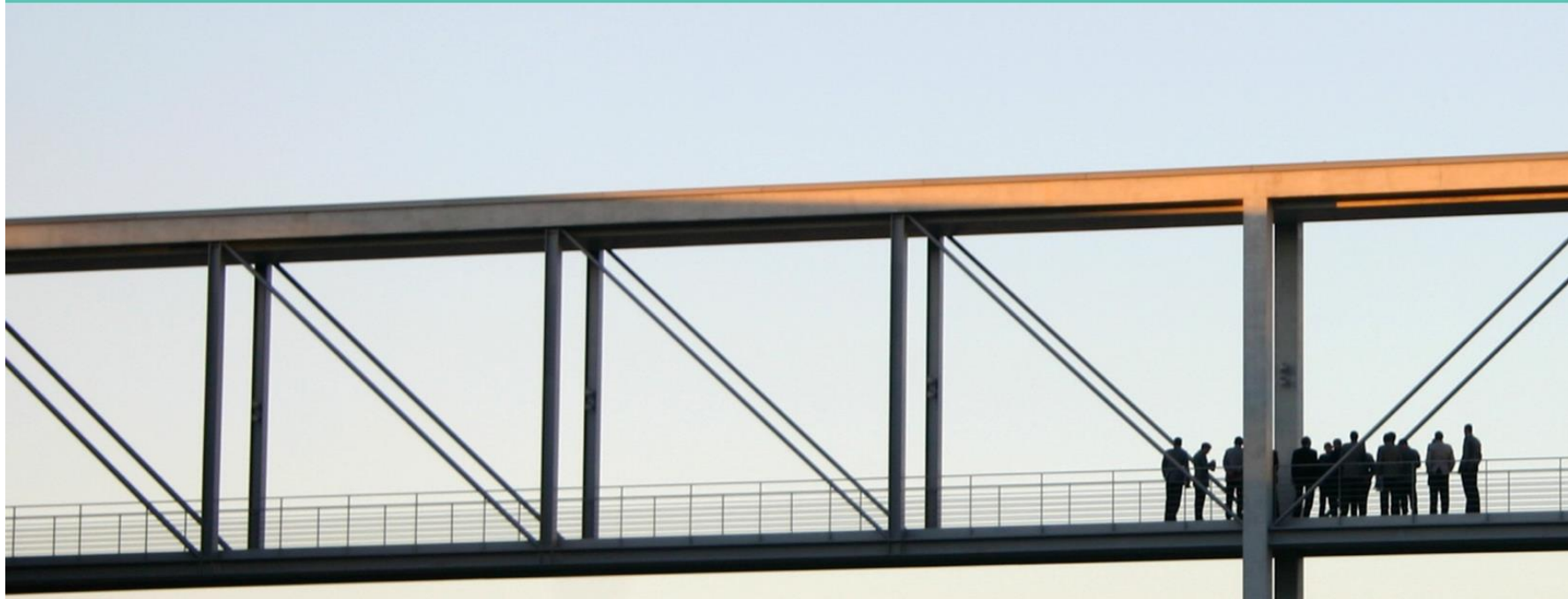




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2.3 REVIEW ON THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CIVIC EDUCATION AND LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION



WORK PACKAGE 2: RESEARCH ANALYSIS ON THE TRANSITION TO EARLY ADULTHOOD OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS



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DISCLAIMER

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The *CIVILHOOD – Enhancing unaccompanied minors transition to early adulthood through civic education and labour market integration* project is led by ARSIS (Greece) in partnership with CECL (Greece), CESIE (Italy), EPEKA (Slovenia), CODECA (Cyprus), SUDWIND (Austria) and KINDERFREUNDE (Austria). All the members of the consortium were part of the implementation of the research in their relevant contexts.

ARSIS (Association for the Social Support of Youth) is a non-governmental organization, specializing in the social support of youth that are in difficulty or danger and in the advocacy of their rights, was established in 1992 and since then it organises and participates in networks, cooperates with public services and non-governmental organisations and formulates proposals in the field of social policy for children and young people. The vision of ARSIS is a society with equal opportunities for all young people and respect for their rights, as stated in Greek and international legislation, especially the UN International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

CECL is one of the most active Greek not-for-profit research institutes. CECL is active in constitutional institutions and good governance, European integration and policy, fundamental rights and social policy. The specific objectives of the CECL are to provide institutional know-how and capacity-building to public bodies in Greece, developing countries and member-states of the European Union, to undertake theoretical and applied research in the fields of Greek, European and comparative public law and public policies, and to promote public awareness on developments in the European area.

CESIE is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Palermo (Italy) and established in 2001. CESIE is committed to promote the cultural, social, educational and economic development at local, national, European and international levels. Through its Migration Unit, CESIE supports the social inclusion of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees of all ages (children, youngsters, adults) through holistic activities and trainings.



EPEKA is an association and social enterprise established in 2008 in Slovenia and is part of the wider international EPEKA Network. The organisation focuses on non-formal education, social inclusion, arts, ecology and other social issues. Since its inception the members of EPEKA have worked closely with the Roma community and other target groups which fall into the category of NEET.

CODECA is a non-profit organisation established and operating in Cyprus since 2016. The organisation aims, through the provision of specialised services, to reduce social inequalities, develop conditions for equal opportunities, and assist the integration of vulnerable and socially excluded groups into society. One of its main operations is the provision of management and services at the migrant reception centres in the Republic of Cyprus, as well the provision of semi-independent living spaces as well psycho-social and training support to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

SÜDWIND is an independent Austrian human rights organisation. For more than 40 years, Südwind has been advocating for social justice, fair working conditions and a sustainable global development. Through educational work, public relations and campaigning, Südwind addresses global interrelationships and their social impacts. With public campaigns, awareness raising and through educational work, Südwind is committed to a more equal world and a good life for all. Südwind has been a long-term member of the Austrian Platform for development and humanitarian aid as well as the Austrian Alliance for Climate Justice.

KINDERFREUNDE (Childrenfriends) is a non-governmental organization based in Vienna (Austria) that promotes the rights of children who live in Austria, founded in 1908 as a worker's association in order to improve the lives of their children. Nowadays, Kinderfreunde is not only a strong lobby for children and their rights recognition but also is involved in many projects in Austria, for the development of children's wellbeing. Activities such as children's rights and child protection programmes, political and social lobbying for Kinderfreunde kindergartens, educational work with refugees directly in refugee centres, play afternoons, local groups all over Austria and vacation activities for Families are a large part of the work of the organisation.

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INTRODUCTION

Good practice exchange can serve as a valuable guide in order to understand, analyse, adapt and develop further activities and once these actions are fully formulated, the consortium will review the ways they can be implemented through the CIVILHOOD curriculum to better reach and assist unaccompanied minors transitioning through adulthood. The collection of the twenty practices that are found below has taken place in Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Slovenia and has been based on the following objectives:

- Analyse the connection between civic education and labour market integration.
- Understand how civic engagement and values that civic education promotes can strengthen and assist unaccompanied minors to transition to early adulthood and the labour market integration.
- Study which labour skills and values are acquired through civic education.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology that has been used is an adaptation of the SPICE Framework (Booth 2006), following five parameters of analysis:

1. **SETTING:** In this parameter occurs the description of the context in question – where the good practice has taken place (e.g., EU/International/City etc.).
2. **PERSPECTIVE:** This parameter allows to identify the users, potential users, or stakeholders of the service/practice/intervention - for whom (e.g., Minors/young migrants/youth workers).
3. **INTERVENTION:** This parameter analyses the actions taken for the users, potential users, or stakeholders - (educators, programmes). This is also the space to analyse aims, objectives, planned activities – all the elements that have occurred in the planning of the practice.
4. **WHAT HAPPENED¹:** The parameter focuses on the description of what and how things took place during the practice, with an analysis of qualitative and quantitative indicators.
5. **EVALUATION:** In the final parameter occur references regarding the evaluation of the practice, With the evaluation there is also focus on the results or measurements that could determine the success of the intervention - what result or how well it went (e.g., defining inclusion processes).

¹ The fourth parameter is the main difference between this adaptation that is being used in this guide and the SPICE Framework since originally it is named “Comparison” and refers to an analysis of the practice/intervention comparing it to alternative actions or outcomes. The research team that developed this guide decided to move forward with “What happened” instead so that more information could be collected on the results of the practice before moving forward with its evaluation.



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Moreover, this is the space in which difficulties, strengths, weaknesses of the practice are presented, while extracting conclusions regarding the CIVILHOOD project.



AUSTRIA

I. KINDERFREUNDE CONNECT (2015 - ongoing)

Source/ Information: <https://connect.kinderfreunde.at/>

SETTING

Local project funded by a Viennese non-profit organisation Austria Children friends and volunteers - First in Traiskirchen (first reception centre in Austria for asylum seekers) and then adapted for big shelters in Vienna.

PERSPECTIVE

Unaccompanied minors, asylum seeking children and their families

INTERVENTION

The aim of the project is to strengthen, support and help families, children and young minors to find their place in the majority society.

Furthermore, the target group is to be promoted through various projects and supported in leading a self-determined life. The empowerment of children and young adults is to be particularly promoted.

Connect is the result of volunteers and employees of the Childrenfriends Austria who established a social place for the asylum seekers to meet, interact and connect, in the first reception centre Traiskirchen in 2015. In 2016 the project was conceptualised and moved to refugee shelters in Vienna, funded by Vienna Social Fund and Vienna Health Promotion. This is also about low-threshold work with asylum seekers.

The project promotes social interaction among children, their families and unaccompanied minors living in large refugee shelters who initially have little to no interaction with the majority society. Connect consists of several projects that have been implemented in recent years. Five of them continue to this day.



Active projects:

1. **Connect Playroom:** The rooms of the playroom are located in the accommodation directly and are supervised by educators twice a week in the afternoon. A space for children between 3 and 13 years old, where they can playfully learn the German language and interact with other children. Through learning the language together, playing and many excursions, the introduction to Austria should be made easier. First friendships and important social relationships are established. Getting to know the customs in a new country, but also the exchange of their own language and culture is an important point. Connect playroom has taken place since 2016 until now, in two refugee shelters. About 55 children a week regularly participate in the playroom activities.
2. **Connect Parent coffee:** This project is mostly run-in combination with Connect playroom, the idea here is to invite the parents whose children visit the playroom to share their experiences, fears and wishes with professional parent-child trainers in a parent coffee. The parents' coffee usually takes place directly in the accommodation. This activity has existed since 2016 until now, but in times of Corona it was limited and partly tried to continue online. Approximately 15-20 parents attend the parents' coffee on a regular basis.
3. **Connect Training:** Sport as a balance has been an important element in the work with young asylum seekers from the very beginning. Through regular kickboxing training, which has taken place once a week since 2016, the young people learn rules, cultural exchange and can test their physical limits. The training takes place with a professional kickboxing trainer and with regularly invited external trainers. The Training is once a week with an average of 15 participants between 6-25 years, of different gender.
4. **Connect UAM:** The most recent of the many Connect activities is Connect UAM, which has only been running since 2022 and offers recreational planning for young unaccompanied minors directly in the accommodation itself. The activities happen 3 times a week and include programs such as trips to museums, German tutoring, cooking, individual counselling, sporting excursions (climbing, soccer, basketball and volleyball, running training, boxing training etc). In the weeks about 20-25 young people are reached.
5. **Connect Summer holidays:** Vacations for refugee children and young people. One to two weeks in the summer vacations, a vacation camp financed by donations is organised and carried out by Connect. Here, relationships among the young people are formed and intensified, but also through many free activities and sleeping in tents, independence is promoted.



Since 2018, 60 children and young people have participated in these activities.

