

WELCO-
MING
REFUGEES
WITH
DIGNITY

VADEMECUM
ON THE RECEPTION
AND INTEGRATION
OF REFUGEES
IN EUROPEAN CITIES

INTRO- DUCTION

Today Europe is faced with an unprecedented human challenge, no doubt the largest in its history since the end of the Second World War. A challenge that if is to be dealt with effectively, implies the mobilisation of society as a whole: politicians at local, national and European level, but also the members of civil society. The future of millions of men, women and children depends on providing concrete, effective solutions.

While it takes many years to implement an international agreement at intergovernmental level, territorial authorities have the advantage of being able to adapt very quickly to the new challenges confronting them.

In Strasbourg, European capital of Democracy and of Human Rights, particular attention has always been paid to receiving and integrating newcomers to its territory. It was entirely natural in September 2015 for Roland RIES, Mayor of Strasbourg, to answer the French authorities' call to create a national Solidarity City Network.

Led by Nawel RAFIK-ELMRINI, Deputy to the Mayor of Strasbourg in charge of European and International Relations, and at the initiative of the City of Strasbourg and the Italian cities of Catania and Rovereto, this network was extended to European level a month later with the launch of the «European Solidarity City Network». Soon afterwards, the Club de Strasbourg, whose members include over 60 European cities, then the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, made up of 648 elected officials

representing over 200,000 local authorities in 47 Member States, but also the National Association of Italian Communes (ANCI), which is made up of some 8,000 Italian communes, also committed to developing this Network.

The fruit of a year's painstaking work, the «Vademecum» is the first concrete outcome of the «European Solidarity City Network» initiative. Its purpose is to list the good practices relating to public policies on the reception and integration of refugees that are being implemented at local level. The «Vademecum» aims to be an account of the involvement and diversity of action of European cities at a time when many of them are faced with the opposition of their own governments. This is why this guide is designed as a practical tool, a decision support instrument and a veritable source of inspiration for cities that may feel helpless or isolated faced with the arrival of large numbers of refugees on their territory. Through this guide, the only one of its kind, European cities will be able learn from each other and strengthen their cooperation in a domain where improvisation is unfortunately often the *modus operandi*.

I- INTRODUCTION

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- German villages come to the aid of traumatised refugees
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- Leicester is committed to offering unaccompanied minors a smooth transition to adulthood.
- In Italy, the reception of unaccompanied minors is mobilising the State, European cities and civil society.

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- In Strasbourg, a process of cooperation between institutions, citizens and local associations is providing concrete solutions to deal with the real situations experienced
- Stuttgart is encouraging interactions between refugees and the local population at neighbourhood level
- In Tallinn, an settlement support plan for a balanced spread of refugees across the country
- In the Rhône, young people are getting working with associations to provide meals to refugees

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- In Rome, an ambitious programme to enable refugees to make the most of their entrepreneurial skills
- In Stuttgart, job market integration services grouped together in a «Welcome Center»

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- In Martina Franca, young refugees are enhancing the cultural heritage of their new region.
- In Berlin, refugees recruited as guides in the city's main museums offer a new perspective of the history of their host society.

10. COMMUNICATING INTELLIGENTLY TO COMBAT PREJUDICE

- Erlangen is combating stereotypes and prejudice against refugees by taking part in the Council of Europe's «C41» campaign (Communication for Integration)
- In Béziers and on social media, faced with the communication developed by the extreme right, a counter-campaign is being organised

11. VALUING REFUGEES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE HOST SOCIETY

- In Caltanissetta, young refugees are giving English lessons to policemen.
- In Bologna, a communication campaign to raise awareness among the city's inhabitants of the contribution that illustrious refugees have made to their host society.

12. DO NOT FORGET

- Catania and Rovereto pay a fitting tribute to those who have lost their lives

III- DOCUMENTS ANNEXES

- Founding declaration of the European Network of Cities of Solidarity, October 2015
- Declaration of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, October 2015
- Annual declaration of the Club de Strasbourg, November 2015

01

“WELCOME TO REFUGEES”: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRST CONTACT AND THE INITIAL RECEPTION

When fleeing from their home country, most refugees have a destination in mind, a specific country or a specific city where they have relatives or friends. The journey that brings them to Europe is extremely risky. They have to continuously change their itinerary to avoid danger and are sometimes forced to stay in places for a long time before they can eventually continue on their way. This occurs in particular when countries shut down their borders in an attempt to deflect migration routes. Cities then find themselves confronted with new situations that they must respond to as a matter of urgency.



→ IN TRIKALA, A LETTER OF WELCOME TO ACCOMPANY REFUGEES IN THEIR FIRST FORMALITIES

CONTEXT

The sudden closing of the border in Northern Greece led to the unexpected arrival of 201 refugees in Trikala.

PROCESS

On arrival, refugees were hosted in a reception centre set up in a gymnasium and in the fortress of Trikala¹.

Very quickly, the municipal authorities sought to involve numerous parties. Finally, it was possible to welcome the refugees thanks to the work of 185 volunteers and other local players. Local people and businesses provided basic goods; the local hospital gave first aid treatment and other medical assistance; the Greek army distributed food and the local scouts organised games for the children.

The Mayor of Trikala then sent out a welcome letter with simple information to facilitate the reception of the refugees.

RESULTS

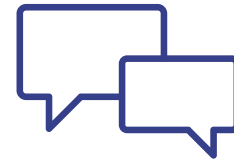
This mobilisation meant that two large groups of refugees were cared for successfully and 201 refugees were sheltered and catered for in the fortress of Trikala. Close cooperation between the local authorities, volunteers and other local stakeholders has made it possible to provide an appropriate solution to the situation despite the lack of immediately available public resources.

RESOURCES

The participation of volunteers has been found to be indispensable in welcome activities, medical care, provision of food, creative activities for children, etc. Municipal employees have overseen the proper distribution of food and other necessary products. The refugees themselves have been keen to help, particularly as interpreters and translators.

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1- http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/photo/2016-03/15/c_135189014_2.htm

→ IN UTRECHT, AN AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME FROM DAY ONE

CONTEXT

The city of Utrecht is very active in defending and promoting Human Rights. It is a member of the Shelter City network which hosts human rights defenders who are being threatened because of their work, and supports activities and exchanges that help foster respect for human dignity.

In September 2015, Utrecht was called upon to accommodate 500 asylum seekers within one day.

PROCESS

The city of Utrecht's work receiving and integrating refugees is based on a policy of no compromise on Human Rights and of integration starting from day one of the refugees' arrival.

A key marker of the City's commitment is the emergency reception centre set up in the concert hall next to the new City Hall. The refugees were later accommodated in an empty school building. The aid provided in the shelters is coordinated through a private website, **Welcome to Utrecht** (www.welkominutrecht.nu) and the Facebook page www.facebook.com/welkominutrecht.

The different actions are coordinated by a special team of refugees, in close collaboration with the staff of different departments (safety and public order, social housing, communication, youth, etc.) In order to pre-empt and reduce the fears expressed by local people, a team in charge of the city's communication answers questions on social media (helpdesk, frequently asked questions regularly updated).

Also, neighbourhood information evenings are held with the presence of the local authorities, and security and medical staff, with the aim of gaining the local population's support for the initiative.

RESULTS

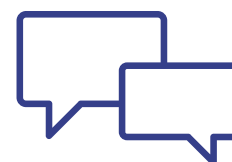
The City of Utrecht's policy can count on the active participation of local NGOs, who have launched many local initiatives. Communication via social media like Facebook and WhatsApp is widely used to make emergency decisions.

RESOURCES

To implement its refugee reception and integration policy, the City of Utrecht can count on a team of ten civil servants within the municipality and around fifty paid workers and 200 volunteers, as well as Utrecht's NGOs.

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02

FACILITATING ACCESS TO DECENT HOUSING

With the recent arrival of large numbers of refugees, the provision of adequate accommodation at very short notice has proved to be the key challenge for European cities. These cities have, however, been very inventive. Emergency shelters have been set up in concert halls², empty schools³, former hospitals, unoccupied business centres and sometimes in tents or container camps. These can only be temporary solutions. Living in conditions of extreme promiscuity is conducive to conflict and can cause health and safety concerns. People living there tend to be more disheartened, to remain contained in self-enclosed social circles and to operate with very little direct contact with the local population.

Experience has shown that decentralised housing is essential to facilitate the integration of refugees in the city. It enables them to start living a normal life and go to places where they will meet and interact with the local population. Because the availability of social housing and low-cost rented accommodation is declining in European countries, this issue is a real challenge for municipalities.

→ IN DRESDEN, ACCOMMODATION POSSIBILITIES SPREAD ACROSS THE ENTIRE CITY

CONTEXT

In 2015-2016, under the motto “Dresden acts”, the city of Dresden has been providing accommodation for 6000 refugees. In Germany, it is the Länder (regional level) and local authorities who are in charge of asylum seeker reception, accommodation, health and refugee social inclusion.⁴

PROCESS

Dresden City council voted for an ambitious decentralised accommodation scheme, which organises fair distribution throughout the city, to help avoid social conflicts and spatial segregation.

To achieve this, six decentralised coordination offices spread evenly in different parts of the city have been created⁵. There has also been intense communication to broadcast this plan through official websites, NGOs, smartphone apps, etc.

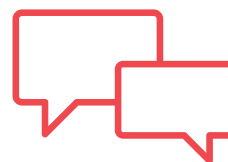
RESULTS

70% of the 6000 refugees who arrived in Dresden in 2015-2016 currently live in individual apartments⁷.

Instead of large accommodation schemes like those planned by the German government, the city has proposed setting up multiple small reception centres for a maximum of sixty refugees.

