

THURSDAY
18
APRIL 2024

BRUSSELS



FINAL EVENT AGENDA

HOUSING INITIATIVES AS DRIVERS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

09.00 → 17.00



This project has received
funding from
the European Union's
Horizon 2020 research
and innovation programme
under grant agreement
N° 101004535.



| TIME | SEQUENCE | SPEAKERS/FACILITATORS |
|--|--|--|
| 08:00 → 09:00 GROUND FLOOR | Welcome and complimentary breakfast | Welcome by Cota |
| 09:00 → 09:15 MAIN ROOM / 3 RD FLOOR | Introduction: The Merging project in a nutshell Opening words: EU migration research, overview in Horizon and future steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Catherine Mercier-Suissa & Dr Noémie Dominguez (UJML - Merging coordinators) • Mr Michail Moschovakos, Policy Officer, Migration, Education, Youth and Intangible Cultural Heritage, European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, D3-Fair Societies & Cultural Heritage. |
| 09:30 → 10:15 MAIN ROOM / 3 RD FLOOR | 3 pilots, 3 stories: presentation of the projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction: Mr Romain Minod, Co-founder and Director of Quatorze • Prof. Catherine Mercier-Suissa (UJML) and Ms Mallory Mahout (FNDSA), representatives from the Cocon project (Lyon) • Prof. Carles X Simo-Noguerra (UVEG) and Ms Àngela Rolanà Barrera (València Acull), representatives from the Caliu Urba project (Valencia) • Ms Nancy Ottaviano (Quatorze) and Mr Dan Melander (First to know), representative from the Anna project (Göteborg) |
| 10:15 → 10:45 MAIN ROOM / 3 RD FLOOR | Merging's final evaluation: findings and recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Mina De Beaumont & Mr Thibault Simonet (Cota) |
| 10:45 → 11:05 | COFFEE BREAK | |
| 11:05 → 12:05 MAIN ROOM / 3 RD FLOOR | Panel discussion: <i>"How to rethink housing for migrants, refugees and newcomers in Europe, to ensure a sustainable and proper integration?"</i> | <p>Introduction and moderation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Samantha Caccamo, CEO, Social Business Earth <p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof Pura Peris Garcia, Law professor, activist for housing, against racism and sexism, member of the Spanish Green Party and former regional DG for Housing Emergency and Social Function of Housing (2019-2023) • Ms Sameera Chukkappalli, Founder of Needlab, Obama Leader, and UN-Habitat Assembly Speaker • Mr Rudi Osman, Journalist, and founder of the Union of Exiled Students, Obama leader • Mr Adam Labaran, Board member, EU-COMAR, Vice-President of the Refugees Union in Portugal |
| 12:05 → 12:15 MAIN ROOM / 3 RD FLOOR | Wrap-up of the morning session | Ms Alexandra Cogels & Mr Thibault Simonet (Cota) |
| 12:15 → 13:15 | LUNCH BREAK (<i>on site buffet lunch</i>) | |
| 13:15 → 13:30 MAIN ROOM, 2 ND & 3 RD ROOMS / 3 RD FLOOR | Introduction of the afternoon workshops | Ms Alexandra Cogels & Mr Thibault Simonet (Cota) |
| 13:30 → 15:00 MAIN ROOM, 2 ND & 3 RD ROOMS / 3 RD FLOOR | Workshops (2 sessions) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop 1 – Operative concept of integration and concept of democratic participation in the pilots - Experience sharing about collaboration within the Merging pilot projects and personal experience <i>Facilitation: Mr Daniel Millor Vela (Quatorze) & Ms Anne-Cécile De Giacconi (LIP), with the testimonies of Prof. Carles X Simo-Noguerra (UVEG) and Ms Julia Checa Valero, General Coordinator of València Acull (Caliu Urba project)</i> • Workshop 2 – Integration: why and how? - Showcase of 3 European projects working on migrants' integration process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embrace: Mr Giovanni Fontana, Co-Founder and President of Second Tree - Integreat: Prof. Morena Cuconato & Ms Virginia Signorini, UNIBO - Mimy: Ms Jutta Bissinger, Research and Development Specialist, Department of Geography and Spatial Planning, Université du Luxembourg <i>Facilitation : Dr Noémie Dominguez (UJML) & Mr Thibault Simonet (Cota)</i> • Workshop 3 – Building housing projects, making home – Exhibition <i>Facilitation : Ms Nancy Ottaviano (Quatorze) & Ms Alexandra Cogels (Cota)</i> |
| 15:00 → 15:30 | COFFEE & WELLNESS BREAK | |
| 15:30 → 16:15 MAIN ROOM, 2 ND & 3 RD ROOMS / 3 RD FLOOR | Workshops (1 session) | <i>See above</i> |
| 16:15 → 16:45 MAIN ROOM/ 3 RD FLOOR | Wrap-up of the afternoon session and closing remarks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Romain Minod, Co-founder and Director of Quatorze • Prof. Catherine Mercier-Suissa & Dr Noémie Dominguez (UJML - Merging coordinators) |