As regards to the past projects:

1. **Connect Sports:** This activity was carried out together with the Connect Playroom in the shelters. This was about getting to know different sports clubs for the children of refugee families. The Connect Playroom visited the following sports clubs with the children: Football club, Karate club, Yoga studio and Climbing club. The aim was to enable the children to become members of a sports club and to show them possibilities that they can do in their free time. Connect Sports took place from 2020-2022 and about 10 children a week participated.
2. **Connect to Participate:** This project took place in 2022 and was a cooperation with the Austrian Chamber of Labour. Over a period of three months, 15 young asylum seekers were supported in finding a self-determined voice through the exchange of opinions, political education and creative methods.
3. **Connect Tandem:** The idea behind Connect Tandem, similar to other mentoring projects, was to bring unaccompanied refugee youth together with people who have been living in Vienna for some time. The Viennese become caregivers for the young people, introduce them to Vienna, and provide variety in everyday life. The project lasted throughout 2016 and approximately 20 young asylum seekers took part in it. The tasks were to support the young people in the asylum process, educational but also emotional, family support. Some of the young people are still in contact with their “godparents” today.
4. **Connect Media:** The project Connect Media, was a cooperation of the Austrian Children's Friends with the Skills Group agency and OKTO Community TV, which since fall 2016 has offered young people who are new to Vienna and interested in politics and journalism an opportunity to get to know the Austrian media world. Duration was from 2016 to 2019.



WHAT HAPPENED

From 2015 until 2022, a large number of unaccompanied minors and children their families participated in the following activities:

- Connect Playroom, two times a Week
- Connect to Participate 2022 (special project for young migrants and transition into adulthood together with the Austrian camper of Labour.
- Connect training, once a week
- Connect Parent, coffee once a week
- Connect Summer holidays, once a year
- Connect to Participate, one-time for three months

EVALUATION

Difficulties or constraints for its implementation

- The funding of the project is a new challenge every year, so the project Connect since its establishment in 2016, must always change and adapt to the political changes in the country.
- Furthermore, some projects, such as Connect Tandem or Connect Sport, were discontinued because the implementation did not meet the requirements.
- Especially in the projects Connect UAM and Connect to Participate, the target group, young refugee adults, is more difficult to reach. Regular participation in the activities is also difficult to achieve.

Strengths

- It is a low-threshold and low-effort work with a target group that does not have it easy socially. For example, the Connect playroom can be implemented very easily and can be carried out and adapted almost anywhere with only a few resources.
- Through social interaction of the social workers with the children, the parents can also be reached and exchanged informally on important social issues.
- The repeated support has enabled relationships to develop between children, parents and the staff, which can continue even after the time in the shelter and thus facilitate the social entry into the majority society.



II. JUGENDCOACHING (2000 - ongoing)

Source/ Information: <https://www.neba.at/jugendcoaching>

SETTING

NEBA is a network for employment assistance and offers youth coaching with more than 180 providers in Austria. It is an initiative of the Social Ministry Service and has been active for over 20 years. In Austria there are different providers for this, which are supported by the NEBA network.

PERSPECTIVE

Young people with a (learning) disability, school dropouts, young people without educational qualifications, young people from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds

INTERVENTION

The aim of the project is to give education to support students from the 9th year of school attendance onwards, as well as young people under the age of 19 who are not part of the system and young people with (former) special educational needs or disabilities up to the age of 25.

Youth coaching is also intended to make a significant contribution to the personal and social stabilization of young people. It is precisely problems such as family difficulties, addictive behaviour, debts, housing problems, etc. that make access to higher qualifications more difficult.

Youth coaching is also intended to help young people with a migration background, who are not so familiar with the Austrian labour market and training opportunities, as well as young people with learning difficulties, to learn to use their potential in a more targeted way. Personal perspective planning is intended to enable further school attendance, a qualification measure, an apprenticeship opportunity or a permanent employment relationship.

Youth coaching consists of three phases:

Stage 1 - Initial interview: Young people receive information in the scope of a few hours (maximum 2 months). If more support is needed, a transition to Stage 2 or Stage 3 may occur.

Stage 2 – Counselling: Young people receive targeted career guidance as well as help with personal decision-making and organizing support services. Completion of stage 2 - after a maximum of 6 months (handover of a perspective plan) - is a prerequisite for completing an extended apprenticeship or partial qualification or for participation in the production school.



Stage 3 – Support: In the sense of "case management", an analysis of the young person's strengths and weaknesses, including a perspective plan, is drawn up. This contains concrete support measures, qualification steps as well as medium and long-term goals. This stage can last up to one year. Young people can also receive follow-up support. It is possible to contact the young people again.

In stages 2 and 3, the young people should also gain practical experience in the world of training and work, e.g., through courses for vocational testing or work training/work trials in companies.

In connection with the compulsory training for young people under the age of 18, level 0 - introduction to compulsory training - is added. The focus here is on establishing contact with the young person who is obliged to undergo training or with his or her legal guardians, and on targeted referral to programs that help fulfil the obligation to undergo training.

In addition to Youth Coaching, there are also four other NEBA initiatives: Job Fit, Job training assistance, Work assistance, Job coaching with the most participants.

WHAT HAPPENED

To get a little insight, the figures from 2021 are used.

A total of 59,995 young people throughout Austria participated in the Youth Coaching 2021 project. Of these, 14 percent were between the ages of 17 and 23.

In stage 1, there were 49%, in stage 2 there were 31% and in stage 3, 21% participants.

Source/Information: https://www.bundeskost.at/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/NEBA_Datasheet_2021_Jugendcoaching.pdf

EVALUATION

Difficulties or constraints for its implementation

- This kind of coaching can only happen with good financial support and/ or funding agencies.
- Since it is structured similar to a government initiative, there may be a higher inhibition to use these services, especially if one is not yet too familiar with the new country of origin.



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- You need a person or an association to point you to this offer.

Strengths

- It is a good initiative to obtain a higher educational qualification
- It is free, voluntary and accessible to everyone (not dependent on asylum status).
- It can be used to find jobs and apprenticeships, and to get a better knowledge of the labour market situation in Austria.



III. MIGREMPower: Itineraries and resources for migrants and refugees' empowerment and integration (2017-2019)

Source/Information: <https://migrempower.eu/en/>

SETTING

International project funded by the EU - Multiple EU countries (Spain, Italy, Germany, Cyprus, Austria and France)

PERSPECTIVE

Migrants

INTERVENTION

The “*MigrEmpower: Itineraries and resources for migrants and refugees' empowerment and integration*” project, was aimed to contribute to immigrants social and labour integration in the hosting societies, involving 8 partner organizations from 6 EU countries: Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Germany, Austria and France. These 8 organizations attempted to promote equal opportunities and social inclusion by designing the MigrEmpower itinerary, a 3-phase path embodying intervention tools for orientation, assessment of competences, self-evaluation and empowerment aimed at promoting immigrants' integration, making them immediately usable by professionals and social workers.

Partners of the project believed that migration and asylum seekers inclusion processes represent a great challenge for the whole Europe. Immigrants' integration and the number of people arriving in the EU have become a topic of a constant debate across Europe. The new debate is now how to promote integration approaches, policies, theory and practices. Civil coexistence and mutual respect have to be built through educational and welfare interventions also in the labour field. Integration processes often result in xenophobic attitudes. According to this, learning has become the only way of migrants to defend themselves against prejudices and stereotypes.

Activities:

- Participants' first needs analysis.
- Self-evaluation and balance of competences and qualifications.
- Orientation and Counselling.
- Training with five modules in relation to the subjects of Computer Literacy, Linguistic Literacy, Citizenship and Social Skills, Communication and Personal Brand and Self-Employment.



- Employment Support focused on the organization of meetings with local employers, networking sessions and other employment supporting activities addressed to improve participants' employability and entrepreneurship.

WHAT HAPPENED

A study on integration policies and good practices was elaborated by partners, offering the insights of the state-of-the-art of immigrants both at European and partner countries level, selecting Good Practices of social and labour integration while creating policy recommendations.

On the basis of the carried-out research, the MigrEmpower itinerary was designed by partners encompassing 3 phases: the Orientation and Counselling phase, focused on participants' first needs analysis, self-evaluation and balance of competences and qualifications.

A Training Package, with five modules in relation to the subjects of Computer Literacy, Linguistic Literacy, Citizenship and Social Skills, Communication and Personal Brand and Self-Employment.

A Guidelines for Employment Support. focused on the organization of meetings with local employers, networking sessions and other employment supporting activities addressed to improve participants' employability and entrepreneurship.

The itinerary was tested by project partners in the 6 EU countries during the 2nd project year by involving a total of 342 participants and 26 professionals. Evaluation activities demonstrated that participants benefitted from the itinerary, as they gained knowledge and information about local labour markets and job search strategies, improved or acquired key skills such as communication and language, empathy, solidarity, tolerance, creativity, open-mindedness, a sense of respect, equality and diversity through interculturality, dialogue, exchanges, informal moments and debates, gaining self-confidence and motivation.

The MigrEmpower materials are available in English, Spanish, Italian, German, Greek and French and freely accessible and downloadable from the project web site (<https://www.migrempower.eu/>).



EVALUATION

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

- Difficulties in maintaining the beneficiaries throughout the duration of the project.
- Time resource not sufficient for individual coaching.
- Difficulties in creating a “classroom” with the necessary equipment in the institution.
- Language barrier between trainer and participants and among participants.

Strengths

- The successful piloting of the itinerary demonstrated that social and labour integration paths for immigrants are possible: this requests a strong commitment and responsibility of all entities involved such as policy makers, administrations, bodies/services working with these beneficiaries, employers, etc.
- The itinerary has been considered as useful path for professionals as it provides a framework and tools that can be applied to all kinds of local and personal circumstances, thanks to its openness and high degree of flexibility. As well, by undertaking the piloting phase, partner organizations’ staff members and professionals working with immigrants could enrich their knowledge and competences, acquiring new skills for supporting the beneficiaries, finally expanding their local networks in the sector. as the project Outputs can be part of future activities related to education and training of immigrants, or be adapted and used to meet immigrants’ needs as well as other disadvantaged groups around Europe, thanks to the high flexibility of the MigrEmpower methodology.

Weaknesses

- The activities and tools are not designed for the UAM only. They are not specific to that target group.
- It was only a pilot project, not a permanent programme.



IV. CONNECTING PEOPLE: Sponsorships for unaccompanied underage refugees (2001 - ongoing)

Source/Information: <http://www.connectingpeople.at/>

SETTING

Regional Project (Vienna) with partnership on national level

PERSPECTIVE

Unaccompanied minors and young migrants

INTERVENTION

Connecting People is a mentorship project for unaccompanied minors that was initiated by “asylkoordination österreich” in 2001.

The basic idea of the project is that it strengthens every minor with the help of someone who accompanies and supports them, especially taking in consideration young migrants and UAM that in most cases had to leave everything behind them during their migration journey, including family and relatives.

The aim is to build a long-term stable relationship with a young person and to support them in the difficulties they might face in their everyday life, giving them time, emotional attention, active listening, and simply the possibility of "being there" for them.

The main goal of Connecting People is to recruit, train and accompany adult Austrians who take on a mentorship programme for an unaccompanied minor refugee. This mentorship is voluntary and free of charge and aims to offer young immigrants in Austria the most comprehensive and concrete support possible. The focus is on establishing a long-term stable relationship between the mentor and the young person.

Two thirds of Connecting People's funding come from the Vienna Social Fund and the Ministry of Social Affairs. The remaining funds are raised through donations.



Activities:

Concrete support of the project's staff:

- Connecting People looks for people and families who would like to voluntarily become a mentor of an unaccompanied minor refugee.
- All mentors receive training before taking on the mentorship and are also supervised by the organization during the experience.
- They offer regular meetings for exchange and information, organize joint activities with young people and mentors and are available to both groups for advice and support as needed.

