

VET4MIGRE

IO2
SMART PRACTICES

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

In the Action

Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships for VET – Development of innovation



Erasmus+

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Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a powerful tool to create jobs among migrant and refugee populations who face barriers in finding employment. It also drives economic growth and nurtures new skills and capabilities.

As part of the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, the European Commission aims to create an environment where business support services reach all potential entrepreneurs, including those from vulnerable groups. The European Commission recognises that migrants make up an important number of potential entrepreneurs, but that they face specific legal, cultural and linguistic barriers.

In this project, we aim to support the creation, improvement and wider dissemination of support schemes for migrants and refugees. We recognise that it is important to develop new, creative and long-term strategies to allow refugee and migrant populations to adapt, integrate and become positive citizens in their host countries, and to support their smooth transition into the job market by offering training and mentoring opportunities to become self-employed.

This "Smart Practices" booklet was compiled as a quick reference for those interested in hearing more about the most innovative and cutting edge practices in the field today. It is a collection of 2 practices for each country involved in the project; each chapter presents the country context, followed by 2 real-world smart practices that have been identified as innovative, successful, and worth sharing. Therefore this international compendium, with chapters from Bulgaria, Spain, Denmark, Italy, and Greece, is useful for any stakeholder working with and seeking to support migrant and refugee entrepreneurs. We encourage the use of this booklet as a source of inspiration and idea-sharing to bolster discussion and implementation of effective solutions for ensuring migrant and refugee entrepreneurs achieve their goals.

I ITALY

1. Context

In Italy, the migrant population increased by about 2 million people in the period between 2007 and 2016, and in 2016, the Italian authorities registered almost 263,000 foreigners. As of 2016 IDOS¹ estimates, the total number of migrants regularly staying on the Italian territory is said to be 5,359,000 persons.

The number of employed people with a foreign background increased to 2,401,000 in 2016 – a rise of 42,000 people from the previous year. They mainly work in the service sector (66,4%), with others in industry and the smallest share in the agricultural sector. Among the employed foreigners, more than 13% of them are engaged in an entrepreneurial activity. This percentage increases to 50% for the Chinese population. Migrant enterprises account for 10% in total of all firms in Italy.

In such a context, VET providers need to update their educational offerings in order to comply with the rapidly changing situation caused by the recent migration phenomenon. Some of the smart practices in Italy and Europe are aimed at identifying new skills required by both trainers and migrants in order to foster their employability. Some of the skills needed relate to intercultural communication and adaptation to diversity. Therefore, the need for the development of new approaches and innovative methodologies emerged.

2. Smart Practices Italy

2.1 M.I.C.R.O. - Migrants Ideas Converted into Real Opportunities

<http://micro.microcredito.gov.it/>

Project partners:

Ente Nazionale per il Microcredito (Coordinator)	Rome, Italy
Ce.S.F.Or – Centro Studi Formazione Orientamento	Rome, Italy
Mediterranean – Réseau Euro-Méditerranéen pour la Coopération	Brussels, Belgium
Acción contra el hambre	Madrid, Spain
Nantik Lum	Madrid, Spain
Wisamar Bildungsgesellschaft gemeinnützige GmbH	Leipzig, Germany

MICRO is a European project directed to all the microcredit operators and NGOs working with migrants who are interested in setting up an entrepreneurial activity.

¹ IDOS – Dossier Statistico Immigrazione <http://www.dossierimmigrazione.it/>

The project has the overall objective of creating professionals capable of supporting migrants throughout all the phases of the realisation of an entrepreneurial activity. The project partners work on the creation and testing of an innovative e-learning methodology, in order for operators to acquire transversal skills in the sectors of economy, finance and intercultural communication.

The project foresees two main sets of activities that will be carried out in Rome: the Sharing of best practices and Training courses. For the identification of best practices, current or past best practices realised by the partner organisations in the fields are discussed, including access to credit, training and social inclusion of migrants, as well as practical models and solutions for the operators' training path. For the training courses, there is testing of new methodology with 20 operators from partner countries.

