Labour Plus

Policy Recommendations and Guidelines for Inclusive and Sustainable Strategies and Employment Policies regarding Migrant and Roma Populations

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Labour Plus partners

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🏛 European New Towns and Pilotcities Platform (Belgium)

🏛 The University of Latvia (Latvia)

🏛 County Council of Alt Empordà (Spain)

🏛 Antwerp Centre for Minorities (Belgium)

🏛 Newry and Mourne District Council (UK)

🏛 Mittelhessischer Bildungsverband e.V.(Germany)

🏛 The Municipality of Nagykálló (Hungary)

🏛 Sofia Region (Bulgaria)

🏛 The Development Agency of Santa Cruz de Tenerife (Spain)

🏛 The Province of Padua (Italy)

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1 The General Context

In recent decades, most European countries have been experiencing increasing migration and internal diversity. The European continent (including Russia) hosts almost a third (31%) of all international migrants (72 million out of a total 232 million)[1]. According to the "European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals" (European Commission, 20/07/11, p.2), "migrants from third countries represent around 4% of the total EU population", and that is without counting children of migrants, who in a country like France, for example, represent 11% of the population (INSEE data, 2008). This trend is occurring while other demographic changes within the European Union are also at play, such as an ageing population and a declining working-age population.

2. http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1059&langId=en
3. http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/eu.cfm

In many ways, **migration and diversity can be seen as assets for improving the productivity of the European economy; however, this can only be achieved if Europe "finds a way to better cope with its diverse and multicultural societies through more effective integration of migrants"** ("European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals", op. cit. p.2). Many challenges stand in the way of the inclusion of migrants and children of migrants, most of which have been heightened by the economic crisis. These include the "prevailing low employment levels of migrants, especially migrant women; rising unemployment and high levels of 'over-qualification'; the increasing risks of social exclusion; gaps in educational achievement; and public concerns about the lack of integration of migrants" (ibid. p.4).

Labour inclusion of migrants is therefore one of the core concerns for most European countries. But it can also be seen as a key tool to enhance their insertion, together with language knowledge and education. However, such objectives are difficult to achieve, especially in light of the economic crisis that began to spread across Europe in 2007. As a result of which, unemployment has increased sharply in Europe from 7.1% in 2008 to a peak of 10.9% in 2013. The Europe 2020 Strategy, launched in 2010, aims to tackle these challenges; but national performances are heterogeneous, and some economic sectors and actors, for example small and medium-sized enterprises, are more affected than others (European Commission, "Taking Stock of the Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth", 05/03/14).

One of the concepts that has been put forward, as part of the social dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy, is the concept of active inclusion. In defining and implementing its policies and activities, the EU is obliged under the Treaties to take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health (Article 9 TFEU). In this context, the concept of active inclusion refers to the means to enable every citizen, notably the most disadvantaged, to fully participate in society, including having a job.

In practical terms, this means[2]

Adequate income support together with help to get a job. This could be by linking out-of-work and in-work benefits, and/or by helping people access the benefits to which they are entitled.

Inclusive labour markets — making it easier for people to join the workforce, tackling in-work poverty, and avoiding poverty traps and disincentives to work.

Access to quality services that help people participate actively in society, including getting back to work.

The concept of active inclusion is also intended to tackle various specific challenges such as poverty, social exclusion, in-work poverty, labour market segmentation, long-term unemployment and gender inequalities. Complementary to the concept of active inclusion, the concept of integration[3] refers to a two-way process of mutual accommodation by all migrants and residents of Member States.

While integration policies have previously mostly been designed at the national level, it is now recognized that local authorities have an important role to play in enacting and improving the active inclusion of migrants

(European Commission, "European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals", 20/07/11, p.8). Over the past few years, the European Commission has published several documents and guidelines encouraging local authorities to act in this field.

It is also clear that local authorities can and should see migration as an opportunity to be seized: "It is at regional, national and local levels that each individual and each stakeholder will seize the opportunities brought by migration and by mobility" (European Commission, "Global Approach to Migration and Mobility", Brussels, 18/11/11, p.2).

Of course, such an objective is extremely ambitious: as is now well known, inclusion is multifarious and occurs along multiple axes. This means that even if labour inclusion should be given priority, local authorities have to take care of other aspects of insertion as well: "the integration process should be supported by actions taken in numerous policy areas to ensure employment opportunities. Including education systems, access to health and other public services, access to private services (banks, insurance, etc.), conditions allowing for active participation in public and political life, and building up social and cultural ties to achieve a feeling of belonging to the receiving society" (European Commission, "EU initiatives supporting the integration of third-country nationals", 20/07/11, p.2). Taking into account this multifaceted aspect of inclusion is particularly important when dealing with more vulnerable sections of the migrant population, such as the elderly, refugees or women.

Among those facing the highest risks of marginalization are the 10-12 million Roma living in Europe, who often face discrimination, social exclusion, and poor socio-economic conditions. Various policies and measures have been developed to address the specific problems confronting Roma, such as the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (European Commission, "An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020", 05/04/11). This comprehensive framework, linked to the Europe 2020 Strategy but tailored to each national situation, targets the four key areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing. And it acknowledges the complex and interrelated nature of social and labour insertion, which has also been put at the core of the Labour Plus project. ⊗

1.1 Objectives and Approach of the Labour Plus Project

The **Labour Plus project has been designed to provide answers to the challenges local authorities in Europe currently face when trying to improve the active inclusion of migrants and Roma populations.** It brings together partners, mainly local authorities, with a shared vision of employment and equality. These partners experience complex structural shifts in local labour markets, and due to the economic crisis and financial pressures, lack opportunities to create more effective and inclusive employment strategies. Meanwhile, many social groups in these local communities – migrants in general, and Roma in particular – face substantial difficulties integrating into the labour market. They find themselves at the margins of the local economy, often stigmatized and socially excluded.

As the frontline against labour exclusion, **local authorities have a vital role to play in achieving more equal local employment agendas.** To meet this challenge, the Labour Plus project facilitates an exchange of policies and strategies to improve the partners' labour markets, and stimulate more inclusive and sustainable employment policies. It also helps partners tackle discrimination and unemployment by analyzing and discussing existing policies, strategies and scenarios. A key question addressed by the project is how to make the labour market stronger (economic objective) and more equal and accessible for migrants (labour skills objective), with a special focus on Roma.

The main objectives of the Labour Plus project are:

✋ to stimulate and improve local strategies and policies for employment and equal labour participation, particularly of migrants with a special focus on Roma;

✋ to create an active network of practices and synergies exchange; where the partners meet, cooperate, exchange and transfer knowledge and information;

✋ over the long-term, to enhance the prospects of the disadvantaged groups in the local labour market, but also in education and social integration;

✋ to inform local, regional and European stakeholders on different possible solutions and strategies for effective labour policies and inclusive employment.

With this in mind, the Labour Plus project has launched a meaningful social dialogue between partners who would otherwise have few opportunities to exchange and test their strategies on how to stimulate local employment while also making it more equal. Issues of how the discriminated groups' participation and integration can improve the labour market are also at the core of discussions.

The Labour Plus project also seeks to contribute to policy making by setting up policy recommendations and common strategies, and by influencing and consulting with local decision-makers in order to improve employment strategies at the local and interregional levels by providing decision-makers with tailor-made tools and ideas. ⊗

1.2 Presentation of the Policy Recommendations and Guidelines

The Policy Recommendations and Guidelines offer a synthesis of the findings of the Labour Plus project with regards to local employment policies for migrant and Roma populations in Europe. The Policy Recommendations and Guidelines also build on the main trends within the European Union in respect of these public policies.

