

Migrants - guided tour of the house



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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Maciej Hilarowicz

The aim of our project efforts was to identify the best practices in the field of admitting migrants to the European Union.

We defined these migrations quite broadly, and concerned both refugees who found themselves within the EU as a result of persecution or armed conflicts, as well as those who came here to escape poverty, in search of opportunities for personal development.

In the project, we also took into account intra-EU migrants, treating this type of emigration as an equally significant process in the context of integration. Wandering to a richer center, the aim of which is to improve one's life from, for example, less prosperous and still burdened with deficits communities in the neighboring EU countries, is still quite common.

Integration takes place in different ways.

We have made the host society the target of our studies. Individuals or small groups that often determine the characteristics of the narrative about migrants (for the purposes of this article, I shall adopt the term migrants for each of the above-mentioned types of groups migrating to and within the EU).

The same actors, people characterized by a certain, special sensitivity and courage - if we raise the context of becoming familiar with strangeness, they became the object of our project interest.

We searched for individuals and formal or informal groups that do not operate within subsidized-support structures. We were interested in the people who decided to help migrants, their motivations, inspirations, character and way of acting.

We also wanted to know how these larger institutions operate, discover if and how they can support our little players, us, because most of the project participants are recruited from such active volunteer environments, acting here and now, directly, providing simple help - financial, organizational and administrative for the individual in need. In each of the visited countries, we tried, as far as possible, to get acquainted with the local migration policy, with the main actors of non-governmental organizations as well as decision-makers from local authorities or the EU. It was instructive to compare different approaches, different human sensitivity, differently emphasized priorities.

This knowledge, very informative, gave us a more complete picture of the support for migrants in the EU, we realized the extraordinary complexity of the process of migrant integration.

Returning to the heroes of our project inquiries, we tried to recognize the motivations of the leaders and volunteers as well as how they stay in the act of helping for a long time, what pushes them to act, what language should be used and it is worth using in the organization to keep the enthusiasm for further actions. We discovered that help, voluntary work and selflessness are qualities that should be protected, as unfortunately they are often impermanent.

We still do not know the answer to the question of how to sustain the weakening will to help, how to stimulate the burnt out with help. This phenomenon shocked us and raised a number of questions.

We also observed a certain pattern.

Well, small non-governmental organizations with a limited budget are able to implement projects in a punctual manner, engaging volunteers for just a few days. Such a mass move works very well, which we could observe during the activities of the Aid Staff Belgium. Volunteers were willing to devote their time to carrying out specific activities in a short time. On the other hand, it becomes a problem to keep the ranks of people active, who would support the organization on a permanent basis. Many of these ngoes only operate on one or more projects a year, while remaining dormant the rest of the time.

Is it possible to develop such initiatives, are there ways to support social good, activity, good intentions that, as we have clearly seen, reside in the communities, in the people we have met.

How to use this energy, make it durable.

These are the questions we come up with when summarizing this project.

We are aware of the problems, we believe that there are solutions that guarantee the durability of the organization and reduce burnout of volunteers. Today we would call for systemic support for the staff and decision-makers. Possibility of acquiring leadership competences, participation in activities that strengthen morale and help in management.

Poland's migration policy



Mirosław Bieniecki

Poland lacks a well-thought-out integration policy towards foreigners. High hopes for a change are put in the adopted on July 31 this year. by the Council of Ministers in the document entitled "Poland's migration policy - current state of play and proposed actions", however, so far the document has not changed the current situation yet: integration measures undertaken by various organizations, although often very valuable, are systemic scattered and uncoordinated.

This situation is in contrast to the experience of the countries that have already been they have developed mechanisms for the integration of immigrants which show that they are effective integration policy must be based on the coordination of activities involved in it entities and continuous evaluation of applied solutions. "Integration Practices" project, the result of which is our report was to meet these expectations proposing systemic development of evaluation methodology and policy progress indicators integration.

