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STRATEGIES FOR REFUGEES

THE GUIDE OF BEST PRACTICES FOR REFUGEES' INTEGRATION

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Introduction



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The Guide of Best Practices for Refugees' Integration is the result of a collaboration between eight international European organisations, which undertook the Erasmus Plus project titled Strategies for Refugees to learn, teach and spread awareness about the conditions faced by refugees and asylum seekers around Europe. The countries involved in the project are United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Poland and Romania. All the participating organisations from these countries met frequently over a course of two years in different countries, sharing information, training and ideas based on how refugees and asylum seekers have been helped to settle down and restart their lives. We are now sharing the gist of our learning with this guide so that we can promote the best and proven ways in which refugees can be helped, not just in Europe, but in any country around the world.

We encourage the person reading this guide to circulate this informational guide as much and as far as possible. This guide of best practices for refugees' integration is useful for any organisation such as NGOs, charity workers, governmental initiatives, councils as well as any private organisations or individuals who want to make a difference, to help and support refugees all over the globe. It contains best practices from the partner organisations' countries and involve lots of efforts, coordination and teamwork with the main objectives to:

- Help the social service providers and organisations working with migrants to scale up their activities relevant to the migrants integration.
- Support training and skills development to enable more practitioners to improve their capacity building on diversity and identity management.
- Increase cooperation between organisations working with the mission of social and cultural inclusion.

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1. ESTIA by UNCHR started by OMNES - Greece



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It all started by a team of Volunteers from Kilkis who noticed that the situation at the camp of Cherso was inhuman.

Volunteers from Kilkis and Polykastro who visited Edomeni daily addressed a social networking call to accommodate refugees in order to leave even temporarily the poor living conditions prevailing in the camp. The online call had a great response, and 70-75 families of refugees were temporarily hosted by people who were interested both in Kilkis and Thessaloniki.

The volunteers realized that housing refugees in homes not only offered decent dignity but is also more economical than in camps with often expensive partnerships with food contractors and others. The first step was the effort of autonomous temporary housing with the rental of 16 apartments and with money paid by small groups of volunteers of our country and abroad directly to the owners of



the apartments. Then, on the basis of this experience, Omnes conducted an economically-feasible, equitable housing study of the 60,000 refugees who were trapped in our country in various regions and sought an institution that would implement this different housing program for which Omnes would offer know-how and voluntary support. The project was presented to NGOs, UNHCR, the Ministry of Migration Policy, a relevant workshop at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and in June 2016 in the European Parliament. The plan was also presented to the mayor of Kilkis and to the Kilkis Development Company, but without the necessary response on the grounds that there were no means to implement the project. After constant pressure in November 2016, the agreement with UNHCR was signed for the rental of 30 houses in Kilkis. Gradually there has been an upward trend in the rental of houses. Thus, in April, 95 homes were rented in Kilkis and Paionia for refugees and another ten were hired for six months by Help refugees for the housing of locals and families of socially excluded. According to the October record through the program, 336 refugees were found in Kilkis and 114 in Paionia, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Kuwait, Palestine and Iran among them unaccompanied minor refugees, people from vulnerable social groups and people with disabilities. By the end of December, UNHCR had created 21,435 places in the accommodation scheme as part of the ESTIA programme. These were in 3,577 separate facilities, in 21 cities





Social Boutique by Omnes

It is a space based on the volunteerism of the local community, which will distribute to benefactors of the OMNES program, but also urban households in need, clothing and footwear, etc.

The purpose of its operation is part of OMNES's program of initiatives and actions for the social protection and care of refugees residing in homes in the city of Kilkis, benefiting from the program of the Kilkis Volunteer Association and vulnerable groups of the local population affected by its consequences economic and social crisis. It works with the contribution of volunteer refugees who undertake shifts according to their working hours and started in cooperation with the local department of design and technology of clothing.



2. Access to Work | Workshop Series for Refugees & Asylum Seekers by Generation 2.0- Greece



The newly launched program "Facilitating access to work for Vulnerable Populations in Athens" aims to support refugees and asylum seekers in improving their living conditions by finding a fulfilling job position through the Career Counseling Service of Generation 2.0 RED, with the support of the International Rescue Committee.

The program includes the reinforcement of one to one career counselling sessions, along with the organisation of a series of job readiness, soft skills and hard skills workshops.

