

VET4MIGRE

TARGET GROUPS REPORT

Research done
by the associations

Realized in the framework of
the project
“Vet opportunities for
migrants and refugees”
(Acronym “VET4MIGRE”)
Action n.
2017-1-DK01-KA202-034224

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Project Context

Brief Overview of the Current Picture of Migration in Europe

Worldwide today, migrants¹ are moving most frequently from the south to the north, with 70%² heading to the Global North. They are looking for better economic, social, political and humanitarian conditions. The growing asymmetry between developed and developing countries further mirrors this increase in migration.

The current context of migration in Europe is characterized by the difficulties of coordination between countries. This situation is affecting the choices of migrants in terms of localisation and condition of reception in each country.

Moreover, the Syrian conflict continues to displace many, with newer displacements largely due to conflict in sub-Saharan African. Refugees from Syria represent one third of the increase from the first six months of 2017.³ Between January and June 2017, the number of refugees' worldwide has increased by 7%, with 1.3 million more people in movement as compared to the previous year.⁴

Once migrants and refugees arrive in different European countries, they may face obstacles when: searching for a new job, learning the language, and accessing benefits. The majority of refugees in Europe who become permanent residents struggle when integrating into their new society, and this integration requires first and foremost an occupation. Without one, their situation becomes a source of political conflict that can also fuel xenophobia.

¹ An international migrant is a person who crosses a border with the intention of living in a different country from their country of origin. There are two types of migrants: those seeking a better economic and social condition and asylum seekers. Asylum seekers are forced migrants, under the Geneva Convention law. They may be granted refugee status when they are outside of their country of origin and have proven they face possible persecution on the basis of religion, race, nationality, belonging to a certain social group and/or political opinions. The UNHCR reports that 2016 saw the highest level of displacement on record worldwide, with 65.6 million people forced from their homes, half of whom were under the age of 18.

² Ibid.

³ UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency. 2017. Report : Mid-year trends. Online : <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcr-stats/5aaa4fd27/mid-year-trends-june-2017.html>

⁴ Ibid. p.5.

Entrepreneurship in Europe Today

Regarding entrepreneurship in Europe today, the situation is characterized by less than half of all Europeans harboring a desire to start their own business: a total of 45% of Europeans wish to be self-employed.

There is also a clear indication that entrepreneurship and self-employment in ethnic communities are higher than the national averages.⁵ The EU Labour Force survey shows that the trend of migrant entrepreneurship varies across the EU, with the share of migrant entrepreneurs in total employment being 1.5 to 2.9 percentage points higher than natives in the countries of: the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Denmark and Sweden. However, there is a lower share of migrant entrepreneurs when compared with natives in: Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Ireland, Germany and Austria.

Data on the number of new entrepreneurs in a given year also suggests that migrants tend to be more active as entrepreneurs than natives. During the period 1998-2008, the annual number of new migrant entrepreneurs almost doubled in Germany (to over 100,000 per year) and in the United Kingdom (almost 90,000 per year), in Spain (over 75,000 per year), in Italy (46,000+) and in France (35,000+).

In addition, migrants tend to be more entrepreneurial in relative terms with respect to their population, than natives. For example, in the UK, while migrants represent 8% of the UK population, they own around 12% of all UK SMEs.⁶

Currently, some countries in Europe are changing their policies and attitudes with regards to refugees and migrants in order to halt the current influx. Actions that have been taken include: cutting financial assistance, curtailing freedom of movement, reducing access to social services and to the labour market.

Thus, deteriorating living conditions and an increasingly negative social and political atmosphere will alienate many non-native residents, separating them from their host societies. Alleviating this situation is a top priority in realizing a truly inclusive and cohesive European society, where everyone may prosper.

⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/2365/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/pdf>

⁶ https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/ministerstvo/integracia-cudzincov/dokumenty/the_contribution_of_migrant_entrepreneurs_to_the_eu_economy.pdf

In Europe, although a high proportion of foreign-born entrepreneurs work in sectors more traditionally associated with migrant businesses (i.e. wholesale and retail trade), many work outside the traditional ethnic business sectors, with almost 18% of migrant entrepreneurs in the construction sector; around 8% in the professional, scientific and technical sector; around 6% in manufacturing; and another 6% in human health and social work.

While transitions into entrepreneurship from one year to another are seen to be higher among migrants, transitions out are also higher. This lower survival rate can indicate that self-employment is a mechanism to move into wage employment or it can indicate a higher failure rate of migrant firms. The OECD study found that even after controlling for qualifications, experience and other factors, migrant businesses are 27% less likely to survive relative to native businesses.

VET4MIGRE Project Background

We recognize in this project the importance of entrepreneurship as a powerful tool for job creation among migrant and refugee populations otherwise facing barriers in finding employment. Entrepreneurship is a powerful driver of economic growth and job creation, nurturing new skills and capabilities.

Creating an environment attractive to all forms of entrepreneurship, where business support services reach all potential entrepreneurs, including those from more vulnerable groups is an aim of the European Commission in their Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, which is part of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The aim is to create conditions for 'smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth' that will make the EU in its entirety stronger and more cohesive.⁷ The European Commission recognizes that migrants represent an important pool of potential entrepreneurs, but that they face specific legal, cultural and linguistic obstacles.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/promoting-entrepreneurship/we-work-for/migrants_en

In this project we aim to support the creation, improvement and wider dissemination of support schemes for migrants and refugees. Thus, Vet4Migre recognizes that it is important to develop new, creative and long-term strategies and practical ways, for refugee and migrant populations to adapt, integrate and become positive members in their host countries, and seeks to support their smooth integration into the job market by offering the necessary training and mentoring opportunities to become self-employed.

Indeed, migrants and refugees are an important workforce for the hosting EU countries and can make a significant contribution to the host economies. Fundamentally, this seems to require targeted training and mentoring, allowing them to succeed in becoming new entrepreneurs.

As we can see from the above statistics, the economic prosperity and political stability of the EU seems to have exerted a strong pull on immigrants. In destination countries, international migration may be used to fill specific gaps in the labor market.

Furthermore, Europe needs more entrepreneurs and an enabling VET climate for entrepreneurship in order to successfully implement the Lisbon strategy and create necessary conditions for sustainable and inclusive growth and employment.

With this in mind, and following the EC recommendations to include migrants in the European economy, there needs to be greater emphasis placed on:

- A. Reinforcing skills in ICT and in innovations
- B. Increasing abilities in management, language, marketing and in all the soft skills that go along with these
- C. Promoting the exchange of good practices in the promotion of ethnic minority and migrant businesses
- D. creating options for better integration

Based on the above, this project aims to provide trainings in the necessary sectors, promote social cohesion and the integration of migrants, and facilitate the development of new start-ups.

Process of Data Collection for this Report

Each of the 6 partner country organizations, from collectively: Denmark, Spain, Italy (2 organizations), Bulgaria, and Greece, has contributed to this report with a national chapter. This Target Groups Report is thus a compilation and analysis of feedback in the form of a compendium of 5 national chapters. Feedback has been collected from 2 main groups, those being: migrants and refugees, as well as the stakeholders who support them.

Each partner organization has conducted surveys, focus groups, interviews and desk research in an effort to outline the needs of migrants and refugees in successfully starting their own business in the countries where they are now based. Within each national chapter, we outline the current situation and training available in the field of entrepreneurship and employability, in an effort to identify available resources and gaps in training provisions.

Within each country, 2 focus groups were held to produce each national chapter. The first focus groups was with migrants and refugees (10 participants or more) who have a business idea. The second focus group was with stakeholders working to support this group (at least 5 participants), from public and private entities, e.g. NGO representatives, government case workers, etc.

Each organization, before starting the interview, ensured that the aims of the project and the objectives of the research were explained in full to the participants. Any issues were further clarified as necessary about the initiative and/or the European programs in which it is been developed.

Facilitators made a point to underline that this research was realized within the framework of the European program: Erasmus Plus KA2, explaining that it is an action to support strategic partnerships directed to support innovative initiatives and to offer new VET opportunities in the participating countries.

Overall, facilitators in each country worked to generate discussion and highlight differing points of view. They also played a proactive role in the focus groups, asking members to elaborate on certain issues and controlling the ‘air time’ of group members so that no one individual dominated the conversation.

Moreover, it was also underlined that this specific action was granted by the Erasmus National Agency in Denmark that demonstrated a specific interest and attention to the subject area of migrant entrepreneurship.

Before starting the interviews, information was further provided on the project activities to be developed and on the international partnership. Participants were encouraged to visit the official project web site⁸ and/or the Facebook⁹ page of the project where it could be possible to find more information and to stay in contact directly with all the partners and or persons interested in the project results.

⁸ <https://www.vet4migre.eu/en/>

⁹ <https://da-dk.facebook.com/Vet4Migre/>



Denmark **National Report**

Introduction

In February 2018, the Danish partner organization, Crossing Borders, conducted fieldwork research involving both surveys and focus group interviews with migrant entrepreneurs and stakeholders supporting this group.

In this Danish National chapter, a brief historical context will be provided regarding statistics related first to migrants and refugees in general, and secondly the situation for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs, in Denmark today.

In 2017, immigrants and their descendants made up 13% of the total population of Denmark. Of this total, 10% were immigrants, whilst of these, 58% come from non-western countries. In the past 30 years, the number of non-western immigrants in Denmark has gone up by a factor of five.¹⁰

The period from 1995–2008 saw a rise in employment of immigrants with a non-western background, a peak which has since fallen. Among immigrants ages 16-64 with a non-western background, in 2015, men and women were employed at a rate of 53% and 45% respectively.

The most current government statistical data available involving migrant and refugee entrepreneurs in Denmark can be found in the report: “Entrepreneurship Index for Migrants and Descendants in Denmark 2013”.¹¹ In this report, the Danish Social and Integration Ministry, which had created a task force on integration, identified entrepreneurship as a special area for encouraging integration and employment in Denmark.

We briefly summarize their findings below, and note the need for more current data, a gap we contribute to addressing in the following chapter as we outline our findings from the VET4MIGRE project focus groups.

From the ministry’s report, in 2013, 13.6% of all entrepreneurs in Denmark were migrants or their descendants. Non-western migrants made up the majority of these at 8.3%. The number of entrepreneurs with an immigrant background had never been higher. The immigrant entrepreneurs as compared to the entrepreneurs of Danish origin were often driven by necessity to create their businesses, which is a characteristic and drive we identified from the outset of our project, as generally true of migrant entrepreneurs across Europe.

¹⁰ <http://dst.dk/Site/Dst/Udgivelser/GetPubFile.aspx?id=20705&sid=indv2017>

¹¹ <http://w2l.dk/file/406159/ivaerksaetterindeks2013.pdf>

2012 saw 42,800 persons in Denmark employed in start-ups, with 9.4% of these being immigrants with non-western backgrounds. Established businesses by immigrants, however, more often closed within the first 3 years of their creation, unlike those started by persons of ethnic Danish origin, yet, those that survived the first critical 3 years went on to create more job opportunities per business than their ethnic Danish counterparts.

In 2012, entrepreneurs of Danish origin were on average older than those with immigrant backgrounds. The immigrant entrepreneurs also generally had a lower level of education. The report noted that migrant entrepreneurs as compared to ethnic Danes have a demonstrated greater potential for creating export businesses. Migrants further concentrate on the branches of “trade and transport” and “hotel and restaurants” rather than “information and communication of knowledge services,” like their Danish counterparts, but that changes with their length of stay in Denmark.

For immigrant women in Denmark in 2012, it was found that they more often chose to be entrepreneurs than women of ethnic Danish origin, and that their numbers were rising. Among immigrants establishing businesses in Denmark, 24% were women in 2007 and that number rose to 30% in 2010.

Overall, the ministry found that effective training and counseling for migrant entrepreneurs in the critical start-up phase contributed to overall business survival during the first years.

Like elsewhere in Europe, migrant and refugee entrepreneurs in Denmark create value for society in many ways. Among others, they are job-creators, reduce welfare costs as they are self-employed, and they bring their unique skills and experiences. Often their motivation is more necessity-oriented and they have unique advantages such as having an established international network.

Moreover, entrepreneurship is a sector identified by the Danish state as an area worthy of strengthening to promote integration and a prosperous society. Denmark has taken concrete actions to ensure assistance to those with entrepreneurial aims. There is a need for continued and more current follow-up and support for this group, for the benefit of the society as a whole.

Feedback: Migrants and Refugees in Denmark

In February 2018, Crossing Borders conducted interviews with highly-skilled migrants in Denmark and collected the main findings. The results follow below and center around the issues of: language, public policy, financing, networks, and the role of NGOs.

One of the major problems that migrant and refugee entrepreneurs are facing in Denmark with regards to accessing job positions that accurately reflect their skill levels, is the language barrier. Customized arrangements focused on preparing for entry into the labour market, e.g. mentoring and/or coaching, would best address this issue, according to the survey responses.

Awareness of current policies and procedures for business creation among immigrants and refugees is limited overall, as participants in our survey believe their knowledge is only partially adequate. Moreover, most of those migrants and refugees who participated have not yet received any support in regards to entry into the business environment and counseling related to the legal frameworks of entrepreneurship in Denmark. In addition, one of the major issues they face as a group is access to public/private funding.

When asked about their engagement in any sort of networking, specifically with: other immigrant entrepreneurs; third-sector entities; and business and/or religious organizations aimed at supporting migrant entrepreneurs, the answers were mixed. Half of the participants responded positively and half of them negatively.

The vast majority of participants responded that NGOs should play a role in consulting, mentoring, coaching and similar, also in partnership with educational institutions and businesses, in order to address the insufficient customized educational support to entrepreneurs currently available.

Indeed, all of the survey participants believe that NGOs should have a role in the provision of support schemes (coaching, mentoring, etc.) in alliance with business-sector stakeholders to address the insufficient provisions of legal and business advice customized to migrants' enterprises.

Two relevant roles were identified that NGOs should play in the introduction of immigrants and refugees into the labor market and/or business sector:

1. Educational services targeted at developing soft, transversal, entrepreneurial skills as well as basic instruments of employability/ entrepreneurship
2. Orienteering and work-based learning, in partnership with business/labour market stakeholders.

The majority of participants thought that NGOs should play a role in the cross-collaboration and coordination in between sectors including other NGOs, educational institutions, and businesses, in order to assist migrants in the process of transition between entrepreneurial intentions to entrepreneurial action.

The majority of participants further identify that any strategies aimed at improving equal opportunity to the labour market and business sector access, should address the skills-based roots of inequality in opportunity through education/mentoring/coaching, etc.

Finally, the optimal approaches for dealing with phenomena of actual and hidden discrimination of immigrants and refugees within the realms of the labour market and business sector, would be education and awareness-raising actions. These actions should be targeted at sensitizing employers/ stakeholders in the field of business regarding discrimination, according to the feedback we received.

Case Studies: Migrants and Refugees in Denmark

The first participant is an immigrant to Denmark, whose country of origin is India. In India, she worked as a software engineer. Because cooking was something she enjoyed, when she and her husband moved to Denmark and she didn't have a job, she started talking with her network of friends about her business idea for starting a catering company. She found many of her friends had food intolerances and enjoyed her Asian food, and the idea started to take shape.

In realizing her entrepreneurial dreams, she has found it difficult navigating all the ideas her friends were suggesting. She had an interest in making something really new and innovative. The obstacles she has met are many. She has found it difficult not having someone to consult about what she wanted to create—someone to help her edit her ideas and get started. She says she has in general lacked a strong knowledge of the process of building a business and how to test the strength of her model.

She has attempted to use the resources available from the municipality, but they were not for her personalized enough to be really meaningful. The courses she has attended have been too general and she wishes they were sector-oriented, so that she could attend one about the food business sector, specifically, for example, to learn about certification requirements in Denmark. She has often felt alone and without proper explanation of where to begin to obtain this information. She feels that Danes would not face so great a barrier. In her view, it would be easier for Danes to find the information and/or people that could direct them to the information needed, from within their network.

After attending the municipality-run courses, she was provided with a mentor, but she felt she didn't connect well or relate enough to her mentor and was not comfortable asking for or didn't know how to ask for a new one, so she lost interest. For her, regardless of the counseling, she was still critically lacking a network of people successful in the food business. She wishes it was easier to connect people together in the same sector, both those who are established and successful and those just starting out. She would have liked to ask questions like: How can I reach an adequate target group? What mistakes did you make and what remedies did you employ? What location would be best for my business? And then she would like to have simply been able to share experiences and learn from such a network of food business owners.

The first participant has experienced a lot of dead ends that can cause mental stress, resulting in her wish for a better support group. At some points, she has just wanted to "give up" because she couldn't find someone to help her. It would have been easier had she had someone to listen to her difficulties and share their own relatable experiences. She has one entrepreneur friend who is a jewelry maker who has been very much a source of support for her that she highly values. She pointed out that ideally mentorship and a support network would involve personal and professional support in the form of mentors—in her case she has relied on her friend and husband.

She explained further that she also felt that with case workers in the municipality, it is a big problem when one's case gets handed off to another, meaning one has to start from scratch. This requires rebuilding a completely new relationship that takes an effort to establish. She also reported getting different answers from different case workers.

Another obstacle she has encountered is learning how to make her business more visible to the Danish public. Online-marketing like on Facebook and marketing generally is expensive in Denmark.

She identifies feedback from those that have tried her dishes to have been a powerful motivator. There was a street food festival where she had a stand and received great feedback. For her, it was a great driver to know people like the product, so she decided the rest she could figure out, she would just need patience. Knowing other people were happy with the food was what she needed to continue in the process.

