

MANUAL OF GOOD PRACTICES AND PROJECTS OF SUCCESS

**PROVIDED FOR THE ATTENTION,
INFORMATION, ADVICE,
INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION
OF REFUGEES**

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1-

INTRODUCTION

1.1. GENERAL CONTEXT

1.2. DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE

1.3. PROJECT PARTNERS

2-

GOOD PRACTICES ON THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF THE REFUGEES

2.1. SOCIAL INTEGRATION STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

1. The UNHCR's scheme on promoting self-reliance and integration

2. ANTIGONE's holistic approach on social inclusion

3. The "FutbolNet Project" of the Fundació Barça

4. App4Refs: a mobile phone application to support the urban integration of refugees

2.2. PSYCHOSOCIAL RECOVERY AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

1. The INTERSOS holistic approach to Mental Health: integrating psycho-social support with case management and community based work

2. HESTIA Hellas' therapeutic Intervention for children with developmental disabilities

3. The Humanity Crew's mental health approach on post traumatic disorder

2.3. GOOD PRACTICES ON ATTENTION TO VULNERABLE GROUPS

1. FAROS holistic care plan for unaccompanied minors

2. PRAKSIS good practices on child protection and support

3. The "Bridging Rainbow" project for LGBTI Refugees & Asylum seekers

4. Melissa's integration pathway for refugee women

2.4. GOVERNMENTAL LOCAL INITIATIVES AND POLICIES

1. The Athens Municipality Accommodation Scheme Programme

2. Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee Issues

3. The Catalan Refugee Programme and the Social Mentoring Programme from Generalitat

4. "Barcelona, City of Refuge"

2.5. TRAINING RESOURCES FOR HUMANITARIAN WORKERS

1. The ReCULM OERs and MOOC to upskill Cultural Mediators

2. The Time to Wellcome Erasmus+ project of the British Red Cross

2.6. EDUCATION AND WORK ORIENTATION

1. Migratory Birds: The first newspaper in Greece made by refugee, migrant and Greek Youth

2. Access to Higher Education for Refugee at the American College of Greece

3. A Protocol for the Validation of Academic Competences of Refugees across Europe

3-

CONCLUSIONS

4-

CONTACTS

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL CONTEXT

Since 2015 an overwhelming flow of people, affected by conflicts in Afghanistan, Palestinian Territories, Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Iran and Congo (among other countries), fleeing from life threatening situations and violence and therefore entitled to refugee status under international conventions, crossed Greece and the Balkans looking for safety in Europe. Following the closure of the border with Northern Macedonia and the agreement between the European Union and Turkey on the rejection of refugees arriving to the Greek islands, more than 50,000 people have been stuck in Greece, where they will have to remain indefinitely.¹

Refugees and migrants who come to Europe often faced war, persecution and extreme hardships in their countries of origin. Many experienced displacement and trauma in transit countries and embarked on dangerous travels. Lack of information, uncertainty about immigration status, potential hostility and discrimination, changing policies, undignified detention all add further psychological burdens. Forced migration erodes pre-migration protective supports (such as family and friends, stable social bonds and structures) presenting considerable challenges for the cultural, religious and gender identities. Forced migration requires multiple adaptations in short periods of time. People, especially children, become more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Pre-existing social and mental health conditions can be exacerbated. Furthermore, the way people are perceived and how protection and assistance is provided may induce or aggravate problems, for example by undermining human dignity, discouraging social integration and creating dependency. Rates of disorders related to extreme stress, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), are higher in refugees than in people who are not forcibly displaced. However, for most refugees and asylum seekers potentially traumatic events from the past are not the only, or even most important, source of psychological distress. Most emotional suffering is directly related to current worries about survival and uncertainty about the future. Being a refugee or an asylum seeker per se does not make individuals significantly more vulnerable for mental disorders, but these individuals can be exposed to various stress factors that influence their physical and mental wellbeing.

¹ <https://migration.iom.int/europe?type=arrivals>

Due to the economic crisis in Greece, the reduction of public resources for social welfare has extended the serious challenge to address the influx of refugees and their inclusion in Greek society in full guarantee of their economic, social and cultural rights. In this context, the general distress emphasizes the vulnerability of refugees and asylum seekers, who arrive in a new social and cultural context without knowing the ways of entry to socialization and the labor market. This reality increases the risk of social exclusion making cohesion among cultures very difficult and challenging. The situation described above is especially aggravated in the cases of people, especially women, with their dependent children, unaccompanied minors, people with disabilities or chronic illnesses, or members of the LGBTIQ community.

The financial and institutional challenges in articulating an attention for this group has not been an obstacle for public and private organizations to develop innovative and effective practices for the reception and inclusion of refugees.

In 2016 shelter accommodations replacing the old camps in Greece. This process, other than facilitating the progressive emptying of the camps present in the continental Greece, has allowed to gradually relieve the Greek islands from the pressure of the massive arrivals. The shelter structures, being temporarily hosted in hotels, have been transferred in different structures, such as apartments in urban areas. With the departure of many international actors, which operated in order to mitigate the emergency, it is necessary, now more than ever, to focus the interventions in the long-run, by involving the local authorities and the civil society to build an efficient reception system and to facilitate the long term psycho-social and economic integration of refugees in the host society.

- 1.2 - DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE

This manual identifies and compiles 20 Good Practices resulting from the meetings of Greek and Catalan social agents and institutions working in the field in support to the reception, attention, information, advice, inclusion and integration of refugees. The purpose of the Manual is to present a brief and compiled account of some of the most successful projects of integration implemented in Greece so far highlighting the fruitful collaboration between public and private entities, which operate in tandem to respond to the refugees' needs.

The Manual comes as a result of the project partnership between the Catalan Fundació Privada ACSAR and the Communication and Media Psychology Lab (CoMePsy) of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA).

Building upon the social integration knowledge and field work experience derived in the context of the EC project UNINTEGRA (AMIF, 2017-2019), the Manual aims to make this exchange of good practices among Catalan and Greek institutions durable, replicable, and useful for agents that work with the refugee population worldwide.

The selected Good Practices are related to the following areas:

- _ Social integration strategies and tools
- _ Psychosocial recovery and mental health support
- _ Attention to vulnerable groups
- _ Governmental local initiatives and plans
- _ Training for humanitarian professionals
- _ Education and work orientation

The Manual project is funded by ÀREA METROPOLITANA DE BARCELONA (AMB) under the Department of International Relations and Cooperation with main objective to promote democratic mechanisms that favor the participation of the various actors involved in urban and metropolitan governance.

- 1.3 - PROJECT PARTNERS

ACSAR Foundation is a pioneer entity in the field of asylum and refuge in the Catalan context. The purpose of the Foundation is to transform praxis, provide direct assistance and contribute to the productive debate on phenomena related to international mobility, cultural diversity and social cohesion. The main goal is to support the construction of a plural society while promoting the equality of citizenship rights. Activities carried out so far by the ACSAR Foundation are aligned with the study of the immigration phenomena in Catalonia, Spain and the wider European and international framework, raising social awareness and facilitating knowledge and respect among the different cultural groups.

Since 2016, and based on the support of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, ACSAR Foundation started its activities in Greece through the Xeflis Project. Through voluntary work and technical cooperation, the ACSAR Foundation has contributed to the emotional recovery of refugees in Athens and created links with local entities that work in the care, assistance, empowerment and reception of refugees.

The presence and prior work on the ground has led to the consolidation of relationships and confidence with the different social agents that operate in the reception of refugees, such as the Athens City Council, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), the UNHCR office in Greece, and local NGOs such as Solidarity Now, Praxis, Humanity Crew, Project Elea, Melissa, among many others.

The close collaboration and field work with these organisations has also provided an experience and testimony that has allowed the ACSAR Foundation to identify the best proven successful projects of the organizations that operate in Greece. The presence of the ACSAR Foundation in the Greek territory has resulted in the expansion of its field work activities and lines of action through the participation in European projects.

In particular, the UNINTEGRA project, funded by the Asylum and Migration International Fund (AMIF, 2017-2019) gives continuity to the voluntary activities and technical cooperation of ACSAR in the field of emotional recovery and the local integration of refugees. It incorporates other actions to strengthen the technical capacity of local organizations; together with the CoMePsy Lab of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), ACSAR Foundation organized two International Conferences on social inclusion and labor integration as well as series of training workshops for organisations and individuals that work in the field with refugees (for example: psychological intervention with minors or a workshop given by refugees to social agents about their needs for attention). Furthermore, in the context of the UNINTEGRA project, ACSAR, the CoMePsy Lab of the NKUA and the Greek Forum of Migrants (GFM) worked together in the development of a mobile application especially designed to support the social and cultural inclusion of refugees in the urban environment of Athens.

The **Communication & Media Psychology Laboratory (CoMePsy Lab)** is an academic entity inside the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

The CoMePsy Lab was founded in 2001. The research projects implemented by the Lab generally cover issues related to non-verbal communication, emotion and cognition, interpersonal interaction and group dynamics, media education, cyberpsychology, psychology of media and technology, research methods in psychology and communication. In more than 18 years of operation, the CoMePsy Lab has a rich research and teaching experience in the field of media and social sciences.

As partner of the UNINTEGRA project and in collaboration with ACSAR Foundation, the CoMePsy Lab organized two International Conferences on the social integration and the work orientation of refugees; Within the framework of the 1st Conference (June 2018), namely *“Promoting social inclusion and local integration of refugees: best practices and innovative tools”*, representatives from Greek, Catalan and other European institutions, as well as numerous international and Greek NGOs operating in the field with refugees in Greece shared institutional practices and initiatives on subjects such as the psychological recovery and mental health support of refugees, attention to vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors, disability, gender and LGBTQI issues, the training of cultural mediators and humanitarian workers, as well as local initiatives for the refugee’s social inclusion, and ICT solutions to support urban integration. Part of the event was the EU launching of the mobile app for refugees “App4Refs”.