The project also envisages two main outputs: an E-learning platform and Info-training path. The platform will be directed towards operators working with migrants who have extremely different backgrounds. The training path contained in the platform will allow them to enhance their transversal skills.

This is directed at migrant entrepreneurs and it offers a complete overview, orientation and an initial training on how to realise an entrepreneurial activity.

The materials relevant to the education path for the operators are available at the following link:

<http://micro.microcredito.gov.it/en/corso-formativo-per-operatori/>

The resources dedicated to migrant entrepreneurs are available here:

<http://micro.microcredito.gov.it/en/english-educational-path-for-entrepreneur/>

2.2 CNA World
www.cnaroma.it

The “Confederazione Nazionale dell'Artigianato e della Piccola e Media Impresa di Roma”, CNA, is the cluster association in support and representation of the small craft enterprises and of the SMEs in the trade sector.

They represent the interest of small entrepreneurs and provide services in the field of vocational training. CNA established a help desk for constant individualised support and organises events open to migrants and Italian people, therefore promoting social integration².

CNA World offers the following services related to VET: individual business support; business training sessions; and mentoring.

² <http://www.cnaroma.it/aree-tematiche/imprenditoria-straniera-cna-world>

The CNA offers a service of assessing business ideas starting with an analysis in the form of a questionnaire. The personnel of the CNA assess the quality of the business idea as well as the skills and competences of the migrant.

The business training sessions follow the individual analysis of the business plan and of the individual's skills and competencies. Every training session lasts 3 months and focuses on budgeting rules, marketing, including online.

Lastly, mentoring cycles are offered at the CNA in Rome. Every cycle lasts from one to six months, according to the needs of the mentee.

CNA Roma, the local chapter of CNA in the capital of Italy, further offers a list of vocational training courses dedicated to both migrants and Italian people. The list of courses is available online³.

Indra Perera is the current president of CNA World. He is an entrepreneur from Sri Lanka who asked for support from the CNA in 2009 and is now president of an enterprise of services in Rome. He stated that one of the most important problems faced by foreign enterprises is integration⁴.

II GREECE

1. Context

In 2017, the total number of immigrants residing in Greece was approximately 1,2 million. This number implies that migrants constitute about 10,9% of the total population of the country. The migrants' countries of origin vary with the dominant ones being Syria, Iraq and Pakistan.

Naturally, migrants seek occupations in limited sectors when looking for employment opportunities, in order to make a living. The migrants tend to be employed in the following areas:

- Construction,
- Private households
- Hotels
- Restaurants,
- Agriculture
- Trade.

³ <http://formazione.cnaroma.it/>

⁴ http://www.cnaroma.it/sites/default/files/indra_perera_intervista_avvenire.pdf

It is worth mentioning that male migrants' employment in the construction sector exceeds 25% of total employment.

More and more organizations and public institutions organize a great variety of training and occupational programs and seminars, enabling high-skilled migrants to have greater opportunities for employment. The increase in the relevant indicators in terms of educational and training provision is supported by the Greek state.

The aforementioned training and educational services rely mostly on the following:

- Linguistic courses
- ICT training
- Work-based learning
- Career guidance
- Entrepreneurship support

https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=unemp_gap&t=2016&cm49=300

2. Smart Practices Greece

2.1: Institute Of Entrepreneurship Development (<https://ied.eu/>)

The Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (IED) is a non-profit and non-governmental organization located in Larissa, Greece. The main objective of the institute is the promotion of principles of entrepreneurship, supporting vulnerable groups such as immigrants and refugees. They not only provide support for their integration in the labour market, but also to improve social inclusion.

Furthermore, IED makes efforts to enhance social responsibility and sensitivity, combating discrimination. In this way, economic and social progress throughout disadvantaged parts of the population are achieved.

Through the participation in various projects, the staff of the institute gained experience and expertise in providing support to immigrants who show an interest in entrepreneurship or starting their own business career in the host country.