They provide a summary of lessons learned and new ideas suggested within the framework of the project, and have one main objective:

to improve the existing labour integration policies at the local level for migrant and Roma populations.

To this end, the Guidelines propose a new, more comprehensive and inclusive approach to dealing with the challenges and obstacles emerging from local employment policies for migrant and Roma populations in Europe.

The Policy Recommendations and Guidelines are the result of three years work involving eleven European local authorities. This close collaboration has generated new knowledge that can also benefit other local decision-makers and communities, and that the Policy Recommendations and Guidelines are designed to disseminate. The target audience of the Guidelines is mostly local decision-makers from local authorities and other key stakeholders at the local level.

The Guidelines are illustrated with various examples taken from the Labour Plus partners' experiences. It includes recommendations for improving the active inclusion of migrants in general, and of "specific" groups such as the Roma but also refugees, youth and Irish Travelers.

4 http://www.labourplus.eu/index.php/pearltrees
5 http://www.labourplus.eu/images/Final_Report_best_practices.pdf

Following European directives in this respect (see, among other documents, the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020) adopted on 07/03/11), it also mainstreams a gender approach, and details how policy recommendations need to take into account the needs of both men and women, and to acknowledge the specific vulnerability of migrant women. This is especially important in the field of employment, where "women's participation in the labour market not only contributes to their economic independence, but is also the best safeguard against poverty and social exclusion" ("Council Conclusions on Gender equality: strengthening growth and employment - input to the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy", Council of the European Union, 30/11/09, p.3).

The Policy Recommendations and Guidelines complement and interact with other Labour Plus projects' outputs, such as the Pearl Trees[4] and the Report on Good Practices[5]. ⊗

This Guide provides information about:

🖐 Challenges and obstacles faced by local authorities when trying to fight labour exclusion. This builds on evidence from the Labour Plus partner's experience, as well as on the results from the exchange of good practices between partners; In the next chapter, which constitutes the core of this Guide, we give policy recommendations to tackle each of the challenges faced by local authorities (each area is identified by a different color to facilitate reading and understanding). These recommendations are illustrated by concrete examples drawn from Labour Plus partners' experience. This Guidelines also provides concrete examples that can be used by local authorities beyond the Labour Plus project when trying to improve their labour inclusion policies targeting migrant and Roma populations.

🖐 The main types of local policies for the active inclusion of migrants developed at the local level. This highlights diversity in practices, but also the main characteristics and common points between local policies. Based on experiences developed by the Labour Plus partners, it also identifies relevant new approaches and experiences that give added value. This Guidelines also highlights the lessons learned, good practices and areas that still need to be improved, as well as the main weaknesses in the current approaches.

2 Fighting labour exclusion

Challenges and obstacles

Labour inclusion is amongst the most pressing needs of target groups (migrants and Roma populations), alongside education, training and housing. Target groups across Europe face remarkably similar issues and challenges that impede their inclusion in the labour market. Their often low levels of income and social status in turn affect their access to education, and other cultural and social resources. Because they are more likely to be unemployed, migrants and Roma communities are on average poorer and have difficulties accessing decent housing, or some-times any housing at all. This demonstrates the interconnected character of the challenges faced by these groups.

Fighting labour exclusion

Limited competences & legal issues

- Legal issues hamper integration
- Local authorities constrained by national frames

Linguistic, educational & literacy issues

- Unifamiliarity with Local Language
- Lack of recognition of diplomas and qualifications
- Weak job search skills

High level of endogamy

Challenges and obstacles

Economic crisis context

- Unemployment
- Negative Stereotypes
- Dependency on public services

Organizational issues

- Weak coordination between local services
- Lack of human & financial resources
- Bureaucracy

Intercultural issues

- Difficulty identifying interlocutors in targeted communities
- Gender Issues

2.1 Labour Inclusion Challenges

Dealing with the Difficult Economic Context

Local employment policies across European countries face comparable challenges. The first being the deep impact of the economic crisis that weighs heavily on the ability of local authorities to sustain and/or fund major initiatives in the field of active inclusion, and has caused a worsening of the situation for both migrants and the rest of the population. This constitutes a major constraint and explains why some inclusion policies are not as ambitious as expected. It also feeds a negative and pessimistic climate, in turn reinforcing negative opinions vis-à-vis migrants and/or communities like the Roma that do not seem well integrated and are often accused of not striving hard enough to better their own situation.

One of the other consequences of the economic crisis is an increase in overall levels of unemployment, which further impede migrants' inclusion. Considering the fact that their educational attainment and training is generally lower than that of the rest of the population, in such a context it becomes even more complicated for them to find and keep a job, even a low-skilled one. Not having a job in turn makes it more difficult to find decent housing, thus feeding a vicious circle of pauperization and/or dependency on public subsidies.

One also notices that in all cases recent waves of migration seem to be more difficult to manage than previous ones, at least at the cultural/societal level. Even where discrimination and racism are not widespread, feelings of mistrust or even of hostility still seem to be on the rise, accompanied by negative myths, for instance about migrants stealing jobs or prospering on state subsidies. In all cases, such negative stereotypes exist and are sometimes reinforced by the media who put the emphasis on the problems induced by migration rather than its positive aspects.

As a result, local authorities must first and foremost face sociological and economic challenges: they have to deal with long-term unemployment in all sections of their populations, not just among migrants or Roma groups. They also face a general lack of low-skilled jobs, which would have favored the insertion of migrants without diplomas or significant training or work experience. ⊗

🏛 The University of Latvia (Latvia)

Youth Unemployment in Latvia reached 23.8% in December of 2013 and is notably higher than in other age groups. One of the reasons behind the unemployment of young people is their low educational attainment levels: only 22.1% have acquired professional education & 16.8% higher education.

Young people are among the groups hardest hit by the economic downturn, since they were among the first to lose their jobs as a direct as well as indirect result of the crisis. Certain social classes are more affected, for example low-skilled youth who have the highest unemployment rates & seem particularly vulnerable to unemployment in the current economic climate.

This could be due to the collapse of many sectors, notably construction & retail. During the previous period of economic prosperity, a considerable number of young people had gained work experience in low-qualified jobs without proper education and/or qualifications.

+23,08%
Youth Unemployment
in Latvia

22.1%
of them have acquired
professional education

16.8%
of them have acquired
higher education
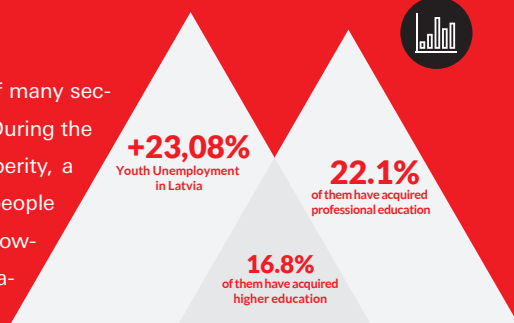
🏛 The Municipality of Nagykálló (Hungary)

One of the strategies set up by the Municipality of Nagykálló in Hungary was to try to jointly tackle urban economic issues & labour inclusion ones. A program targeting low or under-qualified Roma workers living in a pilot social town rehabilitation area of Nagykálló was implemented in 2010-2011.

