

REPORT ON BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Cross-country evaluation report of best practices and lessons learned
of welcoming spaces and initiatives in shrinking areas of Europe



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Acknowledgements

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Deliverable D6.3 Evaluation report of the best practices and lessons learned concerning 'welcoming spaces' in the five selected countries

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Photo from one of the events of the Welcoming Spaces project in Saalfeld, Germany. / Photo by: Plattform e.V.



Foreword



WELCOMING SPACES

NETHERLANDS
SPAIN
ITALY
POLAND
GERMANY

The project "Investing in 'Welcoming Spaces' in Europe: revitalizing shrinking areas by hosting non-EU migrants" (Welcoming Spaces), funded by the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, has been implemented during four years in five European countries: the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Poland and Germany.

During the entire course of the project, intensive field research has been carried out to gain a further understanding of the reality of migrant integration in shrinking regions and to find so-called 'welcoming spaces'. Furthermore, different activities, workshops and events organised within the project have sought to change narratives, foster dialogues and create meeting spaces. All this has entailed a process of continuous learning on the part of all the people who have been involved in the project and the lessons learned are precisely what is reflected in this report, since we can all learn from others.

With this report we also hope to leave a record of our own good practices within the project and give visibility to those initiatives, actions and approaches that we consider to be successful and worthy of being shared, replicated and transferred to other projects and regions by other stakeholders, practitioners, associations and other entities that are interested in working and doing research in the field of migrant integration in rural and shrinking regions.

We hope that it will inspire and spark new ideas for all of you.





Research Fieldwork

In the framework of the Welcoming Spaces project, research teams from five universities in different European countries have carried out fieldwork to investigate various localities and initiatives that have been identified as “welcoming” on the basis of a number of indicators. The University of Utrecht (Netherlands), the University of A Coruña (Spain), the University of Bologna (Italy), the SGH Warsaw School of Economics (Poland), and the University of Siegen (Germany) undertook fieldwork to better understand local contexts and dynamics involved in migrant integration from different points of view.

The fieldwork was conducted by the different research teams of those universities in order to identify and analyse the characteristics of the initiatives that can be considered “welcoming”. Some teams have also used the fieldwork to delve into more specific issues such as the influence of the political configuration of the region and country in the culture of reception and measures in place for the integration of migrants, existing narratives on migration flows, etc.

Fieldwork gives rise to all kinds of encounters, experiences, unforeseen events and anecdotes from which much can be learned for future research.

Best practices



- Trusting organisations that have the know-how, expertise and contacts in the territory when planning the fieldwork.
- Establishing a set of shared criteria among the regions and/or countries to be studied to facilitate future comparative analyses.
- Organising focus groups, whenever the circumstances allow it, given that they provide the opportunity to bring together different agents and generate spaces (even if ephemeral) for listening to different opinions and experiences.
- Considering the possibility of conducting “walking interviews” in order to explore people’s spaces and trajectories, and reduce power imbalances.
- Adapting the language and vocabulary used (avoid jargon and anglicisms) during interviews so that interviewees better understand the questions or issues raised.
- Interviewing all types of people relevant to the research, regardless of the language barriers. Even if the interviews need to be translated, this allows to get to testimonies that would otherwise be silenced.
- Being very aware of who the translator is, that is to say if it is another person from the community due to privacy issues, or if he/she can insert more power imbalances to the interview itself by belonging to a specific institution, organisation, etc.



*Picture of a mural in Camini (Italy).
Photo by: University of Bologna*

Lessons learned



- The collaboration of universities with social organisations in the territories to be researched is crucial when it comes to establishing contacts and organising the fieldwork.
- The people and institutions that are the subjects of academic research often want to see the final results of such research, so it is important to make them available to them, if possible in their language.
- When publishing research findings, several factors have to be taken into account, such as the verbatim quotations of the interviewees, in order to avoid exposing them in their own municipality because of their statements. Therefore, confidentiality of sources is essential.
- Be aware that in many municipalities, mayors have other jobs in addition to leading the town hall and this affects their availability. Moreover, many different entities contact municipalities, as well as associations and individuals, so we run the risk of burning out the contacts.
- Organising focus groups requires a lot of contact with key stakeholders and a lot of prior preparation.
- Terms such as “devitalisation”, “emplacement”, “newcomer”, etc. were difficult to apply in the interviews, as they were different from the terms normally used by the general population, such as “depopulation”, “integration”, etc.
- In case the research team does not know the language of the country or region where the fieldwork will be carried out, it is crucial that some kind of interpretation service is organised, even if on an informal basis (if the project budget does not allow otherwise). The information collected and the results may vary considerably if this is not taken into consideration well in advance.
- Consider the possibility of interviewing people who have already left rural municipalities, in order to understand the key issues and to be able to compare with those who have stayed.



Group photo of some of the participants of the Welcoming Spaces conference in Saalfeld in September 2022. / Photo by: Plattform e.V.



Events

Events are the perfect occasion to share information, disseminate project findings and observations, learn from others, and create and strengthen networks of contacts. In recent years there has been a significant increase in events in online format that have facilitated the meeting of people, especially from different countries. Yet, face-to-face events always allow for a higher level of connection and interaction, hallway conversations, and exchange of ideas during coffee breaks, from which interesting and inspiring ideas and insights can be drawn.

Both societal partners and academic partners of the Welcoming Spaces have organised meaningful events with stakeholders and local practitioners in the five project countries, both online and onsite. These events have been primarily aimed at identifying best practices and lessons learned with regard to 'welcoming initiatives' and have included stakeholder meetings, debates, festivals, and field visits to 'welcoming spaces' in shrinking regions.

Furthermore, project partners have also participated in events organised by other institutions and in the framework of other European projects that have also dealt with the integration of migrants, rural development, etc. Participation in external events made it possible to see progress and findings in other contexts and to keep up to date with the latest research developments in these fields. Projects and initiatives are not independent and isolated. In many cases, they share many similarities and common lines of work that can be mutually enriching.

In this section we share some of the good practices identified and lessons learned through the organisation of seminars, workshops and conferences and participation in various events both online and onsite.

Best practices



Community-based engagement

- Fostering a whole-of-community approach based on the engagement of all local actors including residents and the business community.
- **Create an atmosphere of trust and openness for people to express their opinions and ideas and participate in the organisation process of activities. When people feel heard and empowered, they are more likely to start further projects and activities on their own initiative and commit to the society and the area they live in.**
- Always try to make the activities as intergenerational as possible and certainly bring and involve the younger generations to take ownership of the process of change.



Working groups at one of the project events in Altenburg, Germany. / Photo by: Plattform e.V.

