

MIGRANT INCLUSION STRATEGIES: TRANSFERRING GOOD PRACTICES IN PROJECT MiSTRA

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Abstract. *The paper presented some good practices established after several years of exchanges and transfers, implemented at European level, on social inclusion and welfare practices targeting on migrant or other vulnerable groups as minorities like Roma people. The presented good practices are part of implementation of Life Long Learning project MiStra in the last few years. MiStra involve policy makers, local authorities and public and private stakeholders on project aimed at the integration of policies and target interventions identified as good practices at European level for social inclusion of migrants, Roma and other minorities. Aim of MiStra is to transfer models and elements of good practice from Dublin, Berlin, Vienna and Bologna in four chosen target cities Taranto, Burgas, Prague and Budapest.*

Keywords: migrants; minorities; inclusion; good practices; MiStra project

INTRODUCTION

Migration in Europe has a long tradition, the practices of coexistence with large immigrant communities is a common phenomenon in the cities of many countries. On 1 January 2014, the number of people living in the EU-28 who were citizens of non-member countries was 19.6 million while the number of people living in the EU-28 who had been born outside of the EU was 33.5 million. In addition, there were 14.3 million persons living in one of the EU Member States on 1 January 2014 with the citizenship of another EU Member State (Eurostat, 2015).

More than 750,000 migrants are estimated to have arrived by sea to the end of October 2015, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), but exact numbers are unclear as some may have passed through borders undetected. One way to measure where migrants have ended up is through asylum applications. Although not all of those arriving claim asylum, over 700,000 have done

so, according to the EU statistics agency, Eurostat. Germany continues to be the most popular destination for migrants arriving in Europe. It has received the highest number of new asylum applications, with more than 331,000 by the end of October 2015. Hungary has moved into second place, as more migrants have tried to make the journey overland through Greece and the Western Balkans. It had 143,070 applications by the end of August 2015. The conflict in Syria continues to be by far the biggest driver of the migration. But the ongoing violence in Afghanistan, abuses in Eritrea, as well as poverty in Kosovo are also leading people to look for new lives elsewhere (BBC News 2015).

In absolute terms, the largest numbers of non-nationals living in the EU Member States on 1 January 2014 were found in Germany (7.0 million persons), the United Kingdom (5.0 million), Italy (4.9 million), Spain (4.7 million) and France (4.2 million). Non-nationals in these five Member States collectively represented 76 % of the total number of

non-nationals living in all of the EU Member States, while the same five Member States had a 63% share of the EU's population (Eurostat, 2015). The largest migrants groups who have not non EU-27 origins come from Turkey, Morocco, Albania, Algeria, etc. In recent years, increases the migrant flow from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc. The migration pressure is challenging for European governments and institutions because of its intensity and specific structural transformations.

A total of 16 of the EU Member States reported more immigration than emigration in 2013, but in Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland, Portugal, Romania and the three Baltic Member States, emigrants outnumbered immigrants. In 2013, the relative share of national immigrants, in other words immigrants with the citizenship of the Member State to which they were migrating, within the total number of immigrants was highest in Romania (90% of all immigrants), Lithuania (86%), Portugal (69%), Estonia, Poland (both 60%), Latvia (58%) and Slovakia (52%). These were the only EU Member States to report that national immigration accounted for a share higher than 50%. By contrast, Italy, Austria and Luxembourg reported relatively low shares, as national immigration in 2013 accounted for less than 10% of all immigration. (Eurostat, 2015).

Regarding the gender distribution of immigrants to the EU Member States in 2013, there were slightly more men than women (53% compared with 47%). The Member State reporting the highest share of male immigrants was Slovenia (61%); by contrast, the highest share of female immigrants was reported in Ireland (52%). Immigrants into EU Member States in 2013 were, on average, much younger than the population already resident in their country of destination. On 1 January 2014, the median age of the EU-28 population was 42 years (Eurostat, 2015).

The situation in Bulgaria is somewhat different because still emigration in the country exceeds the immigrant flow, but clearly there is a tendency for change. The experts suggest that Bulgaria is in the initial phase of the transformation of the country of origin and

transit of migrants in destination country. On estimates and opinions of various experts, the number of foreigners residing in Bulgaria now is up to 150 000 people, including seasonal workers and illegal immigrants (estimates of illegal immigrants residing in Bulgaria vary between 30 000 and 50 000), ie approximately 2% of the population. Bulgaria's readiness to deal with the integration of immigrants was strongly placed on the agenda as a result of increased refugee flow to the country in 2013-2014 and still continues to be a hot topic. When the topic is integration of immigrants we can not pass without mention the difficulties of their social inclusion, and also problems with other vulnerable groups in the country in recent years, mainly members of minorities, especially Roma people.