Its main objective was to return the unemployed back to the labour market through special training and courses. This integrated programme provided not only qualification training courses in 3 job sectors (park keeper, gardeners and restaurant assistants) but also specific courses on mental and life aspects.

Policy Recommendations

Tackling the Labour Inclusion Challenges:
Promote labour inclusion

MAKE MAINSTREAM THE NEEDS OF MIGRANTS AND ROMA IN THE ELABORATION OF LOCAL LABOUR POLICIES.

👍 Define clearer strategies for local economic development that include specific lines of action for the integration of these groups.

👍 Rethink entry policies to the local labor market. For example, self-employment policies do not always work well with migrant populations.

👍 Promote a professional, expert local network to work jointly to create synergies in order to develop employment strategies for people with migrant origins.

STRENGTHEN LINKS WITH PARTNERS IN THE LOCAL LABOUR FIELD

👍 Work with employers.

👍 Establish networks through mentoring schemes.

👍 Involve social partners in the local labour integration process.

👍 Promote temporary employment and temporary agency work as a stepping stone to more stable employment.

🏢 The Municipality of Nagykálló (Hungary)

One of the strategies developed by Nagykálló, Hungary, was to find markets for local good quality agricultural products and to introduce a "two steps" labour force – market integration and support for small agricultural enterprises through extra income. The programme addresses challenges such as long-term unemployment, unemployed Roma people, lack of healthy local agricultural products, and integration into markets for local farmers. The project consists of an agricultural public work programme, support for local traditional farmers and small agricultural enterprises in finding new markets, and the creation of a Fruit & Vegetable Farmer's Organization, helping local traditional farmers and Small & Medium-sized agricultural enterprises find new markets.

🏢 Sofia Region (Bulgaria)

Many Roma people are unemployed or work in the informal economy. To support their increased involvement in formal activities, the Sofia Region in Bulgaria has partnered with a company that works in waste selection and waste management of industrial and house waste, giving them permanent jobs and good working conditions. This policy enhances the integration of Roma into the local labour market, as well as the transfer of an informal Roma activity to a formal economic one that is registered and part of the tax system.

FIGHT DISCRIMINATION

👍 Set up programmes or measures to fight discrimination in the local labour market and discriminatory behavior on the part of employers, and to promote training in diversity for trade unions.

👍 Implement pro-active anti-discrimination and diversity policies in companies.

👍 Because employers are often not very familiar with the legislation, there is a need to inform them about good practices in the field of diversity promotion. Show them concrete good practices in hiring members of ethnic minorities.

🏢 Mittelhessischer Bildungsverband e.V. (Germany)

In Marburg, Germany, training is offered to case managers in job agencies. This training addresses problems of misunderstanding and of discrimination against unemployed migrants and refugees in job agencies. The two main objectives are to raise intercultural awareness of case managers who are working in job agencies, and to increase knowledge in migration, intercultural consulting and strategies.

SET AN EXAMPLE!

👍 Promote immigrant employment in the local public service. The public sector can serve as a role model for other employers.

👍 Facilitate access of migrants or Roma to financial credit, and set up programmes or measures for helping them during the start-up stage of new businesses.

DON'T FORGET THE MEDIA

👍 Counter clichés about the population of immigrant origin, and their access to certain services and programs.

👍 Start an anti-rumour strategy at the local level to break with social and labour stereotypes that affect this population. Provide training for civil servants working on the front lines to fight rumors, inform people about cultural diversity and improve understanding of the needs of migrants and Roma populations.

👍 Go out and meet the target groups: if a person doesn't know how to read and write, even a very well designed website is useless. So it's vital to go into the field and meet members of the target group.

🏢 The Development Agency of Santa Cruz de Tenerife (Spain)

The Municipality of Santa Cruz de Tenerife in Spain has set up a programme to fight the increasing social vulnerability and risk of social exclusion faced by the foreign citizen population. This project aims at facilitating the integration of migrant population in the municipality, through the improvement of the public image of migrants and promoting positive aspects of a society characterized by cultural diversity. It organizes awareness campaigns, proposes immigration legal advice, education and training tools to improve the social and labour position of migrant people, and employment guidance. It also facilitates the access to information and resources, and mainstreams these needs in the planning of municipal policy and in the development of mechanisms for citizen participation.

ENVISAGE LABOUR INCLUSION AS JUST ONE DIMENSION OF INTEGRATION

The first point to keep in mind is that employment is an important dimension of integration, but one that interacts with other dimensions. In other words, insertion into the labour market is often strongly dependent on other aspects of integration. The most obvious ones being language (because being fluent in the local language is often a prerequisite to getting a job) and education (because employers often value diplomas). But there are other important aspects of integration that also play an important role, such as housing (in the absence of decent housing, it's difficult to find and/or focus on a job), mobility (mobility might be required of those looking for a job) and social relations/participation (integration at the social/political level has a positive impact on the ability of migrants to find a job). Treating employment as a stand-alone field of policy intervention is thus likely to be counterproductive.
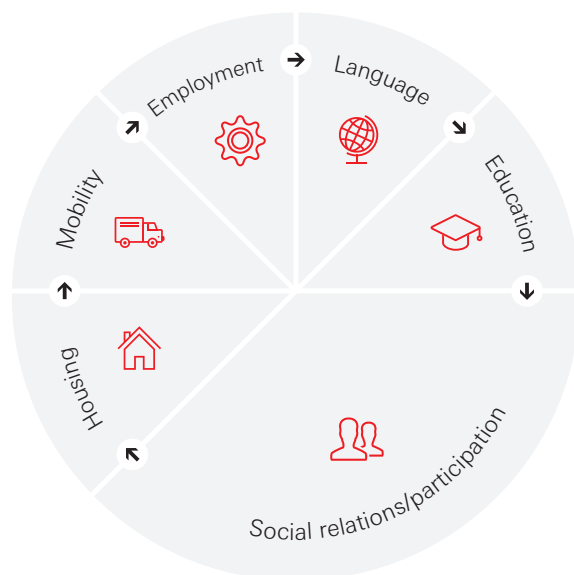
DEFINE THE MAIN POLICY OBJECTIVES

Even if the primary objective of labour inclusion policies is always to favor access to employment, there are actually very different types of policies that can be implemented. We can identify three main types of policies:

👍 Palliative policies: promoting services and resources to solve social problems arising, for instance, from the coexistence of different work cultures;

👍 Preventive policies: promoting actions at an early stage to train individuals to find future work;

👍 Strategic policies: tackling the root and structural causes behind structural inequalities and discrimination in that society.
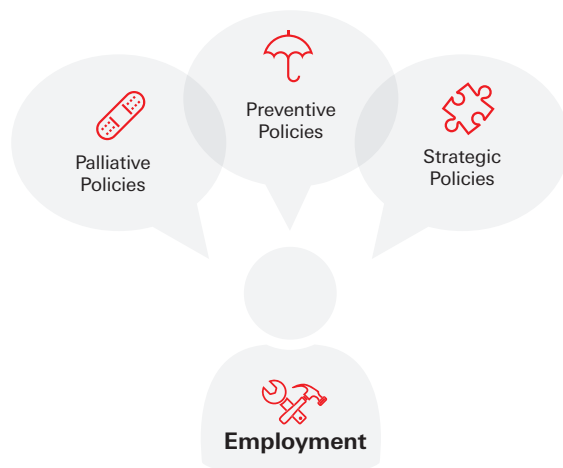
HOW TO DEFINE POLICY PRIORITIES? Policy priorities can include:

👍 improve target groups' capacities (language, education, training, etc)

👍 improve contacts between target group and employers

👍 address stereotypes and rumors

👍 focus on other aspects of target groups' integration

👍 improve the capabilities of personnel working in relevant agencies to deal with target groups, etc.