→ PRESENTATION OF THE SPEAKERS



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OPENING WORDS

MICHALIS MOSCHOVAKOS



I'm Michalis Moschovakos, policy officer on migration at the European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation.

Throughout my career, I've delved into various facets of migration from volunteering and youth work to policy implementation at national and EU level where I have dealt with migration issues through youth policy, education, human rights and, research. My ambition is to standardize the feeding of migration research into policy development for a fair and efficient migration policy.

PANEL DISCUSSION

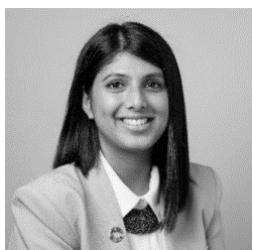
MS SAMANTHA CACCAMO



Born in Bologna, Italy, Samantha Caccamo is the founder, CEO and President of the Board of Social Business Earth (SBE). Samantha has 20+ years' experience working in the private and social sector. She is a leader and visionary in advancing the social business model at global level. She is an advocate of poverty eradication and believes in redesigning a new and inclusive economic system to serve the most disadvantaged people. She is a consultant in the field of migration and integration and has designed and implemented a number of projects at EU level for asylum seekers and refugees. In her capacity she manages the SBE team to advance the organization's

mission of facilitating the creation of sustainable business models and promoting equal opportunities for all. Samantha has directly contributed to the development and implementation of a number of social businesses in Europe, Asia and Africa. She also provides tailored consulting and training in sustainability and social entrepreneurship to corporates, NGOs, impact entrepreneurs and university students around the world. She holds a BA in Journalism from Pepperdine University, Los Angeles and an Executive MBA from Università della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano.

MS SAMEERA CHUKKAPALLI HOLMES



She is an Obama Leader and the founder and director of Needlab, a nonprofit organization that works to solve habitat and resilience problems in cities and rural areas. Needlab works with communities worldwide to develop human and environmental-centered architectural design solutions.

Needlab's mission is to research, build, and advocate for dignity in design and self-sufficiency in communities. They have completed projects on four continents - directly impacting communities by working with and for them. She is the youngest architect to participate in "Barcelona Design Week", and one among the three selected architects to display sustainable housing solutions at the 1st UN-Habitat Assembly. She spends most of her time drafting human and environment-centered design solutions with communities around the world. Currently, she is driven toward achieving the UN Sustainable development Goals by making sustainable design solutions reachable to all and teaching graduate students at NYU and Pratt Institute in New York.

MR RUDI OSMAN



He is a passionate advocate for human rights and a fervent promoter of justice and democracy. Having actively participated in the Syrian revolution during the Arab Spring, Rudi faced repeated arrests and tortures. However, this challenging experience strengthened his resilience and dedication to improving the living conditions of vulnerable people. Forced to leave Syria, Rudi found refuge in France where he continued to work for justice while resuming his law studies at the University Paris 2 Assas. Throughout his journey, he had to overcome significant obstacles as a refugee, including the insufficient awareness of university staff and professors about the specific challenges faced by exiled students. In response to these challenges, Rudi founded the Union of Exiled Students in 2018, an organization dedicated to providing administrative, academic, and psychological support to exiles wishing to resume their studies in France. Recognized for his leadership and commitment, Rudi was honored as a laureate of the Obama Foundation's European Leaders 2022 program. Additionally, he is a jury member of the Fondation de France, and an elected member of the board of the European Migration Forum. Rudi continues to commit himself to a more inclusive and fair society, using his personal experience to influence policies and practices in the field of education and inclusion of exiles.