Concrete support by mentors:

- Accompanying the young people on their bureaucratic processes in relation to the authorities (as a confidant at the hearings before the asylum authorities, at various offices, maintaining contact with the school management or the counsellors in the accommodations for young immigrants, etc.).
- Support with learning the German language.
- Tutoring.
- Support with educational issues or for the access to the job market.
- Joint leisure activities.
- Arranging contacts (to doctors, schools, internships, etc.).

WHAT HAPPENED

Every year, several groups of mentors are trained, below you can find the project's structure

1. Information evenings for adults interested in the project: The contact to the people is organized in project groups with a maximum of 30 sponsors each. In the run-up to the project, detailed information meetings are held with all interested parties in small groups. In these talks, the expectations and motivations of the interested parties regarding the sponsorship are to be clarified. But also, the expectations of the future sponsors are an essential part of these talks.

2. Decision on admission to the project or to a project group: Decision on inclusion of people in the project are made in collaboration with the UAM care centres.



3. Participation in a training: After being accepted into the project, the sponsors complete a two-month training course. This training includes an intensive examination of legal as well as pedagogical and psychological issues that may be relevant in the course of the sponsorship. The training takes place in 6 meetings in the range of 2 months for a total of 12 hours. The topics of the training can be found below:

- Getting to know each other in the project group
- Basics of asylum and foreigners' law
- General situation of unaccompanied minors in Austria (statistics, accommodation, basic care, authorities & NGOs etc.)
- Flight and trauma
- Educational situation & access to the labour market
- Accommodation options for unaccompanied minors
- Sponsors report about their experiences

4. Placement of the mentorship: The selection of the young people takes place in cooperation with accommodation and care facilities for unaccompanied minors but also with adult facilities where young adult immigrants are accommodated. When arranging mentorship relations, attention is paid to match the individual wishes and backgrounds, resources and potentiality of the mentors, such as knowledge of a particular national or cultural background, spoken languages or hobbies, with the interests and needs of the young people to be mentored, in order to create the best possible starting point for establishing contact.

5. Accompaniment of the mentorship programme: Connecting People offers regular meetings to exchange experiences, information and advice. In case of acute problems, individual consultations with the project management as well as supervision and legal advice by experts are available at any time. This gives the sponsors and young people the security of not being left alone in difficult situations. The accompaniment during the first year of the placed mentorship programme is intensive, afterwards the plan is more adapted to the needs of each relationship.

6. Joint activities: An integral part of the project are also joint activities with all sponsors and the UAM involved (parties, sports events, picnics etc).



EVALUATION

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

In the few past years, there is a decrease of the availability of potential mentors. Analysis have permitted to link that trends to the overall difficulties and uncertainties due to the feeling of insecurity going on in many countries connected to financial difficulties and the health situation during the first years of COVID-19.

Strengths

- All young people receive information as precisely as possible on what a mentorship programme entails, why and under which conditions adults become mentors.
- All young people are asked if they want to try mentorship, no one is "forced" to do so. If the relationship is not successful, the mentorship can be terminated at any time by either party.
- When arranging mentorship schemes, an attempt is made to match the individual "wishes" and backgrounds, resources with the potentiality of the mentors, such as knowledge on a particular culture, language or hobbies, with the interests and needs of the young people to be mentored.
- The selection of the young people takes place in cooperation with accommodation and care facilities for unaccompanied minors.
- Through contact with their mentors, the young immigrants get to know and understand the culture of the host country better. The mentors, in turn, gain access to information on the intercultural perspective that might have been previously foreign to them as well as access to information on the political, social and cultural dimensions of the country of origin of the UAM. In this way, preconceived images and opinions can be revised and prejudices reduced.

Weaknesses

- Despite detailed information, misunderstandings and unclear expectations and hopes on the part of the young people cannot always be ruled out. Experience shows that it often takes some time until the young people understand what "Connecting People" does and can explain it to third parties.



CYPRUS

I. HelpRefugeesWork (2019-2022)

Source/Information: <https://www.helprefugeeswork.org/>

SETTING

HelpRefugeesWork is an initiative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Country Office in Cyprus, in collaboration with Cyprus Refugee Council (CyRC). It is a job platform designed to support refugee integration through work. It is meant for refugees, employers, institutions running vocational education and training (VET) programmes, and individuals and organizations committed to promoting social participation, inclusion, and diversity.

PERSPECTIVE

Refugees, Employers, Third Country Nationals (trainings)

INTERVENTION

While the government is the one who primarily bears responsibility to facilitate the integration of refugee's, it should be sated that employers also play a crucial role in helping asylum seekers gain access to the labour market. This ensures that asylum seekers can utilise their skills, talents, and competences, as well as develop them. When asylum seekers are effectively integrated into the labour market, they can help meet the country's growing needs for skilled labour and contribute to the flourishing of the national economy.

The website focuses on work since it is essential in assisting asylum seekers in both rebuilding their lives and integrating into the economic and social fabric of the host society. For asylum seekers to be able to effectively exercise their legal right to work as enshrined in the Cyprus Refugee Law, they need to be given adequate support to access jobs. Many need to be provided with specific, technical language and skills training that allows them to re-gain confidence and self-esteem.



Employers in Cyprus are prompted to sign up to this initiative and contribute to creating career opportunities for asylum seekers in Cyprus and further developing their skills and competences.

The following are suggested ways employers may help or support asylum seekers when they sign up for this website.

- Offer jobs to qualifying asylum seekers
- Provide apprenticeship places combined with language training
- Provide internships that are structured around concrete learning outcomes
- Post-placement support to ensure sustainability of employment
- Provide career guidance through outreach activities (e.g., visit to reception centres)
- Continuous on the job training and mentoring/coaching
- Support skills/competence assessment
- Provide scholarships
- Provide vocational training combined with work-focused language classes
- Training of trainers in understanding asylum seekers' need

WHAT HAPPENED

In 2019 the website of HelpRefugeesWork was established and since then thousands of asylum seekers use the website to search for job opportunities that may correspond with their abilities and skills.

Additionally, the website offers training materials and webinars about issues regarding work acquiring related skills, such as CV writing, interview training and many more. Furthermore, the platform organises classes that assist interested participants to learn Greek to a degree where they can integrate more easily, as well as find work more easily.

Moreover, the platform often organises events where employers and interested asylum seekers may interact and be informed opportunities regarding job opportunities in Cyprus.

Over 900 asylum seekers have applied for work and over 250 have found work through the website, while over thousands have used it to access its training materials.



EVALUATION

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

One constraining factor for the action of creating and promoting this platform was the lack of a previous example to draw from and that it had to be promoted to employers, stakeholder and ministries that would then promote its growth. However, through the efforts of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Country Office in Cyprus, in collaboration with Cyprus Refugee Council (CyRC) they were able to overcome this issue by creating an extensive network connecting stakeholders, employers, asylum seekers and governmental entities.

Strengths

The platform:

- Has a wider reach regarding asylum seekers who need assistance in searching for work.
- Has created a space where information is easily accessible both to refugees and employers in Cyprus who may wish to employ them.
- Hosts various events to connecting employers who want to hire asylum seekers to them.
- Provides information to both employers and asylum seekers regarding the legal rights of asylum seekers working in Cyprus.
- Provides both vocational and language training materials that enables asylum seekers to enhance their skills, abilities, and competences.
- Provides training to employers that wish to employ asylum seekers.

Weaknesses

- The platform itself cannot generate interest in employers who are unwilling to employ asylum seekers. Meaning that they can only assist asylum seekers find work with employers who are already interested in hiring them, thus they cannot easily generate interest by employers leading to an increase of work opportunities for asylum seekers.
- Additionally, the platform is only addressed to asylum seekers. While creating an account to be able to apply for work they must have specific information which can only be found on a refugee who has the legal status of one.



- Moreover, asylum seekers are limited by law regarding the work sectors in Cyprus, meaning they cannot arbitrarily choose their profession based on their experience, expertise, abilities, skillset, and competences. This further limit asylum seekers' options in the labour market of Cyprus, thus impeding their integration to their host society.



II. Homes For Hope (2019 - 2022)

Source/Information: <https://www.uncrcpc.org/project/homes-for-hope>

SETTING

The Cyprus based organisation “Hope for Children” CRC Policy Centre undertook the establishment and operation of private children’s shelters for the accommodation and support of unaccompanied children in cooperation with the Social Welfare Services (SWS). These shelters, Homes for Hope, are co-funded by the SWS and the European Funds Unit of the Ministry of Interior.

PERSPECTIVE

The shelters were set up with the intention to provide unaccompanied children with more than just accommodation. They were rather set up to provide multi-disciplinary and holistic services to the children, which would cover all aspects of their daily lives and attend to their needs in the fullest extent possible, with a special focus on psycho-social support and legal guidance to unaccompanied children. This program applies to children up to 18 years old, once they turn 18 years old the unaccompanied minor will have to leave the shelters.

INTERVENTION

“Hope For Children” CRC Policy Centre undertook the establishment and operation of private children’s shelters for the accommodation and support of unaccompanied children in cooperation with the Social Welfare Services (SWS). The shelters are co-funded by the SWS and the European Funds Unit of the Ministry of Interior.

The shelters’ total capacity is from 50 to 75 children who are under the legal guardianship of the Director of the Social Welfare Services.

WHAT HAPPENED

Specific goals:

1. Effective protection and safety of children
2. Specialized legal services
3. Ongoing psycho-social support and counselling
4. Establishing mechanisms of durable solutions for family tracing, assessment and reunification



5. Smooth integration into the reception or host country, reintegration into the country of origin or a third country
6. Provision of assistance in the transition period from adolescence to adulthood
7. Coordinated and comprehensive assessment of the background of every child – Individualized approach.

Interdisciplinary and Holistic Services

The services provided are grouped under three main pillars that form the operating mechanism of the shelters:

A) Rehabilitation services

- Intake of social history / personal care plan
- Assisting in the procedure of age assessment
- Legal and social counselling services
- Psychological support / counselling and therapy (were deemed necessary).

B) Integration services

- Legal and social counselling services
- Psychological support
- Language classes (Greek, English, etc.)
- Educational Activities (art, drama, dance etc)
- Educational Seminars (sexual education, human rights, anger management, hygiene, etc.)
- Supporting access to the public education system
- Assisting access to education
- Access to private schools.

C) Durable solution services

- Family tracing and assessment, possibility of family reunification with relatives in other EU member state (Dublin regulation) and/or of voluntary return to the country of origin



- Exploring the possibility of placement in foster care
- Legal and social counselling services
- Psychological support / therapy
- Support during the procedures for integration in the community during transition to adulthood.

The shelter in Nicosia is co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (90%) and the Republic of Cyprus (10%).

EVALUATION

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

There were difficulties in setting up the structures, meaning finding the appropriate space for the shelters. Another difficulty they faced was that the UAMs did not understand the language or the social norms of Cyprus. This made it difficult to communicate to the UAMs on what they could do and how they could learn to adapt to Cyprus.

Strengths

The “Homes for Hope” structures assist young UAMs by offering a variety of services aiming to teach them knowledge about the social norms and skills in the time unaccompanied minors spent in these structures. This enables UAMs to be better prepared to leave these structures and integrate both in the labour market and the host country.

Weaknesses

There is limited availability regarding the number of unaccompanied minors that these structures can admit. This leads to a large number of UAM being unable to receive the various services and assistance that they could if they had been able to be housed in the shelters provided by Hope for Children.



III. SAFE - Supporting unaccompanied children with Family-based care and Enhanced protection (2019 - 2022)

Source/Information: <http://safeproject.eu/about-the-project/>

SETTING

The Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union funded project which was implemented by a consortium of 4 partners consisting of the British Red Cross (UK) in partnership with KMOP (Greece), the Danish Red Cross (Denmark) and CARDET (Cyprus).