The following chart gives you a sense of how these priorities can be ordered:

The following initiative, developed in Antwerp, follows these principles and recommendations:

Key recommendations to define public policy priorities in active inclusion for migrant and Roma populations

Integrated strategy

› Population oriented
› Gender mainstreaming
› Comprehensive, inclusive and multicultural approach
› Flexible and cross-cutting programmes in strategic sectors
› Fight discrimination
› Anti-rumour strategy to break social/labour stereotypes

Single roof for diverse services

› Employment agency
› Language training and education
› Recognition of qualifications and skills
› Care services and health
› Financial aid and credits
› Mobility
› Housing
› Mediation
› Social relations/participation

Reinforce professional and expert local network

› Strenghten links with partners
› NGO's
› Migrant and Roma organizations
› Enterprises
› Employers
› Schools and colleges
› Public administrations

Preventive policies for children and youth

› Strong affirmative-action policies in the education and schooling system
› Programmes oriented to school-to-work transition
› Preventive community work with groups at risk and families

Specific tools for target groups

› Roma specificities; women; youth; non-motivated;
› entrepreneurs; teenage mothers,...
› Mentorship programmes
› Self-employment
› Start-ups and new businesses
› Training for civil servants

Match! — Bring your social environment to your work

🏢 Antwerp Centre for Minorities (Belgium)

Match! is a project co-developed by The Antwerp Centre for Integration. It was executed in one particular organization in the social economy that employs several hundred migrant workers from different origins.
By introducing the non-professional background of the workers in their work, and focusing on their own input, the project augmented their involvement and motivation to work.

To find out what was important to workers, we organized focus groups and individual interviews. This resulted in several ideas that were combined into the concept of a "family-festival", a world map and a cultural calendar.

Workgroups made up of the workers themselves prepared the festival and were responsible for the day's success. Talent management was a huge part of the whole process: employers became more aware of their workers' talents and how to use them in the best possible way.

The whole project had a huge impact on the workers. For example:

1| sick-leave has fallen from 10.4 to 8.5 %
2| 70% of workers were involved in the actions or workgroups
3| 3. New initiatives are now shaping up

For more information:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xePWUsJiRJ8

2.2 Organizational Challenges

Promoting a global rather than a segmented approach

Local authorities have to deal with significant organizational challenges, which stand in the way of the smooth design and implementation of integration and active inclusion policies.

Some of these challenges pertain to what we could call the limited acceptance of change within administrative services and an excess of bureaucracy, but others to a blatant lack of human and financial resources. Tackling migrant and Roma groups' needs requires coordination between the services responsible for employment, housing, transport, education, etc. This is often made difficult by the strict separations existing between them, and often further exacerbated by deep-rooted working habits. The very different situation facing each Roma or migrant family requires an almost case-by-case approach and individualized monitoring, but this is almost impossible because people working for local authorities have a specific expertise and portfolio, and are often not allowed to tackle matters beyond their mandate. As a result, a migrant or Roma family can sometimes be in contact with 10 to 20 different institutions or municipal services, which seriously impedes coordination.

Some municipalities, such as Nieuwegein, have launched innovative approaches in this field, for instance by focusing on "complex families" (that is, families with interrelated problems such as unemployment, debts, stress, threatening behaviour towards children, etc.) and promoting a global rather than segmented approach to these problems. Such innovative policies represent a first positive step, provided of course local authorities have the competences in-house to take action on the relevant issues.

Policy Recommendations

Tackling the Organizational Challenges:
Reorganize the relevant services

PROMOTE AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

- To avoid wasting resources and efforts, encourage exchanges and cooperation between the local authority services dealing with the various dimensions of integration of migrants (employment, housing, language, etc.).

- A multi-level approach to integration is needed that acknowledges the social, cultural and economic environment in which each person lives; but also the diversity of constraints and challenges existing at each level (individual, family, group, societal).

- It is necessary to take into account the diverse aspects of integration, especially when dealing with individuals/ communities who experience a range of problems at the same time.

- A population-oriented approach is more effective than a problem-oriented one. For instance, focus on specific target groups rather than on general issues such as "long-term unemployment".

- Welcome migrants or Roma populations by providing all relevant services "under a single roof".

- Promote joint planning between the relevant policymakers. At the very least, encourage increased coordination and communication between local authority services.

Nieuwegein (Netherlands)

The municipality of Nieuwegein in the Netherlands promotes an integrated approach to complex problems within Roma families (e.g. lack of schooling/education, reliance on social benefits, poverty and high debts, nuisance in the neighbourhood, criminality).

The integrated programme is based on a new methodology called Wisselgeld (Exchange). Wisselgeld focuses on assisting Roma families with complex problems (multi-problem families). The families' problems are so complicated that they can only be tackled by an individual approach. This individual approach is implemented by so called intermediaries. These intermediaries make an action plan per family and are responsible for coordination with other parties involved. The main goal of the Wisselgeld approach is to attain a positive change within the family system, with a focus on the child, the parents and the living environment.

The Wisselgeld approach is based on the principle of exchange: I give you something (assistance) but in return I expect you to give me something back (e.g. your children attend school).

POOL RESOURCES

🖐 Take the other relevant parties into account when setting up and implementing policies (work and exchange with business, schools, media, etc.).

🖐 Develop strategies to improve cooperation between local agents (public authorities, businesses and social organizations) to optimize resources and services aimed at labour inclusion.

🖐 Strengthen the link with local associations on the ground that have information about what is going on and are trusted by the target groups.

🖐 Identify specific issues and policy priorities (e.g. literacy, training, habits in the workplace, etc.), and organize exchanges between all relevant agencies on these issues and priorities.

🖐 Organize training sessions for local workers on legislative issues and legislative changes affecting the situation of migrants.

🖐 Use foresight and statistical trend analysis to help you act pre-emptively, rather than simply react (e.g. with regards to demographic changes).

🏢 County Council of Alt Empordà (Spain)

The "Language and Enterprise" project, offering language teaching for foreign workers in companies, was developed in the Garrotxa region of Catalonia, and organized by a network that was brought together by the Department of Citizenship & Immigration of the Catalan Government, the Garrotxa Catalan Learning Service (Consortium for Language Standardisation), Olot City Council and Garrotxa County Council.

The main objectives of this project were to:

1) Teach foreign workers the Catalan language

2) Improve effective communication inside organizations

3) Avoid isolation & facilitate employment in companies

4) Involve companies in the integration process of foreign workers

5) Expand the knowledge of workers on issues related to work environment & workplace

6) Implement the project involving public & private companies.

To facilitate implementation of the above policy recommendations, the following visual aid can be useful:

Local associations, NGOs, mediators...

Police, justice system, schools...

Local authorities

Employers, trade unions, business...