Support for rural areas

- Implementing 'rural proofing', a commitment by governments to review and examine all public policies to try to ensure that they do not have a negative impact on rural areas. It is one of the transversal elements outlined in the EU Long Term Vision for Rural Areas.
- Providing support and advice to small municipalities with difficulties in participating in national and regional programmes and getting access to resources for migrant integration and local development.
- Promoting local development of inner areas based on enhancement of local services and connections rather than on mere regentrification and touristification: bringing back residents alongside tourists.
- Enhancing the urban-rural relations given that cities are strategic nodes for employment and services, and therefore, "isolated development" of inner areas could be not sustainable.
- Generating new imaginaries about inner areas and the contribution of migrants to their development: avoiding either romantic or marginalising narratives.

Knowledge and know-how

- Valuing different types of knowledge and know-how, from academic to social work, from business owners and entrepreneurs to migrants, allowing the co-construction of a different and new imaginary.
- Creating the conditions for tapping into the innovative potentials of newcomers for local development.
- Organising meetings and gatherings in rural areas in order to make the most of the existing resources in smaller and more remote municipalities, even if this implies more complex logistics. There is no better place than the rural context to discuss issues on rural development, the demographic challenge and the integration of migrants in "shrinking regions".
- Including activities where migrants can showcase their knowledge, talents and skills and show others what they are capable of and even find common ground with local people and encourage activities that bring local people and migrants together for common projects (for example, fashion show presenting self-designed styles collaboratively created between the migrant community and a local fashion designer).

Municipalities need to consider how their inhabitants (both local and migrant) can flourish based on their individual talents and background, to assess where their talents are most needed and, above all, to implement concrete actions to encourage them.



Group photo of the participants of the International PhD School on Migration and Socioecological Change during the field visit to the municipality of San Esteban de Gormaz, Soria (Spain) / Photo by: Welcoming Spaces

Lessons learned



Engagement, participation and commitment

- The inclusive and open-minded attitude of key local actors towards the local migrant community has an empowering effect.
- Telephone support provided by cultural mediators to migrants and social workers in order to facilitate the interaction between them.
- To ensure successful integration, participation should be encouraged in leisure, sports and other community-building activities.
- Physical-social space and having a clear reason for meeting is particularly necessary in order to initiate an encounter between locals and migrants.
- Artistic activities that are a creative fusion and melting pot serve as places of encounter and mutual inspiration.
- Self-sufficiency, self-management and agency of migrants must be prioritised and encouraged.
- Outreach activities, including cultural public events, should be enhanced since they may become great opportunities to provide information on services and good integration measures to engage all residents.
- Promoting dialogue and exchange of experiences between different collectives and different types of knowledge (academic and non-academic) is crucial for the convergence and connection of theory and research with practice and the day-to-day life of people in the field.
- Communities need to be aware that migration flows are a natural phenomenon and that people constantly come and go. Keeping this in mind is crucial in order to avoid frustration and abandoning certain welcoming initiatives when people leave. What is important is to enjoy and benefit as much as possible from the presence of people while they are part of the community.

Bridging the digital and transport gap

- A mixed approach to digitalisation can be adopted with info points providing device-sharing and support to access digital services.
- Employing “digital mediators” and including digital components in education and vocational training on a systematic basis can help bridge digital and cultural gaps.
- There is the possibility of enhancing transports through economic support to buy tickets or innovative solutions such as social taxi.

Local policies and long-term implementation

- Public authorities are difficult to control since they are highly dependent on the political momentum at any given time.
- Due to the dependence on grant financing and the politicisation of calls for grants financed with public funds, organisations working with migrants often have to significantly limit their activities only to places with the greatest number of foreigners, that is to say, large cities.
- The media play a key role in the coverage of migration-related matters and can be an ally or, on the contrary, foster an atmosphere of mistrust and fear towards foreigners and even set the society against organisations working with migrants. This, coupled with a lack of interest and support from public authorities and governments, makes it impossible to achieve lasting effects in local communities.
- Importance of putting in place policies at local level that benefit all the inhabitants of each municipality (migrants and non-migrants), while having measures at supra-local level that take into account the particularities of each group.
- There are already people and initiatives that have created welcoming spaces for migrants in rural and shrinking areas. However, it is not always easy to transfer and replicate an initiative to a different municipality.

Photovoice

The photovoice methodology was developed by Wang and Burris in 1997 and it is extremely useful for conducting visual research through the photographs taken and selected by participants as they can reflect upon the images and explore different emotions and experiences.

In the framework of the Welcoming Spaces project, the photovoice methodology was implemented in workshops carried out in various localities of the five project countries. In the two-day photo workshops in Altenburg (Germany), Bedum (The Netherlands), Camini (Italy), Lomza (Poland) and Talayuela (Spain), we delved into the question of “welcoming spaces” together with newcomers and long-term residents.



Picture of the photojournalist Álvaro Minguito teaching the use of professional cameras to some of the participants of the photovoice workshop in Talayuela, Spain. / Photo by: Irene Almazán

During the workshops, two creative and visual methods were adopted: space mapping (using different colours to represent specific types of spaces i.e. welcoming, non-welcoming, home, etc.) and photovoice. The workshops paid particular attention to the dynamics between long-term residents and migrants and the co-creation of imaginaries and sense of belonging in the communities. Thus, the research became a process of “collective learning”. Rather than simply representing human experience, the creative process of photography also allowed the understanding of the perceptions of the participants on the spaces related to their daily life in the locality, their sense of belonging (or not), their projects for the future and their individual and collective aspirations.

This type of activity aimed to understand how people associate emotions with specific rural places or even how they create their own “subjective” rural experiences. This can lead to interesting conversations on how to regenerate municipalities in shrinking areas to be more sensitive to the wellbeing of their population, both migrant and local.

All the images taken and the maps elaborated in the framework of the photovoice workshops are available in the digital book edited by the Welcoming Spaces project.



SCAN ME



Picture taken during the photovoice workshop in Talayuela, Spain.
Title: La centralita / Photo by: Asmáa al-Mustafa

Best practices



- The workshops were planned to involve both migrant and local people, in order to have as many perspectives as possible, and to be able to make a better comparison of the different points of view.
- The voices of the participants were amplified through the use of simple tools, such as drawing with markers of different colours or using the camera in automatic mode, and managed to create complex meanings through an alternative reading of space and the participants' relations with the village.
- Including a space for collective reflections and sharing of impressions to give participants the possibility to explain in their own words the reasoning behind the maps they have made and the images they have taken.
- Making a travelling exhibition of the pictures selected in each photovoice workshop in the countries where they were taken and beyond.
- Inviting some of the participants of the photovoice workshops to the opening of the exhibition to explain their perspective and experience. Having their first-hand testimony gives a greater dimension to the project because they are the ones who have actually lived the experience and they themselves can see the impact and scope of what they have reflected in their images.
- Collaborating with relevant stakeholders to conduct the photovoice workshop based on the context in which it takes place and establish strategic contacts. For example, one of the workshops was delivered by a photojournalist committed to the cause of migrants and refugees, and another was facilitated by students from the New Media Arts department of a local university.
- The idea of collecting the photos was also intended to give something tangible back to the communities where the workshops were held.