SOCIAL INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

With the growth of immigrant flow gradually topic is becoming a significant political, economic and social problem. In addition, in some EU countries have large vulnerable groups as minorities like Roma people in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria etc., and all this suggests the needs from specific programs and policies for training and inclusion in the labor market oriented towards these people.

When we talking about social inclusion we aware that there are many possible definition and we have to explain our understanding that was shared by all the partners in the project MiStra: "Social inclusion means, trying to solve problems caused by the society and the single people within as well as political misconceptions in the past. Talking about the process of social inclusion therefore means always to identify structures, circumstances, etc. which are causing social exclusion". The projects position on social inclusion corresponds with the European idea of building an inclusive society, but concentrates on migrant and on minority issues respectively.

Inclusion of migrants and minorities – including Roma people, is a priority theme at European, national and local level. The challenges concerned are many and cannot be

faced singularly: employment rates are connected to the education and training levels of the people, as well as to their correspondence to labor markets; lack of employment opportunities easily leads to social exclusion and poverty; the higher is social exclusion, in particular of migrants and minorities, the higher is the risk of appearance of phenomena of discrimination, racism and stigmatization toward them.

At the same time implementation of project MiStra and the predecessor project LeCiM (for details <http://lecim.ciofs-fp.org>) laid out the common and the different approaches in European countries for the inclusion of migrants. In established host countries such as Germany and Austria projects are often based on their long-standing experience of immigration in form labour migration, refugee flows or family reunions. Other European countries such as Italy became net receiving countries only recently in the 1980s/90s, in large parts because of growing economic prosperity, as well as the redirection of migration flows following the introduction of more restrictive policies in Northern European receiving countries. A similar development regarding the net migration number can be observed in a number of Central Eastern European countries, so countries such as Hungary register positive net migration numbers confronting them with the question of how to prevent social exclusion of migrants.

THE PROJECT MISTRA¹: AIM AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of MiStra project is to mainstream and to transfer elements of good practice models targeted to people with migration background, the Roma communities and other minorities threatened by social exclusion, within Europe. Aim of MiStra is to transfer models and elements of good practice from Dublin, Berlin, Vienna and Bologna in four chosen target cities Taranto, Burgas, Prague and Budapest (for list of partners involved in

project: <http://www.mistraproject.eu/the-mistra-project/partners/>).

The project apply a cross-sector approach and link vocational education and training (VET) policies with social and welfare systems. The level of analyses and implementation of good practices in project is the city level because of few reasons. First of all, we have found in the city an optimal dimension to investigate needs and gaps of the social and welfare systems in respect to the real needs of weak target groups, in particular migrants and minorities living in cities' neighbourhoods. Second, at the city level, challenges are often numerous: for instance the lack of diversity management capacities, the lack of specific measures to overcome the access problems to VET and social welfare measures for migrants and minorities, as well as the widespread difficulty, for local policy makers, to systematically access to European good practices, know-how and exchange. Finally, it is at the city level that most and most interesting opportunities appear to have an impact on people's lives.

The project MiStra sought to improve the integration of migrants/minorities through the exchange of successful practices and learning activities between cities. A successful exchange between cities contains two main topics: the matching of the cities as such and the implementation of the exchange. During the matching process in MiStra, the partners tried to link the needs of the target cities with already developed solutions, services, projects etc. of the good practice cities.

The methodology of the matching process in the project include the following:

A) NEED ANALYSIS OF THE TARGET CITY

The need analysis is an important preparatory document which is helpful to summarize relevant data on the needs and gaps of the target city. The need analysis done within MiStra, was based upon interviews to stakeholders, NGO's, local authorities and social partners and migrant communities within the city.

¹ MiStra – 2012-3679-531325 – LLP – 1 – IT – KA4MP

TABLE 1
CONTAINS OF THE NEED ANALYSES ([FOR DETAILED NEED ANALYSES OF THE FOUR TARGET CITIES:
[HTTP://WWW.MISTRAPROJECT.EU/THE-MISTRA-PROJECT/DOCUMENTS/](http://www.mistraproject.eu/the-mistra-project/documents/))

- *A demographical overview of migrants and minorities in the country;*
- *A background review stating the history of immigration as well as the legal framework and important institutions at national, regional and local level which are working on the issue;*
- *Current educational and labour market situations of the target group;*
- *The situation and needs of NGO's and social networks for integration*
- *Already implemented policies and projects;*
- *Biggest and urgent needs;*
- *Conclusion.*

B) GOOD PRACTICE ANALYSIS

The good practice analysis (model report) is also an important preparatory document and contains relevant data of the specific welfare systems, practices and measures. Furthermore the good practice analysis shows first possible responses to mentioned needs in the need analysis. Within MiStra it was therefore important that the authors of the good practice analysis had the chance to read the need analysis of the cities in need before they started writing the good practice analysis.