It is worth mentioning that the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development, in cooperation with other partners in the framework of the European project's implementation, have developed an online platform in order to support experts and professionals, who, in turn, will assist towards the development of social entrepreneurship by immigrants. The concept of this platform is that a trainer will have access to materials exploring the skills of migrants who are already entrepreneurs or who want to open their own social enterprise.

2.2 Municipality Of Volos – Kekpa Diek
(<http://www.kekpa.gr/el/magazine>)

Taking into consideration the great number of immigrants who live in Volos, actions improving their everyday life are crucial. For this reason, the municipality of Volos provides educational programs targeted at all adults whether employed or unemployed, regardless of gender, educational level, country of origin, etc. The only prerequisite for the interested parties is their interest in gaining knowledge and their active participation. The learning program considers it's main objective to be the integration of disadvantaged peoples into both society and the labour market.

The courses that receive most interest from migrants are language and computer learning courses and these are necessary for their everyday lives and employability. In general, the programs aim to strengthen the capacity to adapt to the demands of an ever-evolving and ever-changing socio-economic environment for foreign citizens.

KEKPA DIEK is formed from the partnership between the public enterprise KEKPA and the public vocational training centre DIEK. It operates as the department of the Municipality of Volos. There are two centres of KEKPA DIEK addressing the needs of migrants.

Some of the centres' objectives are:

- Promoting employment with an emphasis on "Social Economy"
- Supporting existing small migrant businesses that face the risk of being closed down
- Organizing and launching events with the purpose of raising awareness of immigrants' social inclusion.
- Enabling immigrants to have access to health and education services.
- Detecting exclusionary phenomena and advocating for them in the Citizen Advocacy Organization

III BULGARIA

1. Context

According to the government's demographic strategy report, 25,223 people have come to Bulgaria from other countries. This includes both returning Bulgarians and immigrants, according to the social ministry. Foreign immigrants number 14,501 persons in total. 13,066 of these are from outside of the European Union.

Nearly 55% of immigrants in 2015 came from Turkey, Syria and Russia, with people from Turkey making up the highest share, totalling almost a quarter of all immigrants. Syrians make up the second highest number with a total of 15.9% and citizens from the Russian Federation make up the third largest share, with 14%.

Regarding the refugee situation in Bulgaria, the number of people with higher education or college education has fallen more than twice compared to other categories since the beginning of the refugee "wave" in the country. Moreover, according to statistics for the last two years, people without education numbered 23% and those with primary education make up 54%. In the same year, the number of asylum seekers from Syria significantly decreased to twice as low as in 2015.

"Unfortunately, the level of education of the refugees is not high, most of them are either without education or at a basic level. Yet, there is work for all people, and we are continually receiving inquiries from different employers. And keep in mind that these are jobs rejected by Bulgarian citizens, and then the employer turns to us, " explains Anna Andreeva of the State Agency for Refugees.

2. Smart Practices Bulgaria

2.1 Refugee and Migrant Month [FB event here.](#)

The Refugee and Migrant Month event celebrates the culture and identity of refugees and migrants in Bulgaria, with discussions on topics related to the challenges they face.

"Our goal is to reach the widest possible range of people. We have events for the NGO sector, families, programmers and entrepreneurs to devise innovative solutions to problems faced by refugees," said Iva Gumnashka, Director of the social start-up [HITL](#).

"We are very glad that the Representation of the European Commission in Bulgaria has decided to become a co-organizer of the initiative and to support us, because it is very important for us to bring the community, organizations and institutions together to solve social problems."

At "A Hub," the first event - an intercultural evening dedicated to Syria - took place, where refugees prepared traditional dishes and made presentations about their country. There was also a "speed-meeting" to get to know the participants. Throughout the month, A Hub's space was decorated with photographs of four different exhibitions, presenting refugee stories from across the world.

The initiative also includes an art workshop, film screening, design thinking session, social innovation hacks, and more. There was a, e.g. workshop for mothers and children where they can share creative craft techniques and stories. At the design thinking session, refugees and NGO representatives familiarized themselves with new methodologies and sought to better define the main problems faced by refugees.