During the 2nd International Conference titled *“Economic Integration of Refugees: practices and potentials in Education and Employability”* (April, 2019) representatives from Greek, Catalan and other European institutions operating in the field with refugees in Greece shared institutional practices and experiences such as: the educational approach of the City of Athens under the Accommodation Scheme for Asylum Seekers and Beneficiaries of International Protection, the educational programme of the American College in Greece for refugees willing to access higher education, the first newspaper in Greece made by refugee girls and boys aspiring to become journalists (an initiative supported by the Network for Children’s rights), other reflections on the economic benefits and constraints of the refugee and migrant integration policy in Greece and on the challenges of working in a transit country, as well as glimpses on work in progress from research and academic results of the UNINTEGRA project.

As regards the other cooperating entities in the creation of this Manual, Greek administrations, Catalan agents and entities of the third sector in Greece and Catalonia participate by exposing their consolidated expertise in the field of refuge.

The project has also the collaboration of the Greek Forum of Migrants (GFM), a network of migrant’s associations operating in Greece that incorporates the voice and point of view of the refugees themselves in the project activities and the Manual’s content.

GOOD PRACTICES ON THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF THE REFUGEES

SOCIAL INTEGRATION STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

2.1-1.

The UNHCR's scheme on promoting self-reliance and integration

According to the weekly report of the UN Refugee Agency's office in Greece, as of 4 June 2019, the total number of places for refugees and asylum-seekers created by UNHCR, in the framework of the Emergency Support To Integration & Accommodation - ESTIA programme, reached 25,218.

The ESTIA programme is designed to assist asylum-seekers who arrive in Greece with accommodation, cash and support services. The accommodation component of the programme is intended to help vulnerable asylum-seekers for as long as their asylum claim is processed. The programme is fully funded by the European Commission and is presently implemented by UNHCR, in close cooperation with the Greek Ministry of Migration Policy, municipalities and NGOs across Greece. The programme has been instrumental in supporting the Greek State in building up its reception of asylum-seekers sustainably and in line with standards.

When asylum-seekers are recognized as refugees while in ESTIA, they are given a six-month grace period, after which they need to exit the programme. Until now the grace period was continuously extended. Meanwhile asylum-seekers have continued to arrive in Greece in need of protection and assistance - over 6,000 people have arrived since the start of 2019. Many vulnerable asylum-seekers are staying in island reception centers and mainland sites where their needs cannot be adequately met, whereas in the accommodation scheme they will have access to the services and conditions they require.

Some of the recognized refugees in ESTIA apartments received their recognition decision more than two years ago. In addition to accommodation, they have been

supported to access medical services, enroll children at school, pursue employment opportunities, attend Greek language courses where available, and be actively involved in community recreational activities. The vast majority of recognized refugees in ESTIA have been helped to receive a social security number – AMKA (93%) and fiscal registration number – AFM (62%); over 75% of 5-14 year old children are in school; and a growing number are registering with the unemployment service (OAED) and opening a bank account.

These are important steps towards self-reliance and help refugees in ESTIA to find gainful employment or access State social solidarity programmes, in accordance with the law. Meanwhile, prolonging dependence on ESTIA assistance for an indefinite period of time is neither sustainable nor encourages self-sufficiency and integration. Applying the grace period for recognized refugees in ESTIA is also necessary for the sustainability of the accommodation programme available for asylum-seekers.

The grace period is extended for refugees in ESTIA who are assessed as facing serious risks, including severe health conditions, women in advanced pregnancy and recent mothers, as well as their nuclear family members. In addition, the grace period will be extended for nuclear families with children enrolled at school, until 30 June 2019.

Greek authorities, UNHCR and ESTIA partners have been continuously providing information to those affected, so that they are aware of the conditions, the time-frame and their options.

UNHCR encourages and continues to assist Greece in accelerating the adoption of integration measures, to further ensure that recognized refugees have access to critical national programmes and that obstacles are removed – in law and practice – which refugees face in accessing social solidarity programmes, including requirements for specific and additional identity documents and proof of residence in Greece.

A living proof of the ESTIA's programme success to support the self-reliance and independence of refugees in Greece is the story of the Jaff family; they found work at a machine company just three months after arriving on the island in a rickety boat to seek asylum in June 2018. Hemen, who was a civil engineer in Iraq, set out to find a job as soon as the family arrived on the island. He wanted to provide for his family and not to depend solely on humanitarian aid.

“I was wandering the streets of Kos's centre, when I heard noise from some machines. I entered the company and told the owner that I can do everything, from cleaning the tiles on the floors to operating the machines. He believed in me and hired me,” Hemen says. Soon his wife Sharaban began helping out at the office and learning how the different machines work. She has been offered to be hired by the company as an employee from May 2019. Initially the Jaffs were accommodated in a container home at the government-run Pyli reception centre. Soon after, UNHCR's partner NGO ARSIS accommodated the Jaffs in an apartment under the ESTIA programme. On

Kos, nearly 190 asylum-seekers, the most vulnerable, of the 1,000 have access to such apartments as part of UNHCR's support to Greece's reception capacity.

With his first salary, Hemen found an apartment to rent and handed over the keys of the ESTIA flat.

“Since I was able to find a job and make a living, I considered it wrong to continue to benefit from an apartment that could be used by another family that might need it more,” Hemen says. “The time had come for us to become independent.”

Safe on Kos, their little daughter Beta is preparing excitedly for kindergarten which will start in September. For now, she is focused on singing, dancing and improving her English language skills with the help of a laptop provided by the company manager. Hemen, who is passionate about Economics, spends his free time learning about stock markets. His wife is drawing up plans to one day open a gym on Kos. “In the past I used to say that if you uproot a tree from your country and try to plant it elsewhere, it will not flourish. I have changed my mind. My tree is growing strong on Kos and I am delighted about this”, says Hemen.

Sources:

<http://estia.unhcr.gr/en/estia-accommodation-capacity-weekly-update-4-june-2019/>
https://www.unhcr.org/gr/en/11437-iraqi_family_finds_work_and_independence.html

2.1 – 2.

ANTIGONE's holistic approach on social inclusion

ANTIGONE - Information and Documentation Center on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence is a non-profit organisation that was established in 1993. ANTI-GONE's main offices are located in Thessaloniki with a branch in Athens. ANTIGONE develops activities on anti-racism and non-discrimination, human rights, social ecology and non-violent conflict resolution.

The aim of the organisation is the promotion of equal opportunities for all without any discrimination on the basis of sex, race, national origin, social/economic/educational status, disability, age, religion etc. Through its activities that are based on solidarity and active participation, ANTIGONE targets to awareness raising and sensitisation of the society on issues such as non-discrimination and interculturality.

ANTIGONE, “Greek Council for Refugees” and the NGO for the protection of Children “Smile of the Child” collaborated in a multilateral project aiming to reduce the number of refugees and asylum seekers in danger. The project, which followed the previous project HELP SER-124-16, started in February 2017 and was completed in July 2018. It has been funded by the German Federal Office (GFO) and the Help - Hilfe zur Belbsthilfe. In the context of the project, refugee population in danger were offered secure and dignified urban housing and were provided with psychosocial support, specialised treatment and access to legal and social support.

The project activities included:

- a. staff recruitment and training for the operation of the residences in Thessaloniki, which host temporarily highly vulnerable refugee families,
- b. release of the accumulated anger and despair that refugees experience, through activities aiming to improve their physical and psychological health: athletic activities, activities with music and movement, self-defense training lessons, artistic activities, chess lessons etc,
- c. psychosocial / psychological support of refugees,
- d. support of the refugees' social life and strengthening of their creative skills through seminars and activities aiming to foster their knowledge and skills, reinforce their self-confidence and empower trust and communication,
- e. improvement of the cohabitation and mutual approval between the groups living in the Centre of Diavata for Refugees and relocation seekers through "get together" and team building activities for getting to know each other as well as activities for building trust: theatre game, music, movie projections etc,
- f. interaction with local community / de-institutionalization / socialization through events, cultural visits, cooking lessons and other common activities,
- g. vocational training of intercultural mediators and psychologists active in the refugee camps.
- h. maintenance and keeping up-to-date the www.123help.gr platform so that refugees have access to information of their interest as well as for Greek citizens to get informed on issues related to refugees.

Source:

<http://www.antigone.gr/gr/projects/project/37/description/http://www.antigone.gr/gr/news/post/363>

2.1 – 3.

The "FutbolNet Project" of the Fundació Barça

The Mission of the Fundació Barça is to support children and youth from the most vulnerable groups through sports and education in values, for the purpose of contributing to a more egalitarian and inclusive society. To prevent violence, to promote social inclusion and to provide access and reinforcement of education.

The methodologies of the organization include projects, such as (a) FutbolNet, an educational and social instrument based on the use of sport to foster dialogue and social coexistence, (b) BARÇA KIDS, an educational instrument that promotes values at schools, (c) the BARÇA EXPERIENCE, which facilitates actions and experiences to generate positive emotions among seriously ill children, and (d) the PREVENTION OF BULLYING, an educational instrument to prevent harassment among school children.

So far, Fundació Barça has reached via the above tools of intervention over 1.000.000 beneficiaries in 53 countries.

FutbolNet is a methodology for social intervention created by the Fundació Barça in 2011. It is designed as a social inclusion tool that uses physical activity and sport as an agent of change supporting cooperation, gender equality, socialization, social abilities, conflict resolution, and dialogue. The methodology uses soccer and other sports-related activities as tools for reflection and agents of transformation to improve the life of children and young people who are in vulnerable contexts. The beneficiaries are boys and girls from 8 to 21 years from all around the world, selected by vulnerability criteria.

FutbolNet promotes the values of FC Barcelona; Humility, Effort, Ambition, Respect, and team-work (H.E.A.R.T), as understood through a culture of cooperation, to make a positive impact on both an individual and group level. In each session, participants have to put into practice each one of the above mentioned values in the best possible way through sports games and football match. For this purpose each activity features plenty of time for reflection and the games are divided into three parts:

In the 1st part, the two teams meet and agree on the rules they want to play with, relating them with the values and identifying the associated behaviors. Players discuss autonomously and agree to the rules of play. For example, if anyone shows a lack of respect, a penalty is awarded.