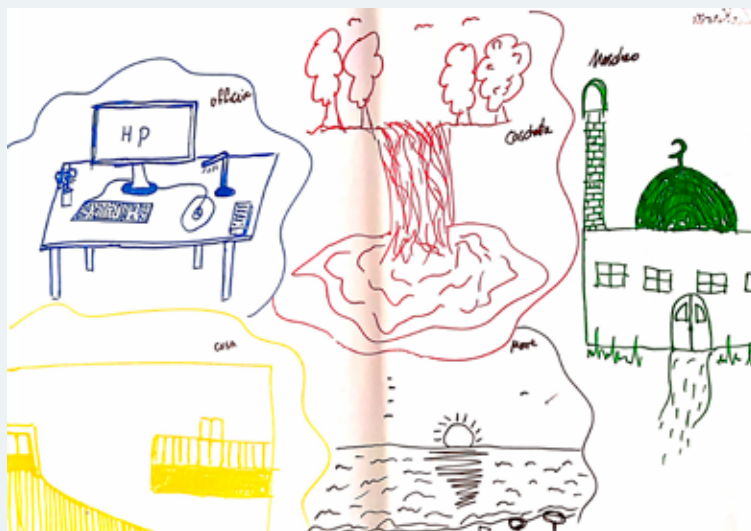
Photovoice exhibition at the Cidade da Cultura de Galicia (Santiago de Compostela, Spain) with the attendance of one of the participants of the photovoice workshop in Talayuela, Spain. / Photo by: Irene Almazán

Lessons learned



- Thanks to the crossover between visual elements (maps and photographs) and storytelling, the photovoice workshops brought out hidden and unexpected outcomes.
- The concept of a map varies from person to person and in many cases is not limited to the strict concept of a geographical map. This variety of visions and ways of understanding the concept of map is in itself enriching.
- This type of research method has allowed to unveil information and foster the exchange of experiences in an easier and smoother way compared to direct interviews.
- The 'welcoming' and 'unwelcoming' spaces that emerged during the various workshops were of a different nature and covered various spatial and temporal levels. That is to say, spaces of the past intertwined with spaces of the present and future, spaces marked by social relationships contrasted spaces of solitude, etc.
- The tools used were able to overcome the language barriers that often hinder dialogue in other cases.
- Thanks to the creation of a 'safe place' where everyone felt represented, the workshop enabled to unlock memories and stir up emotions.

Example of a map drafted by one of the participants of the photovoice workshop in Camini, Italy. Each colour represents different types of spaces and the person's relationship with them.





Festive opening of the photo-exhibition with residents, migrant newcomers, local organisations, artists, professionals and formally opened by the mayor in the community cultural centre of Het Hogeland (Netherlands) / Photo by: Peter Russchen

Pilot projects

In the framework of the Welcoming Spaces project, two pilot projects have been carried out: a social theatre play and a series of activities following the photovoice methodology.

These pilot projects were designed to promote the development of 'welcoming spaces' through initiatives aimed at creating innovative meeting spaces for migrant and local populations in key municipalities already studied within the framework of the Welcoming Spaces project. When setting up the pilot projects, Fundación Cepaim and Utrecht University coordinated themselves to pool ideas for possible activities and approaches that could contribute to the objective of testing new forms of interaction and dialogue.

The purpose of pilot projects is precisely to test whether a new methodology and approach can work in a given context. The implementation of pilot projects is a very revealing process for all parties involved because you learn about what works and what doesn't, what contacts are needed to achieve it, how is the reception by the target group, etc. All of this, with both successes and challenges, allows to gather useful information for forthcoming activities and to demonstrate that carrying out such initiatives can be also interesting for other municipalities. Moreover, if everything goes well, it provides evidence to potential future funders that such initiatives can be more long-term, rather than one-off activities, if there is sufficient funding, and therefore have a greater impact in the areas where they are implemented.



convive

Desde 1994
trabajando
por la
convivencia



Pilot project in Spain

In Spain, a social theatre play was carried out by Fundación Cepaim in close collaboration with the Arab Women's Association of the municipality of San Esteban de Gormaz (2,910 inhabitants in 2022) in the province of Soria. We decided to carry out this activity after several brainstorming meetings with the women in which various possibilities were discussed, such as a mural painting, a comic book with intercultural stories and tales about their experiences or about any other topic they wanted to reflect, a cinema forum, etc.

The Arab women were given the possibility to perform the play themselves, but decided that it was better to have theatre professionals perform it. To this end, the members of the theatre company organised a workshop to learn about their stories and experiences as a way of brainstorming for the drafting of the theatre play. After some dynamics to create creative, friendly and non-judgmental space, the ideas began to flow.

The theatre play took place as part of an intercultural day against racism and xenophobia and was preceded by a photographic exhibition of objects that the Arab women of the association treasure from their countries of origin (clothing, handicrafts, cosmetic products, etc.). This exhibition was organised in the framework of another social project but served as the perfect presentation of the intercultural day to the population of the municipality and to encourage and remind people to attend the theatre play in the afternoon.

*Picture of the forum theatre performance
by "La Rueda" Teatro Social in
San Esteban de Gormaz, Soria (Spain).
Photo by: Irene Almazán*

Pilot project in the Netherlands

The process of designing the pilot project in the Netherlands started with a series of visits to the territories where there was a higher concentration of welcoming initiatives. The idea was to build a trust relation with the initiatives and the people from the municipalities by meeting with them and participating in different activities they organised. Besides, this allowed to identify the main issues they were struggling with and think of possible solutions. In the end, the workshops were organised in two localities: Bedum, in the municipality Het Hogeland, and Nederweert.

In Bedum, the Welcoming Spaces project co-organized a photography workshop that included different activities such as a photography and mapping session, an outdoor photography activity, a photoshoot and a brainstorm session to collectively work on designing a photo exhibition. In this pilot project, we worked together with Colourful Het Hogeland (a community-based initiative), the library and a local photographer. The workshops took place in the library and the catering service was organized by a local Dutch-Moluccan caterer. In Nederweert, the workshop activities were tailored to the local context in collaboration with the community-based initiative Link Nederweert.

The expected outcome of this project was to foster community-building, to strengthen relations with the municipality and to reframe migration debates with the help of visual methods. Although this pilot project was finally carried out in those two localities, throughout the organisational process, many new contacts were established with organisations and key stakeholders in other localities.



