural coexistence in the city from an equality approach in the fight against stereotypes and prejudices about cultural diversity in Barcelona.

The specific objectives followed include:

- Removing and stopping prejudices and stereotypes that affect cultural coexistence.
- Preventing the spread of the creation of stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory attitudes.
- Facilitating positive interaction in the relationship between people belonging to different groups

Four key areas of action and strategic lines have been defined. Key areas:

- Awareness area: It includes actions aimed at removing some conventionalisms and awakening a critical awareness of the population, favouring social participation in the fight against prejudices.
- Training area: It develops actions aimed at training professionals. Training aimed at exploring and sensitizing one's own prejudices and also the training of communicative skills.
- Education area: Promote actions aimed at formal and non-formal education.
- Media area: influence the information disseminated by the media about migrants, refugees and cultural diversity

Strategic lines:

- Highlight and take advantage of the city meeting points / Promote and disseminate the anti-prejudice agent / Invite reflection to the citizens less aware taking advantage of the public spaces of daily life.
- Training for administration professionals and political positions / Training for private sector workers and entrepreneurs.
- Impact on municipal education plans / Promote educational methodologies addressed to the students closest to this kind of experiences / Training for professionals in formal and non-formal education

- Promote the commitment of the media to cultural diversity / Training for media professionals about their social responsibility in this area /Communication strategy of the Antirumores Network.

Currently, the Network is in the process of promoting and implementing the actions proposed in the Plan of Action, for which it has two working commissions: Education and Training Commission and the Commission on Awareness and Media.

Each Commission has its respective working groups, responsible for planning and implementing the the actions. This is a very important challenge for the anti-prejudice task, because it allows citizens to walk and work in a more adequate way according to the reality of each neighborhood.

Some of the results registered so far include:

- Training activity for social actors with the objective of creating the figure of the "anti-prejudice agent".

- Materials: anti-prejudice guide and explanatory leaflets.

- Collaboration in some episodes of the "Tot un món" Program in the Catalonia Television.

- Collaboration on creating a specific dissemination platform: tumblr "Datos contra rumores".

- Creation of 200 usb keys with documents of interest of the Network, communication gadgets.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty of the strategy implementation was to reach people who are not aware. This difficulty was addressed through a wide dissemination and wide media coverage. Thanks to this action many people were reached, not just at local level but also national level.

Other difficulties included not very practical work developed by the Commissions, poor dynamism in the Network meetings and sometimes poor communication between entities. The last three difficulties mentioned were addressed through a commitment meeting between the Network's members and the entities involved. Everything was resolved thanks to the will of continuity of the different people and entities involved as they assume the importance of a project of this nature. In addition, the involvement and support of the City Council has been key to the continuity of the project.

Regarding impact, on a medium term the project has been very well accepted by the target group and on the long term there is a growing awareness in society regarding the need of create alliances to fight against xenophobia and cultural and social prejudices.

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