MR ADAM LABARAN



Adam Labaran is a dynamic individual who wears many hats – he is the Vice President of the Refugees Union in Portugal (UREP), a Board Member of the European Coalition for Migrants and Refugees, Youth worker and a Youth Ambassador linked to the European Youth Centre (EYC), he is a talented Singer/Songwriter, and a dedicated Human Rights Activist. In his role as Vice President of UREP in Portugal, Adam Labaran has been at the forefront of advocating for the rights and well-being of refugees. His commitment to fostering inclusivity and support for the refugee community has made a significant impact on the local landscape. Driven by a passion for making a tangible difference in the lives of migrants and refugees, Adam Labaran works tirelessly to ensure that those seeking asylum in Portugal have access to safe and dignified housing options. Through advocacy efforts and community outreach programs, they strive to address the unique challenges faced by refugees in securing stable accommodation. UREP aims to give refugees a shortcut into Portuguese society. Through our community, we match refugees with local professionals, organizations and businesses in the region, based on professions, skills and expertise. Our community develops the appropriate networking for these citizens so that they can achieve their professional ambitions. Our mission is to guide, train, and facilitate integration into the Portuguese job market, so that they can build a successful life in Portugal.

PURA PERIS GARCIA



PhD in Law, Professor of Financial and Tax Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Valencia. She has a long university teaching and research career recognized with six teaching five-year periods and two six-year research periods, with several publications, both monographs and specialized articles in national and international journals. She has participated as a speaker at numerous national and international congresses. She has held various academic management positions; Department Secretary, elected senate member, elected member of the Law Center Board, Coordinator of the Degree in Law (2010-2019, among others). She has participated in the foundation of the European Association of Tax Law Professor.- From November 2019 to September 2020, Deputy Director of Management of the Valencian Entity for Housing and Land and from September 2020 to August 2023 she has been Director General of Housing Emergency, Social Function and Observatory of Housing and Urban Segregation (Second Vice-Presidency and Ministry of Housing and Bioclimatic Architecture). At present she is the Secretary-General of Los Verdes party. Otherwise, she has published five books of poetry in Catalan.





→ ANNA - THE PILOT PROJECT IN GOTHENBURG

WHAT IS ANNA?

- An individual accommodation in an ecological floating home preserving personal privacy and autonomy while reducing human carbon footprint
- Located close to the historical centre of Gothenburg facilitating access to employment and urban amenities in a neighbourhood with a fierce sense of community
- A network of social companies, NGOs, confessional organisations, individuals and neighbours to support the project development and future tenants.

TO DO THIS, WE HAD TO :

- Carry out feasibility studies to define what could be built in Sweden according to budget and existing urban and building regulations
- Connect with partners and assemble a supportive network of individuals and organisations to co-design the house and establish building methods, including participatory construction.

- Work with First to know and its marine experts on the applicable existing National & European Regulations w(ESRIN, 2022 and 2023) about boats and houseboats to ensure safety on board
- Thanks to Egnahemsfabriken, implement a social construction training program involving 20 participants, with a balance in genders and including one person with a refugee background
- Explore potential locations for the pilot project, prioritising proximity to the city centre to prevent segregation.
- Secure a quay space by negotiating a rental agreement with a private landlord.
- Work with various professional builders on the servicing of house and of the marina
- Collaborate with Räddningsmissionen, an organisation specialising in rental management, to facilitate connections between refugees, newcomers, and housing landlords in the open market.

- Collaborate with the Lundby Parish, a confessional organisation providing social support to vulnerable people

- Collaborate with the Support Group Network, a refugee organisation gathering persons in need of housing in Gothenburg both with refugee status or refugee background

- Collaborate with the Gothenburg Floating Lab network and connect with Gothenburg city council for the pilot project to be part of the development of ecological marinas dedicated to social and environmental sustainability

ANNA IS ALSO :

- An ecological, small autonomous housing reducing human ecological footprint and providing an innovative response to the housing crisis.
- A proof of concept that is to be disseminated thanks to further partnerships that are being consolidated through on site collaborative workshops

CONCLUSION

In Gothenburg, the shortage of available housing or land, coupled with construction permit delays, led to the creation of a floating house called ANNA now leading to inclusive governance on the development of marinas of affordable housings for both students and other target groups such as newcomers: «We want to proceed with a proposal to make permanent houseboat berths at Lindholms Harbor» (Emmyly Bönfors, Municipality of Gothenburg, 2023).