Regarding legal issues, she finds it intimidating trying to navigate and understand everything. She has hired assistance in this area because she considers it important for her to avoid errors, especially concerning tax law. When she initially relied on the municipality legal counseling services, she found that she would call an institution and depending on whom she talked to, she would get different answers. However, like most things in Denmark, paying a professional is very expensive. Also, digital explanations online of legal rules and regulations are largely in Danish only.



Regarding cultural differences, she considers it an advantage to be Indian and so catering Indian food, because it adds authenticity and credibility to her business idea. She does though have to consider how to attract Danes and how much to alter her business to suit Danish sensibilities.

In India, the very close family structure meant that there was a lot of pressure not to disappoint. She feels less pressure here to impress. There are fewer people who would be impacted by any sort of failures she may encounter, which she finds emboldening. She explains that she would be more vulnerable to the opinions and influences of those around her in her community in India. She would potentially feel discouraged from innovating as she wouldn't "dare to do something different."

The rules and regulations in Denmark also create quite a contrast. For the first participant, officials in India would expect favors and consider themselves "masters" which creates extra hardship. Yet, despite the greater transparency here, it remains quite a challenge for her to know where to look for the information she needs to succeed.



The second participant's country of origin is Syria, and he has refugee status in Denmark. He has a business idea that involves the media and which he plans to start with his friends. He has a family background in the food business and has ideas for a business start-up in this sector as well.

The second participant has a strong sense of self-initiative and experience having already, as a teenager, been a successful entrepreneur in Syria. He feels confident in his skills for attracting and reaching out to customers. He considers Denmark to be a good place for business owners based on the strong rules and regulations and high standards of professionalism and is not intimidated by the corresponding amount of bureaucracy. He feels he can largely draw on his own experiences and that of his family's when starting his own business in Denmark. He is thus highly optimistic and motivated.

Regarding obstacles he may encounter, he feels he knows whom to ask for help, and that he can make use of those resources that are free and available, also online. He expects to generate capital to start his business by himself.

As a refugee, he found his original case worker in the municipality to be extremely helpful. She assisted him for almost 9 months. He considers her an important part of his network for guidance in rules and regulations in Denmark. She also "pushed him to go further."

He did though have a mixed experience with the municipality, as the next case worker he consulted was less competent about the rules and regulations. He also met obstacles with the municipality not being able to give him proper feedback about, e.g. his paycheck when he asked for assistance interpreting its details and how his salary was being taxed. He finds that in Denmark, government case workers are highly specialized in one area and lack information about areas outside of their specialty. Other institutional problems he personally encountered involved his case getting stuck in the system and not being followed-up upon, giving the impression that the case-workers become too easily delayed for whatever reason.

For him, a real key was learning the language so that he could communicate properly. While he feels he learned Danish quickly, due to his natural knack for languages, when it comes to legal issues, it would take a lot of time to understand so like her, he will consult someone else.

For the second participant, being from another country can be advantageous, as can starting anew. He feels he can escape the pressures of the expectations of people from Syria. However, in Syria, he found it easier to grow his business because of the different tax situation.

As for Danish policies, he pointed out that refugees at times have money in their home country that they are afraid to declare, because it would have implications for the benefits they receive from the state. This could be changed according to him by extracting less of a cost for bringing those savings here to Denmark. In this way, there would also be more potential start-up money to invest into their business in Denmark, and so the Danish economy.

For a refugee from Syria, the second participant explains that there is an issue with anxiety within one's network, even in Denmark. It becomes important to understand the political positions of personal contacts, e.g. whether or not they are a member of the Syrian secret police.

He says the best way to help refugees is to provide them with money that helps them get on their feet, not welfare, but helping them stabilize and manage practical things. There is also a stigma that is quite demoralizing surrounding refugees on welfare that makes it hard to leave one's home and start a new life, according to him. Refugees are further often in the position of considering how to financially support family members, in his case family members still living in a war zone.

For him, there was a time when he had a lot of stress and anxiety that was also affecting him physically. Now he says he feels more positive; he drew support during that time from his family and friends, and talking about all that he was feeling. He found that it was a struggle learning the practical steps that must be learned by oneself about being open to making mistakes and knowing that you can't wait until things are perfect because then you will never do anything. He explained that you can have the most brilliant idea, but you also have to have a good self-image to realize it. He believes that everybody can be an entrepreneur and develop an idea. "You can use your mistakes and failures as a way to build experience—if you fail you didn't lose anything." For a refugee that has endured intense problems, this psychological aspect must not be overlooked in supporting this group of entrepreneurs.

Like the first participant, the second participant agreed on the need for a mentor, also to help one plan ahead.

He further underscored the need to learn and have assistance in better understanding the unwritten rules which are "everywhere." For example, understanding boundaries and expected behavior around Danish colleagues and friends. There is also a need for Danes, conversely, to understand more about life as a refugee here.

The third participant is a migrant to Denmark with a degree in electrical engineering. He highlighted how he had taken part in many business exhibitions and had participated in extensive student-networking in Denmark. He felt he could see the differences in how he was received at, e.g. the exhibitions, based on his background, which he feels has very real ramifications for accessing public and private funding needed to grow one's business.

Like the others, he emphasized the need for mentorships. He had put in a lot of effort himself experimenting with building a network here. In this area, his greatest success has been by purposefully practicing a sport, where he was able to meet other Danes and develop relationships at this venue. He sees value in a mentor, in that they can guide an entrepreneur with practical matters, like with bank accounts. It is further of high value to him to connect with many people in order to widen one's own resources.

Case Studies: Migrants and Refugees in Denmark Summary

Through the fruitful discussions with the three participants, it was made clear that there exists both advantages and difficulties for those migrants and refugees wishing to start their own business in Denmark. As mentioned by all three, one of the main challenges included not having a 'gatekeeper' or insider to assist with networking and support. Other main points involved the lack of pre-existing knowledge regarding the process of establishing one's business in Denmark and a lack of personalized resources readily available to identify and interpret/translate what information is available. At the same time there are according to our participants advantages in starting a business in Denmark, in e.g. the resources available online, the strong system of rules and regulations that make Denmark attractive for business owners, and the (with variability) helpfulness of case workers for consulting and expanding one's network. However, challenges still persist such as the need to learn Danish and the possibility of getting stuck in the bureaucratic system. Overall, the following were emphasized: the significance of networking; the usefulness of a mentor; and the importance of learning Danish and tackling discrimination.

Feedback: Stakeholders Working With Migrants and Refugees in Denmark

In February 2018 Crossing Borders also conducted interviews with stakeholders working with migrant entrepreneurs in Denmark. The results of these interviews and focus group, which follow below, center around labor market access.

All stakeholders responded that they have certainly observed and concur with the reflections above that there is a particularly high mismatch between the skill levels and job positions held by migrants and refugees in Denmark. The high level of requirements of the host country seems to the stakeholders equal in difficulty to the language barrier. However, after these requirements are achieved, it is still hard for a migrant or refugee to find a job. Notably, the accent of a non-native Danish speaker is often considered “bad” or can make someone “appear unqualified” according to our participants.

The two most significant problems migrant and refugee entrepreneurs face in Denmark, according to the stakeholders supporting this group, are 1) the language barrier and 2) inadequate recognition of qualifications already earned in home countries. The proposed resolution of these issues is to provide customized arrangements of preparation for entering the labour market such as mentoring and coaching.

There was further among the stakeholders, a perceived lack of awareness and support available for migrants when it comes to existing policies and supporting frameworks. The stakeholders identified that there is a significant problem for migrants generally in understanding the legal rules and regulations, especially how to get started and for those who have refugee status with a special set of rules to follow. Stakeholders emphasize that the population of Denmark is largely conservative and private. It is hard to break into the established Danish business society and one really can face obstacles from lack of a network. There was a perceived reluctance to include foreigners in Denmark among the stakeholders, making it further difficult to access funding from the private and public sector, regardless of skill level or quality of the product or service idea and personal qualifications.

Finally, for the stakeholders, it is important to underscore the language barrier in a Danish context, which is especially significant as there exists such a strong social stigma towards those who are non-native speakers.



Case Studies: **Stakeholders** **working with** **migrants and** **refugees** **in Denmark**

The first stakeholder is a municipality case worker supporting migrant and refugee entrepreneurs (and a refugee himself). He highlighted how it is important to call migrant entrepreneurs simply “entrepreneurs” or “business people” because that is what they are. In his work, he raises awareness among migrants and refugees about cultural differences to consider when e.g. pitching one’s company. The support he offers is highly individualized, and thus very resource-intensive. He even visits his clients at home and works to build their confidence and motivation, underlining that they don’t have to have money just to get started.

Overall, in his experience, most startups fail because they do not have enough funding. Access to funding continues to be a major obstacle, as refugees “have no chance of getting money from the bank,” while migrants often need a guarantee, which can also be very difficult to obtain.

For NGOs, he considers it very important to consider raising the visibility of migrant and refugee entrepreneurs as a group, as they need specific resources, and so that Danes better understand how to offer support and build a better society together. There is a need to create a positive narrative that provides new stories to change mindsets about migrants and refugees. NGOs can also build the visibility of migrant and refugee entrepreneurs, so that they have a greater chance of success and also they can inspire others with similar backgrounds, and to create events where this group can network and market their goods. At these events, politicians should be invited to strengthen political support and action.

There is a further need for migrant and immigrant entrepreneurs in Denmark to be assisted in learning about how to be more digital in their start-up idea, and in the use of social media, when creating a business in Danish society.

The second stakeholder is a case-worker at Business House Copenhagen, a municipality-funded institution that offers free courses on how to start a business. Course content centers around practical aspects of starting a business in a Danish context, i.e. legal obligations and information on taxes and marketing. Around 30% of their participants have an immigrant background. Classes are also offered in English and there is a staff member who advises immigrants in the Arabic language. There is also 20-minute individual legal counseling per month, available for free. Further advice is provided on request.

In his experience, the biggest challenges for immigrant entrepreneurs in Denmark is getting a grasp of all the rules and regulations, as well as the administrative aspects of running a business. Gaining adequate funding to begin a business is also a struggle. In Denmark, property is very expensive and competition is high. Furthermore, expectations of the average Dane are also very high when they seek out a service and so any business here must be quality-oriented. Meeting those expectations or identifying what they are can be difficult for a newcomer, according to him.

The third stakeholder is the Director of Copenhagen Business School, School of Entrepreneurship. Since 2007, CSE has helped more than 700 student-driven companies. It is a student incubator with more than 130 cross-disciplinary startups, and with students from more than 90 different countries. It is the largest student incubator in Denmark.

CSE has several students of immigrant or refugee background currently working in teams at the incubator. CSE is working on building their program to support migrants in collaboration with the municipality job center and the Danish Red Cross. According to her, there is a great need for the organizations involved in supporting migrant entrepreneurs to focus on creating a 'mindshift' where entrepreneurs not only use their individual competencies, but are also assisted in transforming the use of his or her competencies in an entrepreneurial way to build confidence and believe more in oneself.



Those migrants who have a knack for searching out information and understanding there is a great need to have official legal help before signing a contract makes a big difference. He pointed out how migrants are generally highly motivated because other doors have been closed for them. He also finds that Danes start a company at an older age, with more competencies, whereas migrants are typically younger and finance themselves with money collected across their own network.

He further emphasized that it can greatly help migrant and refugee entrepreneurs when they have a role model—someone with the same background who has seen success themselves in the same field.

The fourth stakeholder is the founder and CEO of Refugee Entrepreneurs Denmark (RED). This NGO aims to unleash the potential of refugees, creating motivated and empowered individuals by using entrepreneurship as an integration tool that “expands one’s life opportunities.” RED does this through a program that can be divided into 2 key areas: Incubation and Acceleration. The incubation phase prepares the migrant for business creation, and the accelerator phase takes the previous knowledge gained and puts it into action.

RED provides consultancy and counselling for individual refugee entrepreneurs for 7 years. Personalized, individual support over the long-term, though resource-intensive is seen by him as absolutely critical to ensuring success and meeting shared goals. Currently, they have 12 refugees in their program and 10 businesses. The methodology used is designed to help people establish a business “from A to Z.” RED also has a collaboration with the organization “Hack Your Future” teaching refugees to learn code. They provide consulting to entrepreneurs about all aspects of business development, from websites, logo, brand, and pitch-training to microfinancing.

In Denmark, you cannot register a business if you are on state benefits as a refugee. RED is looking into different partnerships and strategies to overcome this barrier. Financing to start a business is a great hurdle for refugees. There is bureaucracy to overcome as well in seeking loans, both from the municipality and banks. It is difficult for refugees to prove their business case without being advised beforehand and taking a loan from a bank is nearly impossible as they so often have no established credit in Denmark. RED further has made suggestions for debate in the Danish Parliament about offering microloans to marginalized individuals, which has a proven success rate, and which of course is also attractive to politicians as it lowers the number of people on government assistance and can create meaningful and sustained employment. The current situation as he sees it is that in Denmark, integration is hindered when refugees do not have access to financing for their startups and are instead obligated to work by the municipality in jobs that are below their skill-level where they end up working with non-Danes, doing low-income work.

RED also focuses on understanding business culture in Denmark. Their program emphasizes how to appeal to the Danish market and trains accordingly. They wish to help migrants appeal not only to other migrants when creating a business, but to succeed in reaching a wider number of potential customers. They have for example helped one refugee business transform their logo so that it is popular for both tourists and Danes alike, and also modify their packaging to be more widely-appealing.

In Denmark, there is a great cultural need for private space according to him, which for some newcomers must be taught, as it can be a big cultural difference. It should also be considered, for example, how to design interiors in a way that makes a Dane feel comfortable, or that is a recognizable environment. One of the businesses they support, “Falafel Factory” has a purposeful design that is in the current “Nordic-style.” In this way, the entrepreneur is not relying on immigrants as their main customer and the larger picture and aim of integration is addressed, not just the success of an individual business. There is also a need for appealing to the Danish market on social media and so counseling on how to navigate this in both a technical but also culturally-aware way.

Psychological services and connecting their refugee group of entrepreneurs to these resources is also taken into consideration, with collaboration with the Danish Refugee Council. The consultants very much ask for and listen to the needs and wishes of the refugees themselves.

Another component of the program is that of corporate social responsibility. This is adding value. For example, the company “Karma Wash” is a social entrepreneurship using eco-friendly products.

He finds that as a group, migrants are highly motivated to become successful entrepreneurs largely in part from a strong desire to get out of and no longer be dependent on the welfare system. He emphasizes that through simply participating in the program, regardless of the outcome of their start-up, refugees will have gained skills in website creation for example, been empowered, know what to do in a step-by-step complete process, become more independent, avoid increasing their dependency on the state, know how to go out and find customers, know how to make a presentation of their business idea, etc.

For him, it isn't enough to establish a network, which is already a challenge for a migrant in a new place, but there is a great need for business skills and cultural awareness training. Other skills training, for example, legal issues and accounting workshops one can attend for free by the municipality. There is also a need for resource-intensive, long-term, individualized support and consultations.

Finally, at RED, they wish to reach out to refugees and support them in creating their own businesses to ensure greater life purpose and connection.

Case Studies: Stakeholders working with migrants and refugees in Denmark Summary

The four stakeholders, each contributed with nuanced feedback about how they work to support migrant and refugee entrepreneurs in their own ways. One key take-away was how it can be a real struggle to grasp the rules and regulations here in Denmark. Access to sufficient funding can also be a major hurdle, a fact exacerbated by the high cost-of living and generally high expenses in Denmark. Competition can be tough and expectations are high in this society; Danish customers expect a high overall standard of quality. To support migrant entrepreneurs in Denmark, special consideration should be paid to building confidence and supporting psychological health and needs throughout the process. Assistance in understanding the Danish language is further needed, as well as not only networking support but also business skills and cultural awareness training, preferably also through mentorship. We further see these stakeholders presently involved in and thinking creatively about collaboration across institutions and organizations, pooling resources and expertise and creating important synergies for the benefit of the group they support. Finally, delivering individualized and long-term assistance is considered essential.

Final Summary Denmark

We see in Denmark, a country that has already identified entrepreneurship as a special area for encouraging integration and employment. Noting this, the results of our research point to key areas where resources may be directed to better support migrants who aim to start a business in this country.

The language barrier is a key hurdle. There is also overall, much bureaucracy to navigate, and this situation is further exacerbated when the rules and regulations can only be found in Danish.

Finding one's way seems to be best supported by trainings and having the help of someone with "insider's knowledge" – a mentor and preferably one within the sector of one's chosen business idea. This person(s) can further shine a light on e.g. important cultural aspects to consider and how to access funding and resources.

Discrimination continues to also be a problem according to both the stakeholders and the migrants themselves. NGOs should work to raise awareness and influence policy makers in this regard.

The psychological aspects of starting a business when you have a migrant and refugee background should not be overlooked. Cross-collaboration in this area across organizations with varying expertise and resources is key. Stakeholders coordinating across institutions can aid migrant entrepreneurs in other ways as well of course, e.g. simply pointing out what resources are already available for which they might otherwise be unaware. New synergies across organizations should be stimulated and considered for the benefit of all involved.

Finally, the Danish market can be a tough one to crack – the competition, financial cost, and customer expectations are all high. The process of supporting migrants and refugee entrepreneurs in Denmark, according to our research will therefore be most effective when it is resource-intensive, individualized, and long-term.