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2- Voir chapitre sur Utrecht

3- Comme à Bergen, Norvège

4- <http://www.dresden.de/de/leben/gesellschaft/migration/asyl/unterbringung.php>

5- <http://www.dresden.de/de/leben/gesellschaft/migration/asyl/hilfe/regionalverantwortliche.php>

→ IN TRIESTE, THE MOBILISATION OF A NETWORK OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS TO PROVIDE A SUITABLE RESPONSE TO THE HOUSING NEEDS OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

CONTEXT

Always at the forefront regarding refugee reception in Italy, Trieste was historically one of the first Italian towns to launch a non-governmental network of reception structures for refugees coming from Bosnia Herzegovina and neighbouring areas involved in the Balkan conflict. When refugees from Kosovo arrived in Trieste in 1998, the city introduced, for the first time in Italy, a decentralised accommodation scheme whereby refugees were not housed in big camps but with hosts in towns and villages. National policy-makers capitalised on the Trieste experience to introduce this possibility in the 2002 law of the National System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR). However, the SPRAR system has not managed to keep up with the exponential increase in international protection requests. The consequences are recourse to informal settlements and social marginalisation for some of these individuals. Although there was no real programme for refugee integration at national level, an agreement was made in 2011 between the Trieste Prefecture and the Refugee Office of the Italian Consortium of Solidarity (ICS) to allow some asylum seekers to be housed in apartments while those who were accommodated in hotels were guaranteed support in terms of local services and legal protection.

PROCESS

In 2013, because of the growing flow of migrants to Trieste, large numbers of "homeless" asylum seekers were recorded. In 2014, the Prefecture of Trieste, together with the Municipality of Trieste, decided to sign a new agreement with two non-profit civil society organisations (the ICS Refugee Office and the Trieste Caritas Foundation), entrusting them with the task of finding and managing accommodation for refugees in private facilities, under their own responsibility. This initiative had a strategic aim: to avoid setting up a "parallel" reception system, preferring to strengthen the SPRAR system and offer asylum seekers the same level of response.

RESULTS

The system has shown itself to be highly flexible: the ICS Refugee Office and the Trieste Caritas Foundation have used local networks and available resources: public authorities, private social sector bodies, training centres, legal experts and consultants, schools providing Italian lessons, etc. Asylum seekers are initially accommodated in hotels, then progressively transferred into small or medium-sized apartments across the urban area in order to allow interaction with local communities.

The number of asylum seekers that Trieste can fully manage has increased substantially since 2013. There is no minimum or maximum number for applicants, as the system adapts to actual needs. At the beginning of 2013, the system included 35 refugees. As a result of proper implementation and review, the city of Trieste alone can receive 560 asylum seekers and 119 applicants under SPRAR (or 0.34% of local residents). The new system has therefore allowed a response to the reception needs of asylum seekers who have not yet been included in the SPRAR. Ultimately, no asylum seeker is excluded from the reception system.

The administration has found this action model as beneficial, effective and applicable at national level, or at least in middle-sized urban areas. The Trieste model thus shows that the streamlined use of resources may result in a smooth mechanism, leading to increasingly comprehensive work and to an approach ensuring that each invested cent is immediately spent to ensure a fair, decent and future-oriented reception, which is not only beneficial to applicants, but to the reception system as a whole.

RESOURCES

Service providers in reception centres receive € 35 per head per day, to cover the costs of accommodation, meals, administrative services, cleaning, the provision of basic items and support for integration.

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Hypertext link: Agreement between the Prefecture of Trieste and the Municipality of Trieste concerning the reception of asylum seekers temporarily present on the provincial territory and not included in the SPRAR system

<https://refugeelocalwelcome.wordpress.com/2015/12/14/municipality-of-trieste-agreement-between-the-prefecture-of-trieste-and-the-municipality-of-trieste-concerning-the-reception-of-asylum-seekers-temporarily-present-on-the-provincial-territory/>

→ THE “GDANSK MODEL”, A PIONEER EXPERIENCE IN THE NORTH OF POLAND

CONTEXT

In Poland, many major cities are fully engaged in favour of the reception and integration of refugees, despite the national context. Gdansk has historically been an inclusive and diverse city. By staying open now to receive and integrate refugees and to proactively integrate immigrants, the City intends to give credibility to the ethos of Solidarity. By having an Immigrants Integration Model voted by the City Council (June 2016), the municipality took leadership in this area in Poland. “You cannot help refugees without acceptance and empathy from residents and without building a spirit of openness to people who are often persecuted in their own countries”, Mayor of Gdansk Pawel Adamowicz declared.

PROCESS

On 7 September 2015, Gdansk city council voted unanimously to welcome refugees and make city buildings available to them, becoming the first Polish city to do so. Gdansk is reluctant to see refugee reception centres opened in the city, and instead believes in better integration within the host community. For example, vacant public housing could be renovated to host refugees, using funding from the EU’s asylum, migration and integration fund (AMIF).

The municipality has moved into an implementation phase of its Model. It has various new services established for immigrants, an NGO devoted to supporting immigrants, it has also organized conferences and seminars on migration. More than 150 people from 70 different public institutions, businesses, NGOs, immigrant groups, faith groups, community groups and journalists are now involved with the municipality’s works.

An Immigrants Council of Gdansk (formed of 13 immigrant councillors) was also set up to give Mayor its feedback and guidance.

On top of things, the municipality is also an active Eurocities member, especially within the Migration and Integration Working Group.

RESULTS

Quite recently, in June 2016, 5 migrant families, a total of 15 people, came to live in Gdansk. As a result of the policies implemented by the municipality, eight of them have already obtained the Polish Charter, and seven received asylum in the country. They got not only flats but also opportunities to complete vocational and adoptive courses and offers for jobs and schools for children.

Websites :

<http://www.gdansk.pl/migracje/Model-Integracji-Imigrantow,a,61064>

<http://www.gdansk.pl/migracje/12-imigrantow-bedzie-doradzac-prezydentowi-Gdanska-Kim-sa,a,61460>

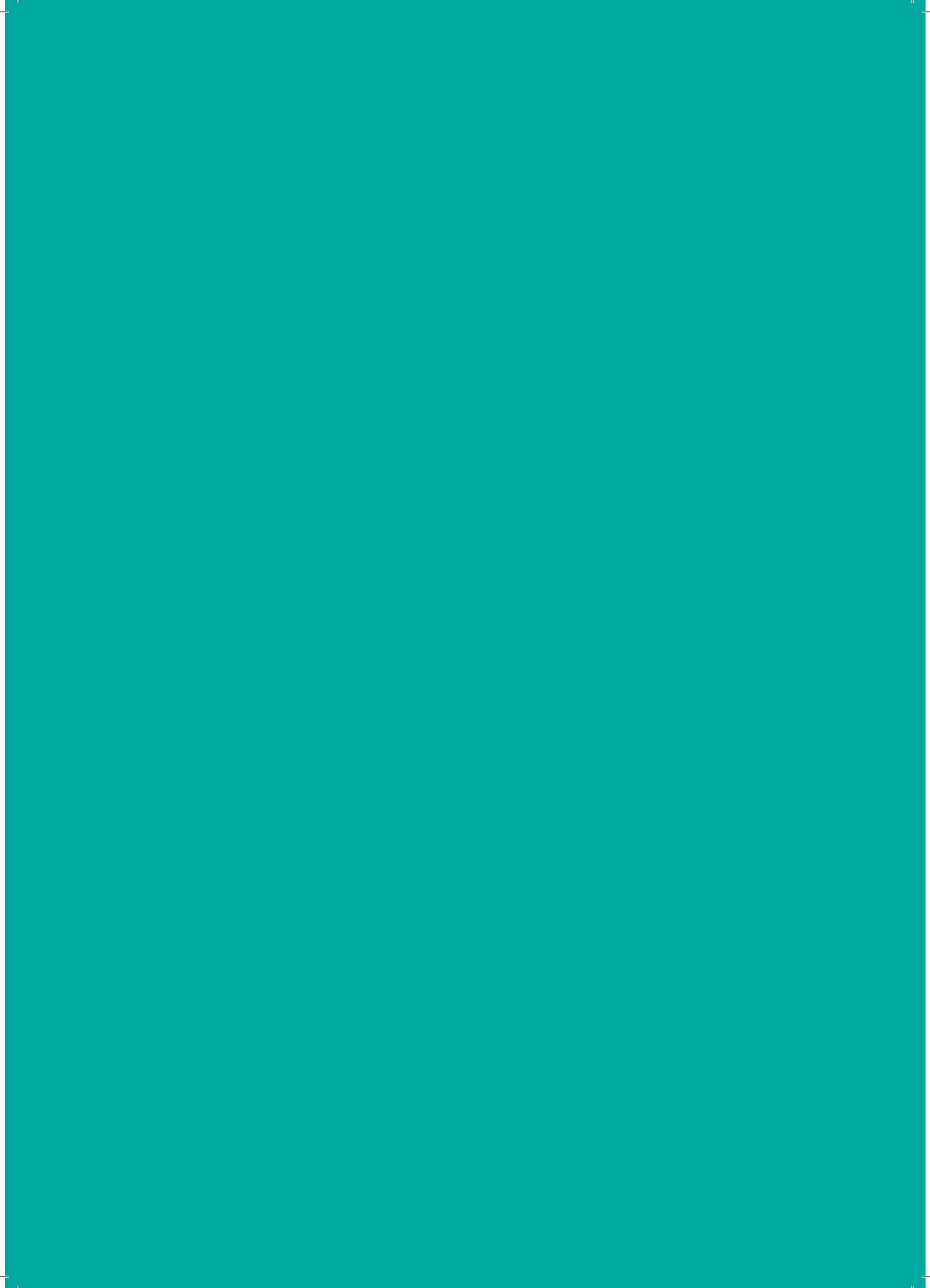


03

FACILITATING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Traumatised by the physical and psychological violence that they have endured in Syria or Iraq, but also as they made their way across Europe, many refugees are in need of medical care and support when they arrive on our continent. Some are suffering from severe post-traumatic stress requiring the indispensable intervention of qualified medical personnel.

In Germany, several towns and villages in the Land of Baden-Württemberg have committed to a scheme to enable traumatised refugees to stabilise and gradually return to a normal life.



→ GERMAN VILLAGES COME TO THE AID OF TRAUMATISED REFUGEES

CONTEXT

In October 2014, two months after the invasion of the Sinjar district of Iraq by the Islamic State and the massacre of thousands of Yazidi men and the capture of 7,000 women and girls, the German Land of Baden-Württemberg took the decision to take 1,000 Yazidi women and children who had managed to escape captivity. The beneficiaries of this programme include young women who have been raped and tortured.

For the manager in charge of the project, the programme's main aim is to «offer women and children who have suffered so much the chance to build a new future. « Some experts believe that some of the people who have endured such trauma could not have survived without medical care.

PROCESS

22 towns and villages decided to set up a programme offering medical treatment and humanitarian visas to the women and children concerned. The doctors working on the scheme chose the people who would benefit based on two criteria: the severity of the physical and psychological trauma they have endured and the way the programme could benefit them.