C) MATCHING SEMINAR

A matching seminar is a face to face seminar between representatives of the good practice models and representatives and stakeholders of the cities in need. The aim of a matching seminar is to link cities in need with a city which provides a good practice responding with specific elements to such needs. The Matching seminar of MiStra, therefore, consisted of three parts:

(1) Exploration of the good practice models through presentations and more detailed information during the exchange mart;

(2) Matching of city in need and good practice model through answering some basic questions:

“Which city offers the most interesting model(s) for your situation?”

“Is it realistic to implement such a project in the next 12 months?”

(3) Bilateral planning (city in need and good practice) of the next steps in form of a transfer plan.

D) EXCHANGE MART

An exchange mart gives time for more detailed explanation of the good practices in direct exchange with the stakeholders of the cities in need. During an exchange mart, stakeholders of the “city in need” have the chance to meet the experts of all good practices in separate groups. The experts from the “good practice models” will provide the stakeholders with

TABLE 2
MODEL OF REPORT FOR THE GOOD PRACTICES (FOR DETAILED INFORMATION FROM THE CITIES:
[HTTP://WWW.MISTRAPROJECT.EU/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2014/11/12_GOOD_PRACTICES_DATABASE.PDF](http://www.mistraproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/12_GOOD_PRACTICES_DATABASE.PDF))

- *A demographical overview of migrants and minorities in the country;*
- *A background review stating the history of immigration as well as the legal framework and important institutions at national, regional and local level which are working on the issue;*
- *Description of good practices:*
 - Main information about the project (aim, target group, duration, etc.)*
 - Description of the concrete activities*
 - Interest in the project from the point of view of a local authorities and from the user's point of view*
 - Description of the final users*
 - Information about transferability*
 - Recommendation for implementation of the practice*

detailed information and will provide them with promotion material of their models for distribution. The Stakeholders of the city in need have the possibility to ask for more details of the models, to address specific questions and to get in bilateral discussion.

E) EXCHANGE MATRIX

The matrix summarizes the matching criteria and gives a first rough overview about possible transfer activities. Example for the MiStra Exchange Matrix see in http://www.mistra-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/12_Good_practices_database.pdf

Once each city in need found a good practice model partner, the real exchange can start. The following tools were used in MiStra and were seen as helpful during the implementation of exchange:

a) Development of a transfer plan

A transfer plan is a collaborative document developed between the cities in need and the representatives of the chosen good practice models. The objective of the plan is to support and to guide the transfer process among all: partners, stakeholders and local professionals. The plan provides further details on the good practice models, the single activities like the mentoring visits and it describes the involvement of specific professionals like local dialogue experts, representatives from migrants or minorities communities, local authorities, etc. The transfer plan also includes a time table.

b) Local Empowerment Workshops (LEWs)

The local empowerment workshops form the heart of the transfer process. The workshops shall establish a structured dialogue among VET representatives, representatives of migrants and minorities, policy makers, trade unions, job centres, Chambers of Commerce, community based organisations, schools, VET centres, local committees and other relevant stakeholders with the aim to work to remove or at least to reduce the identified needs and constraints emerged on migrants and minorities' social inclusion. During MiStra, the LEWs were realized in three editions in each target context. They lasted one and a half day

and the results were recorded in a report. A representative of the good practice model participated during all three workshops.

c) Bilateral visits

Bilateral visits supported the local partnerships in the receiving cities with additional details on the good practice models, for instance organizational or financial issues felt as important in the receiving context. During the implementation of MiStra, the visits were planned during a specific time period but in a flexible way, so that it was possible to travel in moments which were crucial for the transfer.

d) Mentoring interventions

A mentoring intervention is a low-threshold tool which is easy to use during the transfer process. The intervention is done via Email, Skype or Flash conference and initiated by the receiving city. Support and answers will be provided by the representatives of the good practice model. It is important to record questions and answers in order to make the lessons learned available to a wider audience in European context.