Media

Here is an example of an initiative following these principles and recommendations:

GAP (Give me an opportunity)
Socioeducational resource to strengthen the skills of youth of migrant origin to the labour market

🏢 County Council of Alt Empordà (Spain)

PREVENTIVE RESOURCE DESIGNED TO COACH YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THE MULTIDISCIPLINARITY VIEW

Participants

Youth Risk Profile:
12-18 years

(axes of inequality: gender, income, origin and/or ethnic)

MAIN OBJECTIVES

1) To improve resilience and emotional wellbeing of young people

2) To accompany in the construction of life trajectories (training, careers and labour pathways)

3) To improve employability and active inclusion (formal and informal skills acquisition)

4) To strength social networks of young people

DESIGN METHODOLOGY

1) Qualitative Analysis: needs and expectations of young

2) Cross-sectional design of the socioeducational resource in a multidisciplinary team (professionals from different services: Social Services, Employment, Education, Youth, Health, Migration, Social Inclusion)

INTERVENTION METHODOLOGY

1) Changing the look of social action: population oriented, the youth as subject.

2) Resilience and empowerment: to reinforce skills, self-confidence, self-esteem, autonomy and social competence of young.

WORKING WITH COMPETENCES

1) Individual action: Identity; capacities; family; training and patterns of future employment.

2) Community action: Social relations; patterns of success in training and employment; dynamic and experiential activities to promote labour skills; gender issues (attitudes, bullying, ...); diversity and multiculturalism; risk behaviors.

3) Collective action: Knowing the educational resources of the region; contact with the business and jobs

4) Working with professionals from the education sector.

2.3 **Intercultural Challenges**
Interacting with Target Groups

Some other policy challenges originate from the target groups themselves. Because migrant and Roma groups are so diverse, both across and within those groups, helping their active inclusion in and access to the labor market often requires the services of "experts" who can understand their specific expectations and cultural constraints.

In the absence of such experts, finding intermediaries from within the targeted communities can sound like a good alternative, but they may be extremely difficult to identify. The lack of trust and even hostility that often characterizes the opinions of migrants and Roma vis-à-vis local authorities (and vice versa) doesn't help, because it goes against what active inclusion policies should be aiming at.

As a result, implementing a targeted approach is often not possible, with local authorities having the feeling that all their initiatives are met with suspicion and a lack of goodwill. There is often also a significant difference between policy objectives that can be identified at a general level, and individual expectations of the target groups. And this also explains why integration or employment-related policies might not always be viewed positively by their target groups.

"Intercultural challenges" have to be underscored, namely the fact that migrants/Roma communities do not necessarily have the same cultural habits or references, and this regularly creates difficulties, especially at work, where they are often accused of lacking a "proper" work ethic (punctuality, compliance to schedules, respect of other workers and managers, etc). Moreover, migrants and Roma usually have little knowledge or understanding of local authority procedures and feel lost when they have to contact their local authority.

These intercultural challenges also pertain to gender issues, in the sense that many of these groups closely associate "being a man" with being the "breadwinner" for the household. This often constitutes a major obstacle to women's employment, and also clashes with Western conceptions of women's rights and gender equality, for instance by leading to a school dropout of girls at a relatively young age, sometimes because they are getting married well below the legal age of consent for marriage in European countries. In short, women's employment is often hampered by cultures of origin.

Intercultural challenges are further reinforced by a generally high level of endogamy within migrant groups, and even more specifically among Roma populations, which further alienates them from the rest of the population and prevents them learning the local language, as noted above.

Migrants and Roma populations generally lack access to social proximity networks. They also lack knowledge about working habits and local businesses cultures, or the everyday lifestyle habits of the local population.

In addition, migrant and Roma groups often face other problems, such as physical and mental health issues that may be caused by the stress associated with their situation and their poor living conditions: poor hygiene and nutrition affect the job searching processes. The limited physical mobility of migrants and Roma (either caused by legal limitations, in the case for instance of asylum seekers, or by the costs associated with mobility) is another practical obstacle in the way of their integration. These further issues further hamper their capacity to find and keep a job. ⊗

🏛 Nieuwegein, (Netherlands)

Managing Diversity" is a training course delivered by Nieuwegein. This good practice case addresses the increasing cultural diversity of the population of Nieuwegein and its region, and the challenges it brings, focusing on complex Roma families.

The training is given to all levels of the participating organizations, including the municipality: managers, directors, city council, case officers and the project team.

Main objectives of the training are 1) introduction to concepts of intercultural management and diversity, related to one's position in society and working environment; 2) awareness of one's own 'cultural luggage' in relation to that of others.

🏛 Irish Travelling community

The Irish Travelling community is a unique ethnic minority. Many live a nomadic lifestyle, while others are more settled. Many believe that the discrimination they face is different to that faced by migrants, because many migrant workers arrive with a better standard of education than that of the Irish Traveller, and therefore find it easier to access the labour market.

Also the poor literacy skills of Irish Traveller parents mean children may have no help at home with school work. Literacy is a major problem, and many Travellers leave school without basic literacy skills. They do not use conventional means to gain access to employment (e.g. they would not apply for jobs in the standard way or search newspapers for jobs). Their community operates on a "word of mouth" basis, with the male members of the community favoring self-employment.

Policy Recommendations

Tackling the Intercultural Challenges: Take into account the specifics of target groups

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

👍 As a general principle, a case-by-case, or at least group-by-group, approach always seems to be more effective than one that doesn't distinguish between the various target groups.

👍 Take into account the specific expectations of each target group, as these may vary across groups, and over time.

👍 Develop public policies, programs, services and mechanisms better suited to the characteristics and needs of the target groups.

👍 Promote a deeper understanding of the target groups' problems to develop programs, services and devices better suited to their needs.

👍 Gain a good knowledge of the culture, habits and needs of each target group before devising and launching any new policy initiative.

👍 Identify and build contacts with intermediaries from or mediators within the relevant target groups.

TACKLE INTERCULTURAL CHALLENGES

👍 Improve the initial reception areas for newcomers, and provide more information to increase knowledge regarding work habits and culture.

👍 Further adapt public policies and programmes targeting migrants and Roma populations to the particularities of these groups, especially taking into account their origin when defining these particularities.

👍 Develop strategies to prevent irregular and illegal situations due to ignorance of the rules.

🏢 Newry and Mourne District Council (UK)

The Newry and Mourne District Council Traveller Forum was created in 2011. Its aim is to champion Irish Travellers' rights and address current provisions for the Traveller community within the district. The meetings give members of the Traveller community the opportunity to speak one-to-one with elected members on key issues, while also informing the Councillors of Travellers' culture and lifestyle.

🏢 Newry and Mourne District Council (UK)

Centre opened in 2007 as Newry and Mourne Council's response to the changing demographics in the area and to the needs of the new migrant communities. Objectives: creation of a One-Stop-Shop initial point of contact for Black and Ethnic Minority residents; assist local community groups to increase understanding of ethnic diversity & promote integration; facilitate two-way communication between statutory agencies, community groups and ethnic minorities... The Centre provides free advice and support to minority ethnic communities in their own languages.

PAY ATTENTION TO GENDER AND FAMILY DIMENSIONS

🖑 Gender dimensions should be better mainstreamed into integration policies. Integration does not mean the same thing or follow the same patterns for men and women, and local integration policies should take stock of these differences, which are often even more marked within migrant and Roma communities than in the rest of the population.

🖑 Promote community work with families in migrants and Roma communities.

🖑 Activate inactive immigrant or Roma mothers in conjunction with childcare and school. Convince the other members of the family (husbands and fathers, but also mothers) of the need for women to work.

🖑 Pay attention to the fact that women with a migrant or Roma background are often victims of double discrimination: because of their ethnicity and because of their gender.

🖑 Raise the awareness of women of a migrant or Roma background, who often don't realize their own potential.

WITH REGARDS TO ROMA SPECIFICALLY

🖑 Experience has demonstrated the inadequacy of a "global" approach to Roma that doesn't take account of the diversity amongst Roma groups.

