

REPORT OF LOCAL POLICY GUIDELINES
AND RECOMMENDATIONS
ARISING FROM PILOTS IMPLEMENTATION IN LJUBLJANA

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1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For Public Bodies and Local Policy Makers

After conducting several studies on the local level (national projects, EU projects SiforREF, Best, Pandpass, ENGAGE) interviewing different actors (refugees and asylum seekers), stakeholders (local politicians, administrators, activists, educators, active citizens...), we can offer the following recommendations to Public bodies and Local Policy makers:

Special local body which would supervise the integration process should be put in place with a clearly defined long term commitment concerning integration in collaboration with relevant actors. Action plan to resolve the pressing issues (also deriving from COVID-19 pandemic) should be put in action immediately. Collection of good practices, pilots and interventions that already “work” in local context should take place in order to strengthen the most innovative and necessary ones. Additional or constant free language courses focused on asylum seekers and refugees, affordable and available housing in local communities, which are willing and prepared to interact and include asylum seekers and refugees (possibly with benefits for local communities, preferable extra finances), expert employed cultural mediators, which are able to facilitate integration, recognition of qualifications, access to free education not only for children and youth, classes and workshops that could lead to quick employment, proactive local employment service, public works and internships in local institutions, public and private companies, programs for vulnerable groups like unaccompanied youth and women, support of social enterprises which could use already existing competences and skills of asylum seekers and refugees, immediate access to psycho-social support, psychological help for the traumatized, focused legal help (legal claims, help with negatives) day per day organized assistance of active citizens (visits, trips, explanations, festivities...) support for companies, that employ refugees and asylum seekers, daily centers for children (additional help with school work, language), support of inclusive sport and other associations, support of migrant cultural associations, public events with refugees (kitchen, dances, handicraft) invitation to main stream cultural events, Job shadow and internship with local companies or public institutions, consultant bodies of migrants, political rights for migrants on local level, possibility to co-create media content like radio programs for migrant population, TV programs for asylum seekers and refugees, offering of social bonds by municipality...

Also courses for intercultural competences should become obligatory for city officials. Anti-discrimination, anti-racist and anti-hate speech campaigns should take place on regular basis to address the negative “border spectacle” (De Genova, 2016) produced mostly by traditionalist and populist political parties and media.

For NGOs

Including asylum seekers and refugees in the planning of their activities, expanding the already existing activities and support for asylum seekers and refugees, spreading their networks in new areas, localities, permanent employment for cultural mediators, expand the network of volunteers, international cooperation to learn new practices, initiatives, approaches, strengthen the work with general population through festivals, workshops, media, additionally strengthen the cooperation with health and education system, labor market, maintain close connections with the local administration through following the sessions of the city council and offering information, suggestions, offering advocacy for asylum seekers, refugees, pushing for improvements in the non-existing program to provide housing, offering a long term holistic support, looking for employers and companies which would offer job shadow, internship and employment opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees, focus on vulnerable groups like women, traumatized people, children, older asylum seekers and refugees... Looking for potential communities that would welcome newcomers, work in the field like with the families at home or in school or daily centers not only in their spaces...



Intercultural education for the employed and the volunteers...

For private actors

Private actors should be able to address the social topics, which are important in their local communities, integration of asylum seekers and refugees being one of them. Their roles could include possibilities of job shadowing, internship and employment of asylum seekers and refugees, sponsoring organizations and initiatives, that support the integration, Slovenian language class specific for specific workplace or occupation, organizing workshops and classes to teach additional skills and knowledge, intercultural education for co-workers, help with family reunification (sponsorship) of their employed workers...

For civil society

Civil society should stop waiting for political parties and the authorities to improve the situation of asylum seekers and refugees and start to mobilize in order to create and sustain open society for everyone. There are already existing grassroots and solidarity movements, social movements with long history of border struggles with the migrants, minorities and the marginalized. As asylum seekers and refugees are experiencing banal nationalism, discrimination and racism on daily basis they can pinpoint the polisemic borders (Balibar, 2001) in public offices, banks, schools, hospitals, courts, jails, detention centers, and fight together with citizens against it through different interventions, actions, petitions, rallies etc...

2) METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Members of ZRC SAZU team have been doing various types of research in the field of migration and integration for several years and in different rolls. We worked as teachers in primary and secondary schools, volunteers during the "Balkan corridor" activists in the fields of freedom of movement and migrant worker`s rights and were involved in initiatives which, together with migrants, foster inclusion to local communities. We were also leading a project where 10.000 Slovenian primary and secondary teachers were educated in the field of intercultural competences and human rights of migrants.