In the 2nd part, the two teams play trying to implement the rules they have agreed together. A 15-minute football game is played, where the children develop their capacity to inter-relate. The teachers help them to learn to take responsibility for their actions

In the 3rd part, the two teams meet to discuss how the match went. The educational team, through open questions, encourages critical thinking and promotes the critical post-game discussion among participants to assess the game and decide who has won based on behavior and the application of the value in question

The approach is based on three basic rules: (a) there is no referee, (b) the teams must be heterogeneous, and (c) everyone must be encouraged to participate. Any sport can be played following this methodology.

The FutbolNet Program of the Foundation of FC Barcelona was implemented in Greece by the local NGO PRAKSIS with the support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF). The project's beneficiaries in Athens are boys and girls aged 10 to 16. It was implemented from January to June 2018 in four schools of the Municipality of Athens within the framework of the Open Schools Program of the Municipality of Athens, which is coordinated by the Athens Partnership with exclusive donor the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

Source:
<https://foundation.fcbarcelona.com>

2.1 – 4.

App4Refs: a mobile phone application to support the urban integration of refugees

In the context of the EC funded project UNINTEGRA (AMIF, 2017-2019), the AC-SAR Foundation in collaboration with the CoMePsy Lab of the University of Athens and the Greek Forum of Migrants implemented the App4Refs project, which developed a technology application to support social participation, inclusion and integration in the urban environment of Athens.

For refugees and asylum seekers, the mobile phone is one of their most precious possessions providing a tool for communication, integration and navigation in an unfamiliar new environment, while helping them to keep in touch with their peers and family back home. App4Refs builds upon the exploitation of the mobile phone technology, in order to create such a tool that provides easy and quick access wherever the user is, ensuring access to information regarding various areas of every-day life and needs of refugees in the urban environment of Athens; hospitals, free clothes and food, accommodation, assistance, guidance, events, shops, culture etc.



The App4Refs mobile app and project is the result of the coordinated effort and work of three work teams located in Barcelona, Athens and Santiago de Compostela.

In order to be useful and practical, such an app should be simple, straightforward, and easy to access, avoiding tricky technological requirements. Furthermore, the app should work with low end mobile phones, intuitively overcome the language barrier, and above all it should be free of charge, openly available to everyone.

For this purpose, App4Refs incorporates some very important features. Firstly, it provides universal access by using the PWA (progressive web app) technology; the app can be accessed from a normal web browser without having to install anything, ensuring that access to the app is possible via various browsers, from a mobile phone, a laptop, desktop or any other device. Furthermore, the structure of the app has been designed to provide very fast access to a variety of options. The user can at all times access a specific type of location in maximum 2 clicks, and return to the previous area or to the main menu with a single click.

Another key feature of the App4Refs is visual intuitive design. The app relies almost completely on visual icons that represent each area of interest using commonly perceived symbols among cultures. In order to ensure that the perception of symbols works for all cultures, the App4Refs project worked on the analysis of qualitative data (focus groups with refugees of various origins). The symbols/icons are bright, colorful and easy to remember.

To facilitate the use of the interface, different types of elements are represented by different colors; elements that can be clicked (e.g. home button, back button, map icons, web link icons) are using fuchsia color. The cost of the location is green. The language is always on a blue icon. Black color represents static information. At the top of all areas a simple bar informs you of where you are and allows you to go back to the previous page or to the main menu.



Each location has always the same structure: a graphic symbol, the name of the location, the address or addresses associated, green circular icons that shows if the location is free of charge. Blue circular icons specify the language that is spoken at that location, the website or contact data of the location, and the timetable. App4Refs makes intensive use of Google maps to connect the user with easy to understand directions to get to each location, so there is also a map icon to view directions. The integration of App4Refs with Google Maps facilitates enormously the task of finding the best way to get to the location.

In order to be practical and last in time, App4Refs needs to be regularly updated and expanded with new information. For the time being it works as a pilot project offering a tool of integration which could be adapted to the needs of other urban environments that host refugees and asylum seekers inside and outside Greece.

Source:
<https://app4refs.org/>

- 2.2 - PSYCHOSOCIAL RECOVERY AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

2.2_1.

The INTERSOS holistic approach to Mental Health: integrating psycho-social support with case management and community based work

INTERSOS began its intervention in Greece in early 2016 by activating mobile teams consisting of operators and mediators in the reception camps established in the area between Thessaloniki and the North Macedonian border. As one of the implementation partners of UNHCR under the EC funded program ESTIA, INTERSOS operates with two bases: one in Thessaloniki and one in the city of Ioannina (in Epirus, 262 km away from Athens). With a capacity of almost 750 beds, INTERSOS manages apartments and buildings in the urban areas where it is based, running also a wider structure, namely “Agia Eleni”, which is specialized in the assistance of the most vulnerable.

In “Agia Eleni”, INTERSOS provides protection, hygiene and information services, with the objective to build proper practices and methods that could be applicable also in urban contexts providing a long-run reception example that is designed to host refugees into structures to promote integration and intercultural communication. In this context, INTERSOS distributed essential goods and identified the most vulnerable cases such as women, children, the elderly and the disabled, to ensure their dignity and protection. As the crisis stabilized, the intervention focused on the general management of the camps, as in the case of the “Agia Eleni” camp, and on the creation of local entities to manage community services, in coordination with local Greek associations and groups of migrants facilitating communication between cultures.

The INTERSOS holistic approach to Mental Health serves the following objectives:

- _ Dealing with the daily stress factor: prerequisite for addressing mental health problems.
- _ Restoring people’s own resources base, control, and ability for decision making resilience.
- _ Recovering community resilience and re-establishing social networks: forced dependency, feeling of uncertainty, marginalization.
- _ Create a safe and less stressful environment: people can express themselves and take ownership of activities and initiatives.

Source:
<https://www.intersos.org/en/what-we-do/greece/>

2.2 – 2.

HESTIA Hellas' therapeutic Intervention for children with developmental disabilities

Hestia means “hearth, fireplace, altar” and embodies the ancient Greek Goddess of the family, home and domesticity. As the hearth was the centre of family life in the ancient world, Hestia Hellas aims to provide a safe space for refugees and locals to come together, interact, socialize, learn essential skills and build a home away from home.

Hestia Hellas is an NGO that serves vulnerable populations in Athens namely, children, adolescents and adults, native Greeks affected by the strained economy and refugees looking to settle in Greece or other parts of Europe. The organisation's goal is to help these populations prosper by providing critical support and self-sustaining skills. Hestia's programs include: Livelihoods Training, Psychosocial Support, Child Friendly Space, Meal Provision. Developmental disabilities can involve sensory or intellectual difficulty, social or communication disorders, motor impairment. Globally, rates of pediatric developmental disability range from 5% to 20%. The prevalence of developmental delays and disability in the pediatric refugee population is unknown and refugee children are at high risk for developmental delays. In addition, one should take into account the preexisting (established) developmental disorders in this population on top of the ad hoc ones.

The present intervention refers to 10 children (6 from Syria, 4 from Afghanistan/4 girls – 6 boys, with an age range from 5 to 13 years old) with developmental disabilities - delays. 8 of them were non vocal, 4 were physically disabled, and 1 presented hearing disabilities. Among the most serious barriers for non-consistency in the intervention were reported by the HESTIA's experts the lack of transportation means, the parents' great expectations, interpretation barriers, religious attitudes toward a disability as “the will of Allah”, and the lack of information about the specific cognitive conditions. It should be noted that none of the children had participated in a school setting before and none of them had received an intervention in the past.

A diagnosis can't specify what a child can or can't do. A careful assessment to determine the child's specific strengths and needs is needed. At first glance, the symptoms seemed to be more severe. After only a few sessions, substantial progress occurred, especially for the younger children. The intervention worked on the establishment of priorities both for the children and their families, including important social goals such as healthcare, hygiene, feeding independently, toilet training etc. The approach facilitated learning in small groups to foster social skills, and it included also one-to-one sessions to support more individualized goals. Areas of improvement after the intervention include (a) minimization of the problematic behaviors, (b) enhancement of communication, (c) improvement of the cognitive skills of the children (symbolic play, visual discrimination).

Furthermore, the intervention highlighted the importance of parental involvement in therapy. This had been facilitated by prioritizing the family component (including parent training, bringing the parents into the sessions, modeling etc). This increased the parents' awareness of child development and the involved barriers and challenges. Holistic support was revived to the families by providing individual psychological counseling, parental counseling, and forms of psycho-education etc). For the successful implementation of this holistic intervention, other services and therapists were involved; Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) was implemented, as well as an evidence based evaluation, which concluded on the effectiveness of the approach in reducing problem behaviors, building communication, manipulating antecedent conditions and consequences, establishing predictable routines and visual activity schedules and replacing disruptive or inappropriate behavior with more appropriate and effective communication.

Source:

<https://www.hestiahellas.org/>

2.2 – 3.

The Humanity Crew's mental health approach on post traumatic disorder

Refugees and asylum seekers, especially children, may feel overwhelmed or confused and distressed, and experience extreme fear and worries, outbursts of strong emotions such as anger and sadness, nightmares and other sleep problems. Many are affected by multiple losses and are grieving for people, places and life left behind. They may feel fearful or anxious, or numb and detached. Some may have reactions that affect their functioning and thinking capacities and therefore undermine their ability to care for themselves and cope with dangers and risks on their path. It is important to realize that many stress responses are natural ways in which body and mind react to stressors and should not be considered abnormal.

Humanity Crew is an international aid organization specializing in the provision of first response mental health interventions and psychological aid to refugees and people in crises. They work to deploy mental health and psychosocial support to displaced populations in order to improve their mental health and wellbeing, to restore order in their lives, and to prevent further psychological escalation. Humanity Crew seeks to create a world in which mental health support is a fundamental component in all emergency efforts for victims of humanitarian crises.