As well as receiving therapy, the programme's beneficiaries attend German language classes every day and take part in simple activities such as shopping and cycling. The children attend school.

RESULTS

Initially, the programme helps to stabilise the people on it, enabling them to overcome their fear of going out or meeting other people.

The aim is to enable these people to live independently after two years of treatment, even though experts acknowledge that for some of them the process will take longer. Although the Mayor admits that he faced some resistance when he announced the arrival of the beneficiaries of the programme in his village, relations are now very good with all the local people and some shopkeepers have already given some refugees the chance to gain some first work experience.

RESOURCES

The funding made available for this programme by the Land of Baden-Württemberg amounts to 95 million Euros.

Hypertext link:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/mar/02/germany-opens-doors-yazidi-women-children-northern-iraq-enslaved-isis>



→ THE EURODISTRICT STRASBOURG-ORTENAU SUPPORTS AND ACCOMPANIES LOCAL VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS HELPING TRAUMATISED YOUNG REFUGEES.

CONTEXT

The Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau, a Franco-German structure encompassing a number of municipalities situated on either side of the Rhine, wanted to fully play its role in supporting refugees in its area and has set up a fund specifically intended to help refugee children and teenagers. Benefiting from a total of € 30,000 for 2016, the fund's aim is to subsidise projects and/or actions facilitating the integration of refugee children and teenagers aged 0 to 18 years in the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau area, enabling them to take part in new and positive experiences after a long and often traumatic period.

PROCESS:

The actions supported by the fund include the setting up of art therapy groups in a refugee reception centre. But also:

- the organisation of outings to get to know the city and familiarise themselves with the culture of the host country, with the refugee children being accompanied by French and German elementary schoolchildren;
- a contemporary dance/choreography project involving refugee and French and German children, to address concepts such as "belonging", "identity" and "personal story";
- art workshops led by artists and a clinical psychologist for refugee children and schoolchildren from Strasbourg;
- scientific activities;
- a shared activity pressing apples for juice, which is then distributed to refugee accommodation centres;
- photography workshops, where refugees are invited to show photographs taken during their migratory journey as well as photos taken in their new environment.

RESULTS

17 projects run by voluntary associations have been supported by the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau under this scheme.

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Hypertext link:
<http://www.eurodistrict.eu/fr/actualites/les-projets-s%C3%A9lectionn%C3%A9s-par-le-fonds-de-soutien-aux-enfants-r%C3%A9fugi%C3%A9s-2016>



04

FACILITATING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Throughout Europe citizens of all origins, social backgrounds and generations have voiced their solidarity with refugees. The responsiveness of civil society in the face of humanitarian disaster contrasts sharply with the institutional paralysis that has characterised European States and institutions. Associations, private companies and many citizens have spontaneously launched a considerable number of local initiatives to help refugees feel welcome and become acquainted with their new environment.

In this context, many European cities have undertaken actions designed to facilitate access to information on all these initiatives as well as to the different public services.



→ IN GENEVA, A UNIT IN CHARGE OF COORDINATING REFUGEE RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES TO CAPITALISE ON ALL THE INITIATIVES BEING TAKEN AT LOCAL LEVEL

CONTEXT

Geneva has a vibrant and culturally diverse civil society, which generates many local refugee reception initiatives. Geneva is often perceived as a city of Peace because of its status as depository of the 1949 Conventions on the Rules of War and the 1951 Geneva Conventions relating to the Status of Refugees¹⁰.

However, the resources usually provided by central government are insufficient and are allocated as a priority to satisfy vital needs (accommodation, food, health, safety).

PROCESS

In October 2015, a unit was created within the cantonal administration specifically in charge of coordinating refugee reception and integration activities. It is funded by the municipalities with no refugee centres on their territory. It is under the authority of this unit that the information on refugee reception and integration initiatives is collected and that institutional cooperation with other public actors at cantonal level (coordination) and municipal level (advice, information) is organised.

Volunteers are therefore brought in to make the first human contact with newly arrived refugees and trained to stimulate activities in municipalities and neighbourhoods.

RESULTS

Thanks to the voluntary contributions of eight municipalities, teams of four workers were set up, entirely funded by these contributions.

150 out of the 200 proposals made by voluntary organisations have been implemented, concerning in particular support for parents living in refugee centres, the organisation of sports activities, city visits, homework support for refugee children, language lessons, etc.

In addition, measures have been taken to facilitate links between students from the University of Geneva

and newly arrived refugees. Finally, official contracts have been signed with voluntary organisations to lay down the ethical rules and standards involved. An initial evaluation of this approach is expected before the end of 2016.

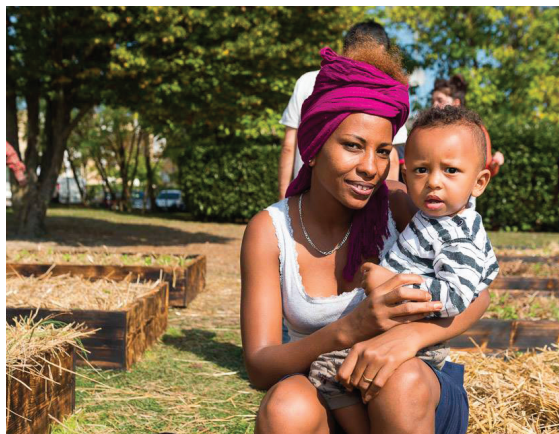
MAIN CHALLENGES

The main challenge of this initiative is to inform and keep track of all the local refugee reception and social integration initiatives, providing information and communicating about the purpose of the coordinating unit. But also to be careful to coordinate without dominating.

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Hypertext link:
<https://www.facebook.com/hospicegeneral>



8 - <http://www.internationalcitiesofpeace.org/what/what.html>

9 - <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/vwTreaties1949.xsp>

10 - <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/basic/3b66c2aa10/convention-protocol-relating-status-refugees.html>

DID YOU KNOW?

→ **The municipality of Daugavpils (Latvia)** has set up an information office to facilitate access to information for all citizens. It is in response to this same challenge concerning access to information that the municipality of Leicester (United Kingdom) has produced a booklet informing asylum seekers about the support they can receive and the procedures to follow. This booklet is accessible via this link: <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/how-we-work/equality-and-diversity/support-for-asylum-seekers/>

Contacts : Daugavpils: Jolanta Uzulina: jolanta.uzulina@daugavpils.lv
Leicester: Irene Kszik: Irene.kszik@leicester.gov.uk

→ **The municipality of Brno (Czech Republic)** has begun a cooperation initiative with the Social Inclusion Agency, aiming to develop a specific approach focusing on deprived neighbourhoods over the next three years. These policies, undertaken with the support of the European Union, in particular concern the integration of newcomers, and include the following actions: the completion of studies to provide the best possible information about issues in the territory. But also: the creation of a municipal team of employees with intercultural skills, equipped to work with newcomers and support their colleagues in various areas of public action. When recruiting, the municipality will of course pay particular attention to the intercultural skills of the new agents.

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Hypertext link: <http://www.brnoexpatcentre.eu>

→ **The municipality of Vara (Sweden)** has made a web page for newcomers to the city, to give them access to different types of practical information, with the aim of assisting their rapid integration into life in the city: accommodation, languages spoken in Vara, chances to get involved in associations, education, health, transport and leisure activities.

Contact : camilla.mahlberg@vara.se

Hypertext link:
<https://www.informationsverige.se/Engelska/Leva-och-bo/lan-och-kommuner/Pages/Vara.aspx>

→ **The municipality of Vienna** has decided to capitalise on a highly mobilised society, by launching a mobile phone app. It offers a map showing information and assistance points for refugees in the city. This action allows refugees to go to places where they can obtain various services and meet volunteers. However, it also allows citizens who want to support collectives committed to helping refugees to participate, by joining the organisations on site.

Hypertext link: <http://www.welcomeoida.at/>

05

ENABLING RAPID INTEGRATION INTO THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Integration through education is one of the main priorities of the European cities that are seeking to put in place solutions to involve the entire population in shared projects accessible to all.

→ IN ATHENS, THE DEVELOPMENT OF “OPEN SCHOOLS” IS FACILITATING YOUNG REFUGEES’ ACCESS TO SCHOOLING

CONTEXT

850,000 arrived in Greece in 2015 with 80% of them passing through the City of Athens. Today, in 2016, Greece has 60,000 refugees housed in 40 camps (36,000 people in mainland Greece, 15,000 on the islands and 9,000 in UNHCR structures). There are currently 10 camps in the city of Athens and about 4,000 people are living in squats.

PROCESS

In 2015, the city of Athens launched the “Open Schools” initiative. This scheme aims to turn public schools belonging to the municipality into educational, recreational, cultural and sports centres for all Athenians (adults and children, refugees included). The programme was launched in 2015 and expanded considerably in the space of a few months so that it now includes 25 municipal public schools in Athens.

Under the scheme, school buildings and playgrounds remain open after school hours until 9.30 in the evening and from 10 am to 8 pm at the weekend. The buildings are used to house creative workshops for all ages, thereby revitalising the premises and bringing communities together, in order to respond to real needs, to increase involvement and interaction between schools and local neighbourhoods.

This project is run by the Athens municipal authority. The Stavros Niarchos foundation is the sole donor, providing a grant to Athens city authority.

RESULTS

During the summer of 2016, 10 different sessions of activities for children were offered in 9 “Open Schools”. Out of 1,250 participants, 450 were refugees. In some workshops, the cooperation between refugee children and local children on a project to build a small robot was a genuine success. Other workshops aimed at refugees enabled them to leave their camps for a few hours each day and to spend some time in a classroom, a safe, familiar environment, where they can play, learn Greek and English, sing or follow other educational programmes designed by the Greek museums.

For the winter, 130 activity sessions and activities for all ages are planned in the 25 Open Schools for some

6,500 participants. The list of activities will be added to every month taking account of local needs and people’s wishes. The organisers of some workshops are in contact with the bodies helping refugees, in order to enable them to participate and to put together new activities to meet their needs.



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Athens “Open Schools” website
<http://athensopenschools.weebly.com/>
E-mail: info@athensopenschools.gr

Social media
Facebook: [@athensopenschools](#)
Twitter: [@ath_openschools](#)
Instagram: [@athensopenschools](#)
Athens City Council:
<https://www.cityofathens.gr/en/>

→ IN GERMANY, LEARNING THE LANGUAGE IN “WILLKOMMENSKLASSEN”

CONTEXT

Germany took in approximately 325,000 new schoolchildren from foreign countries in 2015, according to provisional estimates.