→ Visit of the houseboat during the participatory workshop in February 2024



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→ CALIU URBÀ - THE PILOT PROJECT IN VALENCIA

A COPARTICIPATIVE APPROACH TOWARDS HOLISTIC INTEGRATION OF THE CITY OF VALÈNCIA

8 flats (already refurbished) and 1 street level venue owned by the Valencian Region

Scattered between 5 different normalised building communities

In the historic central district of the city and region + Within a max. 10 minute-walk area

A WIDELY AGREED TARGET GROUP

People whose applications for International Protection were ultimately denied:

- Living in precarious housing and/or at risk of housing exclusion
- With residence permit
- With a source of income that allows them to pay for basic supply and an eventual symbolic rent

Installed from June 2023, with granted stay at least until June 2026

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ General increase in the feeling of safety and integration
- ✓ Enhancement of the access to formal job
- ✓ More quality time for leisure, rest and socialization within the neighbourhood
- ✓ Reduced dependency on social support
- ✓ Wide acknowledgement of the project by strategic local stakeholders

MAIN CHALLENGES

- × Lack of similar previous experiences in the same context
- × Very ambitious goals for such a short time
- × Lack of available time of beneficiaries due to productive and reproductive work obligations
- × Bureaucratic hindrances in the management of the funds and official documents
- × Political spin (municipal and regional) that called for a renovation of key stakeholders

A HIGHLY REPRESENTATIVE AND TRANSVERSAL FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE

CALIU URBÀ CORE TEAM

4 UVEG + 5 Quatorze + 6 València Acull

LOCAL THIRD SECTOR

Spanish Red Cross, CEAR, APIP-ACAM, ACCEM, CEPAIM, MPDL

PUBLIC SECTOR

REGIONAL (core level)

2 Deputy DG of Social Intervention (Valencian Entity of Housing and Ground) / 1 DG competent in Social Housing / 3 DG competent in Inclusion of Migrants

LOCAL Centre of Assistance to Migrants (València City Council)

NATIONAL

Welcoming Centre for Refugees (National Ministry competent in Migration)

INTERNATIONAL UNHCR Spain

1. Political prerogative for the free-leasing of 8 flats and 1 street-level venue at the historic old town of València /// 2. Manages the dwellings and venue /// 3. Funds the first year of social follow-up (through competitive public call) /// 4. Key node of the pilot, lessee of the flats and venue /// 5. WP4 and WP5 MERGING coordinator, in charge of refurbishment of the common space /// 6. In charge of the social follow-up (until May 2024)

SYSTEMATIC COPARTICIPATION

- Weekly meetings of the CU team (València Acull + UVEG + Social psychologist [from Nov 2023])
- 7 meetings related to strategic networking and Follow-Up Committee (+ 10 more meetings before June 2023)
- 5 assemblies and workshops with beneficiaries and Caliu Urbà team
- 5 autonomous assemblies of CU beneficiaries
- 9 workshops for beneficiaries (5 of co-design and construction of the sgraffito wall of the common space)
- + Participation in community choir, scouting group, community orchard

+ Implementation and monitorisation of specific intervention plans on social, labour and psychological domains



WORKING TOWARDS THE CONTINUATION OF CALIU URBÀ BEYOND MERGING (MAY 2024-JUNE 2026-)

INNER FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

Self-funded community
(Economy of the Common Good)

EXTERNAL FUNDING FEASIBILITY

Application to private call for funds
(Fundació La Caixa)

+

Discussion with regional public administration about possible merge with similar already existing programs

LONG TERM HOUSING SOLUTION

Sociolabour consolidation of beneficiaries towards autonomy

+

Assessment of possible ways to secure that they could stay in the neighbourhood after June 2026



→ COCON - THE PILOT PROJECT IN LYON

→ Individual accommodation in tiny houses that preserve personal privacy

→ A comprehensive policy of individualized support carried out by FNSA, a Lyon-based association in charge of supporting refugees, which is over 70 years old, experienced and whose *raison d'être* is : Welcome, Accommodate, Support and Integrate.

→ A coordinator to bring the site to life, create a common project, open the site to the neighborhood and invite neighbors into a yurt to propose or take part in activities.

→ A certain social mix with 2 tiny/5 designed to accommodate non-refugees (Caracol, La Manufacturette).

TO DO THIS, WE HAD TO :

- Carry out feasibility studies to decide where to locate the pilot project (oct.2021, first location, nov. 2022 definitive location)
- Build the tiny houses as part of professional trainings sessions including refugees (may 2022, nov.-déc. 2022, june-july 2023)
- Servicing the plot (viability was decreed in dec. 2023)
- Build a yurt and install it on the site (sept.2023)
- Contact refugees via associations, explain the project to them and organize the settlement of tiny houses (sept.2023)
- Install 5 tiny houses on the site (nov.2023)
- Meet the refugees at first place (november 2023) and included them in the project before their moving
- Introduce mixity: contact associations (Caracole, La Manufacturette) and install two

new tiny houses (nov.2023 and jan.2024)

- Landscaping the grounds, planting trees and grass (march 2024)
 - Obtain all necessary authorizations (building permits, electrical connections, opening of the premises)
- And communicate with the neighborhood, explain the project, get neighbors,



→ Participatory construction site for the yurt installation

HERE IS COCON, A PLACE FOR MIXED LIVING AND SOLIDARITY



→ A third place open to the neighborhood
→ Temporary installation +/- 5 Years

volunteers and refugees involved (nov.2022 until now) all along the pilot project)

→ Thanks to a Tiers-lieu coordinator, hired in dec.2023, a site manager, social workers and all the volunteers involved in the project.