CV Creation & Job Search Techniques | Motivational Letter Writing | Job Interview Preparation

Empower the employability skills and improve the chances on getting a job by learning how to write a powerful CV and a motivational letter! Explore the most common ways of seeking employment and get prepared for your next job interview in the best of ways.

Improve your Communication Skills | Improve your Time Management & Goal Setting Skills

On these workshops we focused on how to communicate better with colleagues and supervisors, while working efficiently with them. In addition, we also explored ways on how to manage our time and deadlines better, as well as how to successfully set goals.



Salaries, Daily Pays and Financial Management in Greece

What is the minimum salary in Greece and what does the gross salary include? How will I be paid when working at a house or as agriculture worker? Who must do tax declaration? Those questions and many more will be answered at this workshop that focus on the management of financial matters and information on salaries, taxes and, in general, the financial aspect of employment.

- Farsi and Arabic interpretation was provided in the English speaking groups
- Tickets for the transport of participants were provided
- The workshops were free of charge, just like any other service provided by g2red

As a part of our "Facilitating Access to Work for Vulnerable Populations in Athens" program, which is implemented with the support of the International Rescue Committee, we have published an Employability Guide, which contains in just a few pages all the material and issues discussed on our Employability Workshops.

This guide is in English, Farsi & Arabic, aiming at providing all the tools a newcomer needs to have an easier access to the Greek labor market.

On the other hand, we published two tutorial videos, one displaying step by step how you can write your CV online using the Europass format, and the other one displays how you may browse job adverts on the most popular websites in Greece and apply for a suitable job. Below, you may find the videos, which also give you the choice of using subtitles in English, Arabic & Farsi for a better understanding.



3. «Relocation & Reception Scheme» by Arsis ,United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and funded by the EU. - Greece

Accommodation of unaccompanied children

Transit shelters for unaccompanied children

ARSIS operates 3 transit shelters for unaccompanied children as follows:

- Athens shelter hosts 30 boys from 14 to 18 years of age
- Alexandroupoli shelter hosts 25 children (boys from 5 to 12 years of age and girls from 5 to 18 years of age)
- Sindos shelter hosts 50 boys from 14 to 18 years of age
- Alexandroupoli shelter hosts 22 children (boys from 5 to 12 years of age and girls from 5 to 18 years of age)
- Makrinitisa shelter hosts 30 boys from 12 to 18 years of age
- Oraiokastro shelter hosts 30 boys from 12 to 18 years of age





"Safe Space" for unaccompanied children (Lagadikia)

The "Safe Space" in the Lagadikia Accommodation Centre was operating in the context of the "Relocation and Reception Scheme" from June to September 2016. Its aim was to provide an alternative to protective custody for unaccompanied children and, to that purpose, it hosted 30 unaccompanied underage boys. In addition, it provided for common accommodation to siblings of different sex.

Other actions for children and the general population

Mobile unit for the support of children in Volos

Center "Moza" in Volos, provides services to children aiming to their psycho-pedagogical care as well as to adults aiming to their psycho-social support and integration. The mobile unit may, in the near future, intervene in the other open centres located in Magnisia and the wider region of Central Greece.

Recreational space for children in AKA Relocation Alimos

ARSIS offers, in a specially designated for this purpose space in AKA Relocation Alimos, a variety of pedagogical and recreational activities for children aged 2-15 years during their waiting.

Support actions in the Lagadikia camp

The end of the "Safe Space" project was followed by an action-oriented one with the overall aim of empowering the population that resides in the Lagadikia Accommodation Center, supporting their integration to their new environment in Europe and boosting their morale. In particular, in November and December 2016, a team of psychologists, social and youth workers, educators, children animators and artists arrived at Lagadikia and provided social services and recreational activities depending on the level of the vulnerability of the beneficiaries.



The project followed the principles of community fieldwork and, in particular, the following steps were considered essential:

- To establish the provision of social services based on a day to day interaction with the beneficiaries and with a problem solving approach; to take advocacy action on a case by case basis.
- To establish recreational activities through monitoring the group both in quantitative and qualitative terms. To combine the talents of children, youth and even adults with the activities offered by the experts was the main premise and purpose!
- All recreational activities were carried out according to the non formal education, based on the active participation with respect for oneself and the group. The general point of departure was the experiential process of discovering oneself out of one's own successes and mistakes, with the instructor serving more as a guide rather than a teacher.
- To organize various actions, specifically designed for the whole family, was considered to be the appropriate way to foster family and community bonding and promote active social integration. The planned activities can be found in the last chapter.