PROCESS

Local authorities are working to set up new «welcome classes» based on the “Willkommensklassen” model. These transitional classes, which focus on learning the German language, are intended to enable children to join mainstream education after one year. The teachers involved are specialised in teaching German as foreign language.

RESULTS

These classes give refugee children a pattern of life similar to that of other children, whilst also enabling them to meet other youngsters of their own age. They bring together children of different levels, ages and countries of origin. The lessons are given in primary and secondary school buildings in Berlin, which facilitates contacts with young Germans. The Länder of Saarland and Berlin have made school attendance by refugee children compulsory.

Hypertext link

<https://www.berlin.de/sen/bjw/fluechtlinge/>



06

PROTECTING

There are an increasing number of unaccompanied minors seeking sanctuary in Europe. Many have been exposed to the same experiences as their adult counterparts. They may have lost parents or siblings through death or separation. They form a particularly vulnerable group and require special protection. Identity reconstruction is particularly complex for unaccompanied minors affected simultaneously by the refugee experience, cultural adjustment and without parents or family members they can refer to or confide in. Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers are protected by international law on the rights of children, just like any other children. They are entitled to social services (housing, healthcare, etc.), to schooling services, to a children's allowance, to a personal custodian and to legal residence.

However, a drastic change occurs overnight when they turn 18. As adults they are no longer eligible for the same protections and rights that they enjoyed as children and they are treated overnight entirely as adults. This brutal change jeopardises their successful transition from childhood to adulthood.



→ LEICESTER IS COMMITTED TO OFFERING UNACCOMPANIED MINORS A SMOOTH TRANSITION TO ADULthood

CONTEXT

The action of the municipality of Leicester was marked in 2007 by the opening of the "Leicester City of Sanctuary", part of a movement committed to building a culture of hospitality and a network of places throughout the country which work to include asylum seekers and refugees in the lives of their communities. Following the restrictions on the asylum seeking process and the limitations to available assistance in the UK, in 2014 the municipal council adopted a motion which aimed to raise awareness of the plight of asylum seekers and the level of destitution many of them face in this country. Between 2015 and 2016, 88,300 unaccompanied minors requested asylum in the European Union¹¹ and more than 9 out of 10 refugee and migrant children arriving in Europe through Italy were unaccompanied¹².

Moreover, it has been shown that expenditure on unaccompanied minors is three to five times higher than for adult asylum seekers, particularly in the period prior to settlement¹³.

PROCESS

In 2013, the After18 foundation was founded in response to the sudden reduction of statutory support for young adult asylum seekers once they turn 18. Since then, it has been providing support to young adults in the asylum system, to help deal with the situation they find themselves in, consider their options and plan for their future. After18 builds a network of assistance through a helpline offering information, signposting to other useful organisations and arranging activities for young people to socialise, have fun and learn new skills.

RESULTS

As a result of this commitment, in 2015, the city of Leicester provided services to 150 young people from 14 different countries.

Young adults are given specific information face to face, over the phone or via social media on the services available, the management of personal/emotional problems, access to employment, etc. Recorded English lessons are available outside the conventional education system, as well as help with homework, advice on their studies and how to access higher education. Vulnerable young women benefit

from particular attention thanks to the setting up of support groups.

In addition, cooperation initiatives have been developed with local refugee and faith bodies, for greater sustainability in partnership working, as well as in work with national networks of charities and universities.

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Hypertext link:
<http://www.after18.org.uk>



11- http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/rights_child/data_children_in_migration.pdf

12- http://www2.unicef.org/60090/media/media_91552.html

13- http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/social-issues-migration-health/making-integration-work-humanitarian-migrants_9789264251236-en#page47 : 45

→ IN ITALY, THE RECEPTION OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS IS MOBILISING THE STATE, EUROPEAN CITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

CONTEXT

On 31 August 2016, there were 13,862 unaccompanied minors in Italy, a figure 55% higher than the previous year. Among the Italian regions, Sicily has taken by far the largest number (41.5%), far ahead of Calabria (7.6%), Lombardy (7.2%), Lazio (6.3%), Emilia Romagna (6.2%) and Apulia (5.3%).

On 26 October 2016, the Italian Parliament recognised the rights of the most vulnerable people, in particular children arriving in the country alone, and launched the new national protection system. The law regulates in particular the procedures for assessing the age of refugees, in order to avoid abusive medical tests, and offers more guarantees such as the presence of «cultural mediators». It provides greater protection in terms of the right to education and healthcare as well as greater attention to children's rights during administrative and judicial proceedings.

PROCESS

Alongside these measures decided at national level, Italian municipal authorities have undertaken numerous actions over the last two years to help unaccompanied minors to develop their basic knowledge and facilitate their relations with the host society.

These activities most often include the organisation of Italian lessons. But also the making available of a linguistic and cultural mediator and help with the registration of children for compulsory education. Other activities are organised in the field of child health, for example learning daily hygiene. But also: provision of clothing, meals and psychological support.

The third area where cities are active relates to the social inclusion of refugees, which is encouraged by sports and recreational activities, but also training and initiation into the world of work

Hypertext link: <http://viedifuga.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2016-MSNA-Rapporto.pdf>

The actions undertaken by cities go hand in hand with many initiatives undertaken by different bodies in civil society in their areas.

In Rome, the NGO «Save The Children Italia» is providing support for unaccompanied minors. It coordinates all the associations of experts in the

Tiburtina station sector, where there is a migrant camp, and makes sure that there are paediatricians present at all times. To enable new arrivals to adapt to their new environment, the voluntary body organises recreational activities and informal educational projects. In addition, it informs minors on the risks of illegal immigration, but also of their rights and the possibilities of protection available to them. Finally, the organisation assesses the needs in terms of healthcare and psychological assistance.

Hypertext link: <https://www.savethechildren.it/blog-notizie/bambini-fuga-il-nostro-intervento>

The NGO «Amici dei Bambini» promotes the hosting of foreign unaccompanied minors in families. In Messina, 17 families have taken in young migrants who have arrived in Sicily. These families receive €400 of public money a month for each migrant hosted. This initiative is also operating in Palermo, where about ten families take care of newly arrived migrants at the weekend or during their free time.

Hypertext link: <http://www.aibi.it/ita/>

INITIATIVE COMPARABLE

In the United Kingdom, to reduce the risk of isolation and loneliness among young refugees, the «Revive» association, supported by Salford City Council, organises different types of activities: football matches, gymnastics classes, cookery lessons, bike outings.

Hypertext link: <http://www.revive-uk.org/a-place-of-welcome-activities-for-young-adult-refugees/>

07

COOPERATING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND OTHER PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

The reception and social inclusion of refugees concerns public institutions at the different levels of state administration (local, regional, national, international). Certain municipal authorities tend to focus on their own spheres of competence, use their own administrative criteria to address issues and overlook the impact their policies have on other levels of government. The efficiency of reception activities requires pragmatic collaboration between all stake-holders. Some cities have acted proactively and established inter-institutional frameworks before having to host a large number of refugees.



→ IN STRASBOURG, A PROCESS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS, CITIZENS AND LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS IS PROVIDING CONCRETE SOLUTIONS TO DEAL WITH THE REAL SITUATIONS EXPERIENCED

CONTEXT

The City of Strasbourg, faithful to its humanist tradition, has for many years been welcoming people escaping war and persecution, whether they come from sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, or Eastern European countries.

PROCESS

In this context, faced with the scale of the challenge, the actions implemented by the municipality have been strengthened on all levels: the provision and adaptation of numerous homes, support for citizen mobilisation to help refugees and finally by putting citizens in contact with local associations working in this domain.

At cross-border level, the City of Strasbourg has launched a coordinated initiative between French and German players, within the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau: a special fund of € 30,000 has been created to assist with the integration of refugee children. The Fund will benefit charitable associations and organisations which help refugee children and young refugees on both sides of the Rhine.

Finally, at European and international level, the City of Strasbourg is behind the launch of the European Solidarity City Network, of which this vade-mecum is one of the first concrete products.

RESULTS

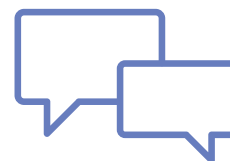
Over 2000 contacts have been made with citizens of Strasbourg and the surrounding areas who wish to become involved and help receive refugees. Almost 1100 proposals have been formulated by callers and internet users, concerning equipment donations, accommodation proposals, or participation in volunteer activities such as interpreting and translation, French lessons and administrative assistance.

Information meetings have been held in the Administrative Centre of the City of Strasbourg, with the participation of elected officials and associations who can assist and support volunteers in their work. Thanks to their help, it has been possible to provide

some general context, but also precisions regarding the concrete modes of volunteer involvement.

Within the Eurodistrict, many activities putting young refugees in contact with young French and German people have taken place, on the themes of discovering nature and contemporary dance. Artistic mediation workshops led by artists have been encouraged, as have multilingualism meetings, the creation of art therapy groups in a reception centre for refugees, scientific activities, and photography workshops.

As part of the annual programme for the Festival of Europe (May 2016) and World Refugee Day (20 June 2016), many events for the general public (conferences, exhibitions, citizen debates) helped to provide accurate information on the situation of refugees, their journey, and the difficulties they encounter.



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Hypertext link:
<http://www.strasbourg.eu/fr/actualites/accueil-de-refugies-strasbourg-se-mobilise>

→ STUTTGART IS ENCOURAGING INTERACTIONS BETWEEN REFUGEES AND THE LOCAL POPULATION AT NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

CONTEXT

Since 2009, the city of Stuttgart has coordinated a national quality committee to develop effective integration policies at local level. In 2015, the "Stuttgart model" was defined, based on four principles: housing for refugees in shared accommodation and apartments spread over all city districts; the number of refugees per building (limited to 250); support provided by volunteers and supervised by city staff members; and local support provided by local friendship circles.

PROCESS

The city of Stuttgart actively takes inspiration from these four principles.

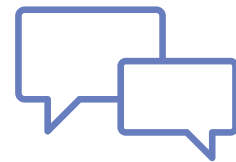
It uses social media, in particular to inform volunteers about the support required, but also 40 friendship circles spread around the city and involving 3500 volunteers.