Our observations in several countries and institutions (Pawlak, Bieniecki 2009; Bieniecki, Pawlak 2010), led us to conclude that the key to the success of our activities aimed at the integration of newcomers with the host society is the application a few basic rules, the most important of which are:

- 1) clear formulation of goals;
- 2) coordination of activities carried out;
- 3) cooperation between institutions involved in integration;
- 4) reliable evaluation of the activities carried out.

For integration, the following factors are also important: starting activities as early as possible integration towards newcomers, adapting these activities to the local / regional one the specificity and conviction of local communities about the need for action. These While the six basic principles do not guarantee full success, they are not adherence to them appears to be the precondition for failure.

Warsaw/Poland - Kuchnia Konfliktu



The immediate impetus was the tragic news from the war in Syria. We wanted to support refugees in Warsaw, the biggest problem for them is usually finding a flat and a job. We wanted to find an educational tool that would give a positive example that we can create a multicultural, well-coordinated team in which we respect each other and fight stereotypes. Those who eat lunch with us support refugees - this is seemingly a small gesture, even the most busy people who do not have time to volunteer or attend demonstrations can afford such help.

The menu changes daily. We want food to be fresh every day, we don't want to keep ready-made products in the fridge for several days. What we cook in the morning is practically always the end of the day, so we don't waste food, which is just as important to us. The changing menu gives people in our team room for expression. If Mr. Sultan from Afghanistan comes on Monday, cooks Afghan or Pakistani dishes with Piotr from Poland, and when Malika comes from Dagestan, then we cook more Eastern dishes. This arrangement gives chefs and cooks the opportunity to experiment. There is a lot of room for creativity in the kitchen, we do not care about the commercial nature of this project, we want to give employees space for exploration, because it brings them satisfaction.



The items on the menu are not an exact representation of the dishes, because we do not believe in such a concept - the dish always shows influences from various other countries. In Afghan dishes we can find, for example, elements of Pakistani or Indian cuisine. We focus on creative exchange.

Some people have actually cooked before, but most of them are housewives who learned the art of cooking from their mothers. They often have the skills our grandmothers had, and we don't necessarily - at least that's the case with me. In the case of men, cooking with us is associated with recalling what grandmothers, mothers and wives used to cook. We have egalitarian rules in the kitchen, but it cannot be denied that the culinary experience is different for men and women.

Warsaw/Poland - Foundation for Somalia



Their mission is to promote intercultural dialogue, diversity as well as exchange of cultural experiences. The objective of our everyday work is to promote tolerance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. We believe that every human being deserves acceptance and respect.

We are the bridge between immigrants and Polish society. We support immigrants culturally and financially, allowing them to integrate better within Polish society and socio-economic reality.

We promote education and knowledge about other cultures and traditions of African and Arab countries.



Elmi Abdi, who comes from Somalia, is a veterinarian by training, a graduate of the University of Mogadishu (Gaheyr - is a Somali university). He worked as a veterinarian in Somalia for two years.

After emigrating to Poland, he started operating in the third sector: he is now the president of the Somali Association in the Republic of Poland. The main goals of the organization are to promote the Somali community in Poland, Somali culture, country language and literature.

- global and development education
- intercultural dialogue and integration
- work with children and youth
- integration projects for migrants and refugees
- creating assistance center for mixed couples and their children
- humanitarian aid for Somalia and other developing countries to and share solutions to achieve Poverty Reduction and the Millennium Development Goals for sustainable development and empowerment. In all our activities, we encourage the protection of human rights, capacity development and the empowerment of women and minorities.
- integration projects for representatives of different cultures
- projects promoting intercultural dialogue: conferences, training sessions, discussions
- research projects aimed at assessing stay conditions of migrants and refugees and the issue of integration
- presenting current situation of people living in Somalia through movie shows and photo exhibitions
- collecting medicines, equipment, money for the hospital in Adado
- promoting voluntary work and civil society

Brussels/Belgium

Brussels - Plateforme Citoyenne – BXLRefugees

The Plateforme Citoyenne – BXLRefugees was launched in September 2015, in response to the largest wave of immigration into Brussels in 20 years. The federal government persistently failed to provide a solution to the migration crisis and hundreds of refugees were sleeping rough in Brussels Maximilien Park. The platform stepped in where the government had failed, calling upon the goodwill of citizens to provide proper housing, or just a warm bed for a night.