Since 2015, Humanity Crew had been acting in Greece; on shores, refugee camps, hospitals, shelters and other institutions, providing MHPSS to tens of thousands of refugees, over 50% of them are children and youth. They operate in the refugees' mother tongue and with full adaptation to their cultural background as the organisations principle is “to work through the mentality and not against it”. In this framework they provide and deploy all around Greece their Mental Health and Psychoso-

cial Support Services (MHPSS), the implementation of which is based on an original three level method, “the inverted pyramid”, which focuses on community-based activities, focus group sessions, and individual sessions for vulnerable cases.

Currently, a project implemented by Humanity Crew under this approach is the Humanity Crew Anti-Bullying Project (HCABP), a five-year multi-disciplinary intervention based on an integrative holistic model that responds to the entire environment of children and adolescents, starting with work with parents, educators, aid workers, and the general population. The goal of the project is not only to provide an individual response to the victims of bullying but to work on prevention and to accompany the various institutions that integrate the refugee and immigrant children. This is done in addition to working with the local and refugee population in order to close cultural gaps and in parallel to campaigns in the media and social networks aimed at raising awareness against bullying.

Source:

<https://humanitycrew.org/>

- 2.3 - GOOD PRACTICES ON ATTENTION TO VULNERABLE GROUPS

2.3_1.

FAROS holistic care plan for unaccompanied minors

The majority of unaccompanied refugee minors that came to Europe in 2015 and 2016, first arrived in Greece, and continued their journey to other European countries. When the “Balkan route” borders were closed more than 50.000 refugees left stranded in Greece, including an estimated 2.350 unaccompanied minors as of July 2017.

Unaccompanied minors are defined as non-EU nationals or stateless persons under the age of 18 years who arrive on the territory of an EU Member State not accompanied by an adult responsible for the minor, or a minor who is left unaccompanied after having entered the territory of a Member State.

Unaccompanied minors on the move face multiple risks and psychological distress as a result not only of their stressful and traumatic journey but also due to a lack of future perspectives, violence, physical and sexual abuse, labor and sexual exploitation as well as human trafficking. Due to their young age, they can easily become victims of abuse and exploitation, and are therefore in special need of comprehensive care and protection. These conditions often lead to substance abuse as an escape to cope with intolerable circumstances.

The majority of unaccompanied minors that have arrived in Greece in 2015 and 2016 are from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Pakistan, with boys comprising more than 90% of the total population. In Greece, unaccompanied and separated minors are entitled to housing, protection by the authorities and are under the legal guardianship of the Public Prosecutor for Minors. Moreover, they are entitled to access the Greek public educational system.

FAROS is a Christian NGO in Athens dedicated to helping unaccompanied minors get off the street and set them on a path to reach their potential, against the pull of their desperate circumstances. It started as a day center and gradually developed a holistic approach, where for every minor there’s an appointed mentor that is following the minor on his whole stay at the center, ensuring that there is a plan made for them during their stay at the center, but also that they are assigned to a social worker who is trying to work together on a long-term plan for him.

FAROS is approved by the government to identify unaccompanied minors on the street and inform the public prosecutor as a mechanism that is spreading and locating the unaccompanied minors into shelters. It works as a contact liaison among them, providing a first screening and identifying the minors’ vulnerabilities and shelter. That makes it possible to take immediate action instead of just being a note on a table,

among 2,000 cases, and then somehow disappearing in the system. This approach makes immediate intervention and action possible. FAROS, has developed a mentorship program to follow up with the children providing a kind of family replacement.

In addition, FAROS' approach is working with "life skills" education, trying to help minors cope with life, and equip them with skills to navigate psychosocially above their circumstances. The aim is to help them to get involved with the daily activities, to provide them with a program of interests, to assist them to regain value in themselves again. A long-term aim of FAROS is to develop a more sustainable solution for unaccompanied minors living in Greece, by establishing paths of education, training and employment helping them to make a living, find internships etc.

FAROS Shelter Hosts 22 unaccompanied refugee boys aged 10 to 16 years old of Syrian, Pakistani, Afghan and Iraqi ethnicity. It is located through street-work as a drop-in center referral from the National Center for Social Solidarity (EKKA). The objectives of the FAROS Shelter are (a) to provide a safe and stable environment for unaccompanied minors, (b) to give them access to legal services, education, life skills courses and vocational training, and (c) to offer the best possible individual care.

Faros approach is based on the development and provision of a holistic care plan accustom to the individual needs of each case. The idea is to evaluate comprehensively the minor's needs examining all aspects of his life, to evaluate the minor's complete picture before determining a care plan for him. Problem in one area of life may influence other areas; this is why the intervention starts with the careful assessment in all areas of person's life. Holistic care planning is essentially about addressing minor's full range of needs, taking into account their personal, social, mental health, ethnic and cultural background and circumstances. It recognizes that there are other issues in addition to mental health needs that can impact on a minor's total mental health and wellbeing.

A multidisciplinary team of experts including a lawyer, a social worker, a psychologist, a shelter team leader, a mentor, and an external guardian work in collaboration to develop an effective care plan and to ensure that a person gets the best help available. FAROS describes this care plan as an active document constantly requiring updating and involving the minor in its development. In this context FAROS constantly evaluates and follows all aspects of the minor's general situation including personal information, current and previous behavior, Record of contact with other services, short and long term future perspectives aiming to develop a common strategy for each minor. The outline of the Care Planning Process is structured around four areas, which include (a) assessment (information gathering process), (b) planning (discuss short and long term goals), (c) implementation (how we can achieve, who will involve), and (d) evaluation: who will evaluate the progress and impact of the plan in the individuals' life.

Source:
National Center for Social Solidarity (E.K.K.A): Situation Update: Unaccompanied Children in Greece, 19 July 2017. Available at: <http://www.ekka.org.gr/files/EKKA%20dashboard%2019-7-2017.pdf>

Harvard University: Emergency Within an Emergency: The Growing Epidemic of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Migrant Children in Greece, 2017. Available at: <https://cdn2.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/04/Emergency-Within-an-Emergency-FXB.pdf>

<http://www.faros.org.gr/>

2.3 – 2.

PRAKSIS good practices on child protection and support

PRAKSIS is a humanitarian NGO, whose primary objective is the design, application and implementation of humanitarian and medical actions through specific programs prioritizing prevention, integration, and advocacy.

PRAKSIS interventions in the area of children protection and support, are implemented through (a) the Reception and Identification Centers for unaccompanied minors, (b) outreach work, (c) accommodation centers for unaccompanied minors (as a long-term intervention), and (d) apartments for vulnerable groups.

By the time of this account, 2.631 unaccompanied boys and girls have been hosted in the PRAKSIS centers. Currently, 211 minors reside in the 12 accommodation centers run by PRAKSIS in Athens, Patra and Thessaloniki.

Services provided by PRAKSIS out of the Centers include: tracing of minors, vulnerability assessment, provision of support (psychosocial, medical, legal, services), job counseling, referrals and follow-up.

In parallel, there are services provided by PRAKSIS inside its centers, which focus of the provision of accommodation in a safe and child friendly environment, primary health care and pharmaceutical care, psychosocial support, psychological and child-psychiatric care, legal support and intermediation services (link with adults' accommodation projects), education on foreign languages and other educational activities (Greek, English and computer lessons, preparation for entering the education system), recreational and cultural activities, workshops (e.g. job counseling), and mentorship.

PRAKSIS works on overcoming series of challenges related to access to health, such as delays in appointments, cost of examinations, lack of interpreters, pharmaceutical cost etc. There are also challenges as regards the access of the unaccompanied minors to mental health structures, such as lack of beds in public child psychiatric clinics, lack of proper accommodation for minors with severe mental health issues (adjustment disorders, PTSD, Anxiety and mood disorders), and once more limited availability of interpreters. PRAKSIS responds to these challenges with an expansion of health services, by providing psychologists in every shelter, and by establishing a Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Department (C.A.P.D). Over the last 18 months, 206 children have been referred to the C.A.P.D. of PRAKSIS.

2.3 – 3.

The “Bridging Rainbow” project for LGBTI Refugees & Asylum seekers

SolidarityNow is a non-governmental organization, committed to improve vulnerable people’s lives in order to pursue a better future, with dignity and perspectives. While most refugee populations flee their home countries due to conflict, political instability and natural disasters, LGBT refugees flee their homes due to their sexual orientation and gender identity for which they face persecution, discrimination and violations of their basic human rights.

Nearly 80 countries worldwide criminalize same-sex relations, while specific laws limiting the rights of the LGBT community may not exist in some countries, and governments often fail to adequately protect this group’s fundamental human rights in the face of abuses and violations. LGBT refugees and asylum seekers face numerous challenges throughout their displacement, including prejudice, unjust detention, sexual and gender-based violence, inhibited access to humanitarian services, and barriers to articulating protection needs during the asylum process.

Raising awareness and sharing information about issues that concern refugees that belong to the LGBT community is vital for ameliorating the quality of services available for them, for their identities to be accepted, and respected by all relevant stakeholders. LGBT refugees often face ignorance and insensitivity both in their own cultural communities and in the humanitarian sector.

At the same time, the Greek LGBT community isn’t always open to racial, ethnic and religious difference, which is another aspect of the intersecting identities of LGBT refugees and asylum seekers that must be respected. It is equally important to ensure that organizations about LGBT rights are well informed in legal and other practical issues, as well as in matters of intersectionality, inclusion and cultural diversity.

In order to respond to the above, the project “Bridging Rainbow” aims to raise awareness about this vulnerable social group by increasing the knowledge and understanding of all relevant stakeholders. It also intends to contribute to strengthening the collaboration between all stakeholders supporting the LGBTI refugee community and act as an accelerator of social change. Furthermore, it seeks to support LGBTI refugees and asylum seekers and facilitate the pathway towards social inclusion and integration in Greece.