RESULTS

More than 8000 refugees live in 123 centres located in 20 out of the 23 boroughs of the city¹⁵.

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¹⁵ - <http://www.stuttgart.de/item/show/385012#headline57b8c6925c2df>

→ IN TALLINN, AN SETTLEMENT SUPPORT PLAN FOR A BALANCED SPREAD OF REFUGEES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

CONTEXT

Tallinn's Development Strategy "Tallinn 2030", adopted by Tallinn City Council in 2010, states that the city's network of social and education institutions must be specifically prepared for the reception and integration of immigrants. In line with the European Agenda on Migration, Estonia received around 550 resettled refugees over a period of 2 years. The admission and settlement of refugees constituted a relatively new challenge for this State.

PROCESS

In autumn 2015, by organising the annual Domestic Peace Forum, the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs mobilised all Estonian territorial authorities to evaluate their readiness for the admission of refugees and the possibility of providing them with accommodation. The Forum also addressed the protection, security and integration of refugees in contemporary Europe, Estonia's readiness to handle the refugee crisis and the expectations of the local residents.

In spring 2016, the Ministry of Social Affairs informed the city about the impending arrival of refugees and the provision of essential services (housing, support person, translation). It gave information about the profile of the future refugees: their age, family status, number of children, their language skills and work experience. The City can offer accommodation suited to the profile of the resettled refugee (size, location within the city, access to schools, etc.)

In order to avoid the formation of refugee ghettos and to spread the administrative load equally between the different districts, Tallin City Council decided to work closely with eight district administrations (territorial authorities).

Tallinn has therefore designated a contact person for inter-institutional cooperation and assembled a city government committee to handle issues related to refugee reception. This committee is guided in its work by the specific needs of the refugees as well as the city's general policy aims in the field of intercultural relations and integration, specifically with a view to facilitating trust relationships between different cultural groups, and guaranteeing the safety of the city's residents and the effective inclusion of minority groups in different fields of civic life.

RESULTS

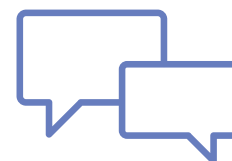
In July 2016, 27 refugees had been relocated from Greece to Estonia¹⁶. 10 refugees have been successfully resettled in Tallin with access to services comparable to that of other residents, and specific support for integration.

Tallinn now has an effective framework for the reception and integration of refugees in the city, allowing it to look to the future with confidence. The city is prepared if the number of refugees to be resettled in the city increases¹⁷.

RESOURCES

Like all other citizens, refugees have access to the normal services provided by the city and covered by the municipal budget.

The City of Tallinn receives 3000 Euros per resettled refugee to cover specific integration needs.



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Hypertext link:
Les premiers réfugiés accueillis arrivent à Tallin
<https://valitsus.ee/en/refugees>

15 - <http://www.stuttgart.de/img/mdb/item/524536/105896.pdf>

16 - http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/20160713/factsheet_relocation_and_resettlement_-_state_of_play_en.pdf

17 - <http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation/?doc=115808>

→ IN THE RHÔNE, YOUNG PEOPLE ARE GETTING WORKING WITH ASSOCIATIONS TO PROVIDE MEALS TO REFUGEES

CONTEXT

On 23 October 2016 about forty young people from neighbourhoods of the cities of Vaulx-en-Velin (Rhône, France), Lyon, Rillieux, Villeurbanne and Saint-Priest took part in an event entitled "Vaulx relève le défi- Réfugiés" (Vaulx rises to the refugee challenge), in answer to a call put out on Facebook.

PROCESS

Two local associations, Collectif Jeunes Solidaires and Sadaqa Humanity organised this event in response to a challenge issued by young people in a town in Ile-de-France who were determined to do something to help migrants, by taking it in turn to hand out meals in Paris.

Three groups were formed among the participants. One group to prepare the meals (pasta or sandwiches), one group to pack them in bags and one group to hand them out. After spending hours in the kitchen preparing and packing up the meals, the participants criss-crossed the city handing out meals to refugees in reception centres and on the streets.

RESULTS

Donations included: packets of pasta, baguettes, mandarins, small bottles of water and bottles of olive oil, etc. The project was a chance for several dozen young people to get involved and help out the associations. An article on the project published in a national media outlet helped to provide a different view of the youngsters who took part in this operation, who are often stigmatised because they come from a so-called «disadvantaged» neighbourhood.

Several of the young people who took part in this action explain that it enabled them, through their exchanges with the people in charge of the associations but also with the migrants they met, to get a better understanding of the migrants' situation and the reasons that caused them to flee their country. «These refugees fled from the bombs, a serious situation. Today they need us to reach to them, that's important,» says one of the participants, for example.

RESOURCES

The resources mobilised for this initiative consisted of donations from leaders of associations and the young people who joined in.

OTHER INITIATIVES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY

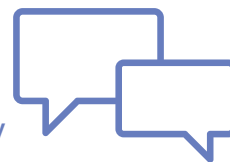
In Poland, there are more and more appeals on Facebook to collect food and clothing and for accommodation - outside the conventional NGO framework. A petition circulated in August 2016, reminding the government of the values of solidarity so dear to Poland. «We call upon the government of the Polish Republic to show more openness on the issue of receiving refugees in Poland as well as in the setting up of integration programmes,» say the signatories. In Poznań, in the west of the country, one parish has launched an appeal on Facebook to pay a year's rent for a Syrian family. The diocese of Wrocław has said that it is willing to receive 15 families. In Budapest, on Blaha Lujza Square, the association «Food not Bombs» provides food for a few Afghan families who are resting a few metres away from the homeless that hang out there.

In Szeged, volunteers from the Migszol (Migrants Solidarité) group sort out provisions donated by the local population: bottles of water, food, clothing and shoes. The NGO the Helsinki Committee provides migrants with city plans to help them find their way around. Croatian citizens have set up a Facebook page to inform migrants of where there are mines. It contains information such a phone number to call, advice on routes to take, but also a map of the north-east of the country showing the areas where there are potentially mines left over from the war of the 1990s.

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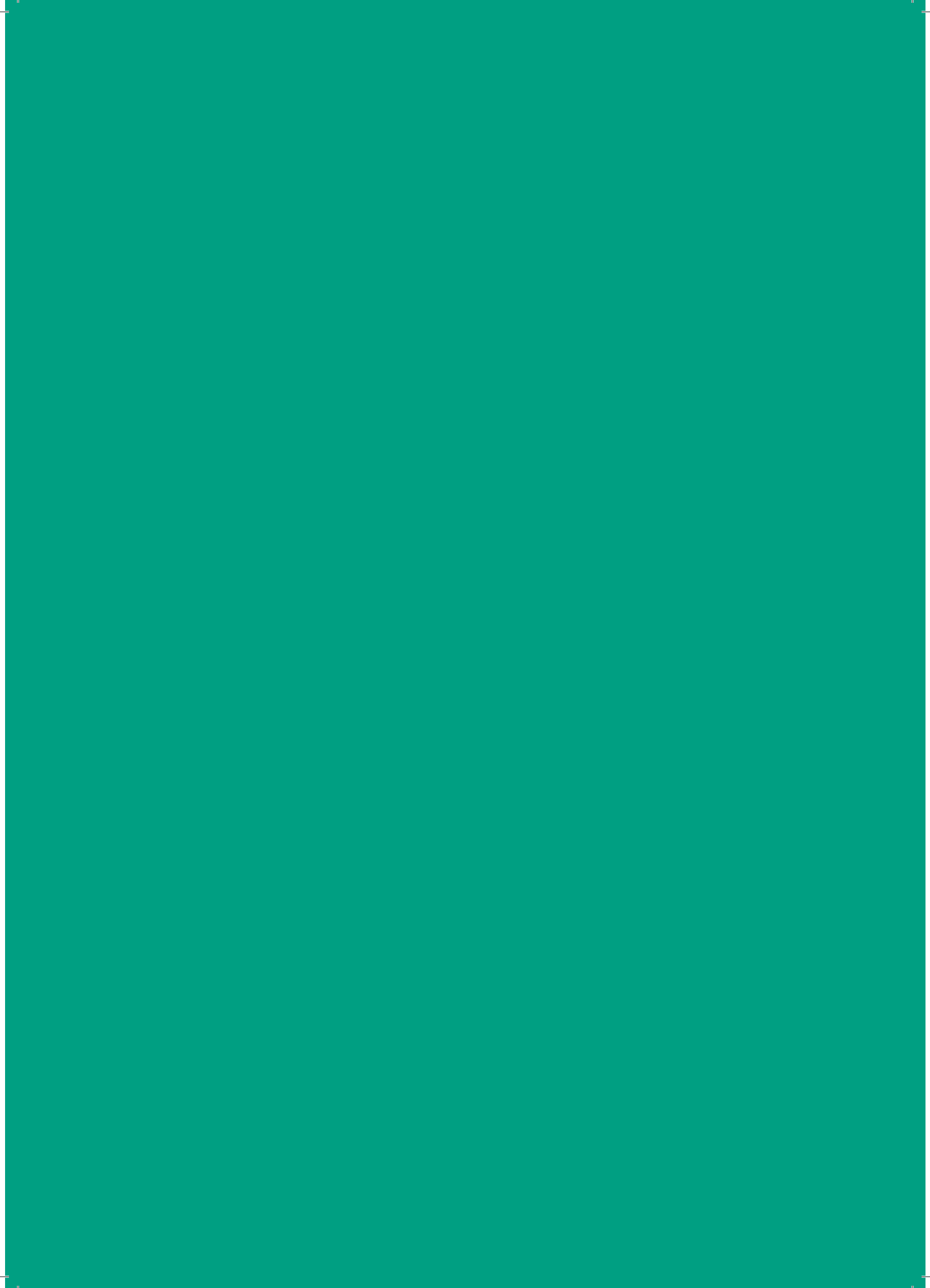
Page Facebook de l'événement :
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08

FACILITATING ACCESS TO THE JOB MARKET

Refugees arriving in Europe are often traumatised by what happened to them in their home country or during the perilous journey to safety. They do however have two extraordinary assets, a great capacity to build resilience in the face of adversity and a formidable drive to start a new life. The challenge, however, is to make the most of these energies and enable refugees to take charge of their own lives. Upon arrival and despite the difficulties they encounter in settling in, refugees are generally optimistic and positive about their new surroundings, new country and new opportunities. However, the initial enthusiasm can be dampened by uncertainty regarding their legal status and the negative consequences this has on their daily life. Moreover, because asylum applications can be kept in limbo for long periods, sometimes even years, some suffer feelings of inactivity, mistrust and resignation. Integration into the host society becomes much more difficult as it requires the refugees to be “re-integrated” into normal life. Identifying the skills of refugees at an early stage and taking concrete steps so that they can be active and connect with other people therefore takes on particular importance.