ITALY

National Report

Introduction

The Italian partners held 2 focus groups: one on 26 March and the second on 24 May, 2018. The first focus group involved 10 migrants in Italy (6 men and 4 women) and the second one involving 5 organizations working with them.

In the first focus group all the participants were Master students, so very highly-skilled migrants. In the second focus group the participants were representatives of 5 public and private entities supporting migrants and foreigners to enter the job market and to start their self-entrepreneurial career.

Each of our focus groups followed the indications received by the coordinator for the organization of the event and for the atmosphere to be created.

It is important to underline that our focus groups had an international point of view because we had the opportunity to involve persons from various countries and from very different backgrounds and/or cultures: so the result of this project task can be considered as a real, even if small, international perspective.

Our intention in making the interviews was also to identify ideas, opinions, and issues in the area of supporting highly skilled migrants to give this target group the opportunity to create a business or find jobs matching their skills levels.

From the partners point of view it was interesting to have answers to our questions from one side directly from migrants and from the other side from stakeholders that normally work with them: an opportunity was created to listen to the two different sides and to understand if they have a different or shared perspective.

The European Union, if it wants to survive the migrant crisis of the last years, has the necessity to invest more and more to sustain integration and inclusion, permitting migrants to find solutions for their lives and for the European economy to have benefits from their business.

Now let's go more deeply inside the results of each of the focus group realized.

We have divided the results into 2 major groups of outcomes:

- Results from migrants' focus group
- Results from stakeholders' focus group

In the following pages, you can read the explanation of the outcomes obtained from both of these meetings.

Feedback: Migrants and Refugees in Italy

The summary of answers received from our Migrants interviews divided by “selected outcome,” follows below.

The **first outcome** we found was a “need for support.” We posed the question: Are you self-employed or thinking about it because you cannot get a qualified job in this country?

For this question, the majority of respondents expressed the need for support, advice or help in another format, in order to establish themselves as self-employed participants in society. This is very important, especially because the group was already high-skilled and qualified.

“For migrants, it’s a bit hard to find some people that can trust us” <...> help from our professors or other persons<...> harder to find a full time job as an immigrant<...> it would help to find more information<...> we need other hands to help us to make this self-employment;

Outcome 2 we found to be: “migrant employment is affected by both economy and discrimination/predispositions.” We posed the question: What are the problems you think highly skilled migrants are facing in accessing adequate job positions in your country?

The answers on this issue were divided. Half of the group saw migrant employment as a general problem of the economy (based on tourism):

“the economy is based on tourism<...>it’s hard because of economy”

Another participant saw a problem of discrimination (a priority for locals): “reserved for Sardinian people <...> The country first gives the chance for local people<...> I can imagine (with the effort for stay permit) how difficult it would be to get employed”

Outcome 3 involved: “a lack of awareness of the current policies and procedures of immigrant integration in the labor market in Italy.” This result from the question: Are you aware of the current policies and procedures of immigrant integration in the labor market and creation of business by immigrants in Italy?

We discovered that a Majority of the group did not have any information about the policies regarding the topic.

To **question 4**, the Outcome found was that: “support programmes aimed at establishing migrant start-ups is not sufficient.”

When asked: Have you ever taken part in any support programme aimed at establishing migrant start-ups delivered by the public/private sector? The majority of the respondents did not have did not have information about the support programmes and the possibilities to take part. Those respondents who did have some awareness about it expressed doubts about the effectiveness – “there is a law, but there is a thing between the law, it’s written, we don’t know if it will be accepted or not<...> I am considered Erasmus for Young entrepreneurs, so it helped me create a business plan. But it’s not enough”

After presenting the question: What role do you think the education and training system should play in supporting migrants’ enterprises/start-ups? We found **Outcome 5** to be that: “education and training system should support migrants’ enterprises/start-ups by coaching and legal/financial advice.”

Most of the respondents put focus on coaching when talking about the support the education and training system could play in supporting migrants’ enterprises/start-ups: “coaching goes first and then maybe funding.”

Regarding **Outcome 6**, we found: “**ethnic groups seem the most important networking opportunities when talking about migrant entrepreneurial support.**”

Are you presently engaged in any sorts of networking with other migrant start-ups/entrepreneurs/third sector entities/business interest organizations/religious organizations/churches aimed at supporting entrepreneurship by migrants?

Almost all the respondents said they were not involved in any networking with other migrants. However, when one of them expressed the small size of their ethnic community (as that’s where they would firstly look for support and networking), others concurred. This means, that migrants first of all rely on their ethnic community abroad (instead of local organizations). “Every country tries to make its group, community. The Moroccan community is way too low, so we don’t know so many people here.”



Furthermore, we found that: “there is not enough support in learning the language for migrants,” as **Outcome 7**. This was after posing the question: What role do you think NGOs can play in addressing the insufficient customized educational support to entrepreneurial skills Education in the case of your business?

When asked about the specific role that NGOs could provide in customized educational support to entrepreneurial skills education, the majority of respondents first and foremost mentioned: language. There were strong opposing opinions, that language can be learned elsewhere, and that coaching is much more important: “coaching, because you can get the language somewhere else.” Coaching came up several more times as a very important aspect. However, there is a language gap that needs to be filled or communicated.

When asked: What role do you think NGOs can play in addressing insufficient provisions of legal, business advice customized to migrants’ enterprises?, we found **Outcome 8** to be: “From NGOs, migrants expect networking opportunities and communication about their issues when entering the job market/business sector.”

The most important finding is the lack of information about the activities and even existence of NGOs and the possible support in setting up the business: “and also there should be like some kind of adverts, accessing the NGOs, not like this, it just go ear to ear. I have never heard of this one, except when someone (study friend) told me”.

Another issue that they expect to be raised is lobbying targeted policy-makers (raising awareness) and creating the networking opportunities, to meet potential business partners, mentors, coaches etc.



Outcome 9:

Outcome 9 was found to be: “NGOs could support potential migrant entrepreneurs by connecting them to job market and providing hands-on work experience.” This was realized after asking: What role do you think NGOs can play to introduce migrants into the labour market/Business sector?

Most of the respondents expressed the importance of Orienteering and work-based learning, in partnership with business/labour market stakeholders, fostering internships, traineeships, networking events “traineeship, it could take you outside of our life, of student life, university, and it would take you to the working world and would make you more active in society. Traineeship and working with someone who has more experience than you.”

We further found that, “NGOs could bridge the gap between the ideas and the realization of ideas” as **Outcome 10.**

What role do you think NGOs can play in assisting migrants in the process of transition between entrepreneurial intentions to entrepreneurial action through the establishment of start-ups?

The most important finding about this issue is the role that local NGOs can play in bridging the gap, acting as mediators and support providers in making the ideas a reality. The entrepreneurial education is one crucial step, with coaching and mentoring into how to apply the education in real life situations: “I would expect the NGO to bridge the gap – I am a student; how can I get employed<...> actually what we search is the connection, how we can get our idea into business market and we need some advice to make (create, build) our ideas too”

“To improve equal opportunities in access to the labour market policy-making effort seems most important” became our result for **Outcome 11**. We asked the group: What strategies can be used in improving equal opportunities in access to the labour market and to the business field by migrants?

The majority of respondents would put the most importance on policy making when addressing the issue of equal opportunities in access to the labour market: “before changing the attitude, policy comes first <...> policy. First, we need to be equal.

Feedback: Stakeholders working with migrants and refugees in Italy

The summary of answers received from our interviews divided by chosen outcome, follows below.

We posed the question: Do you think that there are particular categories of migrants who suffer from a mismatch between their skills & competences and the needs of the job market? From our discussion we derive **Outcome 1**: “**No specific migrant categories are affected by skills mismatch. Difference are due to migrant conditions in their hosting countries.**”

The participants pointed out that many migrants have different skills and competences than the ones required by the Italian job market. They did not identify specific groups, apart from the differences between refugees and regular migrants relating to possession of education diplomas. However, the most important barrier is social inclusion, a very important basis for their integration into the job market. Therefore, those migrants who spend the most time outside the hosting centres and interacting with local population are more likely to succeed in finding a job suitable for their skills. It seems that the length of stay in the Italian territory is the most relevant variable determining the chances to successfully access the job market. Moreover, migrants who are residing in Italy illegally obviously cannot access the regular labour market.

Outcome 2 involved the finding that: “**barriers to access the Italian job market are various.**” The question posed was: What are the most important barriers faced by migrants in accessing the job market in Italy?

The most important identified barriers to accessing the job market in Italy are: insufficient ability; lack of recognition and validation of the diplomas achieved in their countries; and the intercultural differences. When it comes to ranking them from most to least important, the opinions were very different from each participant. Some representatives identified language as the most important problem, others said that language skills are not a barrier. The same is true for qualifications and recognition of diplomas. However, there is a consensus on the need of an action to eliminate intercultural barriers, letting the migrants internalise the Italian practices in social life, which also reflects the soft and social skills needed on the job.

When asked: To which extent do you think that the knowledge of the Italian language is a barrier to access the labour market and what do you do to overcome this barrier? **Outcome 3** was found to be: “**mastery of Italian language is a strong barrier to enter the job market and the entrepreneurial educational offer.**”

Master of the Italian language is the basis for accessing the labour market and for the success of migrants in their entrepreneurial initiatives. Many migrants do not have sufficient mastery of Italian because they have limited relations with people from the area in which they are hosted. Migrants residing in hosting centres tend to stay mostly with their peers at the centre, even when outside the centre itself. So moments for interaction with Italian people are few and not enough. Although all of them have to attend Italian courses, the mastery of Italian in their exit level from these courses is too low.

Therefore all the educational paths offered by the participating organisations included modules of Italian language. Some courses included specific modules for Italian language in the legal or economical fields. However, in all the courses they selected migrants who had a good level of Italian and the mastery of the language was then a precondition in accessing the educational programme. Therefore, the level of mastery of Italian is a barrier to access those courses offered by the organisations participating to the focus group.

Outcome 4 involved: “**Qualifications have low relevance on entering the job market.**” This finding was our result from asking: What do you think about the importance of validation and recognition of qualifications for migrants and foreigners in general?

Qualifications achieved in the countries of origin of third-country nationals are very difficult to be recognised in Italy as the process is long and requires the involvement of institutional stakeholders that are officially accredited bodies for the recognition of qualifications. The participants stated that the recognition of diplomas is a task of Regione Sardegna. In some cases participants said that there is a high risk for false diplomas and the accreditation process in this regard is quite complex. On the other hand, entrepreneurial stakeholders do not rely too much on qualifications and diplomas, but prefer to personally assess skills and competences through trial periods directly on the job.

When asked: What is the role of your organisation in helping migrants in entering the job market? We found that **Outcome 5** was: “**Support to migrants in the access to the job market passes through intercultural sensitiveness.**”

Support to migrants in entering the job market relates to orientation services which include guidance in finding the right job opportunities, writing a curriculum vitae, writing a motivation letter and teaching how to carry out a job interview. In many organisations, the support provided to migrants passes through the same channels of support provided to Italian people, as the orientation services desks are in principle open to everybody, irrespective of their origin. However, in the case of migrants, intercultural mediators play an important role in letting the migrant understand the situation in the hosting country. Moreover, language courses are key for migrants to access many job opportunities. The need for intercultural understanding is important also in choosing the right professionals for the support to migrants’ job orientation or entrepreneurial mentorship.



Regarding discrimination we asked: Do you think that discriminatory behaviours towards migrants are widespread among the job market or in the entrepreneurial field? Our finding, **Outcome 6**, was that: “**Discrimination is an uncertain issue.**”

As regards discrimination, the view of the participants varied. Some of them stated that discrimination did not represent a problem at all, and that they found a great openness to diversity among the actors in the job market. On the contrary, other participants reported that discriminatory behaviours against migrants are a tangible problem. However, it seems that the problem of discrimination is overestimated by migrants themselves, who possibly feel discriminated against, even when this is not really the case.

We further asked the question: How were the educational support schemes for entrepreneurship dedicated to migrants structured? Our finding, **Outcome 7** involves: **there is a general consistency of the entrepreneurial migrants' support schemes**

All the participants reported to have managed educational courses for migrants comprised of both traditional classes and mentoring and coaching schemes. The participants said that the traditional classes focused on the basics topics related to entrepreneurship, such as legal matters, enterprise development and business planning. The mentorship and coaching programmes were aimed at individual assistance in drafting the business plan. The mentorship scheme is also useful in guiding the migrants in securing funding for the start-up phase of their entrepreneurial ventures.

When asked, What kind of funding schemes for enterprise development are available to migrants?, we found **Outcome 8** to be: **“there is a need for specific funding schemes for migrant entrepreneurship.”**

In the region of Sardinia migrants can easily access specific funding opportunities tailored for them. This is the case of a microcredit scheme that was said to open by Regione Sardegna at the end of 2017. Even if in principle they are not excluded from the funding opportunities designed for everybody who is residing in the Sardinian or Italian territories, migrants face greater barriers of access to current funding schemes for entrepreneurship because of the lack of qualifications recognised at the Italian level, the lack of demonstrated experience in the relevant market field or the compliance with the legal requirements specific to Italian people. Therefore, the operators pointed out the need for funding schemes specifically intended for migrants.

What type of support do you offer to migrants would-be entrepreneurs? was the question posed leading to **Outcome 9**: **“the educational offerings for migrant entrepreneurship are quite similar to the support for Italian entrepreneurs.”**

Most of the organisations participating in the focus group stated that they offer a variety of services to migrants asking for help. The type of support offered to them is in some cases the same offered to Italian entrepreneurs, but there is more intercultural sensitivity involved in the case of migrants' support. The support provided refers to legal matters, fiscal matters, business planning, support in securing funding or investment and ongoing support during the first start-up phase of the company.

Outcome 10 involved: **“Partnerships with stakeholders in the area are key to support migrants to enter the job market or set up a start-up.”**

We discovered this after posing the question: Does your organisation cooperate with other stakeholders at the local and regional level in the support of migrants?

All the participants reported that they cooperate with other institutions or organisations at the local level for different purposes. As regards language courses, every organisation relies on official training centres that are accredited for this task. In Italy these centres are called “CPIA”.

Moreover, the organisations involved in the focus group stated that they cooperate with other stakeholders, such as Chambers of Commerce, migrants' and refugees' centres, non profit organisations providing migrants' support and trade unions. It is impossible to carry out such a job alone, and cooperation with other professionals is fundamental.



For **Outcome 11**, we asked the question: Do you think that equal opportunities between women and men is a key aspect in the support to migrants when entering the job market or setting up an entrepreneurial venture? From the responses, we gleaned Outcome 11: **“equal opportunities between men and women are at the basis of migrants’ support.”**

Equal opportunities are an important aspect of the integration of migrants into the job market or for guiding them to entrepreneurship. All the participants stated that they looked for a balance between men and women when organising their courses in support of entrepreneurship. In some cases, courses were directed only to women in order to boost female migrant entrepreneurship. In general, differences between women and men are wide-spread in the Italian job market, which also has ramifications for the situation of the migrants.

Finally, we asked: What do you think about the policies in support of migrants at the regional and national level? We found thus that, for **Outcome 12** there exists: **“fragmentary policies in support of migrants.”**

Policies in support of migrants to aid in entering the job market or setting up a company are quite fragmented. Most of the participants of the focus group stated that there is a short-term view in the policies of public institutions at the regional level. The support is often provided through spotted actions without a continuity with further or previous actions. Policies in support to migrants are based on projects, less than on long processes. This characteristic is further reflected in policies for Italian people, but it seems migrants need more of a long-term view in the policies that support them. All the participants in the focus group stated that they did not carry out lobbying activities at a higher level to stimulate the public institutions, in particular Regione Sardegna.

Final Summary

As a final evaluation of the survey conducted on the various target groups we can say that overall, there were not so many differences identified among the situations they face.

The participants also expressed a need for stronger support and a long-term view in the design of policies towards migrants.

All the participants expressed a great faith in the values and aims of the European Union and they considered as fundamental the opportunities given by all the community programs.

Migrants participating in the focus group stated that NGOs can play an important role in supporting their integration into society through connecting migrants to the job market and helping them in bridging the gap between their ideas and the realisation of their ideas.

Furthermore, the research pointed out the following major points:

- Basing on the stakeholders' view of the current national policies in Italy, it seems that there is too much focus on the short term, therefore revision is needed. The support from the national or regional governments is provided through spotted actions to fund projects that are not embedded in a broader long-term policy.
- The experiences of the stakeholders involved in the activity demonstrated that an effective integration into the job market or the start up of an entrepreneurial initiative is the result of a good knowledge of the Italian language.
- There is an ever-increasing need for network strengthening in order to achieve greater collaboration, social inclusion and larger outreach. All the participants stated that they work in close cooperation with other institutions and organisations at the local level because it is impossible to produce an effective integration process without cooperative work.
- The stakeholders expressed the need of migrants to have more support in the areas of advice, help and information generally and in terms of understanding the socio-cultural and political systems in place.
- Migrants need to interact with the population at the local level in order to increase their knowledge of the culture and the society in which they live. For this reason, effective integration into the job market is achieved by migrants who often go out of the migrants' centres.

The participants underlined that the European programs contribute greatly to:

- Fight discrimination
- Facilitate integration and inclusion
- Give job opportunities to the target group

Furthermore, they are essential for the development of a Europe based on its own fundamental values.