Since then, the Citizens Platform has been providing an unconditional welcome, within its means, and offering information, training and assistance to refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, new arrivals and undocumented migrants. The platform brings together hundreds of volunteers committed to contributing their time and talent to this ambitious project.

So far, the platform has opened ten reception centers for refugees in Brussels. Sister's House is one of them.

Brussels - Sister's House

Sister's House is a center in Brussels for vulnerable migrant women. It opened in November 2018 and was created by women for women. This non-mixed, gender-sensitive project mobilizes the Brussels voluntary and medical network. In Sister's House, women lend a helping hand to other women who are regularly deprived of reception rights or access to basic care and information. Here, they are offered protection from possible harm and can learn to live their lives with dignity. The women unite around everyday difficulties to find strength and inspiration and fight for a fairer future.

At the most fundamental level, Sister's House offers daily food, shelter and showers to migrant women living on the street. It allows them to spend a night in a safe and clean place. Moreover, they are offered clothes and hygiene products, as well as medical, psychological and social help.

In 2019 alone, Sister's House offered more than 13,000 overnight stays to more than 500 women and was supported by over 180 volunteers.

In 2020, the reception of migrant women became even more challenging due to the COVID-19 sanitary restrictions.

RANA (Refugees Are Not Alone)

Provides essential assistance for the inclusion of refugees arriving in Belgium, accompanying them individually so that they can start afresh and live independently.

The project came into being spontaneously in the autumn of 2015, at the initiative of a group of European Parliament volunteers, appalled that hundreds of asylum-seeker families were forced to spend chilly nights outside. As new people have joined the project, RANA today brings together tens of motivated citizens from Belgium, Europe and beyond. RANA has been registered with the Belgian authorities as a non-profit organization (ASBL) since July 2016.

If the original approach of RANA was the search for emergency shelters in hotels and homestays, also collecting donations of clothes or food. But since then, the needs have evolved and RANA too! Today, our activities are part of the long term: helping refugees to integrate into this new society that will become theirs and that of their families. By understanding their needs, we accompany them individually in their administrative, medical, professional or linguistic procedures; from housing research to academic orientation. But RANA is above all a moral and psychological support so that these people do not feel alone.

Innsbruck/Austria

Fluchpunkt Innsbruck

FLUCHTpunkt is a contact address for refugees; a coordinating office dedicated to the aid and support of refugees in Tyrol. Our services are available to all refugees in need of assistance regardless of their legal status.

Our aim is to ensure the acknowledgement and implementation of your social and legal rights. If you choose to contact us, our first task is to understand and clarify your request – with the help of a translator when necessary. We can then advise you regarding your personal situation, and refer you when necessary to other supporting services.

Female counselors are available for all women who prefer this option.

Counselling in matters of social and legal rights.

FLUCHTpunkt can offer counselling services and support in following areas:

- Questions as to minimum living standards
- Legal process of asylum, questions and legal costs
- Residency status and other problems concerning legal right of alins
- Custody and pending deportation
- Health problems, financial dilemma, social difficulties or other problems associated with day to day living (for example, the search for safe sleeping quarter, gratuitous meals and employment)

The Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA)

UNHCR AUSTRIA
Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum

The Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA) is the only public authority deciding on asylum applications and related procedures in Austria.

The BFA has regional offices (Regional Directorates) in all 9 Austrian provinces while its headquarter (the Directorate) is based in Vienna.

<https://help.unhcr.org/austria/where-to-seek-help/>

Counselling Services by BBU

All asylum-seekers who received a negative first instance decision are assigned a free-of-charge legal counsellor from the BBU GmbH. The assigned legal counsellor assists asylum-seekers with lodging an appeal with the Federal Administrative Court. Upon request, they also provide representation in the appeal procedure and accompany asylum-seekers in case the court decides to hold a hearing.