PERSPECTIVE

SAFE Training has been designed for a wide range of professionals and individuals who wish to enhance their knowledge on the issues related to unaccompanied and separated children in Europe. SAFE e-learning courses are developed to address the learning needs of:

- Family-based carers (commonly referred as foster carers and kinship carers): those who look after unaccompanied and separated children as their primary carers.
- Care professionals: those who work with unaccompanied and separated children, such as social workers, childcare/youth workers, psychologists, law practitioners, non-profit organisation professionals/volunteers etc.

INTERVENTION

The project's main objective is to build the knowledge and capacity of professionals and foster carers, kinship, and Dublin family caretakers to enhance family-based care, promote welfare and ensure the protection of unaccompanied children in the UK, Cyprus, Denmark and Greece.

Through the development and the delivery of e-learning training modules as well as the face-to-face training of professionals, foster carers, kinship/Dublin caretakers as well as through the awareness raising and advocating of policies regarding family-based care for unaccompanied children, with institutional and policy makers, and wider public, the project is expected to:

1. Improve the knowledge and capacity of professionals on implementing family-based care for unaccompanied children
2. Improve the knowledge and capacity of fosters carers, kinship, Dublin family carers to support unaccompanied children



3. Increase the awareness of institutional authorities, policy makers, and wider public on benefits of family-based care for unaccompanied children.

WHAT HAPPENED

Between 2019 and 2022: Professionals undertook e-learning, face to face training and capacity building workshops. The trainings helped improve knowledge and understanding of the needs, challenges, situation of unaccompanied children, their rights as looked after children, asylum and legislation policy. This will enable professionals to provide an effective service to unaccompanied children. Professionals will have better understanding of the requirements and challenges of foster care, kinship and Dublin family carers, and as a result be enabled to provide improved support, accurate advice and effective service. This will support caretakers to make positive decisions and prepare for transition phase/leaving care.

E-learning platform: SAFE e-learning courses aim to enhance the knowledge and skills of professionals and family-based carers (foster carers and kinship carers) who provide care and support to unaccompanied and separated children in Europe. SAFE e-learning courses are developed to address the learning needs of:

Family-based carers (commonly referred as foster carers and kinship carers): those who look after unaccompanied and separated children as their primary carers.

Care professionals: those who work with unaccompanied and separated children, such as social workers, childcare/youth workers, psychologists, law practitioners, non-profit organisation professionals/volunteers etc. Additionally, SAFE e-learning courses are useful for a wide range of professionals and individuals who wish to enhance their knowledge on the issues related to unaccompanied and separated children in Europe.

Face-to-face training: Face to face training will be provided using the Training of Trainers and multi-sectoral model. Each country will deliver these trainings appropriate to their context. The Training of Trainers will be delivered to a wide range of professionals and practitioners from various sectors, who in turn will train other people in their home agency. It will lead to more effective and integrated services. It includes a combination of training and capacity building workshops, and in some countries such as the UK, it will employ a mobile trainer, who could travel across the UK delivering training to local authorities at request.



EVALUATION

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

Due to COVID-19 it was understandably difficult to host the trainings face-to-face and so the majority of the training were completed online.

Strengths

- To develop all the actions, partners approached 60 plus professionals/caretakers and more who work with UAMs daily and so had a good understanding of what UAMs would need from professionals. This allowed the partners to create Training Materials that helped improve knowledge and understanding of the needs, challenges, situation of unaccompanied children, their rights as looked after children, asylum and legislation policy. This will enable professionals to provide an effective service to unaccompanied children. Professionals will have better understanding of the requirements and challenges of foster care, kinship, and Dublin family carers, and as a result be enabled to provide improved support, accurate advice and effective service. This will support caretakers to make positive decisions and prepare for transition phase/leaving care.
- To carry out the trainings the partners invited Professionals to participate in the Trainings and proceeded to train them according to the training manual.
- Another strength is the establishment of a network of partners, stakeholders, volunteers, volunteer guardians etc. who going forward will provide knowledge, guidance, and expertise. These people have become a point of reference and stimulation towards UAMs integration to their host communities.

Weaknesses

- Having professionals or caretakers who already work with UAMs as part of the project is not enough. Since these groups already work with UAMs it is important to train them in areas they may still be lacking, however this might limit how UAMs may be assisted since there is a shortage of Organisations, professionals and/or caretakers who work to improve a UAMs ability to become a cohesive member to their host



community. Additionally, the participants are individuals who already come from a background where they already are interested in helping UAMs while limiting the opportunities for someone who might wish to start working with them.

- The project limited itself by focusing only on social inclusion of UAMs through a family base care approach from professionals (etc). While ensuring that UAMs should receive a family-based care, it is vital to ensure that they would be endowed with the necessary tools to ensure they could thrive in their host communities.
- Even though the involvement of local professionals, policy makers, caretakers and many more had been foreseen, it was very difficult to reach and attract the targeted audience. While the project successfully was able to reach and attract some of their target audience, they were unable to convince all of them to participate.



IV. Semi Independent Living Programmes (2019 - 2022)

Source/Information: <https://www.uncrcpc.org/project/semi-independent-living-programme/>

SETTING

The NGO “Hope for Children” CRC Policy Centre operates semi-independent living structures for unaccompanied minors. These structures focus primarily on supporting unaccompanied minors who are transitioning to adulthood. This structure accomplishes this by assisting unaccompanied minors to acquire the skills and experience needed to make a successful transition to independence and adulthood. Many of the UAMs living in these shelters are UAMs who have transitioned to adulthood and may have been previously housed in the Homes for Hope. In Cyprus as soon as someone turns 18, the Government ceases to provide any assistance. For a UAM who may not yet be ready to strike out on their own, these structures provide further assistance so that they can successfully integrate into their local society.

PERSPECTIVE

The shelters were set up with the intention to provide unaccompanied children with accommodation and cover basic needs such as food, healthcare, clothing etc. The specific program can benefit unaccompanied children from the age of 16 and above, with maximum duration of stay until the age of 21.

INTERVENTION

The shelters were set up with the intention to provide unaccompanied children with accommodation and cover basic needs such as food, healthcare, clothing etc. Provide access to education and activities, as well as specialised services such as social, legal, psychological support. Implement activities for the social inclusion and integration of the specific population group, as well as and ensure a smooth transition to adulthood.

WHAT HAPPENED

Up until today Hope for Children operates the Semi-Independent Living Programme to assist unaccompanied minors who they believe require further assistance to be able to transition to the labour market and society of Cyprus.



EVALUATION

Strengths: These shelters assist young UAM by offering a variety of services aiming to teach UAM as much knowledge and skills in their time there. This leads to UAM being better prepared to leave the shelters and integrate both in the labour market and the host country.

Weaknesses: There is a limit to the number of unaccompanied minors that these structures can admit. This leads to a large number of UAM being unable to receive the various services and assistance that they could if they had been able to be housed in the shelters provided by Hope for Children.



GREECE

I. The Adama Job Centre (2021 - ongoing)

Source/ Information: <https://adamajobcenter.crs.org/>

Information has been also acquired through a study visit that took place in the centre.

SETTING

The Adama Job Centre connects job-seeking immigrants in Greece with employers.

PERSPECTIVE

Immigrants and asylum-seekers in Greece (women & men, youth into adulthood)

INTERVENTION

Greece hosts a diverse population of asylum seekers and asylum-seekers with a variety of skills, knowledge and experience. - Successful integration into Greek society largely depends on their ability to access social services as well as job opportunities, a process which is often challenging.

The Adama Centre, located in central Athens, assists immigrants and asylum- seekers to integrate in local societies offering face-to-face and online services. The Centre prepares immigrants for the job market through job counselling, CV creation, support to issue documents, mediation with public services, while it also matches immigrants' qualifications with jobs.

Immigrants and asylum seekers can play a pivotal role in the Greek economy contributing with their valuable skills and talents. In Adama Centre they view employers as key partners and contributors to immigrants' integration, and they stand by all those willing to give immigrants access to safe and dignified employment.

The platform has been designed to offer a user-friendly online tool enabling employers to identify suitable candidates for their open positions and jobseekers to search and apply for those vacancies.

This online platform was developed as an expansion of the services already provided by the Adama Centre.



WHAT HAPPENED

The Adama Job Centre is an online job-matching platform developed by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in partnership with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. Adama Centre was established in late 2021 by CRS and Caritas Hellas in partnership with UNHCR. The Adama Job Centre aims to reinforce the impact of the services provided through Adama Centre to support refugee integration in local societies by linking immigrants looking for employment with prospective employers.

The challenge was therefore to implement an online job search platform, in order for both job seekers to find job vacancies and employers to be able to search for the right candidate. Particular attention was paid to the technical infrastructure and data security, especially taking into account the sensitive personal data that candidates post (CVs).

The result is an excellent online job search platform very similar to other job-searching platforms. The platform also includes a section with available training seminars or workshops, in order to gather this kind of information and encourage private sector companies and other institutions to offer personalised training opportunities to immigrants. Through these personalised training opportunities immigrants will be equipped with more skills when entering the Greek labour market. The platform will continue being updated with new jobs, candidate profiles and training programmes.

By 28/09/2022, the statistics were as follows: **61** Job openings for immigrants Job-seekers and **157** Candidate profiles of employers willing to hire immigrants into their services.²

The majority of requests (73%) that reach the Centre concern provision of assistance to find a job. According to the Integration and Livelihoods Advisor in CRS: “In ADAMA Centre, we facilitate the linkage between refugee job-seekers and private sector employers. ADAMA, which means ‘together’ in Greek, provides a platform for these connections. Success for us is when the people we support take advantage of work and integration opportunities and envision a productive life within the Greek society”.

The Centre prepares immigrants for the job market by helping them:

- Develop a CV and issue the necessary documents for applications.
- Link them to specific job openings and provides interview preparation.
- Coaching and support them while on the job.



It also provides educational opportunities for immigrants about

- Employee rights and responsibilities.
- Salary scales.
- Job ethics.
- Childcare options for working parents.

A dedicated space is available for children to safely use and play while their parents attend counselling sessions.

In addition to employment support, the Centre also has specialised services for vulnerable persons, including homeless and persons with disabilities, to facilitate their access to essential social services.

EVALUATION

Difficulties or constraints for its implementation

- The preparation for entering the labour market is related to various aspects, such as the preparation of their CV, or for an interview, that beneficiaries can learn to do by themselves but also with aspects that can be essential for this process, such as taking Greek language lessons in order to learn how to communicate in Greek. This service is not provided by the ADAMA centre hence they refer to other organisations. For aspects such as vocational training that are not being offered in the centre, there is a constant effort of cooperation with other NGOs.
- Competences in Greek language are needed for accessing the job market. Sometimes seasonal work opportunities in the tourist sector can be accessible to those who do not speak the language but most of the times the conditions are not ideal.
- At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic period there was a small coordination difficulty, since the participants/candidates had to familiarise with some online tools e.g., virtual meeting platforms as well as in the proper on-line etiquette and communication tools. Access to the services was limited also because many beneficiaries were not in possession of digital devices.
- Social skills are very important for job integration. Each person is a carrier of certain cultural and behavioural codes. During employability sessions it is necessary to explain that to beneficiaries in the Greek context.
- There is also a lack of free of charge vocational training programs in areas that many people express an interest in.
- The policies in place in the Greek context are not making job integration of immigrants very accessible. There is often a big amount of bureaucracy, there are constant changes in the frameworks, while public servants are often not well informed about the legal framework which is slowing down the process.