Picture of the participants in one of the photovoice workshops in Bedum, the Netherlands.

*Photo by:
University of Utrecht.*

Best practices



- Involving the migrant population in the design and implementation of the activity. It is recommended that they are involved from the very beginning in the choice of the activity itself to ensure that what is to be carried out matches their interests, talents, needs and concerns.
- Engaging as many local actors as possible and, above all, get the local authorities on board. This facilitates access to public spaces for the development of the activity, dissemination through official channels, and logistical support.
- Ensuring as much as possible the active participation of both the migrant and the local population so that all the phases of the activity are precisely a meeting space and a place of coexistence, understanding and exchange of experiences.
- As the person or entity promoting the activity, maintaining a facilitating role and avoiding the imposition of ideas. The more involved the participants are, the greater their sense of ownership and agency.
- Going beyond gastronomic and folkloric events to encourage the creation of intercultural spaces and explore innovative and novel initiatives that will have a greater long-term impact, raise more awareness and foster deep and meaningful dialogues.
- Setting meeting spaces encourages the possible creation of initiatives and even the emergence of new migrant-led associations. Migrants can learn from each other, especially the newcomers who can draw on the experience of those who have been in the country longer and who can use this as inspiration and guidance to organise themselves and create their own migrant-led movements.
- Using photography to point towards so-called 'domains of commonality', as defined by Çaglar & Glick Schiller, that are usually overlooked in migration debates which focus on integration, such as the use of and attachments to green and blue spaces like nature and rivers.



Picture of the workshop organised with the Arab Women's Association of the municipality of San Esteban de Gormaz to create the forum play together with two representatives of the theatre company "La Rueda" Teatro Social. / Photo by: Irene Almazán

Lessons learned



- It is important to get to know, and therefore use, the most appropriate dissemination channels for the audience you want to reach. To do this, it is crucial to identify the most effective channels beforehand and adapt the dissemination campaign accordingly.
- Assessing the possibility of collaborating with other projects to join forces, maximise resources and leverage existing ones to have a greater impact.
- There will always be external factors that cannot be controlled and that may affect the activities and cause unforeseen events. Therefore, it is vital to have alternative plans in place and to be highly adaptable.
- When contacting potential participants for activities and working and collaborating with other entities, it is important to be careful with how the information is transmitted, and make sure that it is clear, concise and does not give rise to misunderstandings or confusion. Therefore, as far as possible, it is best to try to contact potential participants directly and avoid intermediaries because information, often unintentionally, may get distorted and wrongly conveyed.
- When organising activities in which certain groups of people should be involved, it is important to be aware of their availability and to facilitate their participation as much as possible, either by adapting the times, the location, etc. For example, in case of working with women's groups, it is often still important to take into account the need to carry out the activity during school hours or to provide some sort of babysitting service.
- Contingencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic can severely affect smaller organisations and make it difficult for them to resume their activities, and restore previous dynamics and networks.



Group of people in a community garden in the locality of Saalfeld, Germany. / Photo by: Irene Almazán

Welcoming Initiatives

In the framework of the Welcoming Spaces project, the research teams from five European universities have studied potential 'welcoming initiatives' that favour the integration of migrants specifically in shrinking areas. Each team's research is available in their respective country report, but here we will include some of the most relevant good practices implemented and lessons learned. Some of these are more general observations based on common characteristics or approaches among various initiatives and others are particularities of specific initiatives. All of them are worthy of being shared in order to provide useful information for other stakeholders interested in these matters and who might consider undertaking similar initiatives in their municipality or region, or even giving support to any of them.

Overall, many initiatives revolve around the search for cultural encounters, socialisation points and learning the local language. They all seek to improve the integration process and strengthen the social fabric for the whole community. In other words, the focus on socialisation and contact with others is always present, because at the end of the day having friendships, forming bonds with others and feeling part of a group or a place is important for everyone regardless of their national background.

When analysing the welcoming initiatives, it can be seen that their regional and national context affects their very nature, implementation, target population, duration and focus. Some countries host higher numbers of asylum seekers and refugees, some have special ties with certain nationalities because of their cultural-historical links or because of their geographical proximity and borders, or some are in the midst of a demographic crisis, for example. The cases are many and varied, but the aims are definitely heading towards the same direction.

The Netherlands



In the Netherlands, the welcoming initiatives studied in the framework of the project are situated mostly in peripheral areas and regions that are facing a significant downfall in population and appeal to newcomers. Therefore, the main objective of the initiatives is the **channelling of the labour force, the access to housing and fostering integration processes.**

The initiatives that have been identified are involved in the organisation of a diverse range of activities, dynamization of the localities through culture, sports, language courses and other approaches that involve the integration of migrants. Some have established new spaces in the form of **international cafés** where a variety of intergenerational activities are hosted. They are usually grassroots-based or have a mixed model with the collaboration of local organisations and local governments.

Moreover, in the Netherlands -as in other European countries- there is a lack of labour force in some fields that are usually filled by migrants, such as the care sector. Therefore, a few of the analysed organisations focus on **job seeking and training** in order to help migrants find an employment and follow a specialised educational path, in line with the demands and needs of the labour market, thus guaranteeing a high rate of recruitment.



Three of the seven cultural connectors (Cultuurverbinders) in Achterhoek. / Photo by: Reinier van Willigen



Photos from some of the Taalcafé sessions organised by Leven Naast De Brouwerij / Photo by: Leven Naast De Brouwerij

Best practices



- Conducting needs assessments and identify sectors suffering from staff shortages as an employment opportunity for migrants. Some companies in the health sector select jobseekers directly in the country of origin. The Trigel Care initiative, for example, streamlines the search for personnel, their reception and support during the first year by offering accommodation.
- Creating spaces to feel at ease and welcome in the form of a thematic café to enhance discussions, meet people or learn about various topics. For example, “Leven Naast de Brouwerij” in Gulpen organises different meeting spaces, called cafés, on different topics such as Alzheimer, youth or languages, as well as a reparations workshop and creative evenings.
- Incorporating migrants as those responsible for the activities and not only as participants, as in the case of the RepairCafé of “Leven Naast de Brouwerij” in which there are Eritreans involved in carrying out the workshops.
- Searching for natural encounters between the migrants and locals so that everyone in the municipality gets to know each other organically.
- Offering programme with intergenerational activities and ensure its own long-term financial sustainability.
- Initiatives focused on socio-cultural dynamisation can offer themselves, as in the case of Cultuurverbinders, to carry out cultural activities on on commission. That is to say, they can be hired to organise projects or connecting thematic activities for organisations and clients.

colourful

HET HOGELAND

activiteiten verbinden mensen



*Colourful Het Hogeland, which has board members with different migrant backgrounds.
Photo by: Colourful Het Hogeland*

Lessons learned



- Collaboration and regular contact with the local press is crucial to disseminate the activities to be carried out and to give visibility to what is being done so that it is in the public domain. This can encourage more people to participate and even potential financial donors and partners.
- Locals can become fully involved in a project as volunteers if a sense of community and altruism is cultivated within the municipality.
- Take care of volunteers so that they feel involved in the activities and have a sense of belonging but avoid overburdening and overwhelming them with tasks of high responsibility or beyond their competencies.
- Have a clear mapping of the services and venues available in the locality and the surrounding area in order to be able to choose the spaces to organise activities accordingly.
- There should be a good balance between organising inclusive bottom-up meetups and providing information and support.
- Migrants also have interesting ideas, they just need support and advice to make them a reality.
- The fact that the coordinating team of some initiatives comes from a migrant background has made them sensitive to intercultural communication approaches.