The BBU has offices in all of Austria. You can find more information on opening hours and contact details here. The BBU also offers counselling on voluntary return.

Human trafficking: For any help regarding human trafficking, you can call the 24/7 hotline on human trafficking: 0677 61343434 (all information you share will be treated confidentially!).

Berlin/Germany



SprachCafé Polnisch in Berlin-Pankow is an open meeting place, especially for fans of Poland; the country and its people, Polish language, culture and cuisine.

We meet to talk in Polish and German or in another language, to exchange ideas about interesting topics, to learn from each other, to support and inspire each other – in every way.

We are always looking forward to meeting new people and new ideas. Bilingualism, multilingualism and education are at the core of our work. We work across generations and interculturally. Children are very welcome.

Hospitality and non-violent communication are important components of our everyday life. We respect and appreciate each other. We want every single person and our whole community to succeed.



Katarina Niewiedzial

Katarina Niewiedzial came to Germany with her family from Poland in 1990. For five years, the political scientist worked as an integration officer in the Berlin district of Pankow for the interests of people with a migration background living there, until she moved to the Senate in 2019. As Berlin Commissioner for Integration and Migration, she is now expanding her work to the entire city.

The representative is in constant dialogue with migrant clubs and associations and supports their work with various funding programs. She has succeeded in strengthening the state advisory board for migration and integration issues by setting up an office. With the amendment of the Participation and Integration Act (PartIntG), she wants to anchor the diversity of Berlin's urban society in the public service and contribute to the visibility and representation of people with a migration background.

She would like to invite people who are new to Berlin to support their own concerns right from the start: "It's easier to arrive if you take an active part in social life - whether in a club, on a voluntary basis or in political committees. In this way, the structures and mechanisms of the new environment can be better understood and helped shape."

Berlin/Germany

Caritas Berlin/ Piotr Bocian

The headquarters of our Berlin-based Caritas are located in the Wedding district. From there, we try to organize the entire network of our institutions throughout the archdiocese, i.e. in Berlin, Brandenburg and Mecklemburg - Western Pomerania. In recent years, we have been trying to organize the so-called Caritas-Centers, where our advice and offers are combined not only for refugees, but also for people in need. There are 7 such Caritas centers in Berlin where they can receive professional help.

People ask us with the basic question: where can I sleep, what can I wear, what can I eat. So basic humanitarian matters. Caritas has its clothes warehouses, that's where we send these people to get dressed. In other institutions, they can get something to eat or solve other problems. The issue of accommodation is dealt with by the Berlin Senate. Everyone who comes to Germany is guaranteed an overnight stay. But we are trying to support these people additionally. For example, we have an institution for the very sick who need 24/7 care and who should not live in an ordinary refugee center.

I have always been surprised that a lot of people from Turkey or Arab countries come to Caritas. So much so that we had long waiting lists. And when we were talking to my parents about their expectations, I asked why they were coming to us. After all, there are other institutions here in Berlin that have nothing to do with the Church, but know the mentality of Arab countries better. One of the mothers not only surprised me a lot, but also motivated me very much in what we do. She said "because we expect from Caritas that our children will receive not only information and knowledge, but also other values". Then I asked "but do you know that Caritas is part of the Catholic Church?", Because for Muslims it can sometimes be a problem. And I often heard the answer "we don't care."

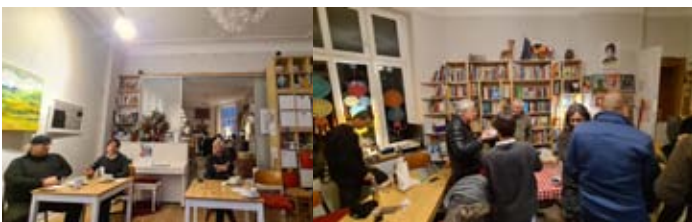
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Innsbruck/Austria



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