🖑 It's important to place the focus on the community/group level and not just on the individual.

🖑 Hire special advisors on Roma issues, with a good knowledge of the said diversity. These advisors should then be consulted before devising policies – not after.

🏛 Antwerp Centre for Minorities (Belgium)

In Antwerp, training sessions focus on teaching people how to work more effectively with Roma communities. Schools, welfare organizations, health care institutions, police forces, etc. are instructed on the background of their Roma clients in order to facilitate communication and interaction with them.
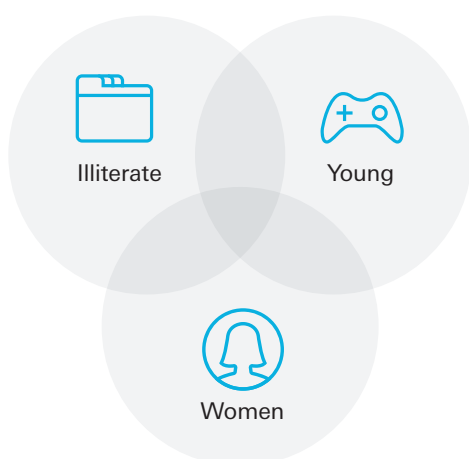

🏛 Antwerp Centre for Minorities (Belgium)

In Antwerp, Roma mediators build bridges between the Roma and the societies where they live. They encourage constructive interaction and manage conflicts effectively. Through a focus on mediation within the school system, the Roma mediators encourage Roma to get an education and to participate positively in society.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the above policy recommendations, the following examples and visual tips are suggested:

LEARN ABOUT YOUR TARGET GROUPS

Policies can target either migrant or Roma populations as a whole, or instead target specific sections within these groups, who have specific needs with regards to access to employment, for instance in terms of training, education, etc.

Illiterate

Young

Women

"Orientation towards future prospects". A methodology for the counseling of undocumented migrants.

Antwerp Centre for Minorities (Belgium)

PARTICIPANTS

1| Day-to-day survivors: little time or mental space to reflect on their personal situation, evaluate, make plans

2| Myths and (false) hope: unrealistic prospects

3| 'Waiting for Godot': initial drive and dreams get drowned

4| Loss of control and dependence on 'higher forces': lawyer, Migration Administration, God

5| Feelings of failure and isolation

6| But also: strong, talented people

SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES

1| Empowerment: focus on the talents and strengths of the participants

2| Autonomy: put choice and responsibility in the hands of the participants

3| Counselor = coach: supports the reflection process by:

    3|1 providing correct and comprehensive information

    3|2 working on trust and recognition

    3|3 asking 'difficult' questions

    3|4 confronting and 'mirroring'

    3|5 visualizing pros and cons

INFORMATIVE AND REFLECTIVE GROUP EXERCISES

1| Information on residence status, labour rights, return (support programs), healthcare, education, voluntary work

2| Reflective exercises

    2|1 reconnection with the past (multi-layered identity, talents and strengths, initial dreams and ambitions)

    2|2 enlarge 'mental space'

    2|3 stimulate 'problem solving' and new strategies

3| Examples of the exercises:

    3|1 Drawing a lifeline

    3|2 Drawing a tree of life

Workshop with women from Moroccan origin users of social services.

County Council of Alt Empordà (Spain)

Participants

16 women

Duration

3 months
(9 sessions/1:30h. x week)

MAIN OBJECTIVES

1| Promote greater independance of women and empowerment.

2| Provide access to resources and facilities in the region.

3| Provide training in catalan language and computer skills.

HUMAN AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES

1| **Professionals:** Social educator, social worker and cultural mediator and professionals in labour issues.

2| **Public Space:** Community Center in Vilajuïga municipality.

3| **Report** for women with worked contents

CONTENT OF WORKING SESSIONS
topics suggested by participants

1| The administrative processes, public and labour resources of the municipality and the region.

2| Personal care and image in job search

3| Inmigration Law

4| Management of the domestic economy: energy saving, responsible purchasing.

5| Education of children: guidelines and conflict prevention.

6| Use of natural and seasonal products

7| Network with local association: Vilajuïga Tots x Tots

IMPACT

1| Positive evaluation of the participants.

2| Close ties with social services and municipality

3| Networking with local association

4| Participants put into practice knowledge acquired

5| Active participation of women in the second hand market of the municipality.

6| Awareness of the need of learning Catalan to access to the labour market.

7| Interest for training and learning in CIT and sewing courses.

8| Access to community orchards

Evaluation

STRENGTHS

1| Cohesion of the women's group.

2| Motivation of professionals.

3| Demand of continuity more focused on education issues

WEAKNESSES

1| Short duration of the workshop

2| Language difficulties

2.4 **Educational Challenges**
Language, Education and Literacy

One of the most significant obstacles faced by target groups consists of linguistic, educational and literacy-related issues. Except in cases like Nagykálló and Sofia, where Roma groups have inhabited the area for centuries, the active inclusion of migrants and Roma populations is seriously impeded by their lack of proficiency in the local language.

Their low educational attainment is another matter of concern, together with difficulties associated with the recognition of diplomas acquired in their country of origin: if it exists at all, the process of diploma recognition is usually very slow. Moreover, the (often very valuable) work experience of migrants in their countries of origin is not recognized either.

This all reinforces issues migrants/Roma groups face when trying to access information or knowledge. Finding a job or place to live is obviously even more complicated when one isn't fluent in the local language, even if relevant information is made available by municipal authorities or local social services. As a consequence, migrants and Roma populations generally lack job search skills. Admittedly, local authorities often provide language courses, but these alone tend to prove insufficient if the people following them don't practice outside the classroom, which is often the case. What's more, target groups are often not interested in dedicating time to education or training, which are not likely to solve their immediate concerns. As a result, the dropout percentage is usually quite high, and young people of migrant origin generally lack solid training.

Policy Recommendations

Tackling the Educational Challenges:
Invest in language, education, training
and improvement of job search skills

TAILOR LANGUAGE COURSES TO THE NEEDS AND COMPETENCE OF TARGET GROUPS

- Target 300-500 hours of language courses for the majority of migrants and simplify language courses offering (lack of clarity due to diversity of actors in language learning field).

- Provide incentives for municipalities, local government and language course providers.

- It is preferable to have combined language and labour market integration as part of a more comprehensive activation and integration strategy. Link language training to early work experience. Promote programmes oriented towards school-to-work transition pathways (apprenticeship).

INVEST IN EDUCATION

- Invest in education for children of migrants or Roma population: Early intervention has proved very effective for the integration of children.

- When possible, introduce elements of affirmative action into the education and schooling systems.

The Development Agency of Santa Cruz de Tenerife (Spain)

In Santa Cruz, Spain, a project for promoting new strategies and tools for favouring employment has been set up. It provides individualized guidance on employment and training; support to schools in the area; a group training course on motivations; development of computer skills for active job search; dissemination of job offers and training; networking; creation of opportunities for cooperation between professionals; training activities aimed at professional areas; work and employment agency survey.

- Work needs to be done specifically with parents in order to make them more aware of the importance of education and training, so that they will not want their children to drop out of school.

- Set up a wider range of vocational courses and greater accessibility to these courses, for example by applying policies that reduce the fees for these courses.