COCON IS ALSO :

Self-contained accommodation in tiny houses that reduce spatial and ecological footprint, provide a possible response to the housing crisis, and are now a housing

solution for refugees and people wishing to share in a community project aimed at integrating people in exile.

CONCLUSION

Cocon is finally a place for mixed living and solidarity with a yurt co-constructed and installed as part of a participatory worksite with neighbors ; «it's a warm cocoon, a link between inhabitants where everyone finds their place to weave a soul of solidarity».

→ MERGING FINAL EVALUATION A COLLECTIVE LEARNING PROCESS

The final evaluation of the project is part of the work package 6, which is dedicated to monitoring and evaluation and led by Cota. The evaluation process has been fully internal and participative, including all the MERGING stakeholders: members of the consortium, local partners, etc. Cota was responsible for the design and the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation device, including the final evaluation.

THE SCOPE

The final evaluation covers 3 focuses, thanks to different data collection and analysis tools:

FOCUS 1 - WORKING AS A CONSORTIUM

How did we work together?

FOCUS 2 - EVALUATION OF THE 3 PILOT PROJECTS

What did we achieve together?

FOCUS 3 - TRANSVERSAL AXES

What did we learn together?

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

- **Focus 1**
22 bilateral interviews
- **Focus 2**
5 field visits (Lyon, Gothenburg, Valencia)
38 interviews with local stakeholders
2 local focus groups
4 local workshops
- **Focus 3**
A common analysis framework

DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

- **A theory of change and a logical framework**
- **The 6 DAC-OECD criteria + Innovation** as an evaluative referential
- **3 focus groups** with all the partners to challenge the findings and analyse collectively the data

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

FOCUS 1 – HOW DID WE WORK TOGETHER?

MERGING has been a very good opportunity to think and do together, thanks to an interdisciplinary approach designed to tackle a major societal challenge, a good an effective collaboration, and an appreciated coordination. A network is in place, gathering and mixing complementary skills and knowledges, which have been developed all along the way.

FOCUS 2 – WHAT DID WE ACHIEVE TOGETHER?

Each of the three pilot projects (Cocon, Anna, Caliu Urbà) has its own and detailed evaluation re-

port. In addition, we realized a brief transversal analysis of these projects, using the six evaluation criteria of the DAC-OECD¹ plus the innovation criteria. This transversal analysis reveals that the three projects:

- **Address real needs**, with a **global strategy** combining housing, social follow-up, and social integration (relevancy).
- Are articulated and/or in line with **different level-governance frameworks, local legislation, and local dynamics** (coherence).
- Address **various and complex issues** by proposing innovative social models (innovation).
- Have used their **budget efficiently** and managed to optimize the costs (efficiency).
- Have realized **significant achievements**, considering the short

timeframe of MERGING and the technical and political challenges to face (effectiveness).

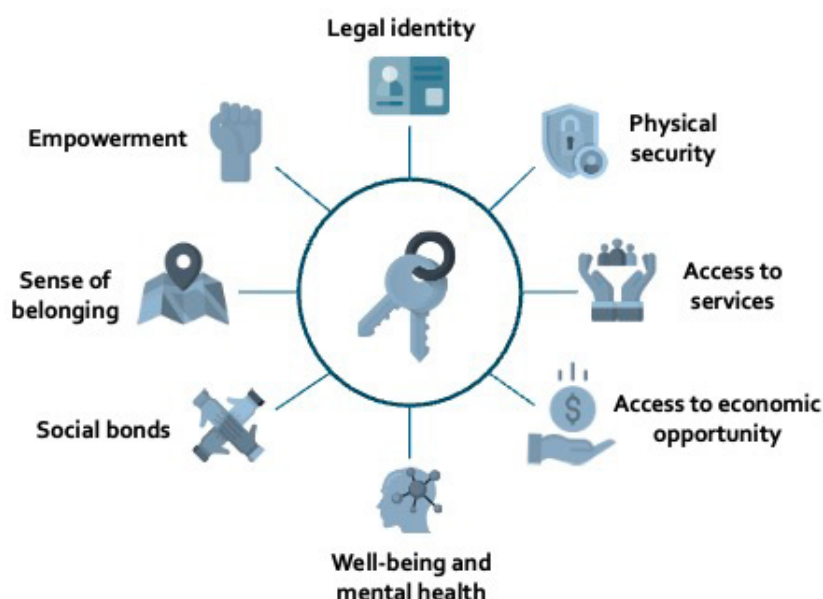
- Propose **new housing models adapted to local issues**, promote participation, strengthen skills, change perceptions and behaviours. The beneficiaries live in **better conditions**, their **physical and mental well-being evolve** positively, and they project themselves in the future (impact).
- The learnings and achievements of the projects **can last thanks to capitalization, promotion, developing various scenarios** at the local level and **relying on the mobilization** of the local networks (sustainability).