Participants in Refugee Month include non-governmental organizations and social mediators, as well as migrants and refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and many other countries.

Organizers include: the Representation of the European Commission in Bulgaria, A Hub, HITL, Bulgarian Red Cross, Caritas Sofia, Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria and Beautiful Faces of Syria. Among the partners of the initiative are: the Refugees Project, SIBI Bulgaria, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the International Organization for Migration.

As a space for social innovations, A Hub hosts many events like this for those who want to learn more about refugees and migrants and become better acquainted with them and their cultures, as well as social innovations for their integration. The entry is free to all events.

[2.2 Design Thinking workshop](#)

[Facebook event here.](#)

[Innovaton Starter box.](#)

Organizers of this event asked the big question: “What challenges do refugees in Bulgaria face?” The intention was that, in order to create successful social innovations, it is essential to thoroughly understand the needs of the beneficiaries and to accurately define the problems that to be solved.

Innovation Starter Box’s Leona Aslanova is one of the best design-thinking experts in Bulgaria. She lead a design-thinking workshop along with representatives from the NGO sector and refugees, where she presented the main principles of the latest methodologies and helped the participants define the three main challenges that refugees face.

The workshop participants worked on empathizing with and defining the “Design thinking process,” and created personas to represent the different types of refugees in Bulgaria and their unique challenges. Other topics included preconceptions and challenging definitions.

IV SPAIN

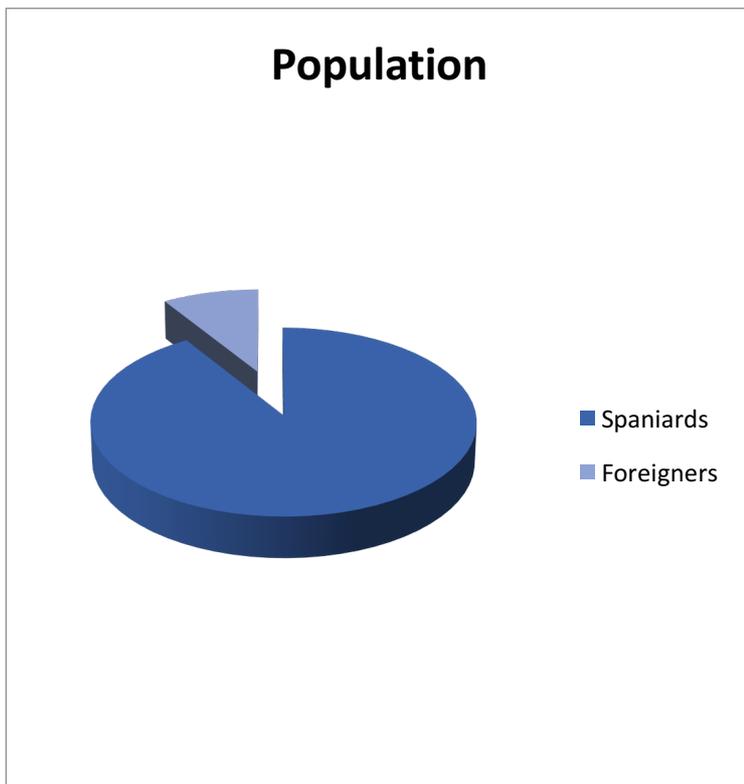
1. Context

Spain has experienced a massive immigration influx since the beginning of the 21st century, mainly driven by economic factors. 2017 data for Spain indicates 9.49% of the population is composed of migrants.

Foreign workers represented 13% of the total Spanish population in 2006, compared to 6.6% in 2001. Generally speaking, it is possible to argue that the Spanish labour market has been able to absorb this enormous increase in the short period. However, immigrants tend to occupy low-skilled occupation sectors, not otherwise filled by Spanish nationals. In addition, migrants are often over-educated for the positions they take and frequently are employed using just temporary contracts. In any case, these negative situations tend to improve as immigrants increase their years of residence in the country.