GREECE **National Report**

Introduction

Over the last few decades there has been an increase in the number of migrants and refugees arriving in Greece. One of the main causes of this phenomenon, among others, is the civil war in Syria. Greece has received the largest proportion of arriving asylum seekers in all of Europe. Using the language of numbers, it would be easier for someone to understand the extent of this phenomenon: out of approximately one million people who arrived to the EU in 2015, over 850.000 entered via Greece. One of the most important aspects of this in our view is that this is not a temporary phenomenon but a long-term issue, that the country and the whole of Europe will continue to face.

The waves of migrants and refugees have essentially changed the anthropogeography of the planet, fleeing not only poverty but also the horror of war and persecution in their countries, especially in the Middle East and North Africa.

Managing the whole situation is a national and, above all, European issue. It requires complex and multilevel policies to mitigate contradictions, in order to solve the high problems that the phenomenon suppresses and reproduces. It is high time for civil society organizations, associations and local and national authorities to intervene and accommodate all required and mandatory actions in order to manage potential relevant issues in each respective field.

The UN has proclaimed the 18th December to be "World Migrants Day." We must take into consideration that one in seven inhabitants of the globe is an immigrant, according to the International Organization for Migration, while at the same time dozens of refugees per day lose their lives trying to move away from war zones.

Indeed, while many people nowadays consider immigration to be a positive and empowering experience, on the other hand, there is no doubt that the lack of human rights for migrants at the borders and in the territory of countries of final destination, it is increasingly a problem. Migration is further based on a complex number of legal systems that authorities implement at a global, regional and national level.

Surveys have shown that migrants and refugees have the tendency to live and work in the shadows, with the fear of expressing their thought and feelings. They are often being denied their fundamental rights and freedoms, while they face extensive discrimination, racism, exploitation and marginalization from the people around them.

National residents of the host countries frequently do not respect migrants' rights, accusing them of creating problems with the distribution of the country's resources. They exclude migrants in their access to fundamental rights, such as the right to education or the right to health, and they are often closely linked to discriminatory laws and practice, deeply-seated in attitudes of prejudice and xenophobia against migrants.

Following a more human rights-based approach to migration places the migrant at the center of migration strategies and governance, and pays particular attention to the situation of disadvantaged groups of migrants. Such an approach may ensure and stabilize that migrants are eventually included in relevant national action plans and policies, such as plans on the provision of public housing or national strategies against xenophobia, racism and marginalization.

Several actors are linked and engaged in information-provision activities concerning, e.g. the asylum procedure. However, since the procedure appears to be quite complex, with continuous legislative changes, as well as numerous bureaucratic hurdles, access to comprehensible information remains a matter of high concern in Greece. Given that legal aid is provided by law only for appeal procedures and remains quite limited in practice, applicants often have to navigate the complex asylum system on their own, without sufficient information.

It is moreover very important to mention the linguistic barriers faced that constitute a substantial and daily challenge. Refugees and migrants in Greece do not always receive information in a language or format they can understand. This phenomenon creates serious language and communication barriers, which can generate feelings of insecurity and have detrimental effects on people's lives.

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Feedback: Migrants and Refugees in Greece

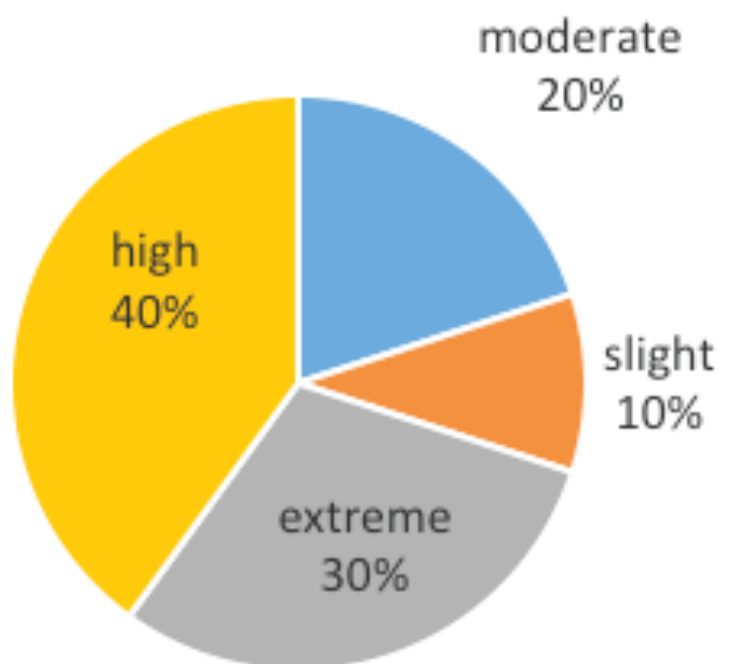
On Thursday, 22 February 2018, the University of Thessaly organized a focus group with 10 migrants and refugees. The aim of this focus group was to discuss the barriers that they face in their current host country of Greece. The main problem that we encountered was that the migrants spoke neither Greek nor English, so we could not communicate without the support of a translator.

The results of the interviews with the migrants were impressive, aiding us in better understanding their difficult, everyday life. Below, the answers to the released questionnaire will be represented in a helpful way.

We asked the following question to our target group: “Is your orientation to self-employability motivated by the difficulty in achieving a job position reflecting your level of skills in the labour market?” the feedback received was utterly mixed. Fifty percent of people asked answered positively whereas the remaining 50% answered to the contrary. Seventy percent of those surveyed did have a high level of skills that could fit in a relevant job position (pie chart 1). At this point it is worth-mentioning that the participants report that it is difficult to find a job related to their expertise in their new country, because the legislation and the professions differ across the countries around the world.

Pie chart 1

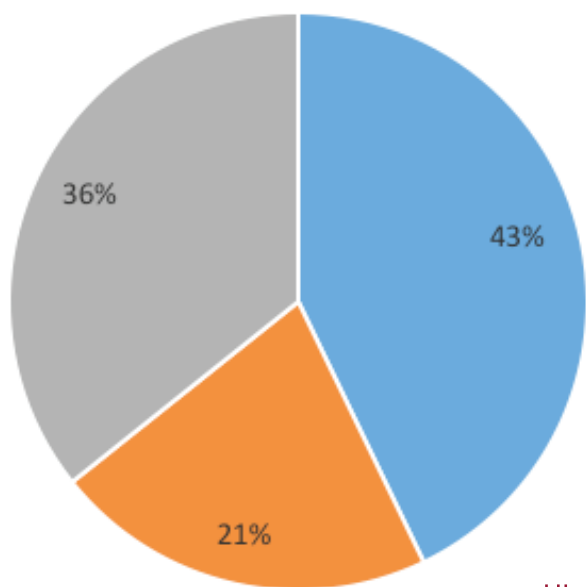
Mismatch between levels of skills and job position



Pie chart 2

Problems of highly skilled migrants while accessing adequate job positions

- language barriers
- Inadequate recognition of qualifications earned in home countries
- Lack of customized policies of integration within the labour market.



High
Moderate
Slight
Extreme

Pie Chart 2: Problems when accessing jobs for highly-skilled migrants

Language barrier

Inadequate recognition of qualifications earned from countries of origin

Lack of customized policies of integration within the labor market

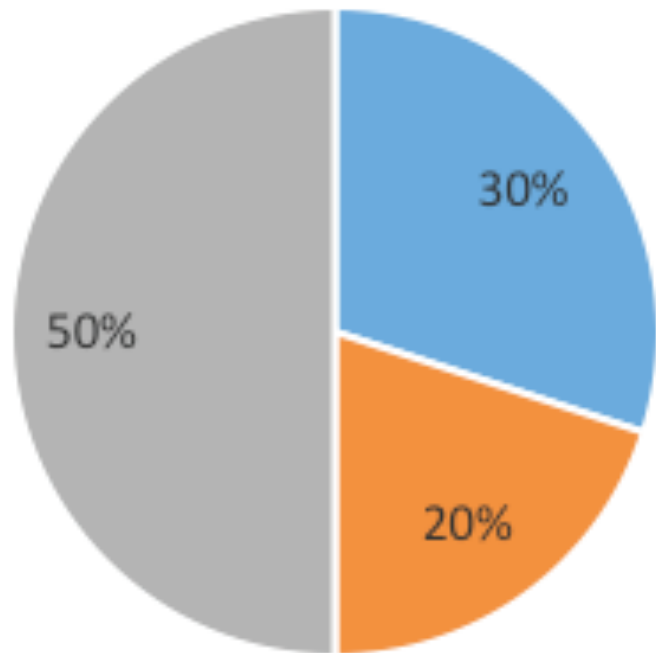
The most crucial problem that does not allow them to achieve status as equal members in the labor market of the host country is the language barriers that they have to tackle, as the communication between the employees and the customers is an essential skill that is required. Additionally, due to the linguistic problems, immigrants and refugees face difficulties accessing financing and training programs to develop their network in contrast with the opportunities given to the national residents of the country. (pie chart 2)

Of secondary importance, is the barrier of a legal framework that is only partially adequate in supporting their equal integration into the labor market. In their opinion, the solution to this problem would be reform of the existing legislation in order to prepare their smooth integration in the labor market. (pie chart 2)

Pie chart 3

The role of the education and training system in supporting migrants enterprises/startups

As we can observe in the following graph, a significant proportion of immigrants believe that the educational system should be more supportive in helping them realize their entrepreneurial initiatives. They wish for a system that provides knowledge on the technical issues that are essential parts of a successful businessman. (pie chart 3)



- Provision of legal/financial consultancy
- Provision of support schemes based on coaching/mentoring for migrant entrepreneurs.
- Provision of customized learning for migrants on the technical issues pertaining to entrepreneurship (Business Management, Strategic Planning, Marketing etc.)

Pie Chart 3: The role of education and training systems in supporting migrant enterprises/startups

Provision of legal/financial consultancy

Provision of support schemes based on coaching/mentoring for migrant entrepreneurs

Provision of customized learning for migrants on the technical issues pertaining to entrepreneurship (business management, strategic planning, marketing, etc.)

A proportion of 80% of the participants of the focus groups highlighted that they have not received any kind of financial support to start their own business or legal advice on how to manage it. Furthermore, they responded that as entrepreneurs they face difficulties in accessing funding programs, either from public or private sources.

After the general questions related with everyday problems they have to tackle, we asked them about the role of NGOs working with migrants and what they would like to see provided in terms of additional support. The results that came back from the participants were really important. They believe that the existence of NGOs is essential and meaningful.

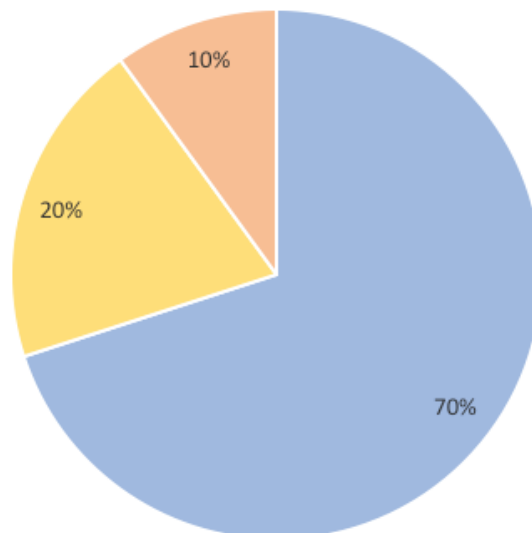
Most of them (8 out of 10 participants) highlight the importance of consulting and mentoring in their business steps, which can help overcome the shortage of insufficient educational support. The following graph can provide us with information about the most important requirement that the migrants have for moving forward: language courses. As we mentioned above, linguistic barriers affect not only their professional life, but also their everyday life.

Additionally, the development of a manual or an e-learning platform in simplified language, will give them access to the legislation and they also would like basic courses about entrepreneurship.

Finally, we closed the discussion by asking the group to identify the different ways and strategies for achieving equal opportunities in their integration to the labor market. More than 50% of migrants pointed out that through the educational system and various campaigns for raising awareness and sensitivity of employers and local authorities, their inclusion in the field of business would be better supported and more-easily achieved. (pie chart 4)

Pie chart 4

What role do you think NGOs can play to introduce migrants into the labour market/Business sector?



- Language courses and educational offer aimed at overcoming the language and cultural barriers to employability/entrepreneurship affecting migrants disproportionately than nationals
- Orienteering and work-based learning, in partnership with business/labour market stakeholders
- Provision of educational offer targeted at developing soft, transversal, entrepreneurial skills as well as basic instruments of employability/entrepreneurship

Pie Chart 4: What role do you think NGOs can play in introducing migrants into the labor market/business sector?

Language courses and educational offerings aimed at overcoming the language and cultural barriers to employability/entrepreneurship affecting migrants disproportionately to nationals

Orienteering and work-based learning, in partnership with business/labor market stakeholders

Provision of educational offerings targeted at developing soft, transversal entrepreneurial skills as well as basic instruments of employability/entrepreneurship

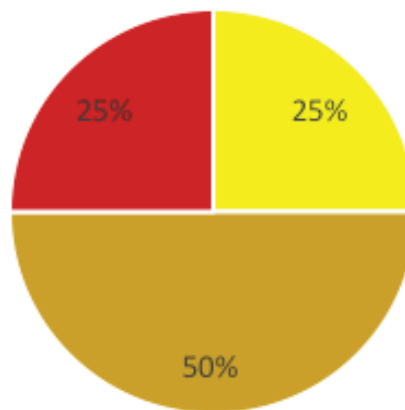
Feedback: Stakeholders working with migrants and refugees in Greece

On Tuesday 27 February 2018, we continued the research about the needs of the migrants and refugees. The University of Thessaly organized a second focus group with the participation of 5 NGO representatives working with migrants in the region of Thessaly. We gave them the questionnaires which were developed within the framework of our project and we had an open and fruitful discussion with this group.

Initially, they were asked if they noticed a mismatch between the skills that migrants have acquired and the job positions they hold. They unanimously supported that this happens indeed, given the barriers migrants encounter, mainly linguistic and discrimination.

An important question was about their plans and actions to support migrants for their smooth inclusion in the labor market. All of them responded that making efforts to develop and promote customized arrangements preparing migrants, e.g. in an appropriate way for doing an interview or informing them about legislation on working issues. In relation to their services, they register their beneficiaries to the local labour office and assist them during their interview. They also assist them to register to the Tax service so as to acquire their VAT number.

Educational offer/support schemes to migrants' entrepreneurship



Research and identification of existing best practices

Surveying the educational needs of migrants among migrants themselves

Surveying among stakeholders in the business field

Educational offerings/support schemes for migrant entrepreneurship

Research and identification of existing best practices

Surveying the educational needs of migrants among migrants themselves

Surveying among stakeholders in the business field

Three of the five participants highlight the promotion of awareness of existing policies among the general public and migrants as essential. Of greatest importance issue was the issue of the development of various methods to help migrants to broaden their horizons and acquire the suitable skills to become an entrepreneur.

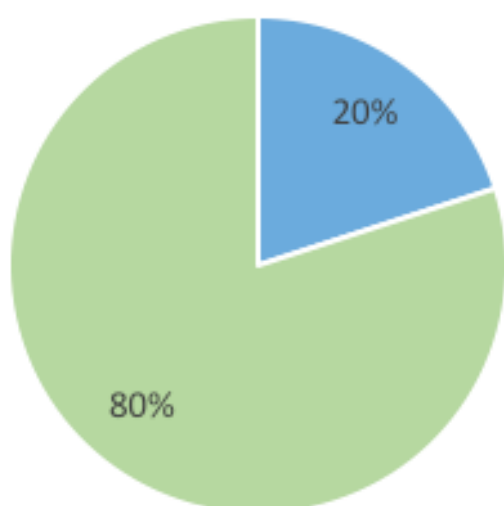
A proportion of 50% did relevant research to identify the migrants' educational background as far as entrepreneurship was concerned.

All of the participants highlight the main activities to help migrants are: mentoring and consulting. It is really important for them to have support, mainly on legal issues. As we can observe from the first focus group, mentoring was crucial as well as for the migrants themselves.

When asked about the efficiency of the existing legislation related to supporting migrants, the NGO representatives point out that it is inadequate, and a more systematic and personalized support system should exist. Additionally, they stated that there are situations and official support systems that contradict each other and even prevent our beneficiaries from seeking work. For example, a refugee that has been given an apartment and a monthly cash card will lose these privileges if he or she seeks employment.

Three of the participants told us that they constantly seek cooperation and synergies with other organizations, public and private, for further support to their beneficiaries in promoting their integration in the local labour market. Furthermore, they make efforts to foster mechanisms of matching between employers' businesses and migrant job-seekers relevant expertise.

Strategies for improving equal opportunities in access to the labour market by migrants



Addressing the skills-based roots of inequality in opportunities through education/mentoring/coaching etc

Education and awareness raising actions targeted at sensitizing employers/stakeholders in the field of business towards inclusion of migrants.

In general, the NGOs' role relates to educational purposes. First of all, they offer language lessons, making migrants' everyday life easier. They make endeavors to raise awareness among national citizens and business stakeholders of migrants' problems via campaigns. Additionally, they create workshops so that the migrants can develop their entrepreneurial and soft skills in order to correspond to employers' needs. They also provide legal advice and coach them on how start their own business supporting them to overcome issues which are due to linguistic barriers.

Strategies for improving equal opportunities in access to the labor market by migrants

Addressing the skills-based roots of inequality in opportunities through education/mentoring/coaching, etc.

Education and awareness-raising actions targeted at sensitizing employers/stakeholders in the field of business towards better inclusion of migrants.