The project includes sensitization training and information sessions regarding the legal framework and the asylum procedure. It also organises and provides workshops to facilitate access to and support the integration into the labor market by building capacity and experiential knowledge of stakeholders and professionals that serve the needs of this group. It also organises and hosts relevant awareness-raising events. The project is implemented by SolidarityNow and is supported by the Municipality of Barcelona and the ACSAR foundation.

Source: <https://www.solidaritynow.org/en/bustingmyths/>

2.3 – 4.

Melissa’s integration pathway for refugee women

Melissa is a network for migrant women living in Athens, Greece. It aims to strengthen their bonds, to build a bridge of communication with the host society promoting empowerment and active citizenship. Founded in September 2014 with the direct involvement of migrant women leaders, it is targeting women from over 45 countries, who live and work in Greece. It operates on the basis of a common platform, a hub where networks and individuals can meet, share their concerns and ideas, and support each other in the pursuit of their common goals.

Melissa gets its name from the Greek word for honey bee. The women who founded the organization in 2014 meant it as a metaphor for the benefits they believe migrant women bring to their communities. The network’s day center, located in a building on the outskirts of Victoria Square in downtown Athens, opened in July 2015. The Melissa staff -many of them migrants themselves- work in collaboration with academic experts, artists, volunteers and other organizations to support the new arrivals. Around 150 women and 40 children come daily to take part in Greek and English literacy programs and psycho-social support, among other activities and information and advocacy services. The building also serves as a space for migrant women’s associations to develop, organize and collaborate after hours.

It focuses on seven strands of activities to fulfill community-building goals for integration.

a. Literacy:

Greek and English classes at different levels, French, German, Spanish classes.

b. Psycho-social support:

Group sessions, individual counseling, psycho-drama, art therapy, narrative exposure treatment, music movement therapies.

c. Information & referrals:

Information sessions and trainings on legal rights and counseling, reproductive health, gender-based violence, social rights, labor rights, and many others.

d. Advocacy support:

Advocacy workshops, media use workshops, interview trainings, public speaking and social media use, as well as workshops on creative writing and personal narratives.

e. Art & creativity:

Visual arts, film and digital story-telling, photography, poetry, music, crafts and community art workshops frequently.

f. Skills & capacity building:

Vocational, cooperative, leadership trainings, ICT and coding trainings, cv writing workshops, cooking, crafts and sewing.

The aim is to gather migrant women and listen to their voices. All activities are scheduled and selected to open communication channels and promote integration. Their empowerment will not only strengthen their own conditions and improve the conditions of their children and their wider ethnic communities but will contribute to overall social cohesion. Melissa's practice is constantly informed and shaped by this grassroots experience. Melissa's response to the refugee influx is one example. Melissa was the first to start planning an integration response when the borders closed by creating Alef, a community-based integration pathway with the support of Mercy Corps and the Municipality of Athens, through which the Network had been receiving more than a hundred women on a daily basis who commute from camps and shelters to the Melissa center. To help women participate, Melissa also introduced a childcare program guided by teachers from Munting Nayon, the Filipino community daycare school.

Source:

<https://www.accmr.gr/en/member/team/505.html>

- 2.4 - GOVERNMENTAL LOCAL INITIATIVES AND POLICIES

2.4_1.

The Athens Municipality Accommodation Scheme Programme

The Accommodation and Services Scheme for Asylum Seekers is being implemented through the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA) of the Municipality of Athens in cooperation with UNHCR. It is funded by the European Commission's department for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), in the framework of the ESTIA programme.

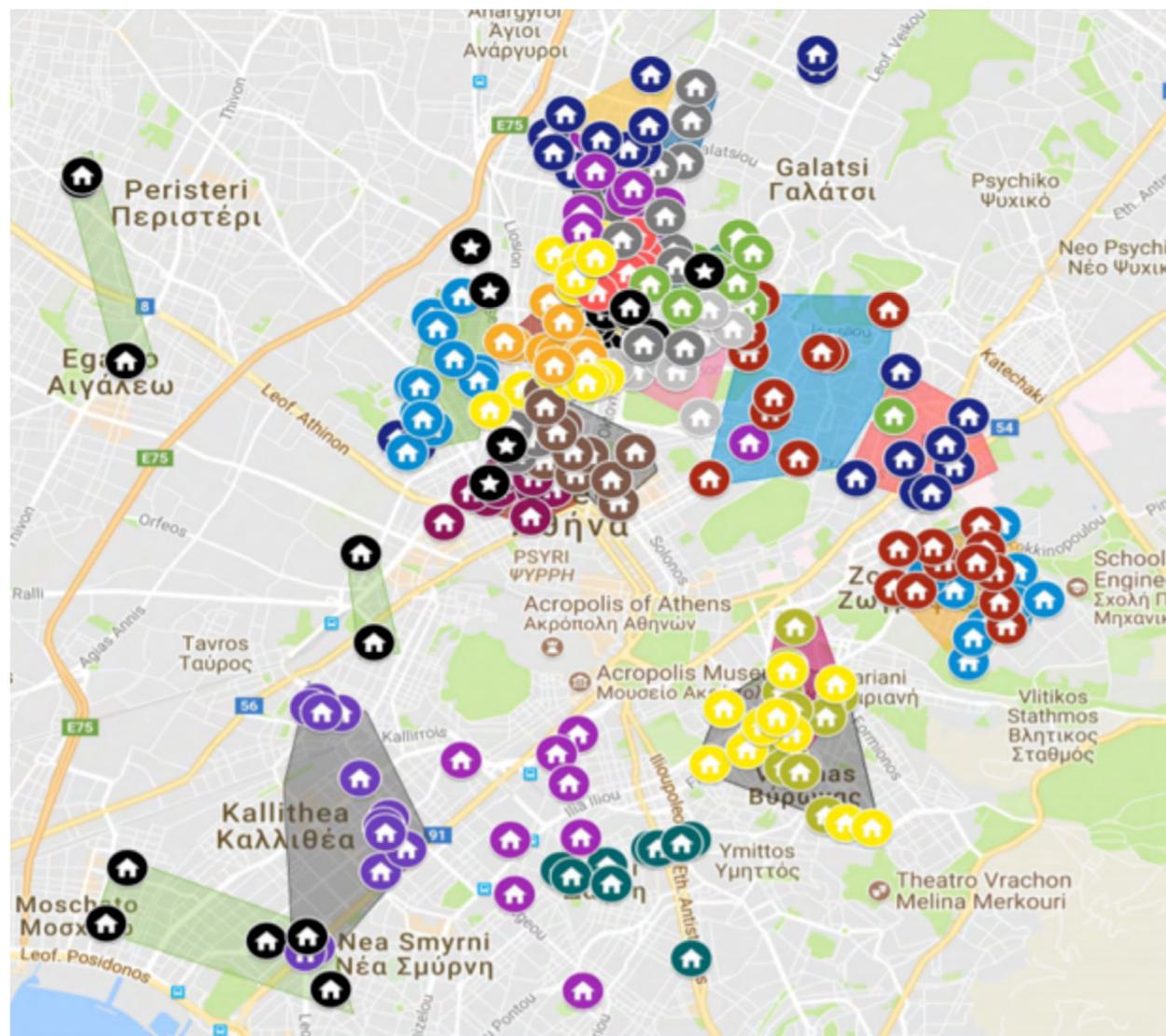
The objective of the programme is to offer a comprehensive response plan for providing dignified living conditions to the refugees, while developing an ample personalized monitoring and support mechanism of each beneficiary (or family) throughout the whole duration of his/her stay in Athens. The project scope includes (a) accommodation in apartments - rentals and utility bills, (b) establishment of a Cash Based Intervention (CBI), (c) provision of psycho-social support, (d) provision of medical care, and other social integration initiatives.

In particular, the program provides:

- a. Accommodation services in equipped apartments of the City of Athens and neighboring municipalities.
- b. A specific amount of money through UNHCR debit cards to meet the basic needs of each family.
- c. Psychosocial support provided by the programme's project team consisting of social scientists, interpreters, apartment managers, psychologists, psychiatrists and nurses.

Through the program concerning asylum seekers, it is offered housing, cash cards, provision of support by specialized staff, educational and cultural activities, co-ordinated support to ensure the smooth entry in the new environment.

Currently, the program covers the needs of approximately 1,650 beneficiaries, hosted in 320 leased apartments. About 4,050 beneficiaries from around the world (Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Congo, etc.) have been enrolled in the programme, 1,850 of whom have been relocated to various European countries (such as Germany, France, and the UK).



Map of leased Accommodation spots, Athens

By June 2018 the project team consisted of **92 members:**

- 30** social scientists/case handlers,
- 19** apartment supervisors, **25** interpreters,
- 15** management/administration employees,
- 1** doctor (psychiatrist) and **2** psychologists operating in one Medical Center.

Some of the Accommodation Plan's results include:

- a.** Facilitation of the asylum seekers/refugees' access to employment, further supporting the beneficiaries' psychosocial empowerment.
- b.** Issuance of social security number (AMKA), tax registration number (AFM), yearly tax declaration and other relevant to employment papers/procedures.
- c.** Referring to services and NGOs for developing skills and gain access to the local labor market.
- d.** Participation in the Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment Committee of the Municipality of Athens Coordination Center for Migrants and Refugee issues (AC-CMR).
- e.** Compiling of a database with a significant number of CVs (more than 220).
- f.** Designing and implementing activities for a more accurate profiling of the beneficiaries' skills, experience and future expectations (e.g. focus groups).

The project counts numerous best practices produced and tested during its implementation, such as:

_ Develop project teams structured in triplets (interpreter, social worker, accommodation officer), an approach that offers integrated support to beneficiaries and consistent community reach.

_ Create focus teams that specialise in subject matters (e.g. protection, education, employment, community engagement) to provide advice and transfer knowledge to the field teams.

_ Establish a centralized system for monitoring and controlling the requests for medical appointments through a Health Help-line (for Arab speakers). In particular for this service, 475 requests have been placed by the beneficiaries during the first 4 months of operation.