In 2017, 284,077 migrants were included in the Special Regime of Self-Employed Workers (RETA), according to data from the Autonomous Workers Association (ATA). This includes in most cases, people who have found self-employment as the optimal way to overcome the crisis and enter the Spanish labour market. Consequently, small businesses predominate, with a low capacity to generate employment (often family-owned) and with preference for sectors such as hospitality and construction (38%). These small businesses also have a relevant proportion in the commerce and transport sector.

Unfortunately, in Spain only very few NGOs offer VET opportunities for migrants, so improvement is needed in this area.



2. Smart Practices Spain

2.1 Programmes Of Initial Welcome, Reception And Provision Of Special Aid For Satisfying Initial Housing And Residential Needs
(<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2009/spain-the-occupational-promotion-of-migrant-workers>)

Welcome services provide information and advice to new inhabitants of the municipality; they help by providing guidance on the city, information about the necessary administrative and legal steps and also in terms of accommodation, schools, health care, and recognition of professional qualifications, etc.

The welcome services recommended to be included in a program of this type are the following: individual advice in the language of origin for newcomers; group counseling modules, also in the native language of immigrants; an individual counseling module regarding, for example, the recognition of professional qualifications; and general pertinent information.



2.2 Family Regrouping Policies

(https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/GUIDEMIGRANTS_EN.pdf and <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2009/spain-the-occupational-promotion-of-migrant-workers>)

Integration in a new society is fundamental for adaptation. In this vein, people should feel that their various traditions and cultures are respected.

Family regrouping policies for those immigrants already established in Spain, aim to facilitate the arrival of spouses/couples and children, as well as the inclusion of children in the Spanish educational system, as well as adaptation of working conditions due to religious issues (for example: adaptation to Ramadan periods).

Children with immigrant and refugee backgrounds learn about a whole new cultural world in schools. The NGOs in this initiative play a very important role in awareness-raising work.

All images: <https://pixabay.com/>

V DENMARK

1. Context

In Denmark, in 2017, 13% of the total population consisted of immigrants and their descendants. 58% of those who are immigrants in Denmark are from non-western countries. This number has significantly risen within the past three decades.⁵ From 1995 to 2008, immigrants with non-western backgrounds saw a rise in employment, however, it is noted that since 2008 the number of those employed has fallen again. As of 2015, immigrants with a non-western background aged between 16 and 64 were employed at rates of 53% and 45%, representing men and women, respectively.

In the most recently available report from “Entrepreneurship Index for Migrants and Descendants in Denmark 2013,”⁶ it is noted that of all entrepreneurs in Denmark, 13.6% were made up of migrants and their descendants. 8.3% of those were characterized as being of non-western descent. This is, in fact, the highest percentage Denmark has ever seen. It is also noted that there is a trend of more immigrant women choosing to be entrepreneurs than ethnic, female Danes. Furthermore, between 2007 and 2010, the number of immigrant entrepreneurs rose from 24% to 30%.

In the same report, it is highlighted that migrants in Denmark tended to focus on “trade and transport” and “hotel and restaurants” sectors, whereas ethnic Danes concentrated more on “information and communication of knowledge services.” However, this sectoral focus tends to shift as migrants stay longer in Denmark.

Services that are available in Denmark to support migrant entrepreneurs can be found in the public sector, with workshops and consultancy opportunities in English and Danish available for free, including in the legal domain. The NGO sector in Denmark further has a wide range of organizations supporting this group, with comparatively more resource-intensive and targeted services.

⁵ <http://dst.dk/Site/Dst/Udgivelser/GetPubFile.aspx?id=20705&sid=indv2017>

⁶ <http://w2l.dk/file/406159/ivaerksaetterindeks2013.pdf>

2. Smart Practices Denmark

2.1 Raising a migrant entrepreneur's cultural awareness and meeting the expectations of a Danish customer

If we look at the successful business “Falafel Factory”, begun by refugee entrepreneurs in Denmark, we can see that they have implemented an aesthetically pleasing Nordic-style layout and logo/signage, which is very popular in Copenhagen and thus brings in business. This, in turn, not only provides a service for those within their network but also eases the transition into opening up the business to locals and thus contributing to overall integration.