We are currently involved in several networks which include public institutions on national and local levels, NGOs, research centers, SMEs, co-working spaces, schools, employment services, migrant associations, social movements grassroots initiatives, Slovenian association for social entrepreneurship, cultural institutions like theaters, music schools, sport institutions like swimming and football etc. We have also been involved in various international research projects on migrant entrepreneurship, asylum seekers and refugee`s social integration through local steering committees, various actions to foster inclusion of children and migrant women to local communities, schools, labor market, music schools etc, courses in social entrepreneurship and political participation of migrants. We also collect good practices from around the globe and try to put them at work in local communities, sometimes through pilot practices. Our work is mainly project orientated which influences our activities sometimes in positive (new ideas, contacts, dynamics, internalization of our work) sometimes in negative ways (short term projects, dependency on foreign project ideas, precarity)

We are using different methodologies such as ethnographic approach methods (Hess 2010: 428), which include participant observation, semi structured interviews and focus groups. Also sometimes »mobile methods' of studying (im)mobilities (see Buscher/Urry/Witchger, 2011: 3) like informal conversations during travel with people on the move, their photos and travel data proved productive and also militant and activist research, where knowledge is produced through discussions, events, protests, demonstrations, sit-ins,



assemblies in self-organized spaces, anti-deportation rallies, public debates, trips, workshops, legal help, everyday support... with the migrants. (see Pistotnik/Lipovec Cebron/Kozinc 2016: 101).

One of the most important influence on our work for the last 3 years is the situation on Slovenian border. Slovenia is a Schengen border country and also one of the countries on the so called “Balkan route” where the EU is maintaining a brutal and violent border regime with the help of Slovenian and Croatian police. People on the move try to cross Bosnian, Croatian and finally Slovenian border on foot hiding in the forest playing several “games” with Croatian and Slovenian police before some of them manage to cross. They arrive in Slovenia traumatized, sick, with injuries and exhausted. Their needs in asylum home and later on in integration houses and private accommodation concerning support are specific and very complex.

We are doing our best to be aware of our positioning and personal bias during our research and work.

As our work is very heterogeneous the indicators for social innovation were a good guideline for the evaluation of good practice and pilot project. Indicators cover most of the essential dimensions of integration process of asylum seekers and refugees especially in the area of social integration. Still they were produced by Technical University of Berlin, a city with one of the most developed integration system in the world with many projects, programs ideas and support groups. Slovenian integration system is still simply not complex enough for some of indicators to make sense. Still they helped us to thing big...

3) INTRODUCTION

Already during the preparations of the application we were aware that SiforREF project is having a potential to produce materials, that will have impact on research about integration of asylum seekers and refugees in Central Europe and EU in general. Its partners, associated partners, stakeholders and target groups were engaged in several carefully planned activities, that put the innovation on the local level in the focus of research.

With deliverables DT 1.1.2 and DT 1.3.1 an excellent overview on what is going on in all five cities in the field of integration of asylum seekers and refugees was created. Interviews of stakeholders and workshops with NGOs and other actors offered an excellent starting point for innovative planning of study visits and pilots and already existing good practices gave a possibility to all partners to rethink their ideas also from practical point of view.

Study visits of five stakeholders per city in all partner cities and presentation of initiatives, research and good practices produced a well of knowledge, ideas and also facilitated important cooperation between partners. Because of COVID-19 visits were organized online but all the partners did an excellent job with their presentations, videos, reports, evaluations so we learned a lot and also meet important and enthusiastic stakeholders who willingly shared their experiences, stories, plans and ideas. Partners from Ljubljana presented Slovenian Philanthropy and its daily center for refugees and asylum seekers as one of the important good practice in Ljubljana. Its activities are very important and their support is quite innovative as they rely on wide network of volunteers, other NGOs, activists, active citizens, companies in order to achieve the positive results for people on the move. It`s not excellence they are after, it`s a compromise between what should be and what is actually possible. Mirovni inštitut, another important stakeholder and network member presented the general situation in Slovenia concerning integration. It was a scientific overview which helped to clarify some blank points. Also a collective InfoKolpa presented their work on the “Balkan route” which is aimed to prevent violent push-backs from Slovenia to Croatia and Croatia to Bosnia. They were also involved in several legal processes which resulted in victory in the court so Slovenia was forced to except push-backed people back and offer them the possibility to apply for asylum. The presentation was well received and project partners made additional efforts to inform relevant actors on the situation at Croatian-Bosnian border and the effect of EU border regime on the integration of the people on the move.