Strengths

- Having bilingual employment officers as this way communication is direct and unhindered.
- Having a gradual and long-term support system which includes: preparation phase, job preparedness sessions (getting to know their rights and responsibilities as well as the legal framework), connection to employers that have been prepared and cross-checked. Moreover, conduction of follow-up sessions and monitoring during the period of employment, so as to be able to foresee possible difficulties and manage them, as well as monitoring sessions to check if the pre-set agreements are kept.
- Creation of an employers' network enabling long term cooperation.
- The practice of "team leaders". A suggestion that is usually done to employers is for them to hire a person who speaks basic English or Greek depending on their mother tongue or other language skills, hire more people speaking the same languages even if they do not have competences in English or Greek.
- The constant screening of employers.
- The request to employers to create a basic job-related glossary which informs future employees about basic work-related vocabulary that can make the job more accessible.



II. IRC JOB COUNSELLING SERVICES (2017 - ongoing)

Source/ Information: <https://www.rescue.org/page/international-rescue-committee-hellas>

SETTING

The IRC, together with its partner the Alba Graduate Business School, the American College of Greece, provides self-employment support

PERSPECTIVE

To youth asylum seekers, migrants and vulnerable Greeks.

INTERVENTION

An important part of the integration process is labour integration. IRC having international experience in integration issues decided to start such programmes.

IRC operates in Greece since 2015, offering employment services, psycho-social support, mental health services, child protection, women empowerment and protection, advocacy. The employment related programmes started in 2017 and they are implemented either by IRC or in cooperation with other partners. Some of the basic services that they offer are:

- Supporting people who would like to start their own business by offer individual counselling and training on entrepreneurship (“ALBA” project).
- Career counselling to people who would like to get a job in Greece or who would like to set a short- or long-term personal employment plan, or employment related training.
- Supporting people who seek for employment or re-integration to the labour market.
- Counselling on reintegration to the education (formal and non-formal) systems. Identifying the existing gaps between their previous education and their current or future employment plans.
- General empowerment of the targeted population aiming to overcome existing barriers (Linguistic, social etc).

WHAT HAPPENED

The IRC has provided self-employment support to asylum seekers, migrants and other vulnerable groups in Greek society.



Around 80 beneficiaries have received support from the EU in 2020 and over 500 beneficiaries in total to 2022. Between 2019 and 2020, IRC Hellas together with its partners, Alba Graduate Business School, the American School of Greece, implemented the "*Craft your Business*" programme which offered entrepreneurial training and mentoring to young people as a preparation for self-employment, while they had the opportunity to apply for grants to set up their own businesses or for further guidance.

The successful business training and coaching program "Craft Your Business", implemented by the International Rescue Committee (IRC Hellas) in partnership with the Alba Graduate Business School, continues with new training rounds, until nowadays.

During the training participants have had the opportunity to explore and learn how to transform their idea into a viable business, develop skills necessary for any job and network with fellow entrepreneurs.

The trainings take place at Alba Graduate Business School, 3 times a week for 2 hours per session, for one month, in English or with the support of an interpreter.

Those who have completed at least 70% of the training and coaching and are eligible to open a business in Greece can take part in the pitching competition. The competition is organized by Alba and IRC and the winner(s) are selected by an external committee of experts. The winner(s) receive a small grant, individual intensive coaching sessions and sessions with a lawyer, accountant, and engineer.

The results of the programme should not only measure in numbers. Beneficiaries start to think in business terms, which is difficult especially when you are an immigrant or refugee trying to survive and become economically independent in a new country.

The program is free of charge and they also develop a lot of soft skills, such as the concepts of teamwork, goal setting and empowerment.

To a further extend, IRC in collaboration with the Municipality of Athens and the Network for Children's Rights provide employability services, such as individual job counselling, assistance in employment, and assistance in the development of a job.

In addition, the Agency for Employment and Social Services with the support of the City of Athens, has been providing job search assistance and employability workshops for skills development, introducing them to job seekers participants to employment rights and familiarizing them with Greek work culture.

In total, 330 people received employability support in 2020 and over 2,300 since 2017.



EVALUATION

Difficulties or constraints for its implementation

- One of the most important requirements are skill is the language skill (either in Greece or English) and many of the immigrants have not yet developed this skill. Many UAMs have had serious difficulties in understanding what is taught which has also discouraged them in continuing to attend courses or specialized workshops that other organisations offer.
- There is a lack of basic digital skills that can undermine the process.

Strengths

- Organizations of fields visits in various businesses and workspaces, where UAM could meet people in the working environment and get a clearer picture about how different working sectors function.
- Organisation of visits in museums, cultural centres, shops etc. These experiences are valuable for the UAMs and stimulate them when thinking about future educational and career paths. They also help them to connect to the hosting community and this is a very important aspect of understanding and subsequently feel more integrated.
- Networking with business operators, other businesses and facilitators.
- Cooperation with the business sector in a stable way, helps young people integrate to a protected and prepared working environment. Long term cooperation's enable a clear communication and allows people to have a clear view of the working environment the young people will be in, how they can adjust their expectations or what their employer expects or should expect from them.
- IRC has a stable cooperation with DERE (The American College of Greece) where UAMs are being informed about the scholarships that the Institution is offering and how they could have access to them.
- Another good practice that they implement is the connection of young people with elders who had follow similar life – career paths. This connection can take many formats such as interviews, networking, or mentoring.



III. Supported Independent Living - SIL/SILA (2016 - ongoing)

Source/ Information: <https://metadrasi.org/>

SETTING

Supported Independent Living (SIL/SILA)

PERSPECTIVE

Unaccompanied minors, aged 16-20

INTERVENTION

According to the current legislation (Law 4375/2016) "*unaccompanied minor is the minor who arrives in Greece without being accompanied by a person exercising, in accordance with Greek law, his parental care or custody or by an adult relative who exercises in practice his care and for as long as the performance of these duties has not been assigned to another person, in accordance with the law. This definition also includes the minor who ceases to be accompanied after entering Greece*".

Based on the updated situation of the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors³ the number of unaccompanied minors living in Greece is estimated at 2,624 of which 85% are boys and 93% are >14 years old. In addition, the number of places offered in Accommodation Facilities (Accommodation Centres/SIL Apartments) are 2,272 while 241 unaccompanied minors aged 16-18 live in SIL apartments and 389 in Reception and Identification Centres (RICs).

Alternative care systems such as SIL and SILA apartments could play a tremendously important role in decreasing the reliance on institutional and residential care with a complementary increase community-based care and services. Deinstitutionalization might give the chance to unaccompanied minors to acquire adequate individual support and the right to independent living and autonomy.

WHAT HAPPENED

SIL apartments offer an alternative initiative regarding care provision for unaccompanied minors aged 16 to 18, identified immigrants or asylum seekers, irrelevant of nationality. UAMs are housed in apartments, with each hosting up to four young people. An interdisciplinary professional team facilitates

³ https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SSPUAM_Statistics_2023_01_01.pdf



their access to education, health and other necessary services, and supports their development, gradual autonomy and self-sufficiency. Project beneficiaries receive cash assistance of €150 per month, and support to manage this.

SILA apartments offer housing to young adults, who are former SIL residents, in apartments until they secure the minimum skills needed to live a fully independent life. They have access to psycho-social support, education and vocational training, job counselling and other services according to their needs. The first apartment began operating in 2018 by Metatarsi in Athens and Kalamata, and has hosted 163 beneficiaries since then.

SIL and SILA speed up the autonomy process of UAMs, since they get the opportunities, they need to develop necessary life skills (e.g., cooking, money management) and to engage with the local community.

EVALUATION

Difficulties or constraints for its implementation

- The availability of resources and uninterrupted funding. In the absence of secure and sufficient funding, there are serious implications in developing long-term and sustainable approaches, with positive outcomes that boost independence, meaningfully move away from emergency-response care models, close gaps, and avoid institutionalisation methods, or other methods not suited to teenagers.
- The age at which UAMs enter alternative care has a significant impact to support UAMs' trajectories towards autonomy and social participation. Support workers underscored that children's integration is challenged by the fact that the majority of UAMs enter SIL at the age of 17 or older, a factor which adds stress and tension on both sides, due to the absence of time to work properly on integration aspects. The criteria for entering care arrangements seem to play a crucial role when considering what works and what does not work in alternative care facilities.
- UAMs who had been in Greece for only a few months demonstrate a lack of motivation for making efforts towards integration. However, UAMs who have been living in Greece for years perceive the possibility of staying in Greece more positively.
- Legal status is the major factor that impacts children and young people in the process of social integration, whether they are residents of SIL, or have turned 18 and are looking for a job.
- Difficulties in relation to accessing social services to issue important documents, such as a social security number (AMKA and PAAYPA), and a tax registration number (AFM).



Strengths / Best Practices

- Enhancement of life skills.
- Individualized case plans.
- Job counselling.
- Empowerment UAMs autonomy.
- Personalized support and counselling.
- Supporting beneficiaries in job searching techniques, CV writing, Cover Letters, Interviews.
- Referrals to trainings/workshops/seminars.
- Liaising with the labour market.



IV. STEPPING STONE (2017 – ongoing)

Source/ Information: <https://metadrasi.org/en/campaigns/stepping-stone/>

SETTING

Stepping Stone

PERSPECTIVE

Immigrants and asylum-seekers in Greece (women & men, youth into adulthood)

INTERVENTION

Stepping Stone was established by METAdrasi, a local NGO, in May 2017 with the aim of supporting asylum seekers and immigrants integrate into Greek society through job counselling and by cultivating their professional skills, and promoting their equal participation in the labour market. Concurrently, Greek and English language courses are also provided by METAdrasi to project beneficiaries to further support them. Participants benefit from

- Support with their CV development.
- Job interview preparation.
- Job searching techniques.
- Networking opportunities.

The services are offered in **English and Greek**.

WHAT HAPPENED

Aiming to support refugees in their integration into the job market, since 2017 METAdrasi, using its own funds along with support from the “Captain Vassilis and Carmen Constantakopoulos” Foundation, started a program called “Stepping Stone”. To date more than 1,200 persons have received support, while just in 2022, 162 people have found a permanent position, taking an important step towards integration into Greek society.

A small and dedicated team welcomes on a daily basis dozens of asylum seekers and migrants, helps them **write their CV, prepare for job interviews** and supports them **in collecting all necessary documents for their employment**, as well as following their further career to avoid cases of “undocumented work”. Iro, a member of the Stepping Stone team, says, *“We face a number of problems with the issue of AMA, the opening of bank accounts and other bureaucratic matters which delay the immediate hiring of people who are fully qualified, but because of these problems, risk losing the job.”*



Apart from the bureaucratic obstacles, the lack of knowledge of the Greek language is often the biggest problem for the integration of asylum seekers and immigrants into the job market. The sole program funded by the European Union is addressed exclusively to recognised refugees, with the result that thousands of asylum seekers remain for long periods “trapped” on the islands and mainland structures, with no access to Greek language lessons. As soon as they acquire asylum status, they are required almost from one day to the next to stand on their own two feet, and find work in order to survive without speaking Greek.

This year, following persistence of many years, METAdrasi, with the support of the UNICEF as well as using its own funds, and in cooperation with the General Secretariat for Reception of Asylum Seekers, set up regular Greek lessons for adults in Kos, Samos, Chios and Lesbos. Iro declares, *“We are constantly getting calls from people who live in the camps and that is why we are trying to find the funding to extend Stepping Stone outside of Athens, in Northern Greece and the islands where we provide Greek lessons.”*

At the same time, due to the crisis in the job market, the Stepping Stone team inaugurated an “Interviews Day” during which company representatives from all over Greece come to the METAdrasi offices and conduct interviews on the spot with interested parties who have been selected according to their qualifications and the jobs available. Thodoris, another member of the Stepping Stone team, notes: *“I remember last month, we had prepared 15 refugees and when the interviews with a staff member of a hotel group were completed, he said to us: ‘I am hiring all of them and I will urgently need another 100!’ I was glad, but at the same time I thought it such a shame that hundreds of refugees are languishing in the camps, while they could have been integrated into the job market and stand on their own two feet rebuilding their life with dignity.”*

More and more companies and hotel groups are contacting METAdrasi, seeking personnel, while lately 45 people on average per month are directed to the job market. Available positions are not only within the tourist sector: Immigrants and asylum seekers are finding work in super markets, accommodation and food service activities, tech and communications companies, logistics etc.