“Falafel Factory” is a business that is receiving the support of an NGO called “Refugee Entrepreneurs Denmark” (RED). Our respondents emphasized how Danes expect high quality when they seek out a service and as a society, take great pride in the Danish design tradition and aesthetic. Appealing to these sensibilities is advantageous for migrant entrepreneurs to broaden their customer base. This example of cultural awareness is, according to RED an essential part of appealing to and “cracking” the Danish market. Creating and designing an, e.g. interior that makes a Dane feel comfortable because it is for them a recognizable space that is purposefully “Nordic” can go a long way. This is true for all aspects of a business, from the interior of a restaurant or design of a sign, but to product packaging.

RED further finds that for newcomers to Denmark, addressing cultural differences is key. For example, expectations of Danes around private space often needs to be taught. YES Cph is an organization supporting refugee entrepreneurs who also works to raise awareness of cultural appropriate behavior in the Danish context, for example related to hygiene. It is also culturally appealing to Danes to have e.g. an element of corporate social responsibility, which the RED-supported company “Karma Wash” exemplifies in their use of eco-friendly products. Incorporating a CSR element in one’s business model can also mean emphasizing the background of the entrepreneur themselves and their life-story or motivation.

Appealing to a Danish consumer and meeting their expectations also means being savvy in the digital domain when it comes to one’s business model. RED has a collaboration with the organization “Hack Your Future” to teach refugee entrepreneurs to learn code and Juan Jensen, a case worker in Helsingor municipality also emphasizes the need for migrant entrepreneurs to think about being more digital in their start-up idea when creating a business in Danish society. Ensuring digital literacy is part of meeting the expectations of Danes and so part of both enhancing appeal and, ultimately, the process of integration.

Refugee Entrepreneurs Denmark: <http://refugeeentrepreneursdenmark.dk/>

YES Cph: <https://www.yescph.dk/>

Helsingør Municipality Newcomer entrepreneur support services: <https://www.helsingor.dk/erhverv/start-og-vaekst-af-virksomhed/nydansk-ivaerksaetter-i-helsingor/>

Hack Your Future: <https://hackyourfuture.dk/about/>

2.2 Cross-institutional support, with a special consideration of psychological needs of migrant entrepreneurs

In providing services to this target group, special emphasis is placed on meeting an individual's psychological needs through collaboration. Our respondents uniformly named psychological obstacles as being profound when starting a business in a new place, with a potentially negative impact on motivation. This can be very difficult to overcome without assistance. In the case of Copenhagen Business School, School of Entrepreneurship (CSE) they have identified a need to support a "mindshift" in which entrepreneurs not only use their competencies, but are transformed in the use of his or her competencies in a way that builds new confidence and a stronger belief in oneself. They do this by working with the Danish Red Cross.

With a common lack of network, and potential past psychological trauma for refugees in particular, there is a need among this group for the provision of assistance to address ongoing emotional needs. RED has identified this necessity as well, and works with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) to ensure that there are consultants available throughout the entire period of service provision--consultants for whom the entrepreneurs can call upon to meet their different needs and wishes.

Ensuring a holistic approach, in which the overall needs of a migrant entrepreneur are met will most-likely mean working in a cross-sectoral manner. Different organizations have different resources and expertise and pooling these not only covers a greater number of needs, including those which are psychological, it also creates a synergistic effect, inviting completely new and innovative collaborations and realizations with a greater chance of success for the individual entrepreneurs.

Refugee Entrepreneurs Denmark: <http://refugeeentrepreneursdenmark.dk/>

Copenhagen Business School, School of Entrepreneurship: <https://cse.cbs.dk/>

Danish Red Cross: <https://www.rodekors.dk/>

Danish Refugee Council: <http://www.drc.dk/>

Credits

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