¹ Development Aid Committee – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.



FOCUS 3 – WHAT DID WE LEARN TOGETHER?

DECENT HOUSING HAS A MULTIPLE IMPACT:



How to provide decent housing?

- Accurate dwellings are **decent, accessible, adapted, and innovative**.
- To feel at home, people need to **personalize the place, choose the program, appropriate the district, and create social bonds** with locals.

- An **efficient social follow-up** should be holistic, tailor-made, evolving and include socialization.

TO ADDRESS INTERLINKED NEEDS, SEVERAL DIMENSIONS MUST BE COVERED:



- To **involve communities**, we must analyze in depth the local ecosystem, mobilize local actors, and create links.

- To **support social change**, we must develop a multilevel strategy, mixing data collection and knowledge production (academic), political action (decision makers) and evolution of perceptions and behaviors (host communities).

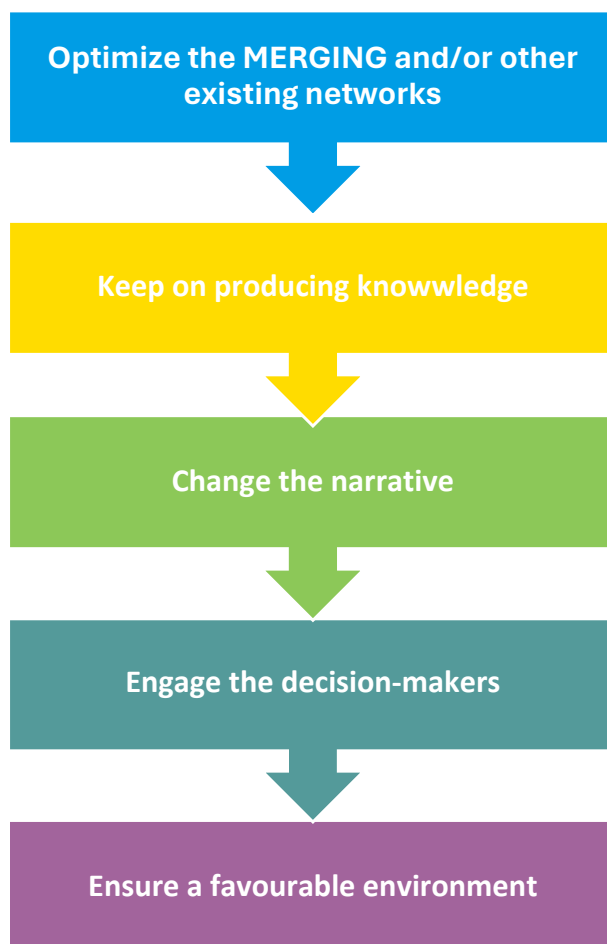
MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and conclusions of the evaluation is a relevant basis for the consortium to elaborate some political recommendations, which will be addressed to different levels of decision-makers. Here is a glimpse of the operational recommendations, which emerged directly from the evaluation process, and are more dedicated to the MERGING partners and their peers.

WORKING AS A CONSORTIUM



DISSEMINATING THE PILOT PROJECTS



NEXT STEPS

A joint reflection with all the consortium members will allow to produce a brochure to develop and share our political recommendations with decision-makers at the local, national, and European level.



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Embrace

→ E.M.B.R.A.C.E EMPOWERING MIGRANTS TO BE REPRESENTATIVE ACTORS IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ABSTRACT

EMBRACE is a two-year long project that aimed to increase newcomers' participation in decision-making and policy implementation processes in host societies through the testing and modelling of a carefully designed pathway. The project stemmed from the need to meaningfully involve newcomers in decision-making and is based on the testing of pilot activities in 11 territories, across 6 European countries.