In addition, the Accommodation plan foresees and implements school enrollments and school attendance follow-ups, information management & analytics, cooperation with the Ministry of Education, and complement case management to tackle cases of bullying, parent's refusal, and gender issues. In the framework of the Accommodation Programme, the "Open Schools Project", had been included by the Council of Europe in the best practices guide for "Promoting human rights at local and regional level", promoting mainly language learning, and other creative learning activities.

Source:

<https://www.accmr.gr/en/component/teams/team/435.html?Itemid=147>

2.4 – 2.

Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee Issues

Since the beginning of 2015, with Greece's unprecedented number of migrant and refugee arrivals fleeing conflict, the City of Athens has increasingly adopted a proactive approach towards developing strategies to address the needs of these vulnerable populations. In this context, the City of Athens undertook the initiative to establish the Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR). The initiative aims at the efficient coordination between the municipal authorities and stakeholders operating within the city, such as national and international NGOs, international organizations, and migrant and refugee community groups. Their goal is to shape the necessary conditions for the smooth integration of migrants and refugees currently living in the city of Athens, but also for dealing with emergency situations linked with future migration flows.

The Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee issues has been operating since June 2017 with Stavros Niarchos Foundation as founding donor and with the coordination of the Athens Partnership, under the Vice - Mayor's Office for Migrants and Refugees.

The ACCMR functions as a coordination hub for the fruitful exchange of good practices and know-how between local and international NGOs, international organizations and municipal bodies on issues ranging from temporary accommodation to integration of newcomers. The Center aims mainly to encourage the development and implementation of innovative tools and initiatives which promote integration, while also liaising with potential donors for funding. The ACCMR has developed a Strategic Action Plan for the smooth integration of migrants and refugees in the city. Importantly, ACCMR in collaboration with key stakeholders has produced the first Guide for the development of a Preparedness and Response Mechanism for effective contingency planning in the event of refugee-related emergencies in Athens'. The Center is liaising with other municipalities in order to exchange and transfer know-how and experience.

ACCMR's operation is organized around 6 Working Committees with the participation of both municipal and other actors involved in the provision of services to migrants and refugees, each focusing on a specific set of services (housing, employment, health, education, legal support, gender aspects), and all working towards defining a comprehensive service delivery system that takes into consideration the short-term and long-term goals of integration. The Center currently counts more than 90 members, while over 200 representatives of the members are actively involved in ACCMR's operations.

Among the tools applied in the context of the ACCMR's plan is the ACCMR digital platform which enables its members to map their services and activities, with a view to including all initiatives taking place in the broad Athens area in relation to refugees and migrants. The online platform will work towards informing organizations

operating in Athens and their professional staff on services and activities and thus facilitate their cooperation. In addition, the Platform enables the organizations to connect with individuals, businesses and other actors who want to support them. In addition, the ACCMR Hub functions as a meeting point and a co-working space with 11 computers available to interested groups.

Source:

<https://www.accmr.gr/en/the-athens-coordination-center.html>

2.4 – 3.

The Catalan Refugee Programme and the Social Mentoring Programme from Generalitat

For the first time, Catalonia has its own refugee program. With the participation of civil society and public administrations, and exploiting successful international models (implemented in Canada, Quebec, and Iceland), as well as the local experience (the social mentorship approach), the Catalan Refugee Programme (CPR) aims to assist refugees throughout the whole process of becoming independent citizens. The Catalan Refugee Programme is structured around three pillars of intervention: housing, financial support and a mentorship scheme. It involves 90 social and institutional agents including the provincial councils (Diputacions), the Barcelona City Council, the Catalan Advocacy Council, and the Catalan Development Cooperation Fund (FCCD), as well as NGO's helping refugees and international protection seekers, such as Accem, ACSAR, Càritas Barcelona, Càritas Catalunya, CCAR, ACNUR, Creu Roja, Stop Mare Mortum and Taula d'Entitats del Tercer Sector. Main actors involved in the CPR include (a) the Catalan Government, which provides financial support to cover basic needs, (b) networks of municipalities that are responsible for the quarterly evaluation of the achievement of the goals, (c) organizations responsible of welcoming refugees offering specialized support, (d) organizations that work as supporting mentors of the "Hosting groups", (e) mentors, which are forming "hosting groups" to accompany refugees, (f) and the refugees themselves, who take the commitment to complete an Individual Activities Plan. The Programme mobilizes eight action groups: education for development and cultural awareness, resource inventory, welcome and reception, employment and employability, health care and wellbeing, child welfare, elderly welfare and Legislation.

So far, the CPR provided housing for 867 cases (650 residences, 217 flats), together with a financial support, equal to the Guaranteed Citizenship Income for each beneficiary.

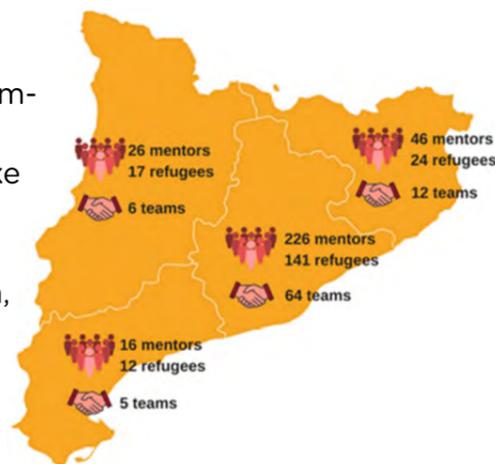
The requirements for participating in the CPR are: to be registered in Catalonia for, at least, 1 year, to have had revenues below the Minimum Income Tax (MIT) in the 12 months prior to the request, and to accept to implement the Individual Activities Plan (IAP), which includes participation in processes and activities that support inclusion and integration, such as learning the language, orientation, training and job placement, discovering the surroundings and establishing social bonds.

Mentorship is a social intervention tool that promotes the relationship between people who voluntarily offer to provide individual support to another person who is in a situation of risk of exclusion. The Mentorship Program of the Generalitat de Catalunya began in January 2017 aiming to encourage volunteers in Catalonia to form “hosting groups” from 3 to 5 people – friends, family members, work colleagues, etc. – and to commit to a program to accompany and support a person or family of refugees or asylum seekers. The relationship is motivated and tutored by a professional. Mentorship doesn’t replace the social network of the refugee nor the professional guide provided by the public administration or the organisation. Goals and guidelines are commonly established, while Mentorship relations are constructed slowly and require limits.

Within the Mentorship framework, the CPR establishes “Hosting Groups”, which are groups consisted from 3 to 5 mentors who spend 2 to 4 hours per week with the mentored person or group. These mentors commit to be involved as members of the “Hosting Groups” for one year, having agreed previously to take part in a personal interview and a 24 hours training on how to accompany refugees to help them to get social, labor and linguistic autonomy.

On the other hand, a “Hosting Group” in the context of the CPR gets a person or group of refugees assigned according to their profile. They provide assistance to refugees to make basic everyday arrangements, they plan activities for the mentored and help them to accomplish them. They also help refugees to establish bonds with their surroundings and to achieve their goals related to learning the language, work orientation and social participation. They help refugees by creating housing or labor opportunities. They can also promote activities to raise awareness.

Criteria for pairing up people in the Mentorship Programme include: geographic proximity (the accompaniment must be done in the same area where one lives), conditions mentors and mentored people make when deciding to take part, capability of communication (shared languages between volunteers and mentored people), as well as gender, family situation, professional field, hobbies and common interests. Personal circumstances and emotional situation are also taken into account seriously, as well as participation in relevant associations.



The role of the “monitoring technician” is to offer guidance in the relationship between mentors and mentored, and to adjust the expectancies and motivations of the volunteers and the mentored people. They supervise the relationship (by taking care of the volunteers, their wellbeing and their motivations), they face ethical dilemmas, accompany the beginning and the closure of the relationship, and ensure confidentiality. They track the weekly meetings between mentors and mentored people. They gather feedback of the refugees, through the professionals of the organiza-

tions working with refugees and they come up with the quarterly evaluation meeting with both refugees and mentors.

Currently the mentorship programme in Catalonia presents 2590 volunteers registered to be mentors.

2.4 – 4.

“Barcelona, City of Refuge”

The “Barcelona, Refugee City” plan was launched in September 2015 to gear the city up to receive and assist refugees providing the necessary services in support to their human and civil rights.

The plan consists of four main parts that involve various City Council departments and services: reception strategy defines Barcelona’s reception model and the implementation stages, taking into account refugees’ needs and rights, but also those of the city’s population; care for refugees already in Barcelona, by bolstering the Care Service for Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees (SAIER) and designing a care programme that offers protection and assistance to asylum seekers who are receiving no help from the state programme; citizen participation and information, including a civic space for coordinating the efforts of the City Council and NGOs in volunteer work, awareness-raising and development education tasks; action abroad, i.e. coordination and mutual support between European cities, city-to-city and in the international networks they belong to.

The City Council has been offering support to migrants and asylum seekers since 1999, through the Care Service for Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees (SAIER). It collaborates, through subsidies, with city NGOs working in asylum and in international development cooperation and education, which have been squeezed hard in recent years by Spanish and Catalan government cuts. It has also had the Barcelona International Peace Resource Centre (CRIPB) since 2009, which promotes peace cultures through dialogue, awareness raising and training in crisis management and conflict resolution.