SOME EXAMPLES OF TRANSFERRING GOOD PRACTICES ON EU CITIES LEVEL FROM MISTRA PROJECT

Now we will present some of the good practices established in the implementation of the project Mistra, which are eligible for educational and labour inclusion of the youth. For detailed information http://www.mistra-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/12_Good_practices_database.pdf

A) "Get to know each other days"

The project *Berlin needs you! (Berlin braucht dich!)* is aimed at pupils with migration backgrounds in Berlin. It addresses the growing need to prepare young people for apprenticeships and for vocational training. It brings together companies and young people while they are still going to school so that there are able to get to know the world of work and the employers are able to support the young people to develop the needed skills. The strategy of the project is to educate pupils about

the world of work before they choose an apprenticeship. Therefore the orientation for vocational training in this project starts already in grade 7. Furthermore, this project gives enterprises the opportunity to tell the pupils what competences are important to start an apprenticeship in their field. Hearing this from an employer has far more impact than hearing this from a teacher. When pupils know what they are learning for they have an aim and they are far more motivated.

Berlin needs you is in contact with companies that are inviting young people in the 7th class (12-14 years) for one day into their company. The “get to know each other days” are part of a 4-step approach. In the 8th class the young people are in the company for one week, in the 9th class they are in the company for 3 weeks. In class 10 the companies are simulating job interview under real conditions.

In the framework of MiStra, Berlin’s tandem partner, the City of Budapest, took over this tool in May 2014. For the first phase all interested migrants could join regardless of age and schooling situation. The first companies to offer such an opportunity were a large paint factory, the water cleaning company of the city and a large textile factory. On the long run Budapest plans to implement this 4-step approach as well in a few pilot schools.

Furthermore, The Job Center in Budapest organizes regularly “mobile career fairs” (road shows) in different schools and shopping malls in order to be where the target group is. They want now to add locations where the migrants are. The first fair is planned for fall 2014 in the Fót Refugee Children’s Center, Mogyoród, and the Refugee Community Center in Budapest and in two other interested schools. Also, the job center consultant visits once a month job seekers and students in the migrant community center. It offers group or personal counselling and it simulates job interviews with the job seekers. Intercultural mediators among the staff of the community center help to make the communication more powerful and effective. Even if the initiative just started in May 2014, there is a growing interest around it.

B) Equal Youth Model, Dublin

The Equal Youth Model was originally developed as part of the Equal Youth project which developed an Interagency Model of Cooperation to ensure that early school leavers obtain and sustain employment through access to quality services that enable them secure appropriate training and educational supports. The project discovered that many agencies work with young people and young people who have left school, however there is a concern that these agencies do not always work together in the most efficient, effective and productive way.

The Equal Youth project brings together a Development Partnership (DP) comprised of the main statutory and voluntary agencies that interact with young people who leave school before completing the Leaving Certificate. The DP members developed a system of working together that facilitated access to education, training and employment for young people through developing linkages, coordination strategies and tracking systems that utilised existing resources to their full potential.

The Equal Youth project/model works as follows:

1) *Mapping*: Desk research was conducted to map out the services that existed for the young person and how policy was interpreted at a local level.

2) *Interagency cooperation*: Interagency development groups were established: a Managers Development Group and a Practitioners Development Group. This enabled interagency to develop at two levels, and for a culture of interagency approaches to develop within the organisations represented from both top down (managers) and bottom up (practitioners) perspectives. Both groups met for a half day on a quarterly basis over the 3 year period. The resulting relationships informed the development of interagency models and resources. The resource pack consisted of a Confidentiality Agreement, Interagency Protocols, Profiling, Action Planning, Practitioner and Manager Training.

3) *Common Profiling*: The Practitioners Development Group meetings identified the need for tracking & profiling systems. These

would enable a ‘common language’ around clients and their needs. In many cases the lack of shared information prevented the organisations from working together, it relied on the client retelling their story/information to a newly accessed service, and in many cases it was unclear what service the client was already working with, who their key worker was, had they an action/goal setting plan in place etc. The practitioners developed a web based tracking system and profiling tool which could be used by all practitioners working with a client. They also developed a training course around the use of these tools.

4) *Youth Views*: A reference group of young people aged 16-24 years was established. They were trained as researchers and conducted research with the target group of young people. This provided the project with a representative consultation group that would comment on, review, and make recommendations to ensure that the products developed were relevant.

5) *Virtual Planning*: as part of the inter-agency process a virtual planning exercise was conducted where organisations agreed to discuss how a local budget would be spent to best meet the needs to the young person - this enabled real interagency working, and a wrapping of the services around the needs of the client.