The comic book was created by 35 children aged 8 to 17 in two emergency reception areas in northern Greece and was implemented by Tdh / ARSIS to enhance the creativity and the ability of children to express themselves freely on paper. Each 4 to 8 sketches unfolds a story. The children chose to draw mainly positive moments of their everyday life or a daily routine that they imagine for the future, and naturally they included moments from

4. Finn Church Aid Helps Refugees Study in Greece



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Digital and tech workshops in Greece by Finn Church Aid support integration and expand the horizons of young people by offering skills that are vital in today's digital world. After a successful two-month pilot in Athens, the plan is to expand to other locations in Greece if suitable partners jump onboard.



Since May 2017, a group of 40 young girls and boys from Greek and refugee communities have been learning digital and tech skills such as programming, robotics and 3D printing in Athens. The purpose of these workshops is to offer youth from different backgrounds an inspiring space to meet and learn together. Mixed groups allow newcomers and Greek to get to know each other, which supports integration.

Over 120 young people applied for the pilot workshops that Finn Church Aid (FCA) is organizing together with Greek NGO Open Technologies Alliance. Selected participants are aged 15 to 18. Half are newcomers from countries such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Romania. The other half are Greek. No previous knowledge in computing sciences was required, only basic English language skills and a desire to learn.

Over the course of a day, up to 100 children and young people visit the centre. The rooms of an old house have been divided into classrooms using low screens.



Teaching is challenging, as new pupils join the groups every week. Every time, the work begins from scratch; the teachers need to figure out what level the child is on and explain what schoolwork is about.

Even though the Greek aid organisation Apostoli maintaining the centre has been carrying out aid work for a long time, the workers had no previous experience of working with refugees and immigrants. So, Finn Church Aid was called in to help.

The aim is to teach the pupils at Satovriandou centre enough Greek for them to study in a Greek school, or enough English for them to manage in other parts of Europe.

"The large number of applications shows that there is a huge demand for this kind of training. We want to reach young people who do not have other opportunities to learn digital skills and who can benefit greatly from these competencies," says FCA education specialist Laura Vanhanen.

"FCA has been successful in leveraging some of the best practices from the Finnish education system and creating new solutions and services for education needs in refugee contexts. In Greece our goal for these tech workshops is to offer youth access to relevant skills."

Workshops are organised in an open technology lab which FCA set up at Impact Hub Athens. The trainers are computing experts from Greek open source and open data communities. After a successful pilot, FCA is looking for partners to scale up in other parts of Greece.



“We want to support youth in learning new skills, but also contribute to integration – offer a place to get to know one another. As the refugee population becomes an integral part of the European landscape, it is critical to find new ways resulting in social cohesion. Learning to code together motivates to collaborate,” Vanhanen says.

The economic crisis has had its toll on Greek youth. Over 45 per cent of the youth are unemployed, and the figure is among the highest in Europe. There are approximately 20 000 refugees under the age of 18 living in Greece at the moment. Most of them do not have access to education.

“Python is the number one programming language and I have already learned the basics,” rejoices Said, 18, from Afghanistan, who has been studying with FCA and wishes to continue studying in autumn.

5. Migrant Campsite, Migrant Workshop - Italy

The project Arte Migrante was born in September 2012 from the idea of a young student of anthropology.

It's actually a national network who aims to promote social inclusion through art.

The activities of the network are implemented in 14 Italian towns, in Germany and Spain. The concept is very simple, a social night is organized once every two weeks, open to anyone (migrants and locals, of any age and background), structured in 4 phases:

- introduction of the participants
- social dinner (the food is brought by the participants)
- free sharing of art performances (dance, singing, poetry, and reading),
- “goodnight” phase, where all participants stand in a circle holding hands and each one tells “goodnight” in his/her own language

Add a little over the years, new formats have been introduced as a Migrant Workshop (Laboratorio Migrante) and a Migrant Campsite (Campeggio Migrante). The Migrant Workshop can be characterized as a combination of many activities open to all, especially prepared and designed to involve homeless, migrants, students, workers and unemployed. There are a variety of tools used, such as: theater, dance, music, crafts and painting, English language, Italian language for foreigners, literacy, synergistic gardening, computer science and curriculum editing. This is precisely the strength of the proposal: people with a more regular dimension of life are able to know and spend time with those coming from radically different cultures and social conditions. Whereas the Migrant Campsite is an annual event in which the various groups of Migrant Art meet to spend 4 days together to get to know each other and to form themselves through workshops, seminars, conferences, group activities set up in a green space, where one can reflect on topics such as peace education, human rights, migration, new poverty.