The “Barcelona, Refugee City” plan was launched in September 2015 in response to the crisis and aiming to prepare the city to receiving and assisting refugees. The “Barcelona, Refugee City” plan operates on four main lines that involve various City Council departments and services:

- a. The Reception strategy defines Barcelona’s reception model and its implementation stages. The aim is to minimize its impact and implement it in the most effective way possible, taking into account refugees’ needs and rights but also those of the city’s population.
- b. Care for refugees already in Barcelona: this means bolstering the Care Service

for Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees (SAIER) and the Municipal reception programme, Nausica that offers protection and assistance to asylum seekers already in Barcelona who are receiving no help from the state programme.

c. Citizen participation and information: as a result of creating the plan, coordination channels were established with social care organisations and associations promoting volunteering in order to channel offers received from the start. At the same time, and in order to support the initiative, a specific line of subsidies has been created to raise awareness in the field of refuge, and agreements reached for the granting of extraordinary subsidies. Transparent information tools have also been set in motion, such as this website and a newsletter that will be sent regularly to anyone who is interested in receiving it.

d. Action abroad: the City Council is pushing for coordination and mutual support between European cities, both on a city-to-city basis as well as in the international networks they belong too. It has also increased the subsidies for NGOs working on the ground, at source and en route.

As regards the Reception part in particular, requesting international protection is a legal process that does not confer any social benefits or any assistance upon arriving in the receiving society. Those with no resources of their own who are claiming asylum can turn to the state programme once their application has been accepted. The programme is managed by social stakeholders and NGOs through a competitive call for subsidies from the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Social Security. The programme consists of three phases of six months divided according to the level of attention those admitted receive. The reception phase (first phase) and the integration phase (second phase) can be completed with a third phase in which the person may need temporary or sporadic help or support in certain areas.

Before the application can be processed, there is an assessment and referral phase (Phase 0) to evaluate the asylum seeker's profile and needs in order to refer them to the appropriate resources.

After six months, they will have permission to work, but they have to search for work and accommodation just like any other citizen. Given their prior situation, they become categorized as a vulnerable group and the state programme often ends before any legal decision is reached, leaving people in an uncertain and unprotected state of limbo.

Barcelona participates in the reception process for refugees and asylum seekers from the first day. It integrates them into neighborhoods and the social and cultural life of the city, enables children to enter the city's schools and gives everyone that needs it access to public health care and social services. Later on, it continues assisting them to enter the labor market and become more independent. If, despite their wish to do so, the conditions for their return to their country of origin do not arise, they are integrated for the long term.

Furthermore, the 'Barcelona, Refugee City' plan drives actions in countries of origin and along the route, and coordinates and collaborates with other cities and international NGOs and bodies working on the ground. Barcelona has been the driving force behind the European refugee cities network Solidarity Cities, which has also been joined by many municipalities in Spain. The main objective of the network is to promote cooperation and sharing of information and good practice, both for mutual support in emergency situations and to share intervention strategies. The network also promotes political initiatives to press the responsible authorities to fulfil their international and European commitments, as well as to come up with policies that tackle the root of the problem and go beyond just taking in refugees. Collaboration with other municipalities also takes place in a city-to-city relationship as part of several international networks which the City Council is a part of, such as Eurocities, Medcities, the World Association of Major Metropolises, and the United Cities and Local Governments network (UCLG). Along with other urban centers, such as Amsterdam, Athens, Berlin and Helsinki, Barcelona is driving the first attempt at multi-level governance by the European Commission: the EU Urban Agenda, resulting from the Pact of Amsterdam, working to strengthen the voices of cities in the power structures of Brussels and to ensure they are eligible to receive emergency funds in the same way as states and organisations.

The 'Barcelona, Refugee City' plan has implemented the 'From City to City' programme to provide assistance and expertise to specific municipal projects in cities with the densest population of refugees in transit and that receive the largest proportion of people fleeing their own countries in search of safety. The initiative has been rolled out in the cities of Athens and Lesbos in Greece, Lampedusa in Italy, Gdansk in Poland, Hamburg in Germany and Amsterdam in the Netherlands. This is done directly through the Global Justice and Cooperation Department, through subsidies, bilateral city-to-city cooperation, cooperation with other bodies and multilateral cooperation, and in association with other municipalities as part of the Catalan Development Cooperation Fund (FCCD).

Source:

<http://ciutatrefugi.barcelona/en>

- 2.5 -
**TRAINING RESOURCES
FOR HUMANITARIAN WORKERS**

2.5-1.
The ReCULM OERs and MOOC to upskill Cultural Mediators

Due to the refugee emergency in Europe, Cultural Mediators' skills needs are changing rapidly calling for the development of up-to-date Vocational Education and Training (VET) resources openly available to their professional community, as well as to organisations responsible for their education. VET provision for Cultural Mediators must be tailored to the extreme work challenges deployed for them in multiple levels. They need to update skills to a) respond immediately providing support in situ, in places where a huge population of refugees is gathered (e.g. the so called "hot spots", ports, borders, islands), and b) in the long term, to assist in the integration of refugees in the hosting EU countries.

Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme (2016-2018) the ReCULM project formed a Strategic Partnership, with the objective to:

- 1.** Develop up-to-date curricula for cultural mediators to face their emerging professional needs.
- 2.** Support Cultural Mediators to address their self-training requirements via freely available Open Educational Resources (OERs) and a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC).
- 3.** Facilitate mutual recognition and accreditation by supporting the development of an EU qualification for Cultural Mediators based on EQF & ECVET standards.

Under the coordination of the National Center for Social Research (EKKE), the Universities of Almeria, Reggio Emilia and Glasgow developed original learning outcomes, a modular course structured around 6 learning units (compiling more than 250 slides, presentations, exercises and case studies), as well as a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), which had been offered freely to almost 5000 worldwide learners in the context of two pilot runs, hosted in the Future Learn Platform.

In particular, the ReCULM online course, namely 'Working Supportively with Refugees: Principles, Skills and Perspectives' has been designed for free, self-paced learning mode for duration of 3 weeks, which included 12 hours of learning in total and 4 hours per week.

The purpose of the course is to learn how the principles of psychological wellbeing, communication and interpretation can benefit the Cultural Mediators' work with refugees and explore interdisciplinary approaches. Combining principles of psychological wellbeing, intercultural communication, interpretation and conflict manage-

ment, this course aims to support professionals to understand and assist in the integration of the refugees in the receiving countries.

Topics covered by the ReCULM MOOC include:

- _ The basics about human migration, refugees and legal framework
- _ Cultural diversity and interethnic relations
- _ Socialization, conflict resolution and social inclusion
- _ Principals of psychological wellbeing and socio-emotional health in refugee cases.
- _ Communication and interpreting in context of cultural mediation
- _ The practice of cultural mediation in the reality of refugees

The online freely accessible course "*Working supportively with Refugees: Principles, Skills and Perspectives*" has been launched the 12th of February 2018. The first pilot began on the 21st of May and the second run, which included amended material, started on the 20th of August 2018. Each run of the course lasted three weeks and involved interactions with tutors from University of Glasgow and live discussion forums. The material of the course was still available for enrolled learners for two weeks after the official end date.

Both runs of the online course were very well attended. The total number of 3843 learners from 125 countries joined the course online (2119 joiners have signed up for the first run and 1724 joiners for the second run of the course).

Source:
<https://www.reculm.eu/>

2.5 – 2.

The Time to Wellcome Erasmus+ project of the British Red Cross

Time to Wellcome is an Erasmus+ project with main objectives (a) to aid integration of young migrants in Greece and France, (b) to educate European society on the situation faced by refugees, and (c) to facilitate interaction between migrants and local communities.

“Time to be welcome” is a collaborative partnership between 10 youth organisations and the British Red Cross. The project also counts on a number of associated partners: international organizations and NGOs such as UNHCR Geneva, Médecins du Monde Greece, Red Cross Greece, Athens City Hall, Ministry of Migration of Greece, and some other non-profit associations.

The project aims to increase the impact of the youth NGOs and volunteers’ engagement in welcoming migrants while encouraging public opinion in Europe to be more respectful and more open towards migrants. Volunteers are empowered to take action in contributing to welcome refugees and newly arrived migrants into refugee camps and other hosting structures and local communities.

In general, the project actively promotes mutual understanding and respect among young people with different ethnic backgrounds with the aim of facilitating intercultural dialogue and learning as well as supporting the inclusion of the newcomers in local European communities. Volunteers are preparing young refugees, who settle in Athens and Paris, for a smooth integration into European society, as well as helping to prepare local communities to welcome those refugees and new migrants with positivity rather than xenophobia.

The project started in December 2016 and lasted until November 2018. It has involved volunteers from several different countries, volunteering for various durations of time (2 months, 6 months or 12 months).

In the context of the project, each volunteer received pre-departure training, including child safeguarding modules from their sending organisation. They also received on-arrival training provided by the on-the-ground hosting organisation and local NGOs. Psychological support training had been delivered to every volunteer. Especially for 12 month volunteers, a week-long mid-project training was also provided.



The project produced an Activities Pack — useful tools for youth work and training activities with migrants, refugees and local communities. Created to help volunteers, as well as social and youth workers, the Activities Pack supports the implementation of new educational methods in the daily work with young migrants as well as local communities.

The project is co-funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Programme KA3 – Support for policy reform and Social Inclusion.

Source:

<http://timetobewelcome.eu/the-project/activity-packs-and-tools/>

- 2.6 -
**EDUCATION AND WORK
ORIENTATION**

2.6-1.

Migratory Birds: The first newspaper in Greece made by refugee, migrant and Greek Youth

The newspaper 'Migratory Birds', part of the 'Young Journalists' project by the Network for Children's Rights, was born out of the reluctance of those living in refugee camps to talk to journalists, because they were convinced that their stories would be misrepresented. Fifteen teenage Afghan girls -and one young Greek girl- decided that they themselves would become journalists in order to give voice to the refugee population.

The overall aim of the project is to assist adolescent refugees to effectively integrate in the Greek society by introducing them to the principles of journalism and to empower them by strengthening their voice through their involvement with various media as the specific age group is rarely heard outside the context of the relevant service providers and within the general public.

During project implementation, the participants are provided with the opportunity to publish their own multilingual newspaper. More specifically, they have already created their own editorial team with distinctive roles and duties, and are the ones deciding on the content of the newspaper. Their texts are being published in English, Greek, Arabic, Farsi and Urdu.