In the MiStra project implementation a profiling form and confidentiality agreement for the guidance of migrants and other minorities using an inter-agency approach was created in Prague. The Irish versions of the templates were translated and discussed with the stakeholders so that a local, Czech version of both written documents (profiling form and confidentiality agreement) and a structure for inter-agency meetings (where it will happen, who to invite, how often etc.) were developed. In this process smaller tools were also developed. For example, the project partners in Prague created a little game presenting case studies of various migrants in power point slides, with the purpose to ask the participants how they would solve the cases of these fictional migrants – most importantly, to which agencies they would send

them. All the answers were written down and the results used as a basis for the list of agencies that will be eventually included in the inter-agency process (see example on <http://www.ideasbank.ie/files/Interagency-Practitioner-Manual.pdf>).

C) *Antidiscrimination model of Bologna*

The Antidiscrimination Node systems of city of Bologna have as a main objective to promote mediation as a method of dispute resolution when conflict arises instead of legal action. The Antidiscrimination Node system operates through a formal agreement between regional and local public authorities and private organisations. It provides services of social and cultural mediation, and counselling sessions in cases of discrimination.

The primary objective is the promotion of Mediation as way of solving disputes caused by misperceptions and lack of understanding. The objectives based on a Regional Agreement are the following:

- To prevent the emergence and formation of discriminatory behaviour;
- To promote and support projects and positive actions, and the dissemination of best practices aimed at eliminating discrimination as well as to develop studies, research, training and exchanges with other countries outside the European Union;
- To help remove conditions of discrimination from acts and laws by offering opportunities for support, assistance, guidance and legal advice;
- Monitoring and verification work through the constant observation of the phenomenon in the region and through working with institutional and association leaders who work to reduce discrimination.

Antidiscrimination activities should be implemented in many activities, not only in dedicated initiatives, in order to favour an open-minded approach in every area of daily life. Racism and discrimination come from misperception and lack of knowledge. To counteract this initiatives and activities should be implemented to create opportunities for the sharing of information regarding discriminated groups

In the acceptance phase the most important activity is the active listening of the client and in cases where there is strong emotional reactions, it may be necessary to have more than one session. Later a first evaluation of the situation is made to decide if the conflict has discriminatory characteristics or if it presents a different problem.

The first evaluation is the responsibility of the Node and the client may request: specific support (from services, groups or associations), pressure actions (solicitation letters), and legal counselling. If the conflict has no discriminatory characteristics the Node will suggest the most adequate services to the person involved.

In cases that, according to the law, the legal counselling confirm that discrimination has occurred, there are the following two possibilities:

- Activation of a Mediation process, operated by the Antidiscrimination Node
- The user may decide to take legal action using the results of the legal counselling offered by the Antidiscrimination Network's lawyer.

The Antidiscrimination Node cannot actively participate in legal action-it promotes mediation as method of dispute resolution.

During the implementation of model in Burgas was created a Public Forum: FICIM - Forum for Integration of Children of Immigrants and Minorities. The Forum was planed a place or space where to discuss integration issues of minority children and also immigrant children, although their problem are quite different. A place where all interested parties in problems of Rome people/immigrants can ask questions to experts or responsible intuitions or just discuss the problems they have.

D) Integration House, Vienna

In Taranto a House of Services was developed, inspired by the Integration House in Vienna, targeting the needs of migrant people. The advantage of a one-stop point of services is that migrant people have one place where they can go to and ask their questions. However, the house of services has a special focus

to job-related issues. Here their services try to prevent unregistered work, the exploitation of people working above all in agriculture, and to avoid marginalisation caused through recruiters of day labourers, a very important and diffused phenomenon in these areas. The Municipality of Taranto offered a dedicated building for this House.

CONCLUSION

There were briefly discussed only few examples of the available EU good practices for educational and labour inclusion of youth migrants/minorities, couple of which were implemented through MiStra project. Transferring and implementing one model or good practice from one to another context is not easy but very exciting and developing experience. Some of the lessons learnt on transfer process in project MiStra should be keep in mind (for more information <http://www.mistraproject.eu/the-mistra-project/products/toolkitMistra>):

- 1) When you transfer good practice from one context to another you have invested time and resources in adapting those models which are better fitting your needs, and be flexible and open to unexpected results;
- 2) An open conversation between partners is important to have all the facts. Not only successes have to be mentioned but also problems have to be discussed, so that they can be solved; and
- 3) The network is important: If a city wants to reach a better integration of migrants/minorities has to work closely with NGOs, state institutions, migrant organizations, integration centres, social services, schools etc. It is good to create a list of agents in the field of integration and to try to contact them all. On the other hand, NGOs and private stakeholders have to be willing to share their experiences, services, difficulties with the public policy makers and officials. Having a structured interaction, for example regular meetings, networking protocols, joint service delivery agreements is a great advantage.

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