Nieuwegein (Netherlands)

In Nieuwegein in the Netherlands, efforts have been made to also enforce the compulsory education law on Roma children. Schools have also been requested to inform the municipality on the absence of Roma children, just like any other child. In such cases, education officers contact the parents and/or child (depending on the age), and try to convince them to send their child to school. If they don't cooperate, as is the regular procedure in the Netherlands, officers are entitled to report them to the courts, and the judge can either fine them or (in the worst case scenario) send one of the parents to jail. The idea is to combine measures of care/help with instruments of enforcement to stimulate school participation by (Roma) children.

🏛 County Council of Alt Empordà (Spain)

The Okup`Alt programme in Alt Empordà, Spain focuses on accompanying young people who are early school leavers through the process of training & integration into the labour market, to avoid dangerous behavior & social exclusion. It aims to provide a resource for young people aged 16 to 18 who have not passed compulsory education, enabling them to continue their education & acquire knowledge and skills to assist their insertion into the labour market. The project enables young people to train in different trades as an alternative to unemployment and as a strategy to get a job. The project is aimed at all young people in the region regardless of their sex, nationality or origin. Training groups are tailored to the employment needs of the region. One of the general aims of the programme is to decrease the percentage of young people who neither study nor work.

PUT THE STRESS ON TRAINING

👍 Adjust training courses to the characteristics of the groups they address (e.g. people with limited study experience, few relational and economic resources, etc.). Propose reduced rates for training courses to facilitate the participation of people with limited incomes and provide incentives to young people of migrant origin.

👍 Organize welcome and training sessions for migrants where they can meet with citizens of migrant origin living in the country, in order to exchange their experiences.

👍 Develop programs for the employment of young people who have had little training. Promote enterprise-based training for migrants and their offspring.

👍 Pay more attention to those with little or no education. By providing, for example, company-based training, employment agency work and mentorships.

👍 Favour individual mentoring. First give general training in seeking a job, then more specialized information on specific activity fields.

👍 To get immigrants rapidly integrated into the labour market, provide a stepwise introduction into the labour market through a sequence of language training, on-the-job training and possibly subsidized employment.

🏛 Newry and Mourne District Council (UK)

The Challenge of Change Programme in Newry and Mourne in Northern Ireland developed a project called "Communities Together." This was a mentoring programme. Members of the migrant community were teamed with members of the Indigenous community, who helped the newcomers settle into their new home. They visited places of local interest and learned about each other's cultures.

🏛 The University of Latvia (Latvia)

Latvia is currently implementing targeted active labour market policy (ALMP) measures to promote youth employment, with the aim to provide opportunities to young unemployed people to acquire their first work experience and, simultaneously, foster their long-term inclusion in the labour market. Another of the main aims in Latvia is building a competitive education system, which plays a key role in ensuring successful integration of young people into the labour market, and fosters a full use of their potential to the benefit of the national economy.

ENHANCE RECOGNITION OF DIPLOMA & OF PAST WORK EXPERIENCE

👍 People holding advanced diplomas often play a key role, but it's not a good idea to place too much importance on diplomas: competence, expertise and accumulated knowledge might be far more important.

👍 Promote better use of the qualifications of immigrants, and implement programmes or measures to promote the migration of the highly skilled. Shift from an approach focused on diplomas to one focusing on assets and competences, and enhance the accreditation of prior learning.

👍 Improve transparency regarding the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications and skills.

🏢 The Province of Padua (Italy)

In Padua, one project, implemented together with other provinces and the Veneto Region, foresees individual & small group services (up to 16 hours of individual support) for migrants, which includes training on labour market & types of contracts, skills assessment (formal, informal & non-formal learning acquired both in the country of origin and on–the-job), and techniques for active job search, interviews, etc. It targets migrants who have lost their job or are seeking first employment (especially women or young people), and who are registered with the public employment services. Expert coaches not only provide guidance to unemployed migrants, but also play a mentoring role to civil servants of public employment services to increase their capacity to deal with these groups, by learning intercultural competences and the ability to better respond to the needs of these groups.

On Education and prevention of early school leaving

🏢 The Province of Padua (Italy)

The importance of early school inclusion for children of migrant origins, and guidance on their future choices, has been recognized since 2004 in Padua. Funded by regional funds for integration and school guidance, and through the collaboration of a vocational school (CIOFS), an NGO working with migrants, the Municipality of Padua and the police department working on admissions, the "School Information Office" has been set up and is currently offering services to parents and children aged 14-18 who have been reunited with their families. The desk is open weekly under the care the migrant service centre, a one-stop-office for all migrants.

The service consists of an initial meeting to inform the family requesting family reunification with minors abroad; a number of meetings with the newly arrived student; support with the initial contact with the local secondary school system; enrolment in Italian-as-a-second-language courses. When requested, the service also operates in schools, by providing re-orientation and guidance for migrant students already enrolled in the first level of secondary school and whose choices appear inadequate. About 150-200 families use the service each year.

Here is an example of an initiative developed in Antwerp, which follows these principles and recommendations:

Orientation towards future prospects
A methodology for the counseling of undocumented migrants.

Antwerp Centre for Minorities (Belgium)

THE FUTURE OF UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS CAN BE CATEGORIZED INTO 4 POSSIBILITIES:

RETURN TO THEIR HOME COUNTRY	MOVE ON TOWARDS A NEW COUNTRY (Legally or Illegally)	STAY HERE IN AN UNDOCUMENTED (illegal) SITUATION	LEGALISE THEIR STAY

A course is organized for undocumented migrants, where they will be asked to reflect on their situation and guided towards a more conscious choice about their future.

The profile of the participants in these group sessions is roughly the same. They are day-to-day survivors and have little time or mental space to reflect on their personal situation, to evaluate, to make plans… They have unrealistic prospects and their decisions are influenced by myths and (false) hope. Initial drive and dreams get drowned and they lose control of their situation. They start to depend on higher forces or exterior situations: their lawyer, the Migration Administration, God… Feelings of failure and isolation take over.

But they are also strong, talented people with strengths and possibilities – and those capacities will be put to work during the course.

The basic principles of the course are:

1. Empowerment: focus on talents and strengths of the participants

2. Autonomy: choice and responsibility in the hands of the participants

3. Counselor = coach: supports the reflection process by:

a| providing correct and comprehensive information

b| working on trust and recognition

c| asking 'difficult' questions

d| confronting and 'mirroring'

e| visualizing pros and cons.

The course consists of a series of informative and reflective group exercises. Information will be given on residence status, labour rights, return (support programs), healthcare, education, voluntary work… So the participants have correct and full information on which to base their decisions.

The reflective exercises (e.g. drawing a life line, drawing a tree of life, etc.) are intended to make the participants reconnect with their past (multi-layered identity, talents and strengths, initial dreams and ambitions), to enlarge their 'mental space' and to stimulate 'problem solving' and new strategies. The dreams and goals of participants are analysed, and empowering exercises are aimed at making them realize their identity is more than just being an undocumented person.

As an outcome of the course, participants have a clearer view of their strengths, the available choices and the possibilities ahead of them.

2.5 Competences Challenges

Acting with limited competences

Even when local authorities are the first to feel the consequences of a lack of active inclusion of migrant and/or Roma groups, they usually don't have the competences to design and implement relevant policies in this field, which often lie within the portfolio of regional or national authorities.