At the moment the network has reached 14 cities and thousands of students, migrants, homeless, workers. The meetings have been organized focused on the most varied themes (music, painting, theatre, juggling, singing, gastronomy). Campeggio Migrant represents an opportunity for the members of the various groups present in Italy to get to know each other, exchange good practices, suggestions, criticism and advice. This is how it becomes a united and cohesive group. In addition, it is a useful time for personal training, in which certain topics are explored (eg social problems, poverty, peace education, rights). It has led to the creation of an increasingly broader national network with more and more organizations and cities, and with local institutions too. The network is fundamental, also to ensure that the AM method spreads and that the various realities learn to reproduce it, so that it is not always necessary to go there with AM (self-reproducing mechanism)

References:

<https://www.artemigrante.eu/storage/app/media/documenti/Tesi-di-Tommaso-Carturan.pdf> of body text

6. Liberi Nantes - Italy

LIBERI NANTES is an association founded in Rome in 2007 with the aim of promoting access to sport to the refugee and asylum seeker community in reception centers in Rome and surroundings. All the work provided until now is held by volunteers, but since the growing and constant evolution of it, transforming the association into a social enterprise is taken in consideration.

Liberi Nantes creates a Football Club, it is the first team in Italy entirely composed by refugees and asylum seekers, victims of a forced migration, playing not only friendly matches but also in championships, but having the impediment thought of being promoted since the players don't have the residence permit. The composition of the team is multicultural; the access to the training is free and open to everybody. The team formed by men plays since 2008 in the 3rd Category tournament organised by FIGC and a team formed by women is training. Starting from 2010, the association organizes every year, a free Italian language course for migrant students of both genders, residing at reception centers of Rome. The Italian school of the Liberi Nantes Association proposed a cultural project of civic, linguistic, ludic-theatrical education for girls and boys, men and women, guests of the reception centers in Rome. Around 40 men and 15 women participate in the football team and around 100 people participate during the year to the hikes in mountains and city sightseeing. Every year around 20 people attend the Italian class proposed by Liberi Nantes. The rehabilitation of the sports centre reunited many of the participants from abroad and locals, creating an inclusive environment in the neighbourhood.

References:

<http://www.liberinantes.org>

7. Spain Supports Integration Activities for Migrant Children and Families in Badalona - Spain

The 2016-2017 school year is getting to its term and with it, the activities planned within the project called "The weight of my backpack" are being developed successfully in the two educational centers of the neighborhood of La Salud in Badalona. The objective of FECCOO is to develop a series of activities aimed at creating optimal school environments that are conducive to the integration of all children and accommodate all migrants, displaced persons and refugees.

Throughout the project, all students had access to illustrated albums dealing with themes related to refuge, war, travel, exile and arrival, which has been crucial to help them reflect on these themes and share their emotions and feelings.

In parallel, work is continuing with the Teachers' Resource Center of the Generalitat de Catalunya, to offer teachers from all educational centers of the municipality the course "Schools: a welcome place, Books: a refuge to live in" that is mobilizing hundreds of students and teachers.

References:

<https://www.education4refugees.org/updates/343-feccoo-spain-supports-integration-activities-for-migrantchildren-and-families-in-badalona>

8. In Vitoria (Spain), Supports Teachers Working in a Multicultural Context - Spain



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The scope of the project called "My school is an intercultural world map in which we all learn better" is to develop teacher training activities, in order to improve the quality of day-to-day interactions with students from different cultural backgrounds.

The EI-supported project taking place at the Sansomendi IPI Educational Center in Vitoria, promotes the right to education for all migrant children, refugees, stateless persons and applicants for international protection, through training modules offered to the whole school staff. The course deals with brand new topics for teachers, such as the right to international protection, as enshrined in international law and current Spanish regulation, and its linkage with the right to education.

The training stimulated debate amongst teachers, highlighting the need to better know the kid's reality and day-to-day life, in order to address better the diverse needs of students and become aware of the potential transformative impact of teachers, educators, and other education workers.