Case Studies: Migrants and Refugees in Greece

After the focus group, we had the opportunity to discuss with the first participant, her situation as a migrant more in-depth. She is a 35-year-old woman from Syria who used to be a professionally active person in her country. Because of the war, she had to leave everything and come to Greece. She deals with various difficulties. Overcoming the linguistic barriers, as she knows very well, the English language is critical for entering the labor market as a migrant. English is necessary to be able to communicate more easily with others, and in this regard she says that her inclusion in the labor market has not been easy. She says: "I had difficulty in finding a job. And when I finally found one, this does not represent my level of expertise. My education is completely different from the job I do now. I have a bachelor in law and I am working as interpreter." She would like to be a good lawyer helping the other people overcome their problems. She was really willing to learn the Greek legal framework, but no employer trusted that she could manage it. She is attending a speed course of Greek Language and she pointed out that if she finds the financial support, she will start a law firm. She wants to follow her dreams, as she has the educational background to become a successful lawyer.

The second participant used to be a school teacher in Syria. He studied in the relevant field, eventually working in a primary school for 3 years before circumstances forced him to migrate. Being a person utterly fond of learning, teaching and especially focused on lifelong learning, his purpose was to transmit knowledge and pedagogy to his fellow citizens and students. Facing numerous and various levels of dilemmas, he eventually decided to leave his country with no clue of what would happen to him or his family. To his great disappointment, he is now incapable of being recognized as a professional teacher, limiting his knowledge to himself. He stated "I could not do the same job here." His disappointment is in large part due to the fact that he feels that he cannot offer anything, although his intentions clearly point to a contrary ambition. A few days per week he tries to gather migrant children unofficially in order to educate and maintain their education at a certain standard. He feels active and helpful in this way. His comments to us were actually a voice asking us to help him remain an active person that will be able to transmit his knowledge and experience. His utmost goal is to be of help and offer something to society. He is fully aware and really open, as he expressed, that being trained under the new circumstances is essential so that he can adapt his occupation to his current circumstances.

Final Summary Greece

A high percentage of the migrants and refugees in Greece come from Syria. The majority of them belong to the middle-class, taking into consideration Syria's economic data. They worked in Syria and fortunately most managed to save some money before the war. Often, the Syrian refugees have a satisfying amount of money to cover their needs in the host country. These are mainly educated people who have graduated from tertiary education, having previously been employed as e.g. doctors, architects or lawyers, while speaking at least one foreign language.

Taking into account their expertise in various fields, integrating them into the labour market will increase the workforce and the productive capabilities of the Greek economy.

Essentially what they are looking for is acceptance. They want to be equal members of the society and of the labor market. They want to work and have a dignified job position, corresponding to their expertise and their experience. It is crucial for them to have the opportunity to start their business, but firstly the legislation should be adapted, giving them the many rights a national has.

The migrants are part of our Greek population and efforts have to be made for achieving their social inclusion. NGOs, associations and relevant authorities can be a substantial helping hand in their smooth integration undertaking the role of a mentor or a consultant, taking into consideration their tailored needs. Such initiatives are highly suggested to be launched in this specific area that may include virtual, interactive or e-learning tools for which interested people can take advantage and find support.



Introduction

When businesses are stronger than ever, and multinational corporations are spreading around the world, the private sector should work together with governments and NGOs to help overcome the short and long-term challenges posed by the current huge influx of migrants here in Bulgaria. It is worthwhile for leaders of companies from all sectors, to get involved from the start. Social, political and economic risks can only be reduced by turning challenges into opportunities. Earlier involvement in the process of evaluation, education, and integration planning would allow the private sector to help shape policy from the outset, not to complain about the failure of the government post-factum. Business leaders can help identify the skills and opportunities that would be most useful for their sectors, establish guidelines and training programs, and offer internships.

The benefits are clear. Migrants arriving in Bulgaria are often young, well-educated, often skilled and willing to quickly integrate into society. They are antidotes to the aging population and low birth rates, and many people are ready to work. By working with the public sector, businesses can help provide the training and the work they need.

But some migrants have jobs that are virtually non-existent in Bulgaria: fishermen, carpet weavers, ceramics makers, etc. And so they find themselves in jobs that do not fit their skills - construction and agricultural aid, cleaners, kitchen assistants, warehouse workers, and so on. Anyone who accepts such a job once has little chance of raising or moving to a better job.

Many migrants cannot provide CVs drafted under EU/Bulgarian rules. Yet they have learned a lot in their lives. Therefore, they should be asked different questions than those addressed to Bulgarians or Germans to understand how employers work. "If you ask them if they manage the household, you can easily find out if you can handle budget and money." "Whoever has built his own home may be a good craftsman."

In this way they become visible and skills that are experiencing demographic difficulties Bulgaria can be used quite well. Even without printing and signature.

Feedback: Stakeholders working with migrants and refugees in Bulgaria

NC Future Now interviewed several members of the NGO community in Bulgaria supporting migrants and refugees.

The first stakeholder, is the CEO and founder, of one such NGO, called: Human in the Loop (HITL). HITL is a social-enterprise based in Bulgaria, that employs and trains refugees in the IT sector, specifically, refugees are trained to be able to provide data services to companies to train and test their ML algorithms. This is an NGO which NC Future Now considers extremely valuable to the migrant community looking to start a business and enhance their skills in Bulgaria.

She is a young and very active person who completed her studies in the US. She has worked on this project since May: “I’ve been working exclusively on this on a full-time basis. When I graduated from university, I went home and started it.”

NC Future Now asked her about the migration situation in Bulgaria, to get a better idea from her about what migrants and refugees are facing. “At the moment there are probably around 2000 people in the refugee camps, which are not that many. There are many who want to stay but also they need a special status to stay. Many come from Afghanistan. The Refugee Agency in Bulgaria in fact does not recognize Afghanistan.”

When asked about how Bulgaria can better receive migrants, she explained that: “When I ask migrants they say they are for the most part having a very good experience here in Bulgaria. Those I speak with say that they do not feel xenophobia. They feel very good and at the same time you see this xenophobia all over the country. The people who see migrants during the day and communicate with them feel the situation is absolutely fine. But people who have never seen migrants and have not communicated with them at all talk negatively and only discuss fear of them.”

“Bulgarians as a whole do not understand migration to be a benefit and there aren’t many policies in place for highly-qualified migrants. There are no special facilities for migrants. Bulgaria is not interested in accepting even highly-qualified refugees and migrants to work on our soil, and therefore there is a market for illegal marriages at the border. There are at the same time a lot of people who have already met the migrants and refugees who came here with a lot of forgiveness.”



“Often, all their savings go to traffickers. These people are thus thoroughly exploited because they are so vulnerable. In fact, there is an integration program, but it is not applied at all. It has been written as a document, but nowhere is it acted upon. This is because it relies on all municipalities to decide to accept refugees. While every municipality has to do this, they have not yet done so and this policy is from 2013 - at the beginning of the refugee crisis. The State Agency for Refugees simply says that they are not responsible for integration, and that they will only act in the area of reception of this group.”

“That is why the non-governmental sector itself shapes its mechanisms. Furthermore, to get an ID, you need an address to get out of the refugee camp. But no one wants to rent apartments for refugees.” She explains further that consideration must be made regarding policies at the European level.

Regarding her involvement in creating HitL, She told us that in the beginning, she started with pilot initiatives and made a digital skills course.

“Not everyone has an affinity for programming, so I decided to do something much more accessible. The idea has grown from a low-employment programming skills based endeavor to a low-employment job, and most people find it more important to get a job to start supporting families and then they can think of re-training,” she explains.

“It all started when I was in America. We made a market survey of companies that did such things and contacted a big platform, actually the second largest platform for these activities called, ‘crowd-flower.’ They work with many NGOs and other smaller companies that are subcontracting them and I have a proposal to become a part of their subcontractors. They are a US firm based in California. I have studied Human Rights in America. This is currently the most progressive thing in California for this group,” according to her.

“In general, there are big problems with this industry. There is a big platform called “mechanical Turk,” which belongs to Amazon. There everybody in the world can write and alter pictures and do small tasks.” In her view, this can lead to the exploitation of labor. “For example, a developer who needs to process some data pays much less money for this type of assignment because this digital economy hardly has any worker protection. You can’t be sure that you will earn enough money and that you will have good working conditions.” Therefore, she says that her NGO does something similar, but ensures that in the process human rights are respected.

At HitL, interventions start at a very early stage. She says that they are currently looking to expand and are negotiating with three companies to do so. As an NGO, they struggle with having little exposure and not yet being well-known, which inhibits their outreach.

“About 10 migrants are waiting in line and as soon as I can, I will call and tell them we are ready to incorporate them in our work - many even ask me if they can get their friends on board too. My first reaction is yes of course, however, I can not take so many people. But the good news is that there is great desire and enthusiasm.” The expectation is HitL can build to the point where it can be more independent in future business ventures.

When asked about the level of support from the NGO sector in Bulgaria that she has received, she responded that other organizations are largely positive: “I work really well with the Red Cross. They have an integration center where we did a digital skills course about basic English computer skills and how to make a website. Also Caritas and the Council of Women Refugees are helpful, while we also have received support from the UN Commission on Refugees.”



Computer
Academy IT step



Bulgarian
Red Cross

Regarding training they undertake at HitL, She explains that, “We keep the element of education at the center. People are trained for two weeks and then there are six hours of work per day and two hours of training everyday.”

“The Red Cross has done different trainings that were more in-line with themes like: creating hand-made items, hairdressing, manicures, and a driving course. This is an amazing exchange between the NGO and business sectors.”

“I also participated in another competition that was called the “Rinker Challenge.” I didn’t win but I created my idea in this venue. The idea was that migrants could learn basic skills one-at-a time, like how to use Photoshop and how to do programming.”



Council of
Women Refugees



UNHCR

Humans in the Loop collaborates with several other agencies and NGOs

The first stakeholder has further received different levels of support in finding the space they occupy now: “We actually just moved here recently after meeting an organization called “IT STEP Academy.” They were very generous to offer us their space. They are wonderful and give us so much help and are always open to us because here's the good thing – they themselves give re-training for computer skills for adults.”

When asked about the biggest obstacles she faces, she explained that it can be very hard to reach out to more refugees, since there is limited accessibility to them in the camps. She highlights that the language barrier can cause major difficulties, as well. Finally, she identifies that in Bulgaria overall, there are limited opportunities for migrants looking for work.

When asked if she has a partner in this venture, she explained that she has someone who helps part-time, and that she is always looking for dedicated persons to help, especially those with technical skills and the ability to make their own platform.

Finally, NC Future Now wishes to highlight Humans in the Loop “Refugee and Migrant Month.” Here, there is space at a social innovations Hub for events for all those interested in learning more about refugees and migrants to get acquainted with this group and their many cultures, and to help create social innovations for their integration, with free entry to all events. The program includes: intercultural evenings; art workshops; and design thinking sessions, where refugees and NGO representatives familiarize themselves with the methodology and define the main problems facing refugees, in a truly innovative way.

Next we interviewed the second stakeholder, the manager of the Red Cross Bulgaria center. The International Red Cross’ purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for all. This organization works to promote mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace for people all around the world.

She and NC Future Now’s met in the office of the Red Cross in Bulgaria. She is a social worker on integration measures. “My job is mainly to coordinate the Center's activities. I decided to work in this area because my grandparents are refugees. The center has been in place for 6 years. It happened that there was a shortage of good practices after the migration crisis, and actually, in recent years, practices have improved. We are trying to find new projects to help refugees. This is work done on two levels in Bulgarian society. We are always open, and we have consultation hours from 10 to 4, and it is important to note that we are here for information only.”



When asked what sort of information migrants to Bulgaria are looking for, she explains that: “Generally things in Bulgaria are on a survival level. People first are looking for a lot of basic information, for example, how to find a job, what the process is for achieving this, how to get financial help to e.g. buy medicines, etc. We deal mainly with people who have already passed this first stage.”

She highlighted how Bulgaria is not a final destination country for many migrants: “We are very often witnesses of people who come and leave because Bulgaria is a transit country for them. However, we have a core of people who have decided to stay or really struggle to stay but there are also many people who are just passing through.”

Those migrants looking for employment are to start their own business have different needs in Bulgaria. “One of the first needs is to learn the language. For this reason, we offer these courses. This is one of our good practices. Our program is very nice because we make a point to follow participants afterwards. Actually, many of the participants of our programs have since created an important network and community. Before, there wasn’t a really good community established for refugees in Bulgaria, but thanks to these courses we were able to make it. I am further, extremely pleased that we managed to win a budget to make a course just for women.”

She explained that after learning Bulgarian further courses are offered so that one can have the skills for working with and starting a business, including: hairdressing, manicure, pedicure, etc.

However, the primary purpose at the center for 2018 is ensuring as many migrants learn English as possible, “because they really need it.” A training course in English and computer skills is on offer.

It is an intense course, 6-hours per day, 5 days a week, and it includes basic English, basic computer skills, as well as work readiness. “English helps especially if the migrants are fortunate enough to also speak Arabic. Those who speak Persian languages have less of an advantage, but for those who speak Arabic, there are a lot of opportunities in Bulgaria.” However, it remains the case overall, that even with language skills, for migrants it is difficult to access the job market and adequate housing.

Regarding entrepreneurship overall, according to her, it is a small minority of migrants who manage to successfully start their own business in Bulgaria, because their starting point is one in which they are really at a comparatively initial level with many obstacles to overcome.

NC Future Now further highlights the work of a person at Innovation Starter Box. They consider her one of the best design thinking experts in Bulgaria. Her expertise was most obviously on display when she, e.g. lead a design thinking workshop with representatives of the NGO sector and refugees in Bulgaria, at which she presented the main principles of the methodology and helped the participants define the three main challenges that refugees face. The intention was born out of the need to know the needs of the beneficiaries and to accurately define the problems to be solved in order to create truly successful social innovations.

Therefore, this example is one that stakeholders working with this group should take note and learn from when supporting migrant entrepreneurs. The workshop participants worked on a 3-step process: empathize, define the design thinking process, and work on creating personas that represent types of refugees and their problems. Other topics included “Point Of View” and “How Might We Challenge Definitions.” This process goes a long way in nuanced support and taking the individual as a whole into consideration.

NC Future Now further highlights the work of Digital Nomads in partnership with Humans in the Loop, in their invitation to all developers, designers, entrepreneurs and social innovators to join the first edition of the “Social Innovations Hackathon.” This was the first event dedicated to one group of “contemporary nomads,” i.e. migrants.

In considering finances, especially funding to start one’s own business, they tackled the barriers to having one’s own bank account (and options for bank loans). In order to allow those without an ID card to sign up for a bank account, they considered the question of possibly using: blockchain technology. They further tackled the obstacle of employment for those without access to the labor market, exploring if it would be possible to train migrants to deliver “human-in-the-loop” services for the training of machine learning. Over the course of two-days, participants was divided into teams that had to create a tech-based solution to one of three challenges that migrants in Bulgaria face.

Finally, Vox Populi creates documentary theater and their work “Mir Vam” (Peace Be With You), presents the image of refugees and migrants from field research and interviews in the migrant camps. This unique performance allows the audience to attend first person narratives about who migrants are, what they are fleeing from and where they are heading. NC Future Now, presents this NGO initiative to highlight how NGOs can support migrant entrepreneurs by raising awareness in the communities in Bulgaria, so that stereotypes and discrimination can be diminished, a primary role that NGOs can have in supporting this group.

Feedback: Stakeholders working with migrants and refugees in Bulgaria Summary

When we talk about the impact of migrants in the workforce, the main starting point in our analysis is that there is a need for NGOs to target the unemployed. This hypothesis is based on the fact that, after receiving international protection status, effective integration takes place in Bulgaria with the help of the NGO sector. There are many factors that make it more difficult to access the labor market for migrants, requiring the intervention of intermediaries. For the most part, migrants and persons with international protection often do not speak Bulgarian and those migrants and refugees who have been granted status are included in Bulgarian language-training.

Furthermore, the educational background of migrants in Bulgaria who have been granted status show a predominant share of people with low levels of education, which in turn necessitates their inclusion in education and training to improve their qualifications. In this report, we have made a point to highlight the strides being made in Bulgaria's NGO sector, especially with training in language and the IT-sector, with truly innovative methodologies, as well as the need for really defining who the beneficiaries are—in a nuanced way.