Germany



In the case of Germany, it is worth noting that the initiatives are mainly located in peripheral areas of the Altenburg district in Thuringia and the Rhein-Hunsrück district in Rhineland-Palatinate. The first being East Germany and the second West Germany, they are regions which -although similar in size- have had a different historical, cultural and economic development in the last decades. Nevertheless, both states have worked out revitalisation strategies while being arrival places for migrants and asylum seekers, especially from 2015 onwards.

Several initiatives are led by NGOs, governments and citizens and they are all different in size, reach, goals, organizational form and target groups. It is important to bear in mind that, in Germany, migrants are categorised into recognised refugees, asylum seekers, people with a so-called "tolerance permit" ("duldung" in German) and people with a migration background.

The recent changes in governmental structures have encouraged the development of some integration policies and programs to foster a 'culture of welcome' such as integration and language courses, job seeking programs, socio-cultural participation, helpdesks and information centres. In addition, some municipalities have started a transformation of their own image by portraying themselves as open to diverse lifestyles and cultures.

The welcoming initiatives in Germany range from **sports and arts activities**, which bring migrants and locals together, to **education and human rights** matters that help integrate newcomers.



Marche des Parapluies (Umbrella March) organised by RLP Refugee Council (Flüchtlingsrat RLP) in which civi.kune also participated on the occasion of World Refugee Day, on June 20th, 2022. Photo by: civi.kune

Best practices



- Organising educational events for awareness-raising and bringing the culture of migrants closer to the general population, companies, educational centres, etc.
- Tenant trainings for migrants on issues related to house renting, interacting with landlords, utility bills, payments, etc.
- Building a safe, creative and active space to foster encounters, solidarity and mutual understanding.
- Explaining the importance of voluntary work and point out the opportunities it brings to oneself to stem the population exodus and promote acceptance and recognition towards non-Germans and refugees as well as their understanding of life in their own country, especially in rural areas.
- Futura e.V.-Integrationsbündnis Altenburger Land helps with the participation and promotion of youth fairs in the district since they consider that participation means having a say. In fact, in Thuringia, the participation of children and young people in local decisions is mandatory. What young people want for their environment will be discussed at the youth fairs by the adolescents together with representatives from the municipalities.
- Conducting eye-catching campaigns denouncing human rights violations against migrants to draw the attention of the population and authorities at different levels. Some organisations deal with right-wing extremism and populism, and group-based misanthropy, by strengthening democracy, diversity, tolerance and human rights-oriented culture.

The **Thuringia Refugee Council** (Flüchtlingsrat Thüringen e.V.) has created two awards.

Since 2000, the "Tip of the Iceberg" (formerly the prize for the greatest possible meanness) has been awarded to authorities, institutions or individuals who have made outstanding efforts to discriminate against and marginalise refugees.

Since 2007, "The Lighthouse" has been awarded on Refugee Day to people who have long and continuously campaigned for the rights of refugees and the improvement of their living conditions, who volunteer their time and often also invest money in order to provide concrete help.

Likewise, **KAUSA**, also in Thüringen, has launched in 2018 the "Unternehmen mit Kultur" (Companies with Culture) prize for entrepreneurs with a migration background, in order to publicly acknowledge and honour their entrepreneurial commitment in business and society and their role as role models.



"Spitze des Eisbergs" ("The tip of the iceberg") - Award granted annually by Flüchtlingsrat Thüringen e.V for the discrimination towards refugees. / Photo by: Flüchtlingsrat Thüringen e.V.



"Der Leuchtturm" ("The Lighthouse") - Award granted annually by Flüchtlingsrat Thüringen e.V for the commitment to the rights of refugees. / Photo by: Flüchtlingsrat Thüringen e.V.



Winners of the KAUSA Prize for Entrepreneurs with a Migration Background in September 2023. / Photo by: KAUSA-Landesstelle Thüringen

Lessons learned



- The importance of joining forces with other like-minded local entities to carry out joint activities that reach a larger population and optimise the use of resources.
- In the third sector, and specifically in organisations working with migrants, the role of volunteers is crucial. The involvement of people with awareness and willingness to change the world makes a big difference, especially in a sector with very limited resources to carry out its solidarity actions.
- The use of spaces should respond to the needs, interests and characteristics of a particular place. For instance, the Café International Büchenbeuren (see page XX) was originally intended to be a space for migrants to meet, and has been transformed into a meeting place for people of all ages and backgrounds
- A sports club as an instrument in social life and the associated club officials, including a trainer, are important factors for the cultural and linguistic integration of refugees into the local society.
- Sport, music and art are excellent connecting elements between people of different ages, backgrounds, etc. Creative activities are very helpful for children to forget their worries and fears, at least for a while.



Art activity organised by Verein zur Förderung aller Kulturen. / Photo by: Verein zur Förderung aller Kulturen

Cafés that bring people together

A typical and traditional meeting point as a café can become the core of social cohesion and knowledge in a municipality. Several initiatives in the Netherlands and Germany have launched cafés as meeting spaces that bring people together. Such initiatives are good and easily replicable activities held in open spaces with a win-win result, also for businesses.

NETHERLANDS

In Kastellaun, the **Caféterra** offers a space for meetings and activities, opportunities for counselling and exchanges on the constant issues of asylum law and options for assistance. For instance, the “Caféterra - Sewing for Everyday Life” course allowed participants to familiarise themselves with the sewing machine, learn how to thread, and how to work with different types of fabric. At the end of the course, the electric sewing machines were given to the participants to enable them to use the skills they had learned.

Cafés can generate spaces for knowledge exchange of all kinds. For example, **Leven Naast de Brouwerij** (Gulpen, Netherlands) organises cafés on various themes: Alzheimer café, repair café, youth, languages and cultural evenings.