EVALUATION

Difficulties or constraints for its implementation

- The lack of Greek language is the greatest barrier for the access to the job market for most immigrants.
- Crisis in the job market. The high unemployment rate in Greece (13% in the third quarter of 2021 compared to the EU average of 6.2%), affects both the immigrant and the local population.
- Lack of necessary documents for employment.
- The complicated procedures to have qualifications and skills recognised. Many of the skills that immigrants acquire and utilise in their respective industries back home cannot be transferred to a European context.



- Bureaucratic difficulties in obtaining the necessary documents (tax number, social security number). The issuance of a Social Security Number (AMKA) by the Greek government, which allows free access to healthcare and the right to work in the country, is either very slow or never comes to fruition.
- Facing racism and discrimination by employers.
- Lack of vocational training programmes that enhance their technical skills and motivate them to learn the language of the host country.
- Greece's policy does not support the access of immigrants in the labour market.

Strengths / Best Practices

- Provision of a holistic and long-term support (support with their CV development, job interview preparation, job searching techniques, networking opportunities).
- Follow-up of beneficiaries through a robust review mechanism that can measure progress made on the objectives.
- Having intercultural mediators who facilitate linguistic exchange and cultural context.
- Building a strong network of employers.
- Liaise with social actors and institutions.
- Link with the METAdrasi's Education Centre for Refugees and Migrants (providing Greek and English language courses).



ITALY

I. RAGAZZI HARRAGA PROJECT (2017 - 2019)

Source/Information: <https://minoristranieri-neveralone.it/progetto/ragazzi-harraga/>

SETTING

Local project funded by an Italian fund - in the city of Palermo

PERSPECTIVE

Unaccompanied minors and young migrants

INTERVENTION

The aim of the project is to strengthen, test and evaluate innovative pathways to sustain unaccompanied minors' transition to adulthood, by offering them a series of educational experiences such as training opportunities and work placement, as well as independent housing solutions. The innovative project uses a more 'local inclusion-oriented approach' instead of the one based on 'material wellbeing of migrants.

Ragazzi Harraga is the result of the alliance of public and private actors which intends to promote pathways towards the autonomy of unaccompanied migrants living in the city of Palermo.

The project promotes a model of social inclusion that takes into account the potential, the interests and the expectations of single migrant children, based on two pillars:

- i. The promotion of a network of actors involved in the realization of individual paths so as to allow them to share information, methods and tools.
- ii. The definition of individual paths of inclusion that enhance the resources and skills of migrant children who should be aware and responsible for that.



Activities:

- Creating a platform which allows users to share, monitor and follow the inclusion strategies of unaccompanied minors living in Palermo.
- Developing activities aimed at sharing methodologies and identifying tools so as to enhance and value the skills acquired by unaccompanied minors and improve the continuity of inclusion strategies.
- Promoting activities aimed at enhancing active citizenship and including unaccompanied minors in the social and cultural life of Palermo (i.e., intercultural, theatre and multimedia workshops).
- Creating and promoting the adoption of open-source tools enabling a participatory mapping of the social and cultural organizations in Palermo.
- Informing, describing, and supporting unaccompanied minors in order to promote active labour market policies.
- Supporting vocational counselling services so as to identify professional skills and collect vacancies from hosting businesses.
- Redecorating and adapting buildings to host unaccompanied minors and guests.
- Assisting and helping institutional care leavers and providing them with autonomous and affordable housing solutions.
- Managing a tourist hostel in collaboration with unaccompanied minors.
- Sensitising and raising awareness of the project in order to promote and enhance its scope.

WHAT HAPPENED

Between 2017 and 2019, 400 unaccompanied migrant boys and girls participated in the following activities:

- 3 cycles of 4 up-skilling workshops involving 240 boys and girls on the themes of interculturality and rights, using theatre, dance, video.
- Created a platform containing the social folders with information on identity, reception, inclusion paths and skills acquired by the UAM involved.
- 200 UAMs involved reinforced and developed transversal skills and relational skills: self-awareness, self-esteem, identification of their own skills and talents.
- Developed an active policy for the inclusion of UAMs in the labour market: 75 internships carried out with 26 hiring in companies.
- Housing solution for young adults, made sustainable by the activation of a guesthouse where young people from foreign countries welcome tourist and religious groups to this city, changing reception narratives.



- Creation of a community “Harraga” in which hundreds of minors and adults found an open space allowing them to meet, dialogue and take care of each other.

EVALUATION

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

- Some youths didn’t finish the internship while sometimes the relationship between employer and young person didn’t work out. Sometimes expectations were different.
- As far as schooling is concerned, on average they attended between 2 and 7 years of school in their country of origin, although the different configuration of school systems has to be taken into account. As a matter of facts when minors arrive, they usually attend a literacy course and then manage to obtain a middle-school diploma thanks to the CPIA (Provincial Centre for Adult Education).

Strengths

- In order to develop of all the actions, partners made reference to a validation group, consisting of eight (8) unaccompanied minors, who were contacted at different stages of the project to give feedback on ideas, actions and strategies aimed at involving boys and girls of Palermo. Their feedbacks have allowed the partners to co-create activities that would provide an effective solution to the challenges they face themselves. As so, it is not a project created for the UAM but with them.
- In order to carry out the workshops and job orientation activities, 18-21-year-old migrant boys and girls have been employed as linguistic and cultural facilitators and peer tutors. some of them have been selected among previous participants of “Ragazzi Harraga”, providing direct and indirect job opportunities throughout the implementation of the project.
- A high number of extracurricular internships have turned to job contracts highlighting how those opportunities have been a key for UAMs and migrant adults to access the job market.
- Another strength is the establishment of a network of partners, stakeholders, volunteers, volunteer guardians etc. who represent a strong social capital for these youngsters. These people have become a point of reference and stimulation towards UAM’s active role in the host community.



Weaknesses

- Having UAMs as the only target group has proven not to be an effective method to encourage the inclusion as a means of creating an intercultural environment, through the involvement of young local people.
- Even if the involvement of local minors had been foreseen, the difficulty of reaching and attracting them was the main challenge as the project was promoted with a clear target group of unaccompanied minors and not just addressed to young people who want to get new experiences and develop their skills.
- Another challenge has been the involvement of unaccompanied minor girls. even considering that their number is significantly inferior compared to the boys, there are many obstacles to reach them and enable their participation.
- Despite the fact that UAMs feel they belong to the city, the lack of participation in public activities does not allow them to be known and interact with other aspects of the urban life, other than those they are involved in or are connected with the migration field.



II. PERCHE' NO PROJECT (2021-2022)

Source/Information: <http://www.asterisco.sicilia.it/tag/perche-no/>

SETTING

Local project funded by two Italian funds, Fondo Beneficenza Intesa San Paolo and Fondazione con il Sud - in the city of Palermo

PERSPECTIVE

Unaccompanied minors, young migrants and young Italian people

INTERVENTION

The aim of the project is to give an opportunity of professional training, work placement and entrepreneurship to young people usually excluded by the job market in Sicily.

“Perché No” was open also to Italian young people in a disadvantaged condition, a situation that is quite common in the poorest areas in the city of Palermo. The training and the work placement had the ambition to further the autonomy of the young migrants by offering them the chance to work along their Italian counterparts.

The project promotes a model of social inclusion that takes into account the potential, the interests and the expectations of single migrant person, based on three pillars:

- I. The professional training of the 50 young people selected for the project.
- II. The work placement for 25 of them in local business and activities to learn professional skills.
- III. The creation of a cleaning enterprise that will be managed directly by the participants.

To facilitate these goals the project assigned to the participants a project mentor, ready to address their needs and to give moral support to the participant during all the phases of the project.



Activities:

- Professional orientation designed on every participant experience and resume.
- Professional training of all the participants.
- Work placement.
- Promoting activities aimed at enhancing active citizenship and including unaccompanied minors in the social and cultural life of Palermo (i.e., intercultural, theatre and multimedia workshops) with the help of the mentors.
- Informing, describing, and supporting the participants in order to promote active labour market policies.
- Supporting vocational counselling services so as to identify professional skills and collect vacancies from hosting businesses.
- Managing a service company, a cleaning business.
- Support of the mentors offered by professionals in ethno-psychology.
- Sensitising and raising awareness of the project in order to promote and enhance its scope.

WHAT HAPPENED

At the start of 2021, 50 young people were selected for the project.

- All the participants attended classes, both online and in class, to improve their professional knowledge and also to receive general education in IT, labour market policies and Italian culture.
- 25 of the participants started internships. Some of them started to work in the same business where they started the placement.
- 10 of the participants were involved in the creation of a company.
- 20 mentors were selected to support the participants.

EVALUATION

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

- Some youths didn't finish the internship while sometimes the relationship between employer and young person didn't work out. Sometimes expectations were different.
- As far as schooling is concerned, on average they attended between 2 and 7 years of school in their country of origin, although the different configuration of school systems has to be taken into account. As a matter of facts when minors arrive, they usually attend a literacy course and then manage to obtain a middle-school diploma thanks to the CPIA (Provincial Centre for Adult Education).



- The pandemic forced the online implementation of some of the training classes and activities.
- Bureaucracy was a problem for the start of the working placements: the lack of documents by some of the participants, particularly UAM and young migrants, meant a significant delay for the start of the internship.
- It was not easy to find a mentor for every participant.

Strengths

- The vocational orientation was considered very important by the participants. Some of them had never assessed their careers before the project.
- Some very important relationships started between mentors and participants.
- The opportunity to start a different career in entrepreneurship was something completely new for most of the participants.
- The inclusion of young people with a difficult background (some of them had a criminal record) and migrants helped to build important relationships between the participants.

Weaknesses

- Some participant left the training class because they found a paid occupation.
- Some incomprehension happened between some of the employers and the participants regarding working hours and payments.
- Another challenge has been the involvement of unaccompanied minor girls. even considering that their number is significantly inferior compared to the boys, there are many obstacles to reach them and enable their participation.
- A small number of extracurricular internships have turned to job contracts.
- Despite the fact that UAMs feel they belong to the city, the lack of participation in public activities does not allow them to be known and interact with other aspects of the urban life, other than those they are involved in or are connected with the migration field.
- The project did not provide for linguistic and cultural facilitators.



III. CENTRO SOCIALE “SAPPUSI” (2013 - ongoing)

Source/Information: <https://www.comune.marsala.tp.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/30397>,
<https://www.difesapopolo.it/Mosaico/Centro-sociale-Sappusi-di-Marsala-un-aiuto-per-i-piu-fragili>

Information acquired through an interview with the person responsible for most of the activities that are taking place in the social centre.

SETTING

The social centre “Sappusi” is a local government building in the outskirts of Marsala, in the neighbourhood called Sappusi.

PERSPECTIVE

The centre hosts activities, laboratories and classes for young people, local people but also unaccompanied minors. The main focus is on the young people that have to pass through the juvenile criminal system.

INTERVENTION

The centre is divided between the Municipality of Marsala and the Italian Ministry of Justice, juvenile subsection. The building has lot of space and the Ministry part has been given to the civil society to organize a gym, workshops and professional trainings. Most of the actions are implemented by volunteers, while some projects have received funds that are managed directly by the guest associations. All the classes and trainings are open to unaccompanied minors. Marsala has a very important recent history of reception centres for UAM. In the recent past the number of minors with a migration background had the record figure of 500 unities, a very important figure also for an island as Sicily where many unaccompanied minors have found a new home since 2014.