→ IN ROME, AN AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME TO ENABLE REFUGEES TO MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS

CONTEXT

Of the 220,000 refugees who arrived in¹⁸ in 2015, 10,000 (including 3,159 unaccompanied minors) are living in Rome¹⁹.

The national reception system for asylum seekers (SPRAR) and State assistance (2,50 euros pocket money per day) have not allowed the country to keep up with the increase in international protection requests. This results in a phenomenon of social marginalisation and recourse to informal settlements.

Taking into account the official unemployment rate in Italy (11.6 % in July 2016), the social integration of migrants is a priority. The social cooperative "Programma Integra", deals with innovative projects to help migrants access housing and work.

PROCESS

The work of the social cooperative "Programma Integra" is based on listening to and recognition of the other, allowing for a new culture of positive welcome, integration and social inclusion. The action mainly consists of a wider range of services targeting asylum seekers and refugees: social and legal counselling, job orientation, counselling services, vocational training courses, Italian language courses, intercultural mediation initiatives, social mediation services in the field of housing, support for entrepreneurship.

The provision of training courses for social professionals working in reception centres should give them a better mastery of the tools for finding housing and work.

RESULTS

Since 2015, 1067 asylum seekers and refugees have benefited from the social inclusion services provided by the Integra Programme (29% increase compared to 2014) and 141 professionals have received training in intercultural skills (intercultural mediators, social workers, psychologists, language teachers).

Training courses have been organised on how to access employment opportunities in tourism related activities (main profiles: waiters, maids and assistant chefs) in collaboration with the Tourism Institute of Lazio Region, as well as professional internships in

local businesses: hotels, franchised restaurants and large retail companies. Training and support courses have also been organised. Finally, training courses and support have been set up for start-up businesses managed by refugees.

Aware of the importance of a good reception for refugees, the "Integra" programme has run an awareness campaign targeting Italian families. In collaboration with similar organisations in Turkey, Austria, Spain and Malta, the "Integra" programme has taken part in a project funded by the European Union entitled "Learning of Local Bodies to Integrate Immigrants".

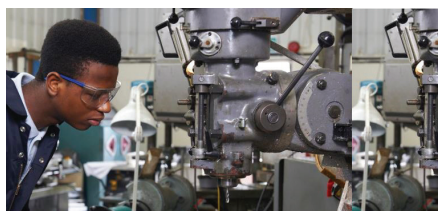
RESOURCES

The budget of the "Integra" programme (around €458 877 in 2014) has benefited from contributions from the City of Rome, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labour and private companies.

The company is staffed by 10 people: 4 social workers, 1 coordinator, 1 project manager, 1 project officer, 1 communication officer and 2 administrative officers.

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18 - www.istat.it/it/files/2016/06/conti.pptx

19 - <https://refugeelocalwelcome.wordpress.com/2015/12/14/programma-integra/#more-85>

20 - http://www.sprar.it/images/Inglese/SPRAR_Description_-_Italy.pdf

21 - <http://www.programmaintegra.it/wp/2016/06/i-risultati-di-1-anno-di-attivita-online-il-3-bilancio-sociale-di-programma-integra/>

22 - <http://www.programmaintegra.it/wp/2016/08/programma-integra-e-refugees-welcome-italia-promuovere-laccoglienza-in-famiglia-di-rifugiati-per-facilitare-lintegrazione/>

23 - <http://www.ll2ii.eu/>

→ IN STUTTGART, JOB MARKET INTEGRATION SERVICES GROUPED TOGETHER IN A “WELCOME CENTER”

CONTEXT

The “Stuttgart Model” is an ambitious plan designed to facilitate migrants’ integration into the job market. Refugees are one of the four target groups of the scheme, which is also aimed at migrants from other European countries, third countries and international students. The legal conditions of access to the job market are different for each of these groups. On the one hand, asylum seekers are only allowed to work after they have been in the country for three months and subject to certain conditions. On the other, people who have been granted refugee status are authorised to work without any particular limitations. They can look for work with the help of a local job centre, but they must have a basic knowledge of German, which is often not the case.

PROCESS

To facilitate migrants’ integration into the job market, Stuttgart city authority launched two years ago the «Stuttgart Welcome Center» as the main service and point of contact for new arrivals working and living in Stuttgart.

The Stuttgart Welcome Center works closely with the main players in the local job market. It gives precise information on jobs available locally, training opportunities and the steps to be taken to have qualifications recognised.

Apprenticeship and employment advisors from civil society assist refugees and new arrivals, providing information and advice so that they can identify the main players and accelerate their integration. The municipality also organises German lessons for refugees combined with other activities provided by volunteers or a part of training courses.

The City of Stuttgart has embarked on an ambitious plan to develop the «Welcome Center”. Projects currently underway include: improvement of the advice services provided to refugees in the first twelve months after they arrive, training refugees to mentor new arrivals themselves, organisation from the outset and at the same time of German language lessons and work experience in companies (placements, first jobs), reinforcement of the centre’s interpreting service.

Lien hypertexte :

<http://www.welcome.stuttgart.de>

<http://www.buergerstiftung-stuttgart.de/neuigkeiten/ausbildungscampus-in-den-startloechern>

<http://www.stuttgart.de/fluechtlinge/>

DID YOU KNOW?

In Germany many companies, small, medium and large, have set up schemes to facilitate refugees’ access to the job market.

For example, in March, Porsche launched a programme to «demonstrate the German culture of welcoming people and enabling them to settle as quickly and as well as possible». Aged between 16 and 38, the 13 participants benefiting from this programme in Stuttgart come from Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria. Selected from about a hundred candidates, they were given German lessons for five months, lessons in the culture of the country - history, bureaucratic formalities, how companies work - and a variety of technical lessons. The great majority of the 13 participants will remain at Porsche in the medium or long term, undergoing multi-disciplinary training, an apprenticeship or going directly into production on a permanent contract.

This commitment on the part of the private sector goes hand in hand with the support granted by local authorities (Länder and municipal authorities) for the training and schooling of new arrivals. The Land of Baden-Württemberg, for example, has launched an ambitious programme of study bursaries intended to facilitate the education of Syrian students and their future integration into the job market by learning the language, attending academic conferences and participating in field visits.



09

ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION
IN THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
LIFE OF THE HOST SOCIETY



→ IN MARTINA FRANCA, YOUNG REFUGEES ARE ENHANCING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THEIR NEW REGION

CONTEXT

As part of the “Veins of Apulia” project, the municipality of Martina Franca is promoting local treasures and in particular the Apulian Aqueduct, considered to be the most important work of hydraulic engineering in Europe.

The city wished to offer a concrete opportunity for inclusion and access to employment to refugees and beneficiaries of the SPRAR service by means of an integration training pathway, which began in 2015 and was renewed in 2016.

The SPRAR (Italian national system for protecting asylum seekers and refugees) is a network of around 700 local authorities that have set up and implemented projects for people forced to migrate. At local level, the territorial authorities, with support from the tertiary sector, guarantee a full reception going far beyond just providing accommodation. It includes guidance, legal assistance and social measures, as well as the development of personalised programs for socio-economic integration.

PROCESS

Refugees and asylum seekers have made multilingual audio and multimedia guides, which follow a cycle route, describing the cultural heritage and environment of the Itria Valley. The audio guide is available online and as an app, with photos and videos showing the history of the region.

This initiative aims to promote the local rural area and improve knowledge and appreciation, on the national and international tourist market, of the Apulian Aqueduct, the largest hydraulic engineering work in Europe, on the occasion of its centenary.

RESULTS

The spectacle offered by the Itria Valley landscape and the charm of the industrial archaeology offered by the century-old aqueduct installation has been the subject of 15 audio accounts (covering the history of hydraulic engineering, dry stone architecture, the olive tree, the vine and local produce, educational workshops, the spiritual centre inspired by syncretism, among other subjects) translated and recorded by the beneficiaries of the work grants into their respective languages (English, French,

Arabic, Russian, Chinese) and embellished by video material and photographs taken during excursions.



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→ IN BERLIN, REFUGEES RECRUITED AS GUIDES IN THE CITY'S MAIN MUSEUMS OFFER A NEW PERSPECTIVE OF THE HISTORY OF THEIR HOST SOCIETY

CONTEXT

The "Multaka" project has enabled 25 Syrian and Iraqi refugees to train to be Arab-speaking guides at the German Historical Museum in Berlin.

PROCESS

The Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin has been recruiting refugees with various backgrounds since 2015: musicians, architects, archaeologists, lawyers. Each of the people selected can then choose to work in one of these four Berlin museums: the Museum of Islamic Art, the Museum of the Ancient Near East, the Bode Museum or the German Historical Museum. They undergo rigorous training, not only acquiring knowledge relating to the works, but learning how to transmit that knowledge to the public.

RESULTS

Since the project began, 4,500 visitors have enjoyed these guided tours. The diversity of the profiles of the refugees selected is a real asset for the museum. For they each put across a particular message on the works in the museum, making it more fun and easier to understand for visitors. One of the guides, Waeel organises visits of vestiges of conflict and draws parallels in his presentations with the war in Syria. His visit, entitled «Why we are here» gives the people attending an understanding of the reasons that the refugees were driven to flee their country.

This initiative enables the refugees who benefit from it to see, in the light of 20th century German history, how it is possible for a country to rebuild, in spite of the ravages of war. Gaining a knowledge of German history reinforces their sense of belonging to their host society, with which they can identify more easily. Today, representatives of the German authorities and international museum community go to Berlin to see how the Multaka example can be reproduced beyond Germany's borders.

Hypertext link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtCfPblOxIA&app=desktop>

DID YOU KNOW?