The participants are encouraged to present issues that are important to them, varying from the living conditions inside camps, social news and sports, to international news, entertainment and the arts. The newspaper is being distributed every two months free of charge as a supplement to 'I Efimerida ton Syntakton', a Greek daily newspaper.

The Young Journalists have produced 12 issues of the 'Migratory Birds' newspaper so far, while the NCR volunteers have translated them into English, Spanish and French.

Source:

https://ddp.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/migratory-birds_english_5_english_00.pdf

2.6-2.

Access to Higher Education for Refugee at the American College of Greece

The American College of Greece (ACG), working together with the U.S. Embassy in Athens, the American College of Thessaloniki/ACT and the American Farm School, launched the programme "Education Unites: From Camp to Campus" providing higher education scholarships to 87 refugees. Scholarship recipients included 24 women and 63 men, ages 18 to 40, from 14 countries to help pay for their studies at ACG for the 2017 to 2018 academic year.

The primary goals of the program were to:

- a.** give opportunities to displaced students, many of whom are victims of wars or violence, to continue their education;
- b.** provide them with the knowledge, skills and academic credits they could then use in Greece or in any other European country they might move to in the future;
- c.** help them move beyond their identity as refugees and begin to be integrated in the local community; and
- d.** offer young men and women hope for the future and preparation for their professional lives.

The Financial Assistance Program at ACG provides various levels of financial assistance based on need and/or academic achievement. The governing philosophy of the program "Education Unites: From Camp to Campus" is grounded in the belief that lack of funds should never prevent academically talented students from receiving a quality education. Funding for financial assistance originates from the college's own resources and from the generous contributions of donors.

Deree - The American College of Greece is in the second year of its scholarship program for refugees. The first year was a joint project, working in tandem with the US embassy, and generously supported by funds from the US Department of State. Nearly 100 students were given half-time scholarships, taking courses that were dependent on their level of English. This second year, Deree & Alba are funding 21 students, with 3 working towards Masters degrees in business topics, one seeking a Masters in Strategic Communication, and the other students working on BA degrees in a wide variety of fields.

The "Education Unites: From Camp to Campus" program offered two courses per student for two semesters (Fall 2017 and Spring 2018) in the three U.S. affiliated colleges in Athens and Thessaloniki. The courses offered also included preparatory English classes, academic classes in diverse fields based on the participants' educational background, as well as vocational training.

In particular at Deree, refugee students had been invited to select from an array of courses, such as:

>	>	>	>	>
English for Academic Purposes	Fundamentals of Academic English	Introduction to Academic Writing	Mathematics for Liberal Arts	Survey of Western Civilization

During the first week of October 2017, seventy eight young refugees started their academic studies as part of the “Education Unites: From Camp to Campus” scholarship program, organized by the U.S. Embassy in Athens in collaboration with the American College of Thessaloniki - Anatolia College, Deree -American College of Greece and Perrotis College - American Farm School. After reviewing over 400 applications and interviewing dozens of refugees and asylum seekers, the three U.S. affiliated colleges have selected the first group of fellows that began their academic studies. For the first semester of the academic year 2017-2018, forty-eight students attend Deree in Athens, fourteen students attend the American College of Thessaloniki, and sixteen students started classes at the Perrotis College in Thessaloniki.

Source:

<https://gr.usembassy.gov/education-culture/education-unites/>
<https://www.acg.edu/news-events/news/education-unites-from-camp-to-campus/countries/education-unites/>

2.6 – 3.

A Protocol for the Validation of Academic Competences of Refugees across Europe

European countries are currently hosting numerous refugees, displaced persons and individuals in a refugee status from non-EU countries, who could be contributing to European societies using their qualifications. Due to the fact that existing systems for the assessment and recognition of foreign certificates and/or knowledge and skills are not always offering to refugees appropriate resources and routes into further education and vocational training, today many of those already qualified are obliged to restart education or training and remain unemployed, at the detriment of their integration prospects in host countries.

The Protocol for the Validation of Academic Competences of Refugees (developed and proposed in the context of the EU project UNINTEGRA, AMIF 2017-2019) aims at facilitating the end users, i.e. refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation, to resume and complete their studies in Higher Education in EU countries, in the most efficient way possible, making every necessary step and process accessible, straightforward, fair, transparent, and effective by leading to a recognized diploma. The procedure described by the Protocol is expected to lead to something more than just a description of competencies as was the case with the successful “European Qualifications Passport for Refugees”). It is also developed to provide a cost-effective solution for everyone involved (refugees, universities, relevant national agencies and third-parties).

The proposed procedure addresses the main problems and barriers that have been identified as part of the development of the Protocol, leading to varying outcomes for refugees with the same need -namely:

- a. The uncertain legal status (and therefore rights, including access to Higher Education) of refugees
- b. The refugees’ access (or not) to information regarding the recognition of their qualifications
- c. The different roles and strategies of Enic-Naric or national information and recognition agencies regarding the recognition procedure in each European country (leading to varying outcomes for refugees with the same need)
- d. Unifying the evaluation procedure in European Universities, expanding the academic and socio-cultural support given to refugees and working with third-parties such as NGOs.

In conclusion, for refugees to be integrated successfully in Higher Education, isolated efforts of Enic-Naric centres and Universities is not enough. The formation of a common EU network consisting of all the Enic-Naric centres and/or national in-

formation and recognition agencies, Ministries of Education and Higher Education institutions, as well as third-parties such as stakeholders from the Higher Education sector, other private sector organizations and NGOs with relative experience, is of the utmost importance.

The final suggestion of this proposal is that such a network would not be complete and efficient without being complemented by a common, single online “window” for applicants, which will channel them to the relevant agencies. Such an information platform regarding the procedure for the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, such as a single online “window”, will help considerably at the simplification of the procedure. Being user-friendly, with a “clean” interface and easy to navigate by people without much online experience and in multiple languages, it will address common procedures and will provide all the necessary links to competent authorities and relevant institutions, such as national Enic-Naric centres or the respective national information and recognition agencies, Ministries of Education, Universities and other Higher Education institutions, professional bodies, NGOs and other relevant third-parties. Currently the Protocol is under development and is expected to be concluded and disseminated to all involved European and national stakeholders by November 2019.

Source:
https://unintegra.usc.es/work_packages.php

CONCLUSIONS

The integration of refugees and asylum seekers is a two-way process, which can only be successfully pursued when the host society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity. Inclusiveness means that refugees should be provided with equal access to housing, health care, education, training and employment.

Refugees’ level of integration and adaptation depends on their pre-migration condition (trauma, mental and physical torture, mass violence, witnessing the killings of family members and friends, sexual abuse, kidnap of children, destruction and looting of personal property, starvation and lack of water and shelter), as well as on post-arrival factors; although arrival in a safe destination provides initial relief, frustration develops as new problems emerge e.g., family separation, language barriers, legal status, unemployment, homelessness, lack of access to education and healthcare, insecurity about the future. Furthermore, social integration depends on the way individuals are perceived, accepted and accommodated in the new environment, especially if they belong to vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied minors, LGBTI, people with disabilities, women with children under their protection.

The circumstances and experiences of forced migration have profound effects on refugees’ health and integration. People who fled from armed conflicts and persecution are vulnerable to mental health problems, post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), depression and anxiety. Furthermore, children in refuge, often separated from their parents, witnessed or experienced violence or torture, experiences that may have a serious impact on their subsequent development.

Back in 2016 the vast majority of asylum seekers decided to submit asylum applications in Greece.² All those applying for asylum in EU Member States are guaranteed certain basic conditions of reception and access to the asylum procedures, protections, and rights. Legal status has significant implications for refugees’ social and economic integration.

Although first aid assistance is provided to asylum seekers and refugees in the context of local and national plans and policies adopted for the resolution of the so called “refugee crisis”, at this point, there is a need for more in-depth and long-term integration plans to be established for people who are trying to integrate in the Greek society leaving behind the initial plan to reach Northern Europe.

Safe and dignified accommodation to refugees, as well as psychological relief, constitute the initial steps towards social integration. Importance needs to be placed

² http://asylo.gov.gr/en/?page_id=110

on the creation of strong bonds between cultures, (i.e. the culture of origin and that of the host society), a condition that will enhance the feeling of belongingness of refugees by making them feel that they are part of a network by promoting familiarization with human rights, mutual respect and understanding. Practices such as the FutbolNet project and the Migratory Birds newspaper present a fine example on how children can be empowered to achieve cross cultural bonding through creative collaboration. Group activities can help promote social inclusion through cooperation, conflict resolution, understanding rules and enhancing critical thinking.

Alongside that, it is essential to provide protection to unaccompanied minors in a wide range of areas, such as social services, health care services, education, accommodation, legal services, recreational activities and many more. The goal should be to empower minors and take them out of the streets in order to facilitate their integration and protect them from abuse. LGBTI individuals are also considered to be a vulnerable group due to the fact that they may face discrimination, bullying, violence and violation of their human rights. Awareness raising projects are highly important in order to assist refugees that belong in this group to fight prejudice. Finally, Melissa's network of refugee women is a good example in praxis on how facilitation of women through the provision of legal advice, access to media and news, language courses, access to psychological support and many more activities can help women strengthen trust and confidence to stand on their feet. The success of this initiative lies in the fact that women, who have been migrants for many years are trained to offer their help to other women, who have just arrived in the host country.

The 20 Good Practices compiled in this Manual present a multidimensional holistic approach developed and implemented by private and public institutions that contributed synergistically in the rehabilitation, accommodation, financial support, mental health care, education, work orientation, psycho-social identity recovery and social inclusion of refugees in Greece so far. A "Good Practice" is the result of a multi-sector collaboration among policy makers and humanitarian institutions, refugees' organizations, housing and employment agencies that work for securing the integration of migrants into society; enabling interactions, increasing opportunities for learning the language, build a future. On the other hand, inability to locate work and underemployment are the most significant barriers to the successful integration of refugees into society, while state sponsored integration programs and housing and employment assistance is a pre-requisite.

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