Activities:

- Professional orientation and training.
- Work placement.
- Promoting activities aimed at enhancing active citizenship and including unaccompanied minors in the social and cultural life of Marsala (i.e., intercultural, theatre and multimedia workshops) with the help of the volunteers.
- Libera Orchestra di Sappusi (a music ensemble composed by many musicians of the territory and unaccompanied minors).
- Printing and tailoring classes.



WHAT HAPPENED

The centre started to host associations and the civil society almost ten years ago. The activities changed a lot during those years, since the staff of volunteers change every few years. Most of the activities take place during the afternoon.

EVALUATION

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

- Cohabitation with public services and agencies.
- Many UAM prefer to look for a paid job, even with the risk of being exploited.

Strengths

- The inclusion of young people with a difficult background (some of them had a criminal record) and migrants helped to build important relationships between the participants.
- Some initiatives, as the “Libera Orchestra Popolare”, helped to deconstruct bias and prejudices in small city such as Marsala.
- All the activities are free, there is nothing to pay for the gym or the trainings.

Weaknesses

- Volunteers’ turnover.
- Lack of funds.
- A stronger participation by the people living in the neighbourhood would be well received.
- Some participant left the training class because they found a paid occupation.
- The project does not provide for linguistic and cultural facilitators.



IV. RAGAZZI SOSPESI (2017-2020)

Source/Information: <https://www.coopdedalus.it/ragazzi-sospesi/>

SETTING

Local project participating in “Never Alone, per un domani possibile” and implemented in the municipality of Napoli

PERSPECTIVE

Unaccompanied minors, young migrants and young Italian people

INTERVENTION

The project intended to improve the living conditions and access to the system of socio-educational and work opportunities for unaccompanied minors, in particular by supporting their difficult transition to adulthood. In particular the objectives were:

- Improving the conditions of citizenship and the possibilities for autonomy of unaccompanied minors and young migrants, with particular attention to support in the complex transition from minor to major age.
- Experimenting and structuring in a stable manner, within the local welfare system, innovative intervention models aimed at UAM and young migrants, also through the use of the practices implemented within the project as an information base for an advocacy action capable to guide and direct local policies.

More specifically, the project intended to increase opportunities for the reception and socio-work inclusion of UAMs and young migrants. This aspect was pursued through actions aimed at:

- Accompanying the young recipients to housing and communication autonomy in the context of life.
- Promoting equal opportunities for access to training and the labour market, creating the conditions for the implementation of an individualised socio-work inclusion programme.
- Offering opportunities to rework one's own experience and access cultural, sporting and recreational activities.
-



WHAT HAPPENED

The “Ragazzi Sospesi” project was characterised by the following actions:

- For the housing dimension: contact with UAMs in the territorial system's reception communities, creation of individualised citizenship and autonomy programmes, provision of civic education, reception and autonomy grants.
- For the work dimension: pre-training for the strengthening of transversal skills, support for job placement and business creation.
- For the social dimension: relational opportunities (e.g., theatre workshop) to rework one's own experience and subjectivity, workshops on civic action and active citizenship, training and coaching of peer operators.
- For the reception system: advocacy actions, exchange seminars.

In addition to the important number of activities that took place directly involving UAMs, the project foresaw the presence of peer tutors and operators with the following objectives:

- Enabling unaccompanied minors to feel seen by their tutors, sharing with them their problems and experiences while creating relationships based on trust and supporting self-reflection.
- Giving some former unaccompanied minors the opportunity to put their own experiences in the relationship, transforming their experience (sometimes difficult and characterised by fragilities) into a resource and in this way enhancing their "experiential knowledge".

This was achieved through a series of actions:

- Training activities offered to the group.
- Periodic team meetings in which the peer tutors and operators participated.
- Job shadowing experiences.

The project was an occasion to rediscover the protagonist of young people through their real participation: the peer operators not only put themselves on the line by changing their perspective and taking on this role, but were also encouraged by the team to participate with their testimony in public initiatives.

For the project team it was in fact fundamental that the peer operators learnt to represent themselves, both for the symbolic value that this may have for the local society and other unaccompanied minors and young migrants who may perceive them as agents of change.



As of 30 April 2019, 290 unaccompanied minors were involved in the activities of the project, while 19 peer tutors and operators were trained and received support.

EVALUATION

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

- Sometimes it is difficult to work on the so-called 'correct distance' to keep between practitioners and beneficiaries. Professionalism is acquired over time, but it can be put at risk when working with vulnerable group.
- This peer relationship sometimes leads to an excessive reduction in distance, while in other cases it leads to an increase in distance with the acquisition of the new role. This difficulty is reduced with experience and age, but constant confrontation with the rest of the team is necessary to monitor critical issues and correct them in the course of work.

Strengths

- The peer relationship brings greater motivation for UAMs in the construction of their identity and in the choices to be made in their own journey, also from an educational point of view.
- Peer operators, due to their life experience, training and role, can also be interesting resources for teachers who want to organise supplementary or workshops for their classes.



SLOVENIA

I. MINT - Mentoring for Integration of third country national children affected by migration, (2019 - 2021)

Source/Information: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/integration-practice/mint-mentoring-integration-third-country-national-children-affected-migration_en

SETTING

International project, co-funded by the European Union’s Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

PERSPECTIVE

Local youth and third-country national children

INTERVENTION

Migrant children and youth are especially vulnerable to social exclusion. Through the MINT project, Terre des hommes and its partners aimed at empowering refugee and migrant children - as well as European youth - to engage in new integration activities. By using an innovative mentoring programme, the project contributed to building more inclusive societies in Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia. The project was an action learning and innovation programme, of which a contextualised, adapted, and tested mentoring model was an important output. This complex programme provided newly arrived migrant children with support, advice, and friendship in the form of mentors, in order to facilitate easier integration. Additionally, it contributed to the improvement of their linguistic and social skills and amplified their voices to communicate their needs (to stakeholders such as their local peers, teachers, and local and national authorities). The project helped to translate EU integration policy into concrete results at both the individual and community level, by providing early support to recently arrived children and promoting their active participation and social inclusion. At the same time, it supported MS governments, local authorities and civil society organisations engaged in the complex process of fostering integration. The MINT project has also contributed to creating a culture of openness towards migrants - particularly children – within the EU (albeit at a local level), and to increasing awareness around migration and the role that TCNs can play in EU societies.

Predicted activities:

1. Engaging children in educational and social activities. Together with its partners, Tdh will design an innovative and replicable peer-to-peer mentoring programme based on good practices and tested models. The mentoring programme will include training local youth volunteers and pairing them with newly arrived migrant and refugee children. They both then participate in individual and group meetings focused on



educational and language support as well as on recreational activities such as board games. In each country, the volunteers facilitate the integration of migrant and refugee children in the local host communities by introducing them to other children in the community and organising common outdoor sports and socio-cultural activities involving visiting historical museums, watching popular national movies or organising sport competitions such as football matches. This helped third-country national children to make new friends and become more familiar with the host community history and habits. The goal of this mentoring programme is to enrol at least 120 children in formal or informal education.

2. Acquiring linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge. Migrant children's integration and learning journey is accompanied by adapting printed and online content. The child-friendly online resources such as videos help newly arrived children understand the national cultural and social specificities of the four project countries. Further, children have the opportunity to learn the local languages through offline and online courses offered in a language that children understand such as Arabic or Farsi. Overall, more than one thousand children are going to acquire the basic knowledge and skills to engage in social relations.
3. Countering stereotypes about migrants and asylum seekers. As part of the mentoring programme, groups of local youth and third-country national children identify key topics reflecting the integration experience. They bring these topics into public discussions through videos promoted online and through theatre plays, debates with peers in schools or other local offline events. These child-led awareness raising and advocacy initiatives address members of local communities and policy makers at local and national level. By countering stereotypes and spreading a positive image of migrant and refugee communities, children benefit from a more welcoming atmosphere within the host societies.

WHAT HAPPENED

According to data collected from migrant children, their families and local youth, the mentoring programme has had a positive impact on children's self-esteem. Furthermore, the improvement of language skills seems to be a key benefit (as reported by children as well as their families). The advocacy initiatives provided a platform for children's voices to be heard outside their own communities. Through a series of advocacy workshops, they learnt how to convey their messages via videos and theatre performances, and how to share their experiences as newly arrived migrant children in the host countries with local and national stakeholders.

As a result of the project:

- 150 newly arrived TCN children were supported by 134 trained, local youth volunteer mentors over two mentoring cycles.
- Over 700 migrant children and adults benefitted from various language learning opportunities.
- 284 children and youth were empowered through actively participating in awareness-raising and advocacy activities.



- 1 tested 'Mentoring Methodological Framework' is now a useful resource available to any organisation willing to set up a mentoring programme with a view to ensuring the effective integration of migrant children. It is available in English, Czech, Polish, Romanian and Slovene.
- 2 mentoring cycles were organised in each project country, each lasting 6-9 months.
- 4 child-friendly videos about national and cultural specificities of the host countries are now available in English, Arabic, Czech, Polish, Russian, Slovene.
- 10 child- and youth-led awareness-raising videos contributed to raising awareness of the general public on the realities – be they positive or challenging - lived by migrant children and youth.
- 11 local events were organised to build more cohesive local communities.
- 4 national advocacy conferences were organised to positively influence local and national policies.
- 1 final international dissemination event was organised, for dissemination of the project results and tools.

EVALUATION

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

These kinds of activities are generally quite hard to implement, as they're strongly linked to volunteering, which cannot and should not be a reliable work-force.

Strengths

The project aims at providing young migrants with strong links to the local environment, which makes it possible for them to learn about the culture and social norms that are present in the hosting society, makes it possible for them to learn and practise the language through communication and provides them with a network.

Weaknesses

As usually, these projects have limited funding opportunities, the mentoring can happen nevertheless but advocacy and similar activities that are also an important part of the project cannot be happening without sufficient funds.



II. PlurAlps (2016 - 2019)

Source/Information: <http://www.uirs.si/sl-si/Raziskovanje/Projekt/id/877>

SETTING

International Interreg project funded by the ERDF (85%) and project partners (15%)

PERSPECTIVE

Unaccompanied minors, young migrants as well as local population

INTERVENTION

PlurAlps was a project of the Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, which aimed to develop and promote a culture that welcomes immigrants. The activities in the municipality of Postojna were carried out by SGLŠ Postojna. Immigrants were properly informed about the opportunities offered by the local environment, equipped with the competences to actively integrate into society, and thus helped to facilitate their social inclusion.

In the period from June to September 2019, activities were organised in the SGLŠ Postojna dormitory and in the park in front of it, in the premises of the Postojna Youth Centre and the Day Centre for Children and Adolescents in Postojna, which promoted cooperation between the majority population and immigrants, thus strengthening intercultural dialogue. They opened ArtCaffe Postojna & Library under the Trees where unaccompanied minors could interact with local environment and get their first work experience.

The main objectives of the project were:

- To improve strategies and practices for social planning and integration of new residents,
- To strengthen cooperation between different levels, actors and sectors in support of the integration of immigrants.
- To improve public awareness of the positive effects of pluralism,
- Develop bottom-up policy recommendations.



WHAT HAPPENED

- They organised more than 15 events
- Active inclusion of 32 unaccompanied minors
- 3 unaccompanied minors were included in labour market through student work
- 3 minors hosted the activities
- more than 120 people attended / 500+ guests
- 1 art workshop
- 1 art exhibition/ paintings exhibition
- 1 dance and movement workshop
- 1 singing workshop
- 1 photography competition/photo exhibition/4 rewarded pictures
- 4 short films and 3 feature length movies played
- 1 storytelling evening
- 2 culinary workshops
- 1 language lesson in Arabic

EVALUATION

The project has been deemed very successful as it brought together unaccompanied migrants with local population. It also helped unaccompanied migrants get their first work experience. It was also an important stepping stone for the organization who has later on been included as a contractor for the Municipality of Postojna, which now applies to projects for which the organization has the capacities for.