The project developed a two-pronged training path to build the capacity of newcomers to engage socially and politically, and to build in local governments the competencies needed to include them in policy development. Listening sessions and co-projecting workshops between newcomers' communities and policy-makers brought these groups together in moments of

cooperation and negotiation of proposals in order to practically implement new policies.

The framework was completed by the establishment of local groups of newcomers, who undertook experiences of public leadership to embody representative positions towards the local structures in place. The project builds its strength on the close cooperation between NGOs working in the field and local/regional public authorities, without whose involvement all efforts to include newcomers in public affairs would hardly translate into concrete actions.

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Promoting newcomers' participation in the design and implementation of integration policies at local, regional, national & EU levels.

- Creation of an EU model of a 'pathway for newcomers' participation that can be replicated at local level
- Increased the capacity of local authorities to effectively consult newcomers on policies directly affecting their lives
- Increased capacity of newcomers to become representatives of their community in front of local institutions
- Increased participation of newcomers in decision-making process at local, regional, national and EU level in policy areas that are particularly relevant for integration





→ Limerick migrant integration forum



→ Barcelona "negotiation skills" workshop

→ INTE-GREAT

AN AMIF FUNDED PROJECT



The project - The AMIF funded project INTE-great, Stakeholder Partnership for the Integration of Migrants, involving partners from Italy, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, and Ireland, has the main objective to build a stronger integration strategy and ecosystem at urban level for migrants arrived in the countries from 2015 onwards, for asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants with subsidiary protection (women, men, families and LGBTQIA+). To this aim we developed an innovative Integration Strategy Framework (ISF) from which we derived practical Guidelines to be used as reflective tools by stakeholders and social workers operating in the integration sector, who design and implement projects for refugees and asylum seekers. The ISF and Guidelines have been tested and experimented through five pilot initiatives by the partnering organisations located in the cities of Varese (IT), Barcelona (ES), Athens (EL), Nicosia (CY) and Limerick (IE), who involved municipalities, nonprofit organizations, civil society, and migrants in the co-design and implementation. This type of stakeholder partnership increases mutual trust and a sense of belonging allowing all interacting people to work together and contribute to the achievement of the same objective, migrants' integration.

The INTEgreat long-term vision is to establish a durable involvement of local stakeholders and a relational approach and commitment between migrants and

local communities after the end of the project. INTE-great assumed that integration can no longer be intended as the result of the commitments, efforts, and achievements of migrants alone, but it strongly depends on the structure and openness of the receiving society.

Therefore, the planning and implementation of the pilot initiatives were based on the active participation and interaction of all the partners and stakeholders involved in them.

ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES FROM THE 5 PILOTS OF INTEGREAT

Pilots' activities – ending in April 2024 after 18 months – include the organization of intercultural events to reduce prejudice and discrimination, information sessions for migrants on local policies related to healthcare and employment, training programs to build and strengthen their soft and professional skills and cultural training for local citizens to facilitate interactions. A set of digital tools, such as social media, web-based platform, and an online integration hub (IHub) have been used to reach the target groups of each activity and disseminate the results. The mobilization of the target groups has been activated through the pilots and by engaging local stakeholders in awareness-raising events, workshops, and digital live forums.

→ **The main challenges** faced during the pilots have been the delays in the implementation of some activities, due to multiple factors. Also, the participatory co-design approach has been for many partners a source of complexity due to the heterogeneity of participants.

The organization of local Integration Working Groups (an activity based on the pre-existing model of Limerick) has represented a challenging experience for some partners mainly due to the difficulty in involving local stakeholders, in particular municipalities; in some cases, this was also due to the changes in the political/local context, which influenced the fluidity of the processes.

→ One of the first transversal **good practice** of the pilots was the use of the ISF checklist, a set of questions related to the four main areas of the project (social cohesion, training, access to employment and healthcare) guiding the partners in the design and implementation of the activities. The participative co-design of activities – once complexity was overcome – and the partnerships created with local stakeholders, represent another good practice as it helped to promote a flexible approach/contingency planning and the cross-pollination of practices among partners, supporting them in meeting needs, addressing gaps, and involving the most vulnerable groups. The creation of the Integration Working Group in each country is expected to become a strength and a long-lasting activity in each of the five partner countries.