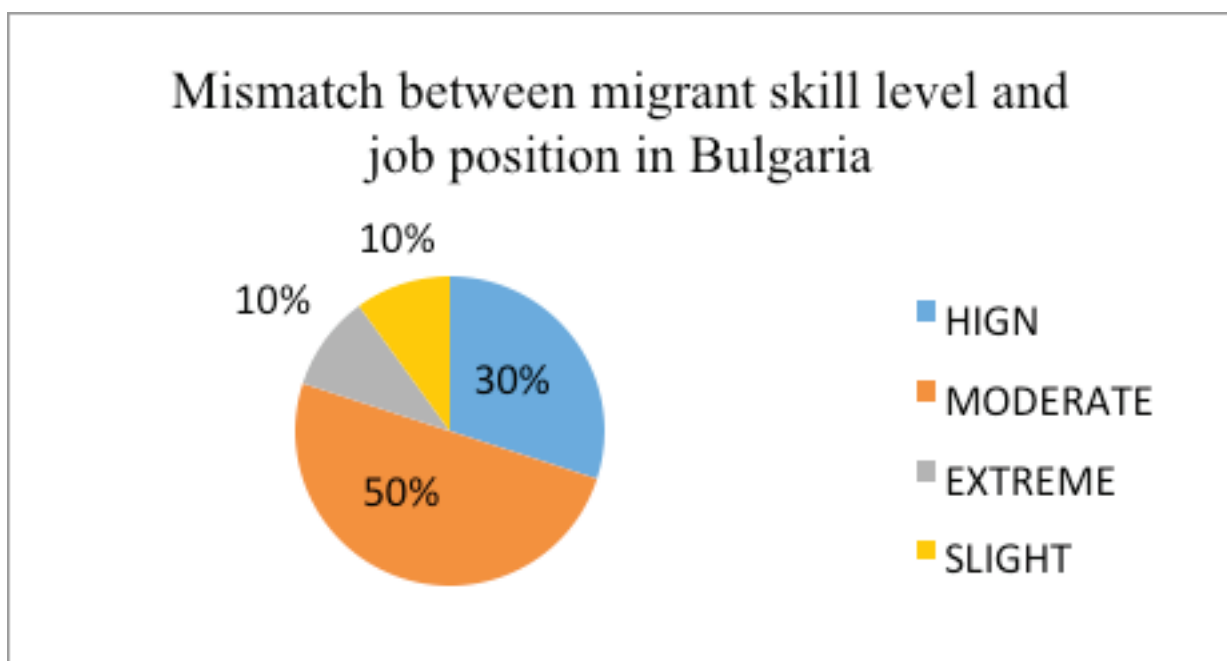
Along with the language barrier and the low educational and qualification levels of migrants, there are cultural and historical factors in plays that mean a large proportion of e.g. women have been economically inactive in their country of origin, affecting their current employment in Bulgaria—a factor that NGOs need to creatively address to support this group of potential entrepreneurs. All this gives reason to the claim that migrant entrepreneurs benefit greatly from the work being done primarily by the NGO sector, as the governmental authorities cannot directly work to ensure migrants enter the labor market, but instead cooperate with the competent authorities to do so. The NGO sector in Bulgaria is therefore providing migrant entrepreneurs in Bulgaria a great assistance.

Feedback: Migrants and Refugees in Bulgaria

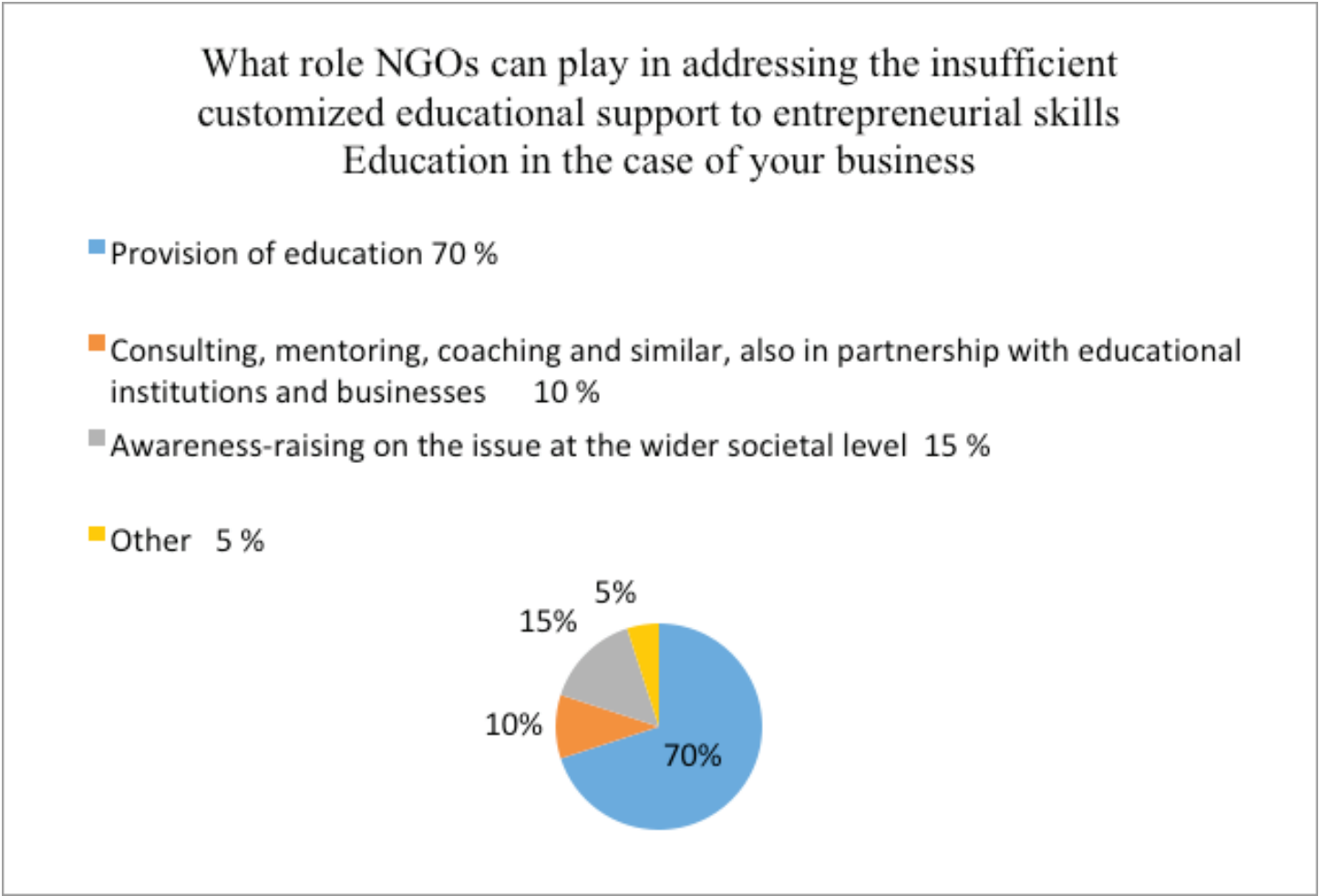
NC Future now held 2 focus groups with migrants and refugees with business ideas. From their findings, all participants share that in Bulgaria there exists a strong support network among immigrants that already have an established business, which very much helps other people who are searching for a job or helps in the creation of their own business.

In Bulgaria migrant businesses most often take the form of shops selling things like: food products, herbs, clothes, and fast food. The participants were happy to report that people in this community often help each other.

In analyzing the results of the interviews, we can see that half of the participants think there is a mismatch between their skill level and job, a moderate finding. Our findings were that migrants coming to Bulgaria arrive with a solid professional background and work experience from their country of origin. Also, in Bulgaria there are many companies that work as outsourcing companies and search for people with Arabic language skills, offering them quality jobs. In these interviews, we learned that for those with this background, it can provide a platform for future work and business creation.

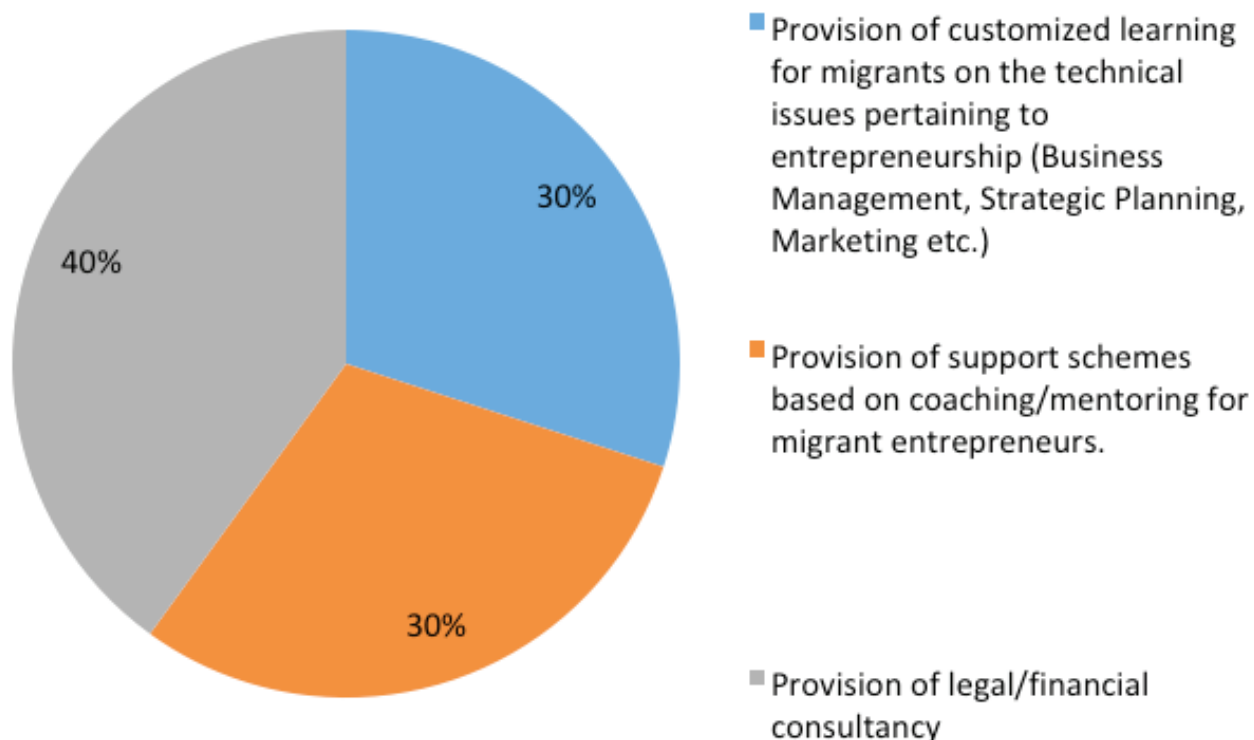


In the charts below, we underscore further findings from the migrant focus groups. A strong majority of 70%, think that the provision of education is the most desirable way to support migrant entrepreneurs.



When one wishes to start a business, it is of course customary to ensure that funding can be established. That's why 40% of participants wish for greater support in the area of financial consultancy. They also highlight the need to connect with someone that can act and help as a mentor or coach by a proportion of 30%.

What role do you think the education and training system should play in supporting migrants' enterprises/startups?



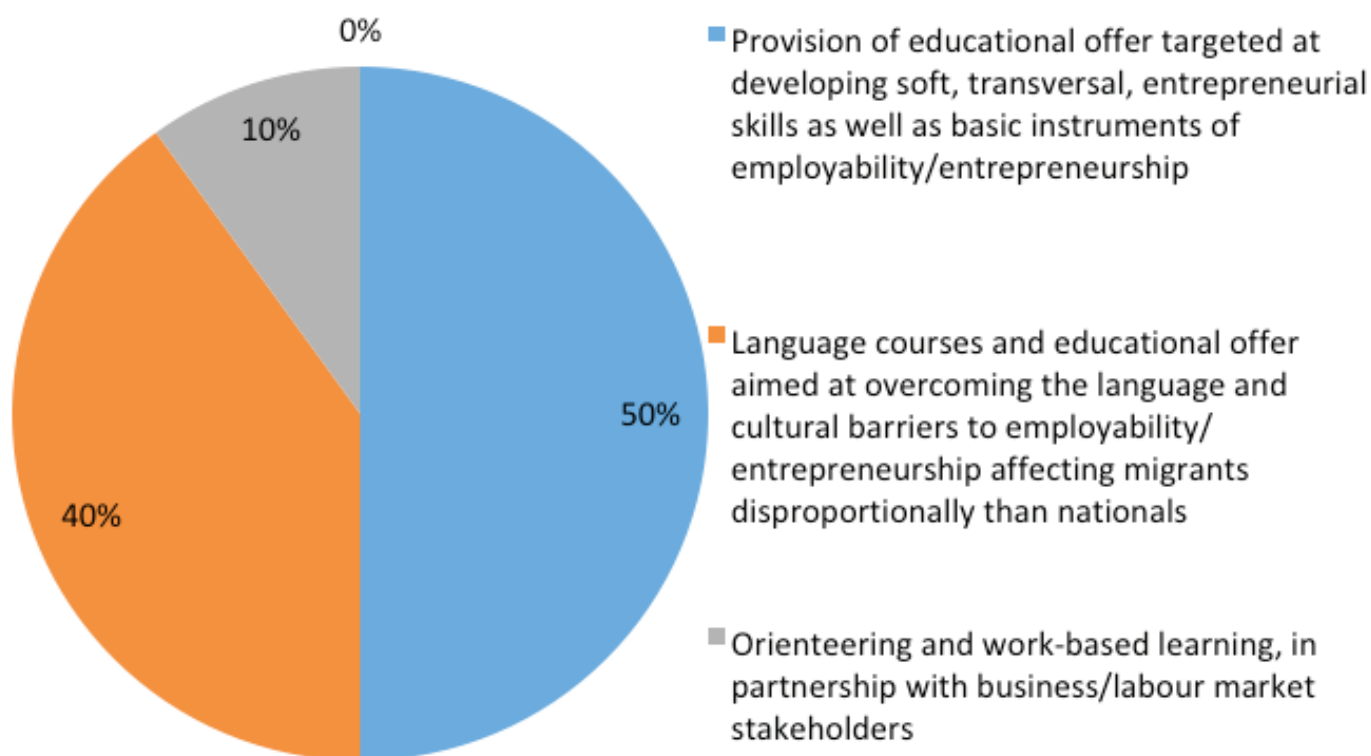
What role do you think education and training should play in supporting migrants' enterprises/startups?

Provision of customized learning for migrants on the technical issues pertaining to entrepreneurship (business management, strategic planning, marketing, etc.)

Provision of support schemes based on coaching/mentoring for migrant entrepreneurs

Provision of legal/financial consultancy

What role do you think NGOs can play to introduce migrants into the Labour market/Business sector?



What role do you think NGOs can play in introducing migrants into the labor market/business sector?

Provision of educational offerings targeted at the development of soft transversal, entrepreneurial skills as well as basic instruments of employability/entrepreneurship

Language courses and educational offerings aimed at overcoming the language and cultural barriers to employability/entrepreneurship affecting migrants disproportionately to nationals

Orienteering and work-based learning, in partnership with business/labor market stakeholders

The first participant, whose home country of origin is Syria, came to Bulgaria because he has relatives here. Now he is helping in the shop selling goods and also trying to learn Bulgarian and to find ways to start his own business.

“The problems I think highly-skilled migrants are facing in accessing adequate job positions in Bulgaria are discrimination and inadequate recognition of qualifications earned in their home countries,” he explains. He thinks that current policies and procedures for immigrant integration into the labour market and the creation of business by immigrants in Bulgaria are only partially adequate.

Case Studies: Migrants and Refugees in Bulgaria

The second participant from Aleppo, Syria said that for her, it is really difficult to obtain a job position that truly reflects her level of skills in the labour market. She is a trained designer and architect.

For her, the problems that highly skilled migrants are facing in accessing adequate job positions in Bulgaria are: discrimination and language barriers. According to her, “current policies and procedures of immigrant integration into the labour market and creation of businesses by immigrants here in Bulgaria are not adequate.”

She believes that NGOs can play a significant role in addressing the insufficient customized educational support to migrants, especially with regards to enhancing entrepreneurial skills by the provision of education.

Final Summary Bulgaria

In the period after 2013, the number of persons who have applied for international protection in Bulgaria substantially increased compared to previous years. Although there has been an observed increase in the number of individuals with refugee status in Bulgaria, there has simultaneously been a significant increase in discontinued cases. This gives grounds to conclude that Bulgaria is not the ultimate destination for many asylum-seekers in the country, taking into account the reasons for termination of the proceedings, which generally show a bad faith attitude from the side of the migrant. On the other hand, those who are beneficiaries of international protection and have access to the labor market in Bulgaria are in practice seeking involvement in the labor force.

Prospects for successful integration of all migrants in Bulgaria into the socio-economic life of the country, as well as the potential additional labor resources and job creation when they start their own business, are aggravated by a number of factors, such as: educational level of those migrant entrepreneurs who have been granted status; poor fluency in English; as well as limited prior economic activity and professional business background of some groups, especially women. These obstacles, combined with the expectations of the migration flow in the coming years, necessitate implementation and reform of current refugee reception policies, especially involving integration into the workforce, with more nuanced support of migrant entrepreneurs.