In the RepairCafé of Leven Naast de Brouwerij, which is run by Eritrean migrants, participants repair all kinds of objects and give them a new lease of life. Thus, on a small scale and locally, they contribute to reducing waste and improving the environment. But above all, repairing together is fun and brings people together.

Thanks to **Taalcafé De Herberg**, Zeelanders and (former) refugees meet every two weeks to learn from each other in the Language Café (Taalcafé).



“Caféterra - Sewing for Everyday Life” course participants in Kastellaun. / Photo by: Westenergie



One of the sessions of the Language Café. Photo by: Provinciale Zeeuwse Courant



RepairCafé led by Eritrean migrants organised within the framework of Leven Naast de Brouwerij / Photo by: Leven Naast de Brouwerij

GERMANY

Café International Büchenbeuren also has different spaces given its intergenerational and intercultural nature: senior citizens' café, women's café, workshops for refugees, homework and toddler support, etc.

Schrankenlos e.V. in Nordhausen also organizes different types of cafés: sewing café, women's café, language café in the Weltladen Café and the local library. Moreover, the Weltladen Café offers dishes from all over the world, freshly cooked using organic and fair-trade ingredients.



Picture of one of the cultural activities held at the Weltladen Café by Schrankenlos e.V. / Photo by: Schrankenlos e.V.



Participants of the workshop on self-esteem for refugee women held by the State Centre for Political Education at the Café International Büchenbeuren. / Photo by: Café International Büchenbeuren



The phenomenon of depopulation in Spain continues to be an enduring issue due to limited job and life opportunities in rural areas and the persistent lack of public investment. In fact, the matter of depopulation has reached such prominence that it has entered the political sphere at regional and national level, since some citizens' platforms that denounce the neglect and abandonment of certain depopulated provinces by the government have established themselves as political parties.

Thus, many of the initiatives analysed seek to mitigate the population gap and to **dynamise the shrinking regions and attract newcomers**. Some of these practices are institutionalised through services financed by the town council and managed through third sector entities. Something noticeable in the case of the welcoming initiatives in Spain is that several of them are focused on attracting people who are willing to carry out their life project in rural and remote areas, regardless of their origin, that is, they are aimed at both migrants and nationals.

There is also a considerable number of **initiatives run by migrants**, many led by communities of the same nationality providing mutual support to one another. This type of initiatives is closely linked to the diaspora and the presence of large migrant communities with historical, cultural and linguistic ties to certain municipalities.

The studied welcoming initiatives are taking place in Galicia, depopulated areas in the centre of the country such as Soria and Teruel and some in southern Spain, mostly in Extremadura and Andalusia.

The documentary *Si ka badu, ka ta biradu* (If you don't go, you won't come back) shares the importance of the invisible work of migrant women in the survival and wellbeing of their families in the Galician town of Burela and the Cape Verdean island of Santiago.



SCAN ME

Batuko Tabanka, a cultural and social organization of the Cape-Verdean women in Galicia./ Photo by: Batuko Tabanka



Best practices



- Migrant-led organisations provide food, counselling, legal advice and basic information to newcomers from the same country. For instance, in some Galician municipalities, communities from Cape Verde, Venezuela, and Peru have created large support networks.
- In welcoming initiatives like Batuko Tabanka, migrants preserve and share the traditions of their countries of origin (i.e. music, dance, etc.) as a way of staying in touch with their roots and to raise awareness among the population of their host municipalities.
- Empowering migrants and fostering their agency and capacity to decide, choose and do things that suit their interests, abilities and needs. Sometimes they just need the tools to then spread their wings. This has a great impact on their self-esteem and self-confidence.
- For instance, there is a project called "Migrant Women: Inclusive communication and coexistence in local settings" run by the Association of Municipal and Citizen Broadcasters of Andalusia (EMA-RTV) and the Municipalities Fund for International Solidarity (FAMSI). The project includes training in the use of radio and audio-visual tools for migrant students. Moreover, they get the opportunity to produce and script a radio programme to address issues related to intercultural coexistence, equal opportunities and against xenophobia and racism.
- NGOs can take on the role of mediators with the local and regional authorities to guarantee the access of migrants to public services and avoid any problems due to language and cultural differences.
- Promoting rural employment raising awareness with companies in order to get job offers for migrants in rural areas. It is crucial to guarantee that job offers are always accompanied by a housing option.
- In the New Paths project (Nuevos Senderos) run by Fundación Cepaim, when sending the job and housing offer to prospective applicants, a "diagnosis of the territory" is attached, including information on transport options, distance to other key municipalities and available services (i.e. school, doctor's office, etc.). In this way, people can get a clearer picture of the context surrounding the job offer. Furthermore, specific training is provided to teach migrants about the characteristics, particularities, opportunities and also challenges of rural areas in Spain. Building and rehabilitating decent and affordable housing by town halls to ensure housing options for those interested in moving to rural areas. It is part of the commitment of some municipalities to attract newcomers.



*Participants of one of the workshops about rural areas, which is part of their socio-labour insertion itinerary.
Photo by: Fundación Cepaim*

- There are companies that are willing to train their workers of migrant origin by organising and paying for Spanish classes. They see it as an investment in their own company, given that the fact that their workers are better trained and improve their level of Spanish, then benefits the company because it improves productivity, the feeling of belonging to the company, etc.
- Building and rehabilitating decent and affordable housing by town halls to ensure housing options for those interested in moving to rural areas. It is part of the commitment of some municipalities to attract newcomers.
- Choosing rural areas as venues for events (i.e. conferences, concerts, etc.) is a way of encouraging the decentralisation of entertainment and leisure and boosting the local economy, as well as giving visibility to depopulated areas and the numerous challenges they face. In the locality of Arenillas in Soria (53 inhabitants in 2022), people come together for the “Boina Fest”.



School in the municipality of Camañas which has been kept open thanks to the attraction of newcomers. / Photo by: Diario de Teruel

Lessons learned



- Attracting families with children to rural areas requires access in the long term to certain services, especially related to education and work-life balance, which often cannot be guaranteed. Consequently, the likelihood of families leaving to meet their needs is higher.
- One of the main challenges in rural areas is the limited availability of decent housing. To this end, meetings can be held with the municipalities so that they can implement measures for rehabilitating housing, increasing the stock of municipal housing and offer it to newcomers.
- A “trampoline process” has been observed since newcomers (both nationals and migrants) arrive to rural areas and then move to another place, often due to family-related reasons or a regrouping process.
- In the urban context, there can be more reluctance to register migrants in the municipal census, while rural areas are not so hostile in this respect.
- Examples of barriers to entrepreneurship and bureaucratic hurdles have been observed, which reduce the possibilities for people to start a business or project of any kind.
- The dynamisation of a vegetable garden in Molina de Aragon has improved relations between people of different origins, and participants of migrant origin have identified it as one of the elements that motivates them to stay in the territory. Small actions can have a great impact!
- Newcomers working in resin extraction are an example of how a shrinking sector in a rural area can be revitalised with real results. In Quintana Redonda, the fact that there is a source of employment for both men and women immigrants is a key factor that favours the settlement of families. For example, the temporality experienced by migrant men working in the resin sector is compensated by the stability of women's employment at the local residence for elderly people.