DIMENSIONS

According to the dimensions of integration indicated in the European Commission's Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 focusing on actions in sectoral areas such as employment, healthcare, capacity building and training, and stressing key principles and values regarding integration and inclusion, we are piloting fair and innovative services for migrants that will hopefully lead to improved capabilities and relationships in the community, while meeting the social need of integration, in the attempt to "enhance society's capacity to act".

→ MIMY - A EU RESEARCH PROJECT TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF MIGRANT YOUTH IN VULNERABLE CONDITIONS

PROJECT KEY FACTS

Title: MIMY - Empowerment through liquid Integration of Migrant Youth in vulnerable conditions

Duration: February 2020 – January 2023

Website: <https://mimy-project.eu>

Focus: Young 18-29 non-EU migrants in vulnerable conditions in 18 case studies in 9 European countries (Luxembourg, Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Hungary)



BRIEF INTRODUCTION

MIMY (Empowerment through liquid Integration of Migrant Youth in vulnerable conditions) is an EU-funded international research project which set out to investigate and support the **integration processes of young migrants (18-29) from non-EU-countries, living in vulnerable conditions in Europe**. The project brought together 11 disciplines and **14 partner institutions** to study and compare integration policies, processes, and experiences across **9 countries** (Luxembourg, Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Hungary). The University of Luxembourg was the lead partner of the project and was responsible for carrying out the MIMY research activities in Luxembourg.

THE FOCUS ON YOUNG NON- EU YOUNG MIGRANTS AND MIMY'S APPROACH

MIMY specifically focused on young people between 18 and 29 who migrated from non-EU countries as they are living through **two transitions** simultaneously: the transition and **adjustment into the country** where they now live and the **transition into adulthood**. This may imply challenges in their integration processes and the need for specific resources, which MIMY aimed to capture and examine. Young migrants, especially those living in vulnerable conditions, are at higher risk of exposure to exclusionary social practices. Besides, their voices and stories are often overlooked in migration and integration policies. Therefore, **MIMY wanted to put the experiences of young migrants at the centre of its activities** by collecting the points of view of different members of this group in interviews, group discussions and events,

as well as by including a group of young people with migration experiences in each of the national MIMY research teams as **peer researchers**.

THE CONCEPT OF LIQUID INTEGRATION

The MIMY consortium is aware that integration is a very political and normative term, which often produces misunderstandings and conflicts in political, public, and scientific debates. Therefore, acknowledging the complexity and nuance of integration, in MIMY we applied the concept of **Liquid Integration** to highlight how integration is **a dynamic, never-ending and open process of change and adaption during life**.

In other words, we don't see integration as a stable and fixed phenomenon with a predetermined start and finish but as a complex process of change of individuals in relation to the local reality where they live. Following this approach, the MIMY project examined not only the experiences of young migrants but also the **context** in which they live and operate.



1172 Participants involved in
MIMY empirical activities



802



Individual interviews



80

Focus groups
with **370**
participants

MIMY'S RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

- Interviews with **stakeholders and service providers** supporting the integration process of young migrants
- Interviews with **young non-EU migrants** facing difficult situations
- Interviews with **young local people** facing difficulties
- Group discussions with **parents of young migrants, previous groups of migrants and young migrants themselves** to reflect on the challenges and opportunities
- Interviews with young people with a migration background who have distinguished themselves in the context of the Luxembourgish society.
- **Participatory action research** with young migrants (e.g. digital storytelling or photovoice workshops in 9 countries)
- **Local workshops and art events** in collaboration with young migrants involved in our project as peer researchers (2022)
- **Final conference in Brussels with art exhibition** in October 2022

MIMY'S OBJECTIVES AND OUTLOOK

The MIMY project applied an interdisciplinary and innovative mixed-methods research design. It aimed at exploring how young people from non-EU countries are settling into the specific context where they live and how they contribute to its society.

MIMY analysed elements that can help the integration processes of young people and what elements make it specifically challenging. Moreover,

MIMY also wanted to bring concrete positive change in European societies where young migrants live and in their own lives, fostering empowerment and offering a platform for young people to express their opinions and ideas (via peer research and participatory action research (e.g. digital storytelling). Follow-up projects on local and national level continued after the end of the project to continue the participatory action research with young migrants (e.g. in Luxembourg and UK).

→ FURTHER INFORMATION

MIMY Website:

<https://www.mimy-project.eu/>

MIMY Youth Blog

 written by MIMY peer researchers:

<https://mimy-project.eu/mimy-youth-blog>

MIMY Online Art Exhibition:

<https://mimy-project.eu/outcomes/online-exhibition>

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