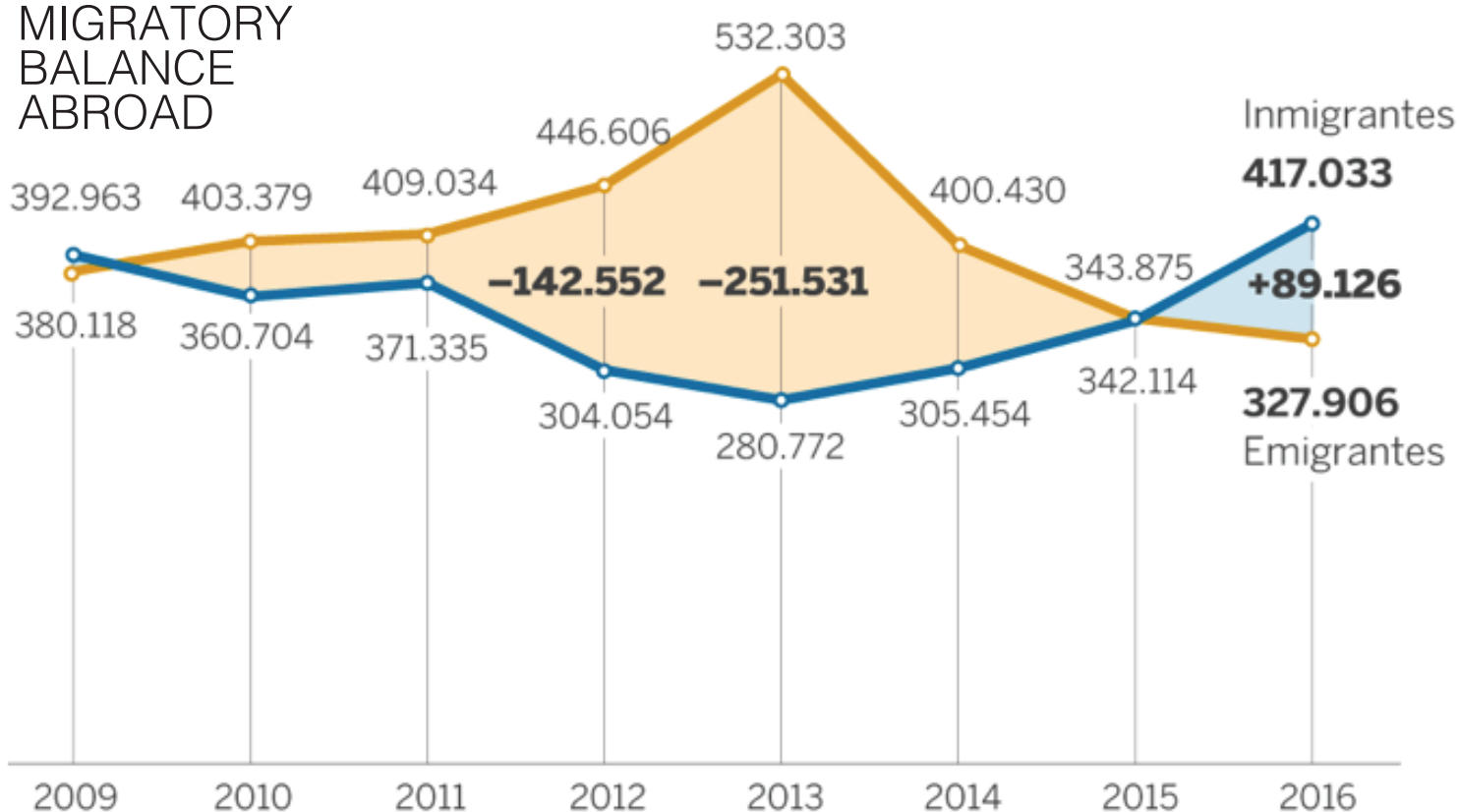
SPAIN

National Report

Introduction

The immigration data of recent years in Spain are entirely related to the economic situation of the country as a whole. Before the economic crisis (from the late 1990s to 2007) Spain received a large number of immigrants, until the economic situation worsened badly and two things happened: immigration was paralyzed and many foreign people already installed in Spain returned to their home country.

MIGRATORY BALANCE ABROAD



However, as we can see from the graph, since 2013 the number of people arriving in Spain from other countries has increased again. The majority of foreigners residing in Spain are still Romanians and Moroccans: 678,098 from the former and 667,189 from the latter. These countries are followed by Venezuela, Colombia, the United Kingdom, Italy, Ecuador and Brazil, in this order (data INE 2016).

As far as the arrival of refugees in Spain is concerned, a real drama is currently being experienced. Spain has traditionally been a country that has received a large number of immigrants and refugees fleeing the hardship of their countries, especially because of its geographical location.

Fuente: INE. EL PAÍS

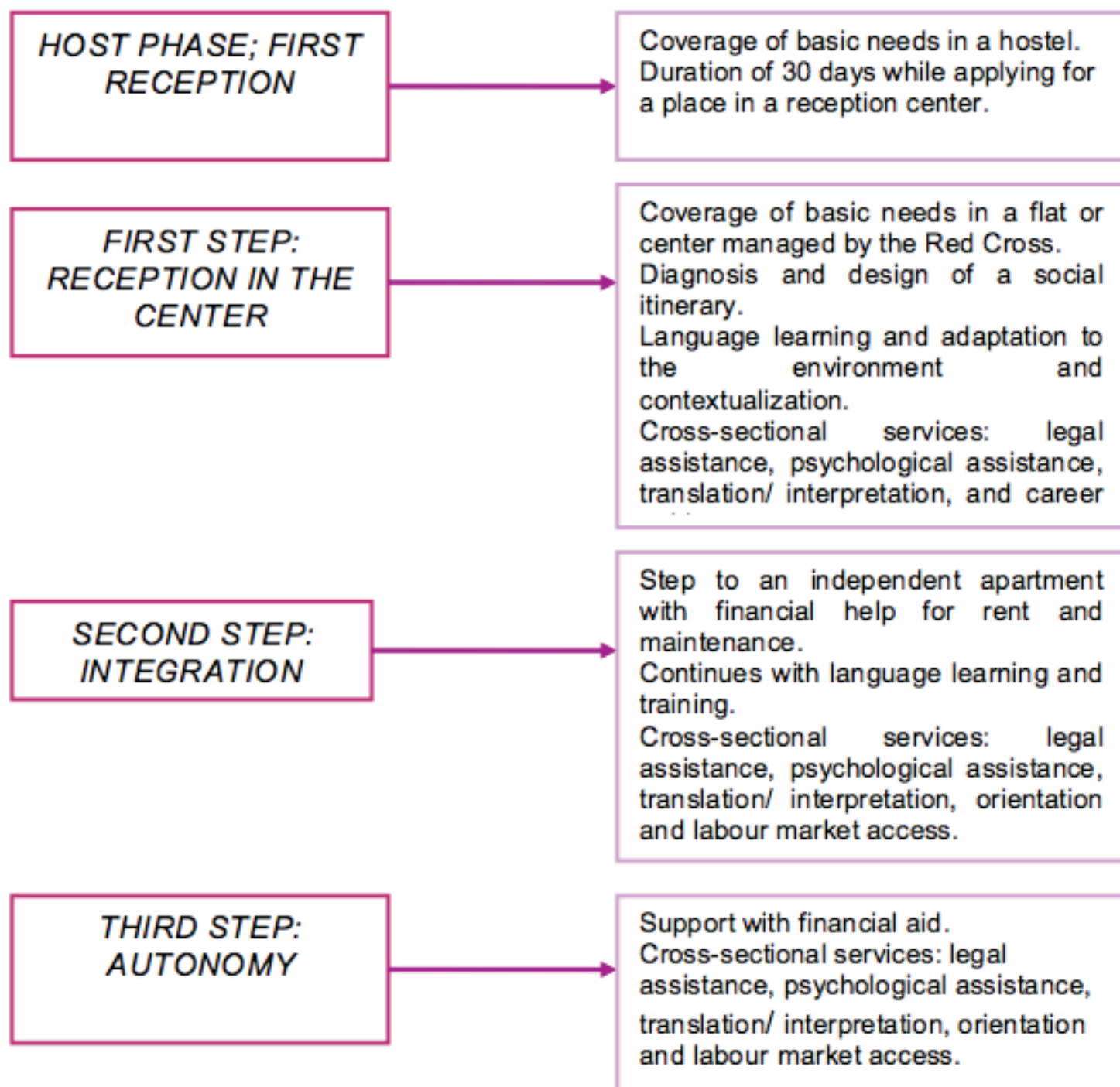
- Emigration with destination abroad
- Immigration from abroad

Negative migratory balance
Positive migratory balance

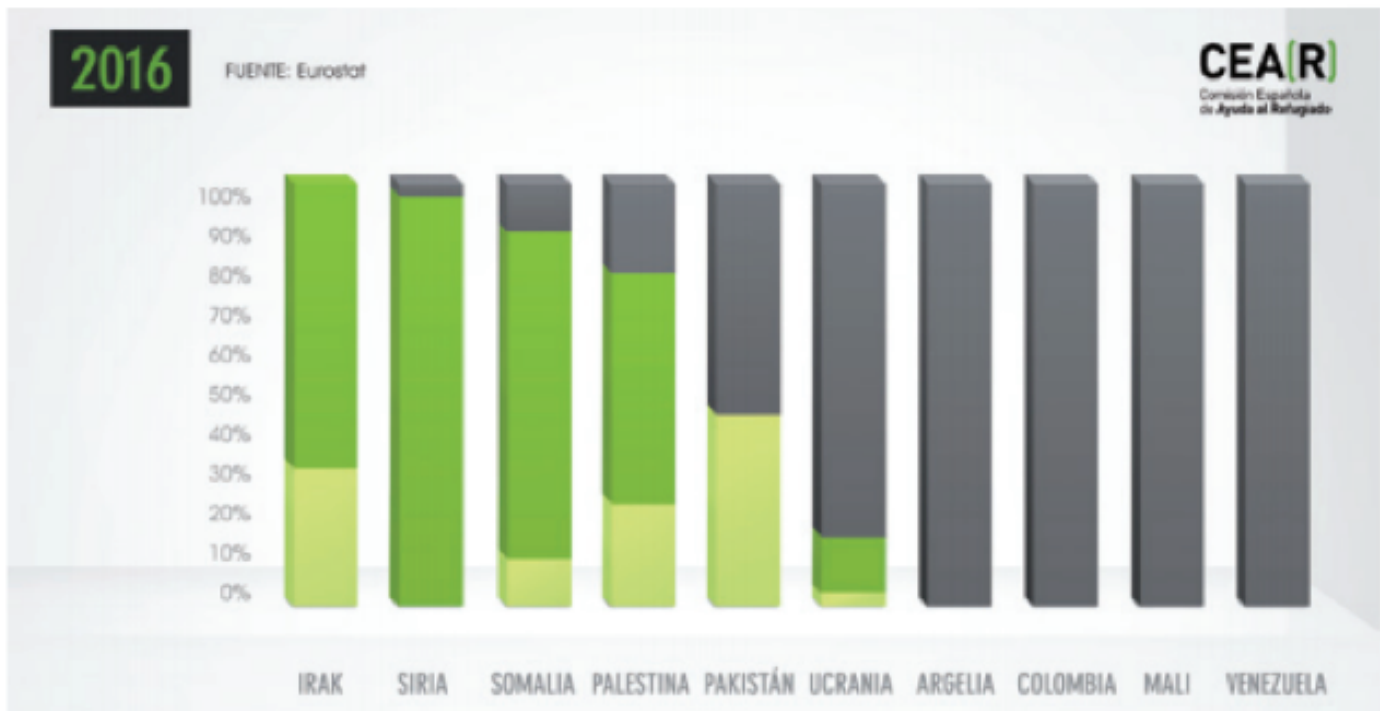
The Cruz Roja Española is one of the main organisations that participate in the management of the Reception Program for applicants for international protection in Spain, financed by the Ministry of Employment and Social Security. However, currently all organisations are overwhelmed due to the humanitarian crisis we are currently experiencing.

The aforementioned government program consists of 4 steps that cover from first reception until the step to autonomy, with a duration of 18 to 24 months:

Unfortunately, Spain has not fulfilled its commitment as a host with the European Union since the refugee crisis in Europe began.



RECOGNITION OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION BY COUNTRY IN SPAIN

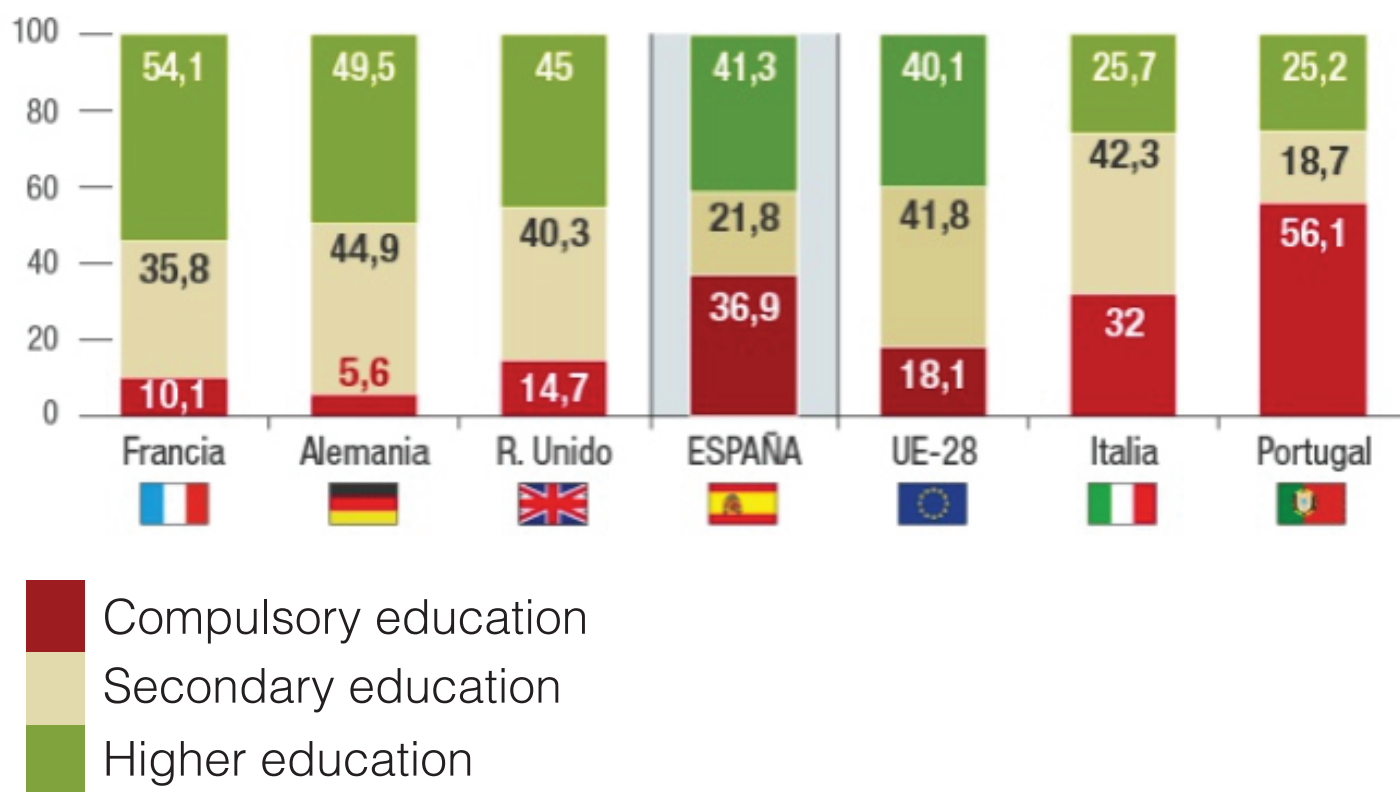


- Refused applications
- Subsidiary protection
- Refugee status

In general terms, it is not easy to start a business in Spain. With regards to state support, the creation of new companies is not facilitated, mainly due to fiscal issues. The rates that autonomous people must pay are very high and, in many cases, they are not progressive (that is, they are not always paid depending on what you earn). In recent years the Government has made tax deductions to young entrepreneurs but only for the first year. Financial aid is also available, but in return, the beneficiary must commit to keeping his company running for several years (whether or not profitable) by paying the relevant taxes. This situation does not make it easy for people to implement their business ideas. In addition, the bureaucracy is slow and can take many months to grant opening licenses.

BUSINESS PEOPLE IN SPAIN

Levels of studies completed in 2014

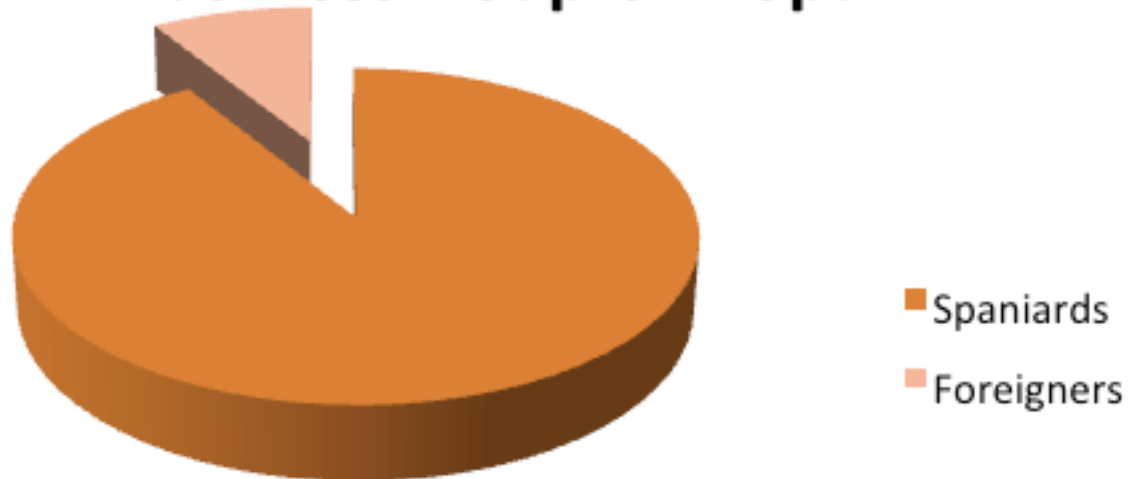


If this is the situation with Spanish people, it is much more difficult for immigrants or refugees, who often find problems with the validation of documents, obtaining financing or overcoming the language barrier.

Of the 46,539,026 inhabitants registered in Spain, 4,549,858 (9.8%) correspond to the group considered part of the foreign population (National Institute of Statistics, 2017). Of these, 284,077 were included in the Special Regime of Self-Employed Workers (RETA), according to data from the Autonomous Workers Association (ATA) at the end of the first quarter of last year.