Resin worker in the pine forest of Quintana Redonda (500 inhabitants aprox.) in the province of Soria, Spain. / Photo by: Keina Espiñeira



The case of Italy is very similar to that of Spain in terms of the concentration of welcoming initiatives in highly depopulated and remote areas. Italy is marked by territorial inequalities in social, health and integration services, some of them more historically rooted, such as the North-South inequalities, and others related to the regional autonomy in areas of public intervention.

What is interesting about the Italian initiatives is that several of them, apart from advocating for human rights, are related to **recover and preserve traditional sectors** (e.g. ceramics, traditional building techniques, etc.). At the same time having a strong link with **eco-sustainability** and the recycling and re-purposing of resources, such as materials and plots of land to give them a new use. Involving newcomers in those **traditional activities**, enables them to gain experience, and improve their stability and wellness.

In addition, it can be noted that among the welcoming initiatives in Italy there are several that are **social cooperatives**. In fact, there are more than 10,000 social cooperatives throughout Italy, mainly thanks to a 1991 law that fostered their creation by offering them preferential tax rates. Nowadays, social cooperatives represent the most prominent form of non-profit organizations operating in Italy in the field of social services. Evidently, its formation and development has been conditioned by the needs of the target population and the resources available in their regions.



Picture included in the "A new world" photographic book created by Eurocoop Jungi Mundu with the sponsorship of the Municipality of Camini and Sprar./ Photo by: Celestino Gagliardi

Best practices



- Elaborating and distributing local, fair trade labelled and organic products farmed with the participation of migrant workers looking for new opportunities. This makes it possible to offer a good alternative to the mainstream market with more sustainable, up-cycled materials reducing the carbon footprint and enhancing local market and creativity.
- For example, IAMME - liberi di scegliere has created its own ethical label and they give opportunities to victims of grey labour or "caporalato", a phenomenon conceptualised in Italy as a form of abusive intermediation in the placement of labour.
- Rehabilitating and giving a new life to abandoned buildings and uncultivated plots of land, and use them for housing, tourism or agricultural purposes. For example, K-PAX rehabilitated the Hotel Giardino, a small skiing resort in Breno that offers a unique job opportunity for young people seeking international protection and refugees.



Hotel Giardino, managed by the social cooperative K-PAX. / Photo by: Hotel Giardino

- Using ancient and traditional heritage for developing projects, dynamising the community and involving locals and migrants plus international volunteers. **Traditional activities can be a unique resource for improving social cohesion while the heritage preservation is strengthened.**
- Helping women victims of trafficking to settle and find a job, gain experience and build a social network.
- Creating and restoring spaces, thanks to crowdfunding or public funding, where people can learn, organise and host cultural events or share activities concerned with awareness-raising and mutual support.

Miledù - Cooperativa di Lavoro Impresa Sociale carries out maintenance work on gardens, farmland and woods in the Como area, on behalf of private and public bodies. Miledù also recovers and regenerates abandoned land, paths and dry stone walls in order to improve the attractiveness of the area, reduce the risks of hydrogeological instability and enhance the terraced landscapes that characterise the natural scenery of the Lake Como area.

Construction of a wall following the traditional dry stone building technique of the region, organised by Miledù. / Photo by: Miledù - Cooperativa di Lavoro Impresa Sociale.



Lessons learned



- Welcoming initiatives develop activities that are beneficial for the whole community, reducing potential conflicts and sustaining better paths for local development of shrinking areas.
- Welcoming initiatives can develop hybrid activities concerning political, social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects. The governance of the initiatives can open spaces for participation of the community (both migrants and older residents), thus sustaining processes of empowerment.
- The Italian reception system has many critical aspects. Although asylum seekers are free to work, they cannot choose in which reception centre they can be hosted.
- It is possible to challenge the principle of distribution assumed at the national level which concentrates the majority of asylum seekers and refugees in private facilities that often prove to be unsustainable.
- The Italian reception structures do not have sufficient resources to support all the activities and the personnel costs. Thus, a financial reform is needed in order to stabilise the internal budget of the organisations managing these structures.
- Over the years, social cooperatives have become key players in the Italian welfare system and social sector.
- Some welcoming initiatives are considering different ways to become less dependent to public funding and reach internal economic sustainability, for example by developing their own business activities.
- The primary sector has troubles in terms of labour rights and staff shortage, so initiatives focusing on these matters are crucial.
- Confiscated or abandoned lands are good assets to be used by newcomers for different kinds of projects and initiatives.



Migrants who manage the agricultural land of the Agri-Culture project in Acquaviva delle Fonti. / Photo by: Agri-Culture



Sale of products grown and harvested as part of the Agri-Culture project in Acquaviva delle Fonti. / Photo by: Agri-Culture

Poland



The migration phenomenon in Poland has its own idiosyncrasies. Poland has several refugee centres and it is precisely around them that several of the welcoming initiatives identified in the framework of the Welcoming Spaces project are located.

There are many initiatives run by NGOs, with the exception of some schools with programs for refugee children, that are being implemented due to their proximity to reception centres and some other municipal facilities. In general, the projects tend to encourage and support migrants in terms of **education, leisure time**, as well as the organisation of **events or language lessons, daily support and counselling**.

The initiatives in question are concentrated in the Podlaskie and Lublin voivodeships in the east of the country, bordering Belarus and Ukraine. The country's situation took a shift after the arrival of Ukrainian refugees due to the outbreak of the war with Russia. In Poland there are some controversies and confrontations in the political debate regarding the reception of migrants and foreigners so NGO's role is significantly relevant to tackle these matters and counter the main institutional discourse. In fact, as the research on the case studies has revealed, the long-term presence of an NGO in a given locality can enhance the integration of different groups and strengthen the overall social cohesion. Hence, it can be assumed that the third sector organisations replace some of the non-existing public services in Poland instead of complementing them.