In Strasbourg, a collective of associations (encompassing in particular Alsace-Syrie and the ATMF (Association of North African Workers in France), was formed to organise, on 5 March 2016, a day dedicated to refugees entitled «A day to understand, understanding to act.» With the support of Strasbourg City council and a socio-cultural centre, this event was an opportunity to encourage the people of Strasbourg to meet and exchange with refugees, thanks to the organisation of a «friendship and solidarity» meal and a musical evening.

But it was also an opportunity to get a better a better understanding of the dramatic situation experienced by refugees in the host country, with an exhibition, a talk followed by a debate and a series of readings. The participation of legal experts, voluntary sector volunteers and journalists helped to deconstruct the discourse of hatred and rejection sometimes put out in the public sphere, to reinforce the links between the different initiatives undertaken in the area and to invite the participants to reflect on future actions

Hypertext link:
<http://www.atmf.org/?p=4833>



10

COMMUNICATING INTELLIGENTLY TO COMBAT PREJUDICE

In Europe, discussions, whether in private circles, in the workplace or in the media, focus much more on the reason why so many refugees are coming to our continent than on the reasons refugees are leaving their families and their homes. The result is that public perceptions are dominated by negative prejudices, for example regarding the number of refugees welcomed, or the idea that refugees «steal» jobs from the locals, or that they come to Europe to abuse the welfare system²⁴. Certain politicians build their careers on fostering anti-refugee prejudice and stereotypes.

The positive contribution of refugees to the host society goes largely unnoticed. For example, only a few internet or smartphone users know that the companies that invented the world's most used smartphone and web browser were both founded by sons of refugees. Combating negative stereotypes about refugees is no easy matter. They flourish despite hard evidence proving their inaccuracy. Albert Einstein, a refugee himself, said that "It is harder to crack prejudice than an atom." Prejudice-free perceptions are a crucial element to facilitate harmonious relations and social cohesion in intercultural societies.



→ ERLANGEN IS COMBATING STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICE AGAINST REFUGEES BY TAKING PART IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S «C41» CAMPAIGN (COMMUNICATION FOR INTEGRATION)

CONTEXT

In Erlangen, Siemens AG, which dominates the local work market, has shown strong commitment to diversity management. In 2008 the Coordination Centre for Integration was set up to implement the city's integration strategy and initiate cooperation with internal and external entities. The 2012 adoption of a master plan for the integration of migrants showed Erlangen's commitment to migrant integration. This commitment gives the city its slogan: "Open by tradition"

Thus, in 2014 and 2015, Erlangen participated in the C41 (Communication for integration) project of the Council of Europe in partnership with 10 other European cities. The project aims to use social networks and viral information channels to provide correct information and explanations on migration and diversity and combat unfounded (but widespread) prejudices and misconceptions.

PROCESS

Following Erlangen's obligation to welcome 300 new migrants, in February 2014, the municipality decided to officially launch the "Don't parrot, enquire!" campaign".

Two groups were targeted: «influential» elderly inhabitants who play a strong role in Erlangen public discourse. And employees of Siemens AG, as they represent a large part of the population and impact strongly on Erlangen city life.

At a banquet for over 1000 people held in the city's main street, Erlangen's citizens and asylum seekers discussed the issue of rumour-spreading and how to fight it. The communication campaign targeting the elderly took place in various locations (club meetings, city park, public spaces) and via the local newspaper. The campaign targeting university students used university facilities like canteens, libraries, lecture halls, student housing, bars, clubs, parks and social networks.

Siemens AG contributed to this campaign by proposing an internship programme for highly skilled asylum seekers.

RESULTS

Open-air anti-rumour events in university gardens were broadcast by social networks (over 17,000 likes and 3000 shares in three days on Germany's largest newspaper's page).

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Hypertext link:
<http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/c4i>



→ IN BÉZIERS AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA, FACED WITH THE COMMUNICATION DEVELOPED BY THE EXTREME RIGHT, A COUNTER-CAMPAIGN IS BEING ORGANISED

Opposed to the “anti-migrant” advertising campaign being deployed by the extreme right-wing Mayor of Béziers, different actors from civil society have mobilised to mount a counter-campaign. Thanks to a crowdfunding initiative launched on the internet, a young entrepreneur, with the help of a non-profit organisation, has already collected 2,604 Euros to buy advertising space in the city and disseminate humanist messages in support of welcoming refugees. Within just a few days of the initiative being launched, 151 citizens of all political and professional backgrounds spontaneously indicated their willingness to take part in the campaign. This mobilisation on the ground has been accompanied by support on social media from a certain number of organisations, youth organisations in particular, calling upon municipalities to develop communications using the «Refugees Welcome» slogan.

Several initiatives undertaken by European cities over last few months or years have clearly taken this direction. In most cases, they too rely on the dynamism of civil society. The City of Lublin (Poland), for example, ran a social awareness-raising campaign entitled “Lublin 4 all” whose aim was to highlight the diversity of its citizens by means of portraits and interviews with inhabitants of the city. To produce this campaign, the municipality supported the project of a young artist and photographer who launched the “Faces of Lublin” project on Facebook. Each of the portraits of inhabitants of the city is accompanied by discussion that addresses the city’s multicultural heritage as well as the vision the citizens have of its future. All these interviews can be found on the website: <http://dlawszystkich.lublin.eu>

Strasbourg City Council has embarked on a project to develop the Council of Europe’s No Hate Speech Movement at local level. This is project to combat all types of hate speech, whether racist, islamophobic, anti-Semitic, based on gender identity or inciting radicalisation, a project against discrimination and harassment, in particular on the internet. The project gives young people and youth organisations the skills they need to recognise human rights violations and act against them. The methodology developed by this campaign has proved itself to be particularly appropriate to fight the hate speech of which refugees are victims. On the occasion of World Refugee Day, the City of Strasbourg organised an event, in which

numerous voluntary and citizens’ organisations took part to say “No to Hatred”. The photos taken by citizens delivering messages of openness and tolerance can be found online on the official Campaign site and have already been shared by numerous web users. Alongside these communication actions, the City of Strasbourg and the Council of Europe have organised trainings in the use of the tools of this campaign.

In the same spirit, the “Connect from the heart” campaign launched in Malta by local voluntary organisations with the support of the Council of Europe, encourages the population to fight hate speech against asylum seekers, refugees and migrants online. A march was organised on 8 July 2016 in the streets of La Valette

Hypertext links: <https://www.leetchi.com/c/contre-affichage-a-beziers>
<https://www.mouvementnonalahaine.org>



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VALUING REFUGEES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE HOST SOCIETY

→ IN CALTANISSETTA, YOUNG REFUGEES ARE GIVING ENGLISH LESSONS TO POLICEMEN

The City of Caltanissetta (Sicily) has organised English lessons for members of the municipal police force. The lessons take place on police premises, twice a week. Currently, a class of around 20 policemen and women taught by Rahaman, a young Pakistani refugee.

The policemen are fast learners and very enthusiastic. «Now, we can't get by without speaking English,» they say. The lessons have also improved understanding

between police and refugees and raised awareness of what refugees can bring to their host society.

Hypertext link: http://video.repubblica.it/edizione/palermo/caltanissetta-i-vigili-urbani-a-lezione-di-inglese-dagli-immigrati/239998/239936?refresh_ce

→ IN BOLOGNA, A COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN TO RAISE AWARENESS AMONG THE CITY'S INHABITANTS OF THE CONTRIBUTION THAT ILLUSTRIOUS REFUGEES HAVE MADE TO THEIR HOST SOCIETY.

"Bologna Cares" is a communication campaign used by the City of Bologna (Italy) to closely involve citizens, in particular during World Refugee Day on 20 June. "Refugees of yesterday and today" is the theme of the 2015 campaign. Its aim is to get people to think about what the people now arriving in Italy can contribute, beyond the logics of the emergency situations. The refugees are the actors in a commercial made in a video laboratory and feature on posters that were displayed in buses throughout the month of June.

"What do Dante, Chopin, Einstein and the asylum seekers arriving in our country have in common?" say

some of these posters, "They all fled from situations that were putting their lives and fundamental freedoms in danger. They were all forced to leave their country to try and rebuild a new life".

Hypertext link:
<http://www.bolognacares.it/>
Contact: antonio.maura@aspbologna.it
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12

DO NOT FORGET

Whilst all European cities must meet the challenge of integrating refugees, the cities situated along the Mediterranean have to fight even harder against the traffic consequences of forced migration. The migrants who arrive on their shores are battered, thirsty, hungry, injured, ill and traumatised. It is estimated that some 10,108 migrants died or went missing between January 2014 and August 2016 while trying to cross the Mediterranean. Most drowned at sea. Many bodies have been washed ashore, bringing tragedy to the beaches of Greece, Italy and Turkey. Images of Alan Kurdi, a 3-year old Syrian boy whose body was washed up in September 2015 on a beach near the resort of Bodrum (Turkey), suddenly raised public awareness of the plight of refugees. Public opinion in Europe was shocked and began to pressure national governments to do something.

Most refugees whose bodies are retrieved cannot be identified. The municipalities in the countries concerned face the issue of burials. In most cases the deceased are buried in unmarked graves with a brief physical description and a number. They are dehumanised and become totally anonymous, without the honours traditionally bestowed on the "unknown soldier". Confronted with such human tragedy, some cities wanted to show their respect and draw attention to the fact that the deceased are people, not ghosts, and are entitled to a personal identity after death.

→ CATANIA AND ROVERETO PAY A FITTING TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES

CONTEXT

An estimated 3,151 migrants died or went missing between January and August 2016 while attempting to cross the Mediterranean. Over 1,250 anonymous men, women and children have been buried in unmarked graves at 70 sites in Turkey, Greece and Italy since 2014. Most of them died trying to cross the Mediterranean to attempt to build a new life in Europe²⁵. In 2014, 100,000 people - two-thirds of the migrants rescued by Italy - were brought to Catania.

CATANIA

The Mayor of Catania has proposed to give honour to seventeen graves of unknown persons who died in a shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa in 2014, immediately involving the vicar of the Archbishop of Catania and the president of the Islamic Community of Sicily. The decision has been made to inscribe on each one of the seventeen tombstones one of the seventeen verses of «Migrant», a poem by the Nigerian Wole Soyinka, winner of a Nobel Literature Prize in 1986.

In 2015, there were several study days on reception policies, with participants from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), European institutions, national government, as well as the mayor of Lampedusa, civil servants, practitioners, researchers, teachers and NGOs. Their aim was to strengthen the symbolic message supporting shared reflections on concrete policy issues²⁶.