Self-employment can be a way to overcome barriers and enter the Spanish labour market. Consequently, small businesses predominate, with a low capacity to generate employment (often family members are the employees) and with preference for sectors such as hospitality and construction (38%). They are also represented in the commerce and transport sector.

Population Breakdown of Business People in Spain



Only 6,2% of the immigrants in Spain are business people

The key to success in this type of small business is usually nothing but hard work and the least possible dependence on banks. As an example, one could cite the case of hairdressing salons. The crisis forced the closure of more than 45,000 hairdressing salons in Spain. However, since the start of the recovery, the new openings now exceed the 55,000 establishments, two thirds of them located in the segment of low-cost and modern salons and many are managed by what in the sector is known as ethnic hairdressers, according to the latest report prepared by Stanpa (National Association of Perfumery and Cosmetics).

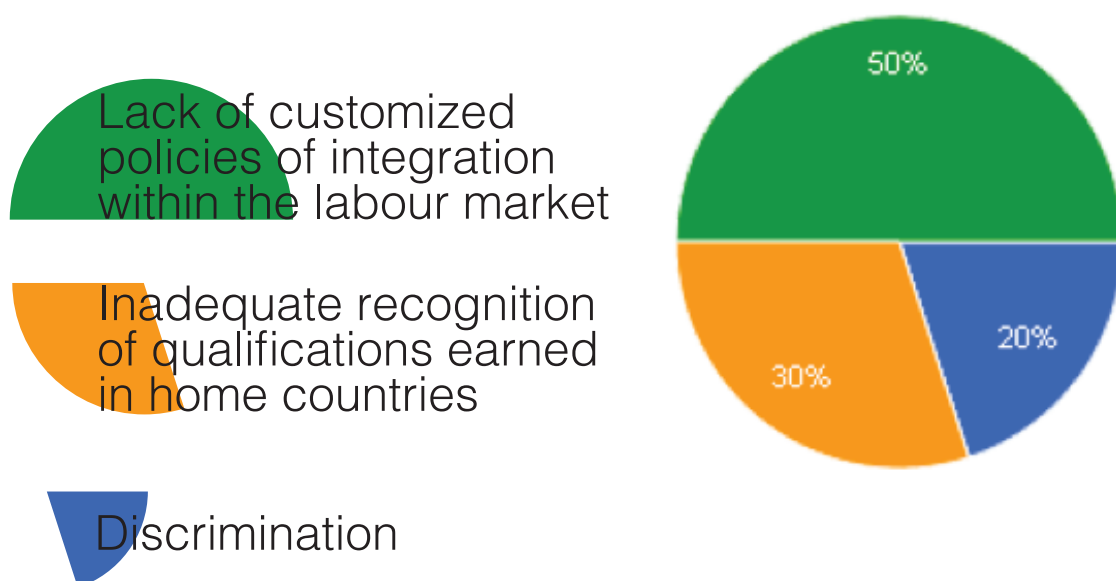
Feedback: Migrants and refugees in Spain

Since the project began, we have been in contact with foreigners settled in Spain who have begun the process of starting a business or thinking of starting in our country. We have gotten to know the difficulties, shortcomings and experiences in general of ten such people in this situation.

The sectors these people represent are very different: education, cleaning, hospitality, craftsmanship and construction. 70% answered affirmatively to the question of whether their main motivation to start a business had to do with the difficulty of finding a job according to their level of education.

For the imbalance between his/her previous work and his/her level of training, the answer is very divided, and we cannot see an overall definitive answer. In general, language has not been a barrier when starting one's business in Spain because most of the participants already knew the language beforehand or came from South American countries, with whom we share a language.

The main problem they have encountered has been the lack of clear public policies that guide them in the process of creating their company, together with the validation of titles obtained in their home countries.



On the other hand, 6 out of 10 people admit to not knowing or having only limited knowledge about the current policies and procedures for the integration of immigrants into the labour market. In this regard, only one person has participated in this type of program in comparison to 9 people who have not had such experience.

Among public bodies and other entities that work with immigrants and refugees, 80% believed that it would be convenient to offer personalised support on technical issues related to entrepreneurship together with supervision and tutoring support.

Finally, none of the people interviewed received or have received funding or public assistance to start their own business.

Case Studies: Migrants and Refugees in Spain

One of the migrants surveyed was willing to expand on his situation and experience starting a business in Spain. He is a 38-year-old man, of Peruvian origin although with an American nationality. In his case, the language barrier has not existed, rather the contrary, as he is a teacher of both Spanish and English. He has a degree in Business Administration and Management and has obtained a Master's Degree (in Spain) in Literature. In recent years he has worked in different academies teaching English, and he is currently working part-time in an academy, teaching Spanish to foreign students and English to young people and Spanish adults. However, for 3 years he has been teaching languages on his own in a place that belongs to a cultural association.

His main problem has been legal, because not having the Spanish nationality, nor being a resident or student, meant that he could not start his own business. He finally got the residency when he entered a domestic partnership with a Spanish woman. This allowed him to continue with his idea of opening a language school on his own, where he has been preparing Spanish young people for three years to get official language certificates. His idea is to keep on growing his business in the coming years to be able to devote himself to his business full time.

Feedback: Stakeholders working with migrants and refugees in Spain

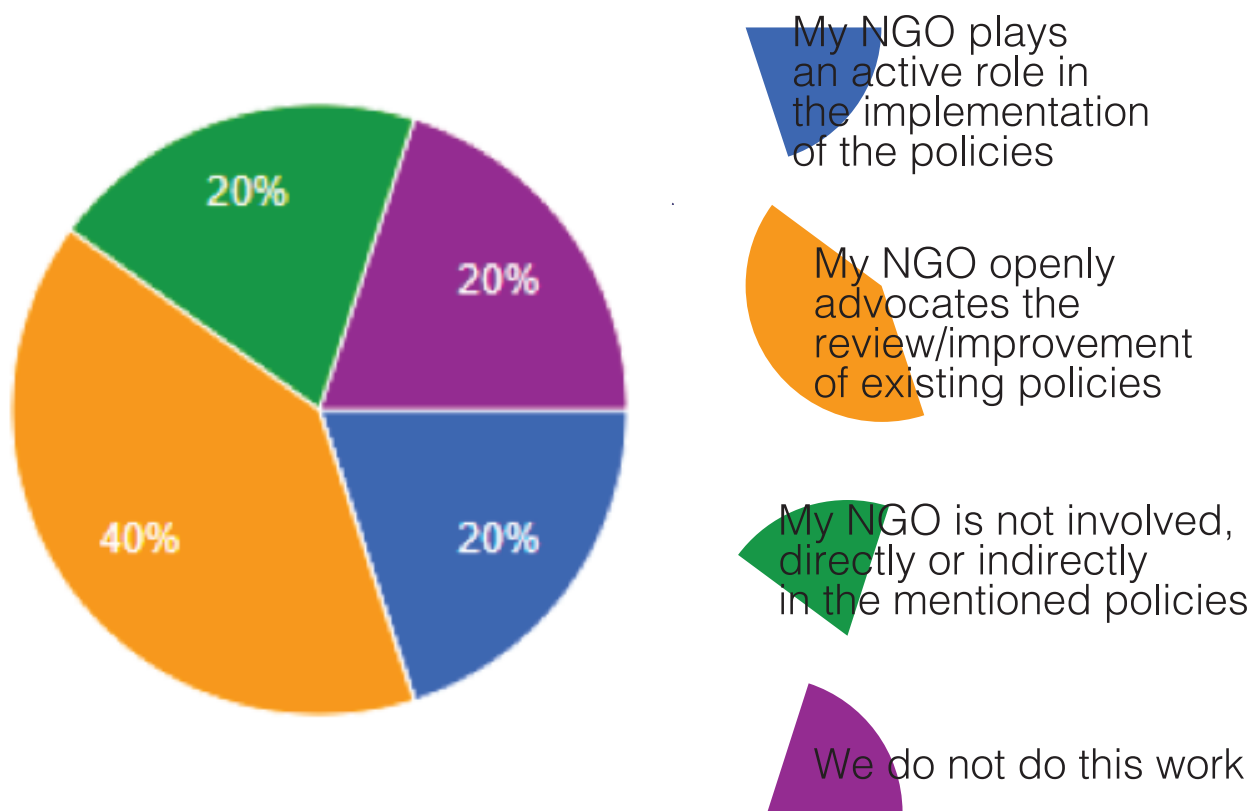
In order to understand the reality better for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs in Spain, we have contacted five NGOs to ask more in depth their opinion on the needs and most notable barriers facing this group. The survey consists of twenty-four questions whose results are described below.

All the NGOs believe that there are specific groups affected by a high imbalance between their level of training and the positions occupied in the labour market, indicating that addressing this gap should be prioritized.

Highly qualified migrants face some problems when accessing the job market due to inadequate recognition of qualifications obtained in their countries of origin, lack of personalised policies for integration in the labour market, and lack of a passport or other documents. To solve this problem, the stakeholders we interviewed relay that it would be necessary to promote the adoption of standards that favour the recognition of qualifications from home countries, provide personalised help for preparing them to enter the labour market and the approval of legal norms to minimise discrimination in selection procedures.

The current policies and procedures for the integration of immigrants into the labour market and the creation of businesses by immigrants are currently null and the only thing that exists is language courses, according to the Spanish NGOs.

The role of the NGOs interviewed, as can be seen in the following graph, is varied:



NGO support to migrants focuses on dialogue with stakeholders, teaching languages, advising for the design of their CVs and offering extra training to achieve a spot in the labour market for these people.

Four NGOs out of five say that the existing legal framework and the instruments available to support the realization entrepreneurship of migrants in Spain are not enough. To this they have added that there are hardly any resources for enhancing language skills, and that it is necessary to facilitate the labor inclusion of the undocumented and/or documented without entrenchment, and that given the high rate of failure in the undertakings, the available instruments are not enough.

To deal with the language barriers faced by migrants in the business field, 3 NGOs out of 5 teach language courses, another facilitates access to entities that manage courses and another makes personalised plans.

To cope with the imbalance between the capacities of migrants and the jobs covered, 3 NGOs out of 5 promote certain mechanisms of balance between companies and migrants who apply for employment, another encourages self-employment of migrants and the latter does not work in this area.

In the case of solving the challenges of migrant companies in accessing public or private financing, 3 NGOs out of 5 give support to the migrant entrepreneur. On the other hand, to solve the lack of personalised legal and business advice for companies of migrants, 3 NGOs facilitate access to legal and business advice.

To help migrants in the employability process through the establishment of new businesses, NGOs develop all options except to act as a direct educational provider.

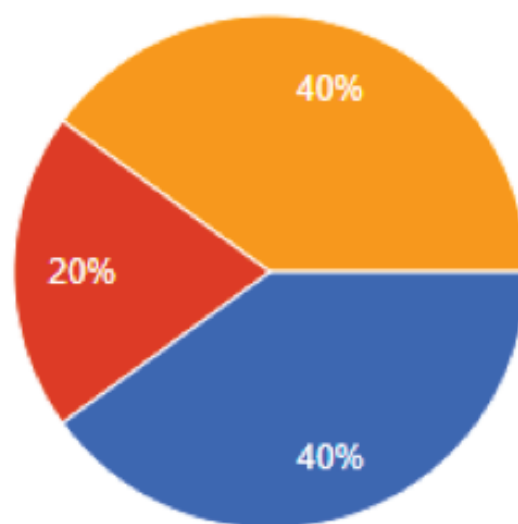
When it comes to improving equal opportunities in access to the labour market and the business sector for migrants, NGOs use all 3 strategies.

To the question on how to face the phenomena of discrimination towards migrants in the workplace, the NGO representatives equally support policy-making and education and awareness.

Education and awareness raising actions targeted at sensitizing employers/stakeholders in the field of business towards addressing discrimination against migrants

Policy-making efforts aimed at addressing discrimination within the fields of labor and business and/or reviewing existing regulations discriminatory to migrants

Provision of educational offerings focused on enhancing migrants' awareness about discrimination and how to address it at different levels



Case Studies: Migrants and Refugees in Spain

We are currently working with a Spanish NGO called La Bolina. We have collaborated in its “Regeneration Project” in Granada, and we have participated in some of the various activities. Its objective is to help refugees through rejuvenation of the countryside and agriculture.

María and Ruth, the founders of La Bolina, tell us about the good atmosphere in which they work with migrants and refugees, above all, they witness a strong desire to work that the sincere aim to find a second chance in life.

Final Summary Spain

From our interviews, several conclusions can be drawn:

1. The biggest problem in Spain for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs, is the government’s lack of help in terms of facilitating the creation of new enterprises. Taxes are very high and the procedure that is in place is excessively long.
2. Language has largely not been an obstacle for this group, given that most of them are coming to Spain from Latin America.
3. Finally, NGOs are a very important and helpful resource throughout the whole process of starting one’s business in Spain.

In our opinion, in Spain there is a lot of work to be done in terms of self-employment of foreigners, and this situation is exacerbated by the current economic and refugee crisis.

However, the work of associations, foundations and NGOs that work with this profile of people, in hand with the government, are doing a great job thanks to their vision and social commitment.

Target Groups Report Final Summary

In this VET4MIGRE project report, we recognize how migrants and refugees are an important workforce for the hosting EU countries and that this group can make a significant contribution to their host economies.

Europe has an identified need for more entrepreneurs and an enabling VET climate for entrepreneurship to fulfil the aims of and successfully implement the Lisbon strategy. Assisting migrant entrepreneurs is essential for creating the necessary conditions for sustainable and inclusive growth and employment, and so a more cohesive Europe.

With this understanding forefront in our research, we have sought out to identify what resources are currently available for migrant entrepreneurs and where training gaps might exist in the partner countries of: Italy, Denmark, Spain, Greece and Bulgaria. This process has been undertaken through research, where we spoke directly with the highly-skilled migrant and refugee entrepreneurs themselves and stakeholders supporting this group, generating fruitful discussions and fuelling important thoughts and ideas about what can be done better to support them.

Universally, the partner organizations found that migrant entrepreneurs need and benefit from customized arrangements focused on preparing them for entry into the labor market through, most notably: mentoring and coaching. In this way, migrants can receive advice, help and information, preferably individualized and tailored to their specific situation and needs. A mentor can further provide critical “insider knowledge,” and open the door to larger network creation, cracking a code that can be hard to decipher on one’s own.

Indeed, network strengthening is key. This is true for the migrant herself, and at the same time, important too for the stakeholders assisting this group. In other words, parallel networks need to be created in which the migrant may manoeuvre and benefit from: the first and most obvious network being her own personal contacts, and the second being the net of organizations working to support migrant entrepreneurs.

These organizations all might service the migrant entrepreneur, but be unaware of each other and what services are already on offer. By collaborating, they can better provide signposts for the migrants they serve and also develop together necessary, innovative, and exciting new synergies and collaborations to support their target group. Pooling resources and expertise across organizations may also be the best way to address specific needs of migrants and refugees in the area of, e.g. psychological and motivational support—needs which may and do differ when compared to the native populations.

Trainings should continue to target language courses, taking into consideration new methodologies, as language is simply a very strong barrier across countries (with the exception of Spain in our study, due to the backgrounds of the majority of the migrant population). Mastering the language is therefore a necessary step, but even with this skill-set, socio-cultural knowledge is also critical. Trainings in this area can bring more nuanced understanding, as can interacting more with the locals in a purposeful way. Understanding cultural codes is something that can be accelerated through trainings and also through the assistance of a mentor.

Furthermore, courses are often available in starting-one's-own business, but these courses if they are to serve migrants, need to provide more targeted information, e.g. be sector-specific, and tackle issues like cultural awareness in marketing and customer service. IT and digitalization offer further inroads for migrants onto the entrepreneurial scene.

The level of bureaucracy that must be navigated will vary by country in the EU. However, overall, there exists among participants in our research special need for aid in interpreting each country's laws and regulations, especially when it comes to the heavy legal language of tax law—an aspect of starting one's business that is important to get correct right from the start.

NGOs working to support migrant and refugee entrepreneurs should moreover look to influencing policy, especially in the areas of: fighting discrimination; accessing funding; and ensuring migrants with a business idea meet a system which they can navigate that is smooth and not overly burdensome. Fighting discrimination should take as a starting point, changing the narrative. One way to do this could be, e.g. promoting events where migrant entrepreneurs are on center stage and politicians are invited to the showcase and conversation. Novel funding strategies may involve creative strategies like pushing for greater access to microfinancing, or revisiting regulations in place that hinder refugee entrepreneurs from truly getting on their own two feet.

Another lesson learned from our research is that we as NGOs and institutions supporting this group need to really “see” the individuals we are supporting—asking in creative ways who the beneficiaries really are in order to provide the most effective assistance. This will further help aid dialogue between this group and society at large.

Ultimately, all participants expressed great trust in the aims and values of the European Union, and the opportunities available. The possibilities of synergies and creative new ideas put forth are highly encouraging. We found individual motivation and dedication across countries to be high.

Participants across countries further find that NGOs can and do play a critical role in supporting integration through connecting migrants to the job market and helping them ensure their dreams of starting a business become a reality. NGOs according to the participants are truly crucial in facilitating integration and inclusion, alongside and in-hand with the various government entities.

Fundamentally, an effective integration process requires cooperative work. For migrant entrepreneurs, collaborative, targeted support will be most effective when it is individualized as far as is relevant and also long-term in both vision and commitment.

Credits

This report research was realized in the project “Vet opportunities for migrants and refugees” in the framework of the European program “Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships for VET.” This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Project code: 2017-1-DK01-KA202-034224