Members of the dance group "Stars of Chechnya" (Gwiazdy Czechenii) in Lublin, Poland.
Photo by: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Wolontariatu

Best practices



- Empowering and training local leaders from migrant communities, i.e. children club in Kolonia Horbów, to teach their own culture and language within the diaspora and all that comes with it.
- Participating as an organisation in international volunteer programmes to host volunteers from other countries interested in contributing to activities for migrants, especially children.
- Specific activities for children of foreign and refugee families in the framework of schools, for example the provision of additional Polish language classes for refugee children to reduce the level gap some students might face.
- Organising interesting and entertaining activities aimed at supporting women and mothers, ensuring that their children are cared for, hence giving them a break from caregiving.
- Bringing together groups that, despite having different backgrounds, may share similar challenges. For instance, connect refugee women with women from rural communities, which are both marginalised groups.
- Selling handicraft and second-hand products as a form of self-financing for an organisation or a community of migrants. This enables an alternative way of art creation and promote fair-trade and sustainable products available in the local and online market.
- Collaborating with artists and craftspeople from all over Poland to organise workshops for migrants.



Women's meeting organised by Dla Ziemi in Trzebieszow, Poland. / Photo by: Stowarzyszenie dla Ziemi



Picture of one of the arts and crafts workshops for women organised by Stowarzyszenie Dla Ziemi at the Lukow Centre. / Photo by: Fundację Drzewo i Jutro

Lessons learned



- Legal assistance provided by NGOs for migrants is of great help for them since some local governments do not provide adequate information to foreigners or the administrative procedures are too complex and bureaucratic.
- Economic migrants differ from asylum seekers and their integration process and migration projects affect differently to the local society. Moreover, children and families hold a range of different needs.
- Craft and second-hand markets can be a successful source of ethical work and an alternative to the more carbon-intensive and exploitative global mainstream market in clothing and other areas.
- Offering migrant children classes on the Polish alphabet, calligraphy, increasing reading and writing skills, enables levelling educational opportunities with their peers.
- Schools are proving to be remarkable welcoming spaces where a great diversity of people come together and NGOs are taking action and supporting schools for further learning and integration actions.



*The primary school in Bezwola is considered a model of international integration.
Photo by: Jakub Orzechowski - Agencja Wyborcza.pl*

Sustainability makes a difference

Several of the welcoming initiatives studied in the framework of the Welcoming Spaces project have a common link: the commitment to the production of local products, ecological agriculture, and the reuse of resources and materials.

SPAIN

Fundación Cepaim and the Micorriza Association joined forces to launch the **“Ecomundo” Social Garden** project in Molina de Aragón. This social garden was created with the aim of being a meeting point for educational centres, sports schools, social organisations working with groups at risk of social exclusion, associations and local residents. They work on concepts of ecological agriculture, food sustainability and recovery of local agricultural varieties on the verge of extinction. The joint action is an integrating activity in itself, and allows working on social aspects, such as language improvement, communication, social skills, and generates mutual knowledge and support networks.



Group of children in the ecological garden “Ecomundo”, which has an open classroom where, in a playful way and through games, agroecology and environmental education are promoted. / Photo by: Fundación Cepaim

POLAND

Notebook
available
at the website
of Rzeczy Drugie.

Notesy w Lukowa

This initiative provides a space for co-creation for asylum seeking women, who live or used to live in the centre for asylum seekers in Lukow, and Polish artists. Asylum seekers sew notebooks from recycled paper and sell them as utility items and art objects. The inside of the notebook is made of recycled paper and the cover is made of coffee beans packets from cafes all over Poland.

Rzeczy Drugie - Second Things

Rzeczy Drugie is a social initiative of the Association "Dla Ziemi", a refugee support organization. The Rzeczy Drugie online shop sells products made by female asylum seekers and refugees in collaboration with the designers. The women are paid for their work and can gain work experience at the same time. They sell handmade notebooks, second-hand clothing and other handicraft such as napkins and shopping bags. It challenges one of the most polluting industries, diversifies economy, promotes art and handicraft.



Migrant women of the Notesy w Lukowa initiative.
Photo by: Notesy w Lukowa



Screenshot of the website of the second-hand shop of Rzeczy Drugie where Notesy w Lukowa's products are sold

ITALY

Jungi Mundu Eurocoop is a cooperative in Camini that promotes traditional labour such as agriculture techniques, handicraft and arts like fabric work, ceramics, clothing and more, also inspired in the different cultures. They use local materials, the products are made by migrants and the hosting village, Camini, is recognized as a safe harbour for new residents.



Participants of projects that support refugee women in a process of growth and training towards autonomy, based on the increasing of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-determination to bring each woman to consciously take possession of their creative potential. / Photo by: Jungi Mundu

Iamme, liberi di scegliere has a line of ethical products cultivated and harvested respecting workers' rights, combating exploitation and the so-called "caporalato".

Humus Job was created to combat the caporalato and grey labour, and to break out the informality in the hiring of workers in agriculture by increasing the economic sustainability of companies. Humus Job is a business network of farms that share the value of collaboration and sharing and aim to be socially, environmentally and economically sustainable. The project believes that economic sustainability can generate favourable conditions to counter irregular labour in agriculture and the drifts of exploitation and caporalato.

Maramao is a cooperative for the promotion of short chain agriculture, organic food and sustainable management of the land, agrarian experimentation, improvement of agricultural fields and valorisation of local products and rural heritage. They organise trainings and educational activities and they hire and offer opportunities for migrants and vulnerable people.



Some of the members of the Maramao agricultural cooperative. / Photo by: Futura News



Event of the Iamme initiative, which is part of a wider programme of collaboration involving NoCap (no gangmastering) and the distribution association Megamark (owner of the ethical brand Iamme) in the southern regions of Italy. / Photo by: Giornalemio.it



Photo by: Humus Job

Conclusions

Projects such as Welcoming Spaces are limited in time because they are subject to specific funding, but they have been inspired by previous projects and may inspire future projects. All of them contribute in some way to the continuation of conversations at different levels about migration in rural areas. The Welcoming Spaces project itself has inspired many undergraduate, masters and doctoral students in several European countries, has led to the establishment of strategic partnerships with other organisations, and to the implementation of parallel activities such as the documentary film *Si ka badu, ka ta biradu* and the “QR-Inquieto: Rural initiatives for the reception of migrants and refugees in Galicia and human rights walks” (<http://esomi.es/qr-inquieto>).

We can inspire one another and learn from each other's successes, challenges and failures. Everything is a learning process that in one way or another helps us to improve our daily work and to propose new projects and initiatives that change the world. That is the purpose of this guide, to compile good practices and lessons learned from the four years of the Welcoming Spaces project and the many welcoming initiatives identified and studied in the five countries of the project. Similar inspirational initiatives are sure to be found in these countries and in many others in Europe and around the world. All the initiatives analysed can be consulted on an interactive map developed in the framework of the Welcoming Spaces. We invite you to consult the interactive map and get further inspired in the following link:



SCAN ME

“We can inspire one another and learn from each other's successes, challenges and failures”



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