RESULTS

Reserving space for deceased migrants in the municipal cemetery has great symbolic importance. It shows the will of the City of Catania to demonstrate openness, inclusivity, understanding and respect for Human rights.

The various events organised in the aftermath of the commemoration ceremony also enabled the local population to overcome the feeling that Catania had been abandoned to its fate by the European Union and other municipalities in Sicily. In 2015, the municipal authorities cancelled a firework show in respect for the 49 migrants whose bodies had been retrieved from an overfull fishing boat. A white balloon for each of the victims was released instead²⁷.

ROVERETO

Rovereto is a small city in Northern Italy, considered to be the city of peace. It is home to the second-largest swinging bell in the world after St. Peter's Bell in Cologne Cathedral. «Maria Dolens» was built under the inspiration of a local priest, between 1918 and 1925, to commemorate the fallen in all wars. The bell still rings every day in their memory.

The «Opera Campana dei Caduti» foundation has opened a webpage to which the citizens of the entire world can add their forename and a number to symbolise the dignity to which the refugees buried in unmarked graves are entitled:

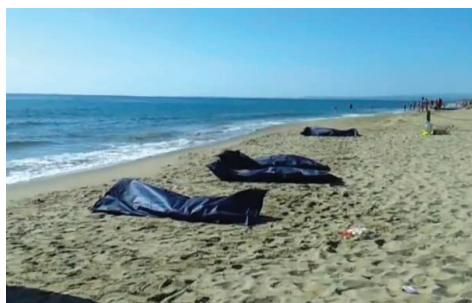
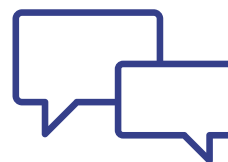
<http://www.attodinominazione.eu/>

So far, 2,715 people from all over the world have taken part in the initiative (August 2016).

CONTACTS

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25 - <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/mediterranean>

26 - <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/mediterranean>

27 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/1d1-91f3683c-5e3c-4a2e-92eb-7d7f6a024c02>

ANNEXES

DECLARATION IN FAVOUR OF ESTABLISHING A EUROPEAN NETWORK OF CITIES OF SOLIDARITY

We, the representatives of the cities of Catane, Rovereto and Strasbourg, hereby

Reiterate:

- The responsibility and role of municipal authorities in the face of the unprecedented challenge represented by the reception of refugees in Europe. Municipal authorities must be able to count on the States and the European Union to support their actions to reinforce and improve facilities for accommodating refugees by means of concrete initiatives, in particular in conjunction with local voluntary organisations.
- That the only lasting response to this challenge is based on solidarity with the refugees and their durable integration.

We hereby reassert

- That the right to asylum is a fundamental right that must be able to be claimed by anyone fleeing war and persecution.
- Our commitment to the principle of solidarity, which forms the foundation of any policy intended to reinforce social cohesion at local, national and European level, without competition or ranking of situations of distress.
- That municipal authorities are major and essential players in the defining of reception, integration and cohesion policies.

Faithful to our shared European values

- we confirm our commitment to pursue policies in favour of refugees in our territories;
- we hereby launch an appeal for the mobilisation of all our partners and our respective networks such as the Strasbourg Club, the National Association of Italian Communes (ANCI), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CLRAE), the Committee of the Regions of the European Union,...

Finally, at the proposal of the City of Strasbourg, the City of Rovereto and the City of Catane acknowledge the value of the French network of cities of solidarity and undertake to develop it at European level.

DECLARATION ADOPTÉE A ROVERETO (ITALIE), 3 OCTOBRE 2015

Mme. Nawel RAFIK-ELMRINI,

Adjointe au Maire de Strasbourg en charge des affaires européennes et internationales,
représentante du Congrès des Pouvoirs locaux et régionaux du Conseil de l'Europe.

M. Enzo BIANCO, Maire de Catane, Président du Conseil national de l'Association Nationale des
Communes Italiennes (ANCI) et représentant du Comité des régions de l'Union européenne.

M. Francesco VALDUGA, Maire de Rovereto, Membre du Club de Strasbourg

29TH SESSION

Strasbourg, 20-22 October 2015

The reception of refugees in Europe

Declaration 4 (2015)

The Congress:

1. notes with concern:

a. that the Declaration of the Bureau of the Congress on the tragic drowning of refugees in the Mediterranean adopted on 31 October 2013 remains distressingly topical and that human dramas are constantly recurring and have spread to all the external borders of the European Union;

b. that, in the absence of a common migration and asylum policy, the large-scale influx of refugees is testing to the limit the solidarity between European States in terms of the fair distribution of migration flows and the resources deployed to accommodate these refugees in conditions worthy of the values promoted by the Council of Europe and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities;

c. that alongside a tremendous upsurge of citizen solidarity, this humanitarian emergency also prompts inward-looking attitudes, violent acts of xenophobia and racist remarks, all of which are phenomena against which the Congress has campaigned for many years through its reports, its appeals to the member States of the Council of Europe and its practical action on the ground,

2. resolutely observes:

a. that the States of Europe must assume shared responsibility for accommodating the refugees on their territory in total respect for the right to asylum in force and to human dignity;

b. that Europe must play a full part in taking in the Syrian refugees, only 6% of whom are on European territory (excluding Turkey), while Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan are accommodating more than 4 million;

c. that faced with this humanitarian emergency, local and regional authorities, regardless of their geographical position in Europe, must play a key role in the arrangements for accommodating the refugees, in order to ease the pressure on the border towns and cities and those closest to the Mediterranean and Syria;

d. that this role is reflected in practical terms on the ground by the provision of public buildings converted to accommodate refugees, political and material support to associations specialising in migrant reception, facilities to help ensure access to administrative formalities, health care and education, etc.

3. expresses:

a. its deep commitment to the principle of solidarity between European states, social cohesion and harmonious co-existence in a pluricultural society;

b. its unshakable conviction that the right to asylum is a fundamental universal right which must be granted to anyone fleeing war or the threat of death;

c. its categorical rejection of any manipulation of the humanitarian crisis for political ends;

d. its strong determination to tirelessly pursue its active efforts to highlight the rich contribution made by migrants to European societies,

4. asks the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe:

- a. to work together with the European Union to ensure that the question of immigration and the right to asylum are the subject of comprehensive European policies based on dignity and solidarity, designed to promote the reception and integration of migrants;
- b. to ensure that local and regional authorities, working with civil society to accommodate refugees, are able to gain better access to national and European funding,

5. appeals to governments of the Council of Europe's member States to take urgent measures with a view to contributing to the political resolution of the conflicts in the Middle-East, to collectively combat international terrorism and help the people suffering there,

6. calls on all the local and regional authorities of the member States of the Council of Europe:

- a. to establish a "European network of cities of solidarity" thereby responding to the European appeal launched on 3 October 2015 by the municipalities of Strasbourg, Catania and Rovereto, in order to co-ordinate more effectively their refugee reception activities and initiatives;
- b. to intensify direct contacts between municipalities and regions, including from a cross-border and transnational perspective, in order to provide opportunities for the reception and integration of migrant populations and refugees;
- c. to share their best practices within European networks, such as the Intercultural Cities, which have long been working on these issues, and more particularly to enable the authorities that have made the most progress in terms of reception to organise peer training sessions in accordance with an arrangement supported by the Congress.

DECLARATION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE STRASBOURG CLUB ON THE RECEPTION OF REFUGEES IN EUROPEAN CITIES

Strasbourg, 17 November 2015

On the occasion of the 13th annual meeting of the Strasbourg Club, **we the representatives of the network's member cities, resolutely and firmly condemn the terrorist attacks perpetrated in Paris on Friday, November 13th. After this tragedy, we are calling for unity and solidarity between European citizens, and we reject all attempts to create confusion between these events and the issue of the reception of refugees.**

For this reason, after having discussed the unprecedented humanitarian challenge that the reception of refugees today represents in Europe's cities, we now declare what follows:

1. We take note of the urgent humanitarian situation facing many European municipalities. Profoundly committed to respect for the right to asylum, a fundamental and universal right which must be granted to all those fleeing war or persecution, we wish to underscore the scale of the difficulties encountered by cities close to the Mediterranean.

2. We would like to express our commitment to the principles of solidarity between European States, social cohesion and living together harmoniously within multicultural societies and our categorical rejection of any instrumentalisation of the humanitarian crisis for political purposes. We note with grave concern that alongside a tremendous upsurge of solidarity among ordinary citizens, the current situation is also prompting inward-looking attitudes, as well as violent acts of xenophobia and racist remarks.

3. It being understood that immigrants are among the first to suffer from hate speech, we wish to jointly develop, as of now, in our territories, actions to raise awareness of the Council of Europe's No Hate Speech Movement: training of local actors in the approach, organisation of and participation in awareness-raising events, active participation in the campaign's national committees, etc.

4. We wish to reiterate the need for a common European policy on asylum. In this respect, we welcome the Declaration adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on 21 October last.

5. We are in fact convinced of the indispensable role that European cities can play in drawing up public policies based on a spirit of solidarity and responsibility and that are respectful of human dignity. Based on cooperation between the different levels of competences, these actions have to be realised in close coordination with the national and European levels. The actions taken by the Strasbourg Club members are a good illustration of this spirit: making available of suitable public buildings; political and material support for voluntary bodies specialised in receiving migrants; provision of resources to facilitate administrative formalities, access to healthcare, education, etc. In this regard, we all share a determination to tirelessly maintain our mobilisation, and we undertake to highlight the rich contribution migrants can bring to our societies.

6. Drawing on our experience of cooperation over a number of years in areas as varied as the integration of the Roma population, culture, sustainable development, European citizenship education, and soon through the development of the International Voluntary Service, we hereby state that it is our belief that only the strengthening of ties and cooperation between countries and cities, as well as the exchanging of good practices, will allow the development of innovative initiatives involving ordinary citizens. This type of cooperation constitutes a real added value as regards both the quality and coordination of the policies implemented by our cities and the reinforcement of our feeling of belonging to a European community of values.

7. This is why we have decided to include the issue of the reception of refugees in Europe on the list of cooperation priorities for the debates of the Strasbourg Club. Against this background and following the declarations adopted by Rovereto and by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, we undertake to develop the European Network of Cities of Solidarity launched following an initiative by the cities of Rovereto, Catane and Strasbourg last October.