References:

<https://www.education4refugees.org/updates/339-in-vitoria-spain-feccoo-supports-teachers-working-in-amulticultural-context>

9. A Holistic Approach: Spanish 'safe Cities' Hope to Offer a Haven for Refugees - Spain

The Spanish government, led by Mariano Rajoy, may have dragged its feet in response to pressure from Brussels to take Syrian refugees, but Barcelona, Madrid and several other cities governed by councils with roots in the indignado movement took the initiative with a network of "safe cities" to assist some of those arriving in Europe.

Ada Colau, the mayor of Barcelona, started the ball rolling when she announced the launch of a register of families willing to open their home to refugees or simply help them. It proved an immediate success. Thousands of Catalans emailed their details to the list. A dozen cities have signed up to the scheme. Madrid mayor Manuela Carmena has been looking at "ways of alleviating the distress". Valencia plans to open emergency accommodation for refugees and is allocating 110 social workers specifically to look after children. Several councils have asked banks to release housing stock that has been vacant since the property market tumbled. Other cities involved include Pamplona, Zaragoza, La Coruña and Malaga.

References:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/15/spain-refugees-indignados-safe-cities>

10. Multi-Service Support Centers (MSC) - Turkey

These centers aim at providing several different activities for refugees with a «one stop shop» approach. Psychosocial counselling, social activities, peace building and social activities, various courses (language, music, painting, etc.), trainings and non-food items and e-voucher card distribution are among the services offered. Their teams consist of social workers, psychologists, nurses, disability experts, peace building officers, interpreters, outreach teams and instructors.





11. Women and Girls Safe Space - Turkey

ASAM has been providing services at 16 Women's Health Counseling Centres which are established in collaboration with the UNFPA under the Project entitled Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS). Women and girls can receive information and services on reproductive health, women's rights, gender based violence and gender equality, psychosocial support, access to health services and socialize and re-build their networks in an inclusive and empowering environment of these centres. These centres operate in cooperation with the Provincial Directorates of Health.



12. Together we Stand - Turkey

The project, implemented in collaboration with GIZ, ASAM and MUDEM, aims to build capacity for social cohesion, cooperation and solidarity between Syrian and Turkish communities through volunteering and community-driven development approach.

The project has a focus on developing the capacity of young Turkish and Syrian adults aged 18-30 by training them in project writing and management so that they become youth leaders who unite the communities through their voluntary activities.

Within this context, volunteers develop valuable skills in project planning and writing, event organizing and leadership competencies with the focus on intercultural dialog and cooperation. Additionally, a significant amount of Turkish and Syrian youth are involved in beneficial, positive and motivating activities which aim to increase capabilities of beneficiaries in teamwork, intercultural communication, conflict management, self-directed learning, and self-organization.





13. Traditional Cappadocia Women's Meeting - Turkey

The 11th of this event was held in 2018 on the International Women's Day and the objective of the event is to form a common platform to encourage the solidarity between the local community and refugee women and bring together the local NGOs working for refugees and women.

Over 2,000 asylum-seeking and refugee women from different cities and nationalities (Syrian, Iraqi, Afghan, Iranian, Somalian, etc.) join this event each year to celebrate the International Women's Day and enjoy the unique beauty of the Cappadocia Region.



14. Support for Foreigners, I am a Mom in Poland - Poland

Support for migrants' moms, who are expecting in Poland by providing support groups and individual psychological consultations for asylum seekers/migrant women and their children.

The aim of these type of project is to help women prepare for labor and care of a new born baby in Poland. The main actions are focused on creating a Multicultural Schools of Birth, involving a hospital visit; support groups; meetings with specialists (dietician, speech therapist, pediatrician etc.) and psychological consultations.

There are also organized meetings with dietitian, concerning proper eating habits for the children of a pregnant women up to 1 year of age. Objectives of these activity is improving skills of mothers-migrants regarding kid's healthy eating and improving children's health thanks to the balanced diet.

15. Education, Learning Assistance - Poland

To help teach foreign children, NGOs are employing people from the foreigners' community as a teacher's help, who work in the schools to which the largest group of foreign students attend.

This solution was introduced as an attempt to search for methods to improve the situation of children who do not speak Polish, which (according to Polish legislation) are immediately included in the normal course of study after the school's coming. This ends many times with educational failures, because it is difficult for children without Polish language to fulfill all their obligations.

Thanks to the presence of the teacher's help on the school grounds, both children and teachers as well as parents can count on support in everyday relationships. These assistants are engaged in open duties, during which foreign children can get to them for help in everyday matters and help teachers who have educational problems with foreign children resulting from both language and cultural barriers.

Project Coordinator



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Partners