Local authorities also have very limited leeway when it comes to devising and implementing integration and inclusion policies. As even if they have, as in some cases, the right to design their own programs, they are still constrained by national frameworks, which determine the general direction and philosophy of integration policies. For example, in many cases local authorities do not have the right to target tackling the needs of specific groups such as migrants or Roma populations, and may only implement general policies that apply to the whole population. This often puts them at odds with both their citizens, and the migrant/Roma communities who often hold them responsible for (the lack of) decisions they are in fact not allowed to make. Thus what seems obvious to those working in the field (namely, that inclusion happens first and foremost locally) is not yet fully reflected in policies, thereby often putting local authorities in an awkward position.

Legal challenges faced by target groups. These various difficulties are also often fed by legal constraints which, by preventing migrants from getting an official job and/or to move around in order to find one, further hamper their integration in the community. In a kind of Kafkaesque situation, migrants are often asked to have a job to be granted a residence permit, but a residence permit is often necessary to find a job.

In addition to the difficulties listed above associated with the recognition of diplomas and qualifications obtained in their country of origin, migrants often struggle to validate their previous work experience, which sometimes doesn't have any equivalent in the countries where they have settled or was too informal to be taken seriously by potential employers.

However one should always keep in mind that there is a great variation across communities and groups, for instance between Roma from Macedonia and Roma from Kosovo, between migrants from Central & Eastern Europe and migrants from North Africa. Each of these groups may face different situations on the ground, suggesting that a "one-fits-all" type solution is unlikely to succeed. ⊗

🏢 Mittelhessischer Bildungsverband e.V.(Germany)

In Germany, the Ministers of the Interior and local agencies for aliens have been working together to ease the situation of refugees, who often live for years tolerated but with reduced access to the labour market. A programme was set up in 2011 with the two-fold objective of granting these refugees temporary residence permits with an equal access to the labour market and including them in national integration efforts. Especially with regards to language skills and assimilation policies. This programme has also been implemented in Göttingen, specifically targeting the Roma community.

Policy Recommendations

Build a common front with other concerned local authorities

JOIN FORCES WITH OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- Exchange knowledge and experiences with other local authorities on Roma and migrant issues.

- Discuss bottlenecks in policy and practice.

- Cooperation and lobby the national government.

- Attract the attention of the national government, raise awareness of the plight of local authorities, and attract financial resources.

- Raise the awareness of the national media on this issue, and on initiatives taken by local authorities in order to exchange knowledge and collaborate.

Municipality of Nagykálló in Hungary

Since 2008, several Dutch municipalities exchange knowledge & recognition on Roma issues. This cooperation was formalized in 2009 in the Platform for Roma-municipalities of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) in which 12 municipalities housing residents with a Roma background participate. It meets 4 times a year. Since the start of the Platform positive progress has been made in cooperation between the state & the municipalities. In October 2009 the Ministers of Integration & Education announced that they were willing to give the Roma municipalities €600.000 in 2010 so they can improve the quality of the municipal capacity to improve the schooling of Roma children. Representatives of mayors of Roma municipalities meet with the Ministers of Security & Justice and Social Affairs & Integration twice a year, to discuss progress and bottlenecks at the local level. Both ministers have to report to the Dutch parliament on the progress of their programme.

Here is an example of an initiative developed in Alt Empordà, which follows these principles and recommendations:

Generating collaborations and exchanging experiences between local agents

County Council of Alt Empordà (Spain)

Under the Labour Plus project, Alt Empordà County Council organized a training day in Figueres on June 2014 about Managing Diversity as part of the exchange of good practice with the municipality of Nieuwegein.

The Alt Empordà team translated the principles and methodologies developed in the Netherlands to their local situation, and organized a training day targeting local professionals and key stakeholders from different areas of intervention, such as labour market, education, social welfare, health, culture, participation, as well as associations, sport and the media.

This training session, clearly geared to promoting awareness about intercultural diversity management at the local level, facilitated a comprehensive view of how to manage diversity that aimed to share principles, methodologies and challenges amongst local agencies, and promote greater awareness amongst all citizens.

During the course of the training day, the video "Plural Perspectives: Managing Diversity in Alt Emporda" was shown. This showed various stakeholders in the region and was designed to strengthen this comprehensive view of diversity. In order to underline the contents of the training day, the Alt Empordà team also presented the publication "Plural Perspectives: Managing Diversity in Alt Empordà", which included contributions from the trainers of Alt Empordà and Nieuwegein, the experience of Nieuwegein and the eight key experiences from Alt Empordà on Managing Diversity were also collected and shown in the video.

3 Main policies developed at local level and lessons learned

3.1 Inventory of main types of local policies for inclusion of migrants

This inventory is based on practices observed in the various cases covered by the LABOUR PLUS project.

Great variety of active inclusion policies and various understandings of 'active inclusion'

Throughout Europe, there is a predominance of inclusive policies, and broadly an abandonment of multicultural options.

There is a great segmentation of policies, and very few integrated strategies towards the inclusion of migrants and Roma populations.

The stress is often put on "practical" aspects of inclusion (housing, employment, education).

There is a great flexibility in practices, which are more flexible than political discourse might suggest.

Most implemented policies are problem-oriented (e.g. "unemployment" or "housing"), rather than population-oriented (e.g. "young people with migrant origins"). This approach has not proved very fruitful in the case of Roma populations, who experience lots of problems simultaneously, but seems to suit other communities better.

The main focus is often put on the economic and educational dimensions of inclusion.

The socio-cultural aspects of active inclusion are not forgotten, but often downplayed.

Most of the time, actions target individuals and not communities; though there have been some steps forward in taking stock of the community dimension of individual integration.

General characteristics of integration and labour inclusion policies

Inclusion policies are on average less developed in the fields of mobility, but also in housing and language.

On average, local authorities "invest" the most in social relations/participation, employment and education.

These policies include a series of actions targeting the individuals such as educational and training activities, language courses, information or interpretation services.

Integration policies are targeted at various public groups, mainly individuals, and in a few cases at various agencies relevant in the field of labour inclusion (e.g. business and schools).

Some of these policies include actions targeting the environment such as stimulation, urban rehabilitation or promotion of low-threshold employment.

They also include a series of liaising actions in the field of labour inclusion, such as mediation, cooperation with NGOs, media, business, schools.

3.2 Lessons learned and main weaknesses

A few examples of identified good practices

Strategic training plan sponsored to capture the business needs in terms of training of the workforce in strategic sectors of the country

Specific training sessions on legislative changes affecting those groups

Welcoming services for individual and groups of the foreign-born population, with specific advice on employment and job searching

First experiences of community work done in area of education (schools and colleges) with youth of immigrant origin

Main difficulties and shortcomings of existing employment programs

Various levels (individual, group, societal) relevant to integration are often not addressed in a systematic and coordinated way

Individualized approaches that are adopted often don't take into account the close environment (family, networks...), which is particularly important for Roma communities, but also for most other migrant communities

Absence of targeted mechanisms, programs and services designed for specific migrant population groups. Most programs and services have a generic and universal approach

In cases where the target group is Roma, local policies often treat them as a unified group, when in fact there are quite important differences between Roma, in particular by geographic origin

Lack of individual monitoring and support to citizens in their job search efforts and in their training programs

Organizational and institutional issues

Collaboration between government and social organizations is in many cases decreasing due to decreasing financial resources

Non-existing relationship or collaboration between public authorities and business in programs for labour inclusion of people of migrant origin

Lack of joint-working culture between public authorities with similar programs and services

Little cooperation between management areas to define cross-cutting programs for Roma or people of migrant origin

Lack of institutional resources decentralized at the local authority level

Labour Plus

labourplus.eu/