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

Within these kinds of projects, there is always a certain risk as activities are co-dependent and one needs to rely on others, especially throughout the process of UAM becoming responsible within performing their own tasks.



Strengths

Giving the UAM opportunities to get familiar with the working environment, increasing the opportunities of the organisation.

Weaknesses

Often, one has to create a space in which UAM have the opportunity to get to know the labour market, instead of including the UAM within the already existing working structure.



III. RefugeeAction III: Mainstreaming inclusion of migrants in society through their integration into the labour market (2019)

Source/Information: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/integration-practice/refugeeaction-iii-mainstreaming-inclusion-migrants-society-through-their_en

SETTING

National context, the project was funded by the Open Society Foundations

PERSPECTIVE

Immigrants, asylum seekers, decision-makers

INTERVENTION

The project aims to contribute to a more open and just society in which Immigrants would feel welcome and accepted as equal in Slovenia, through advocacy and focus on improving access to the labour-market. Since the closure of the Balkan route significantly more asylum applications have been submitted in Slovenia compared to before (277 in 2015, 1308 in 2016, 1476 in 2017, according to the Ministry of Interior). However, a large majority of these people who applied for international protection - mainly from Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan, Algeria, Turkey and Iran - absconded before their procedure was concluded, as they are aware that due to restrictive EU policy the possibilities for gaining asylum are really small. Since 1995 Slovenia granted asylum to only 704 persons, most of these whom were immigrants who came to Slovenia through the EU relocation scheme. Not all of those receiving international protection in Slovenia actually stayed in Slovenia, though, due to poor integration opportunities. Asylum and migration policies in Slovenia are – in accordance with EU trends – more and more restrictive, however NGO advocacy work has brought about some positive results (for example, conditions for family reunification were not restricted in 2017, despite proposed amendments to do so).

Besides asylum procedures integration is another huge challenge in Slovenia, especially in the field of employment. The state has no integration strategy, despite some initiatives from civil society to push for authorities to adopt one. Some programmes and services are outsourced to NGOs; however, these also face numerous (project-based) limitations, and thus integration often starts late and is not adjusted to specific needs of people. One of the biggest challenges (according to MIPEX) seems to be in finding employment, despite the fact that numerous new job positions have opened up and employers now claim to have difficulties finding enough employees.

The goal of this project was to tackle these issues through various activities relating to advocacy and awareness-raising, mentorship and the facilitation of employment.



Predicted activities:

1. Advocacy: I) meetings and coordination with other NGOs/initiatives, ii) following upcoming legislative changes and suggesting amendments to the laws, iii) writing appeals, public statements, protest letters, iv) statements and interviews for national and international media,
2. Employment of one asylum seeker/refugee as a cultural mediator: I) Peace Institute will publish a call for potential candidates, ii) PI team will select three candidates and invite them for an interview, iii) selection of one candidate and arranging the employment for approx. 10 months,
3. Mentorship program for a cultural mediator: I) The PI project team will prepare a programme covering relevant topics and skills, ii) on a weekly basis PI project team will conduct workshops, lectures, counselling, study visits, field trips, meetings, etc. with the cultural mediator, iii) the cultural mediator will further share his/her knowledge and skills with other asylum seekers/immigrants through organised and facilitated meetings/workshops in which we will include also specific experts,
4. Awareness-raising: I) at least five thematic public events (in cooperation with Employment Service of RS (Office for Migrants), Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, specific companies/potential employers, municipalities, etc.)

WHAT HAPPENED

- Successful, cooperative advocacy activities.
- One refugee from Syria has been employed and is still working at the Peace Institute.
- Mentorship programme for a cultural mediator has been developed and can / will be used again in the future.
- Awareness-raising events have been organised, including a big symposium "Promoting the integration of migrants into society through their integration into the labour market", with numerous government and non-government representatives. Additional info on the implementation of the symposium can be found here: <https://www.mirovni-institut.si/porocilo-o-simpoziju-spodbujanje-integracije-migrantov-v-druzbo-skozi-njihovo-vkljucevanje-na-trg-dela/>

EVALUATION

The project has been developed as planned. The most important achievement was employment of a cultural mediator from Syria, with whom we showed that integration should not be just about speaking but also about trying to do something more concrete. Alaa (refugee from Syria) is still



employed at the institute, and seeking more stable financing. The team aims to develop more projects of a similar nature in the future, as interest in inclusion into the labour market for immigrants is big and growing.

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

Asylum-seeking procedures that limit the opportunities of the UAM as well as adult migrants.

Strengths

The mentorship programme for a cultural mediator is a great possibility that could be transferred further on, within various intercultural environments.

Weaknesses

Activities, related to the advocacy, rarely reach their own potentials.



IV. MiCreate - Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe, (2019 - 2021)

Source/Information: <https://www.micreate.eu/index.php/about-common/>

SETTING

International project, Funded throughout the Horizon2020 funding perspective

PERSPECTIVE

Young migrants, young asylum seekers

INTERVENTION

Many children are actively and positively engaged in creating their lives and future for themselves – probably more than we are willing to admit – but they soon become bounded by what adults think is their best interests. In this regard, the project highlights that the existing social and political order does not offer enough autonomous space where children could independently speak for themselves. Our aim in this regard was to create ‘a space’ where migrant children of all ages are able to communicate and share their experiences after arriving in receiving societies. The proposed project embarks on a mission to gather their stories in order to support their needs and aspirations when it comes to integration into host societies, with an aim to make heard the voices of the least powerful members of communities, as an argument and factor for change. Our basic standpoint is that child-centered integration policies, integration programmes, practices and initiatives are among most important factors to support migrant children to become partners and participants in the development of a cohesive societies, with equal opportunities and secured rights as individuals, but also as members of minority and migrant groups in different spheres (education, labour market, housing, civil society, etc.).

The overall objective of the project was to stimulate inclusion of diverse groups of migrant children by adopting child-centred approach to migrant children integration on educational and policy level. The project starts from the fact that European countries and their education systems encounter manifold challenges due to growing ethnic, cultural, linguistic diversity and thereby our specific objectives were:

- to improve knowledge about children’s experiences of life in new social environments
- to explore school peer dynamics in view of the integration process
- to build on the capacity of teachers and educational staff for diversity managing
- to develop child-centred tools for stimulating migrant integration
- to design child-centred integration policy recommendations for diverse decision-makers.



WHAT HAPPENED

The research activities on educational staff and school systems as well as newly arrived migrants, long-term residents and local children were conducted in schools in Slovenia, Denmark, Spain, United Kingdom, Austria and Poland. Along with fieldwork with children in schools, fieldwork with children in transition will take place in camps and institutions in Palermo (Italy), Calais (France), Moria (Greece), Şanlıurfa (Turkey), Linin Reception Camp (Poland), asylum homes in Slovenia and Austria. More than 550 migrant children took part in the research activities of the MiCreate project.

The conclusions of crosscutting analysis and findings from the fieldwork with teachers, local and migrant children provided a base for policy recommendations and development of integration tools through the activities of Integration Lab.

The Integration Labs was established in participating countries to develop IC tools software, while the content of the tools was defined after the first results and findings from the fieldwork with children is available to be incorporated. Children's Advisory Boards on local level were established to provide advice and help researchers with development of IC tools and diversity management practices. Based on revised methods and activities we will thereafter "teacher's manual" was composed in a form of a toolkit, which includes:

- digital storytelling application
- awareness raising IC tool
- guide for teachers introducing multicultural education and diversity management
- guide for teachers including methods for solving inter-ethnic conflicts in school environment
- guide for teachers consisting of art-based approach practices and measures for promoting inclusion
- guide for teachers explaining indicators of migrant's conceptualisation of well-being
- collection of best practices of multiculturalism through organisation of everyday school life.

EVALUATION

Within the project, many reports have been done, covering important aspects such as: State of the Art, Reception communities, Educational Community and School Systems, Fieldwork in schools, Migrant children in transition, etc. Within the existing documents, one can find very well presented and clear information, related to the topic of the project. Policy Lab was created in order to translate subjective children's views and their understanding of well-being into policies that tend to deal with objective measures and indicators of integration and to develop child-centred migrant integration policy based on adjustability, flexibility and contextuality and migrant children participation. Integration Lab was created with an aim to



develop novel ways for stimulating integration of migrants, fostering the values of inclusive societies and tolerance among all children in educational systems. According to the info we could obtain, all the activities of the project were implemented as predicted beforehand.

Difficulties or constrains for its implementation

No specific information on the difficulties were obtained.

Strengths

Inclusion of the IC through digital storytelling, child-centred approach.

Weaknesses

A weakness of many projects that are similar to that one is a fact that the results, although they are online, do not get used often, once the project reaches its end.



CONCLUSIONS

The twenty practices that are presented in this document can serve as a way to identify strengths and difficulties present in regional and national levels in the countries involved in the project. They are practices that are transferable and will provide background information that are useful in the conception of further CIVILHOOD project's activities and in the policy recommendations that will derive from the experience made in the framework of the projects.

One of the main conclusions from this analysis is that there is an important connection between civic education and labour market integration, since most of the practices highlight the need for educative paths that are coherent and supplementary and not limited to finding a job opportunity. Civic education, as seen from the practices enhances interpersonal communication skills, enables critical thinking while improving speaking, listening, collaboration, and skills related gathering and processing information.

An assembly of the key outtakes from this collection has been put together, divided in two categories:

- Training of UAMs
- Training of other stakeholders

Training of UAMs

In general, it has been observed that in all contexts the authorities and the legal system which are responsible for providing certain framework conditions for UAMs - legal representation in the asylum procedure, age-appropriate accommodation, etc. are more often than not, disinvolved in the creation of social contacts, emotional support and help with orientation in everyday adult life. These aspects are very important in the transition into adulthood of UAMs and it is crucial that they are introduced in child-centred, culturally appropriate training activities which are also based in informal or non-formal educative methods. The combination of different types of activities such as those of socialization, social involvement in the public space, learning about one's culture, language exchanges etc. can be rather motivating for the participants while the presence of cultural mediators especially when organizing activities with youth that has not been present in the country for a long time. Adjusting some of the key elements of the [ADAMA project](#) can prove useful for the creation of educative activities while using the holistic approach of the IC tools created through the [MiCreate](#) project has also been underlined.

Another aspect that has been emphasised from the good practices is the importance of empowering individuals while encouraging their active participation, giving them certain tasks and responsibilities through the activities (i.e., the organisation of an event or campaign), reinforcing in this way their sense of ownership in the educational activities. It has also been underlined that the combination of activities with mentorship schemes and youth coaching can support them in the process of organising and leading their lives independently.



Moreover, it has been underlined from a few practices that it is important to not assume that UAMs or young immigrants are interested to participate in specific training activities without incentivizing their presence. There are various incentives that can be used such as the organization of low-threshold excursions and recreative activities as well as the provision of small “treats” and anything else that can catch their attention so that they become involved in the long-term processes and pursue their participation with higher interest. Giving an allowance during the trainings can also be seen as an effective method in order to avoid a high number of drop-outs.

Last but not least, in relation to the dimension of work integration delivery of sessions related to entrepreneurship can be seen as valuable for them. The organization of training sessions that include tips and information on processes related to career guidance services is of great importance while assessing skills and creating individual paths can support a better matching between job supply and demand. As observed through one of the practices making accessible job-related glossaries while promoting participation to online courses can support beneficiaries to develop job-related language skills. It is also essential to connect beneficiaries to the networks of organizations offering employment services and vocational training.

Training of other stakeholders

As regards to the training of stakeholders that are supporting inclusion processes of UAMs and young migrants, it is important to assess their knowledge and explain in depth issues faced in inclusion processes so that they can better support their beneficiaries. Moreover, focus has to be put in the preparation of stakeholders so that they promote educative paths for UAMs and young migrants through an active collaboration and exchange among their peers.