So when pilot projects started we could already notice innovative approaches which were developed during the project itself. In Ljubljana Refugee online market was taking shape as asylum seekers and refugees expressed the need to build an independent homepage, where they could sell their craft and control all the process in order to create possibilities for people and even create jobs. Idea has a lot of potential because as it is not focused on Ljubljana but is targeting all refugee population in Europe. Also the starting costs are low so success is more likely. A lot of knowledge from border struggles in partner cities is behind this idea.

Next step is creating the Local policy guidelines where we would like to present our results to city officials, politicians, companies, the media and general public in order to push our understanding of integration further. We want to leave the starting point, which was identified during initial research and move further. It is not something we can do on our own but it has to be a commitment of local communities with a clear cut long term plan.

4) LOCAL CONTEXT AND CURRENT CHALLENGES

Local migration data

- Number of persons acquiring international protection in Slovenia per year:

From 1995	2016: 170
to 2010: 209	2017: 152
2011: 24	2018: 104
2012: 34	2019: 88
2013: 37	2020: 83
2014: 44	Total: 991
2015: 46	

Source: Governmental Office for Support and Integration of Migrants <https://www.gov.si/assets/vladne-sluzbe/UOIM/STATISTIKA/Januar-2021/Stevilo-oseb-z-mednarodno-zascito-po-letih.pdf-correctedByPAVE.pdf>

- Number of foreign citizens (migrants) residing in Slovenia:

On 1 January 2021, Slovenia's population was 2,108,977 or 0.6% more than one year earlier. The number of Slovene citizens increased by 800, and the number of foreign citizens by 12,300 in 2020. On 1 January 2021, 8% of the 2,108,977 usually resident population of Slovenia were foreigners.

Source: Republic of Slovenia Statistical office: <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/news/Index/9212>

Policies and Legislations

The national legislative framework consists of acts on asylum procedures, reception conditions, detention and content of international protection. The basis for this framework lies in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (e. g. The Geneva Convention) and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The mentioned acts are: International Protection Act (IPA), Aliens Act, General Administrative Procedure Act (GAPA) and Administrative Dispute Act. There are also several decrees, guidelines and regulations that implement procedures regarding international protection, reception and detention conditions, as well as the content of international protection. These legal bodies set out rules of conduct during these procedures, while also



ensure the methods and conditions for ensuring rights of asylum applicants, detainees and other persons regarded under the Aliens Act. (AIDA report 2018 - UPDATE, pp. 9-11)

After almost two decades of no changes to the Slovenian Asylum procedures, the increase of asylum seekers since 2015 affected and in some ways challenged the asylum system in all areas. In early 2017, Slovenia adopted amendments to the Aliens Act, allowing future restrictions on access to asylum procedures. The amendments to the Aliens acts allowed the Parliament to vote on suspending the right to international protection in cases when they recognize that migration might pose “a threat to public order and internal safety in the Republic of Slovenia”. The changes to the law were to be enforced in extraordinary cases and events, such as the “Refugee Crisis” of 2015-2016 that initiated these amendments. With the support of several NGOs and civil initiatives, the Slovenian Human Rights Ombudsman called for a review of the adopted amendments. In September 2019 the Constitutional Court ruled that the amendments of the Aliens Act that would allow the state to limit access to the territory for asylum seekers in case of a large number of arrivals was in breach of the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in Article 18 of the Constitution. (AIDA report 2018 and 2019, pp. 17, pp.19)

Article 43 to the International Protection Act regulates asylum application procedures with the access to territory, by indicating that all applications are processed by the ‘competent authority’. Third-country nationals can express their intention before any state or local authority, which has the duty to inform the Police. (International protection act; Official Gazette of RS, No. 22/16 and subsequent amendments)

Despite this regulation, such procedures are not used in practice at the state border, airport or ports. Applicants to international protection are first processed by the Police in the preliminary procedure: they establish the identity and travel route of the individual and complete the registration form. During the procedure the police must provide an interpreter. The Police also obtains a short statement as regards to reasons for applying for international protection. The latter is a part of ordinary procedure. The individuals are then transferred to the Reception Centre (Asylum Home) in Ljubljana, where they start the second phase of the procedure - they lodge the application for international protection. Before lodging the application, the personnel at the Asylum Home conduct a medical examination and take a photograph and fingerprints which are run through the Eurodac database after the lodging of the asylum application. The International Protection Act does not state any provision of a free legal representation for applicants in the first instance procedure. Legal representation is implemented instead by the non-governmental organization Legal-Informational Centre (PIC). In the case of an unaccompanied minor, the personnel appoint a legal guardian, before the procedure begins. The competent authority that processes an application for international protection is the Migration Office (Ministry of Interior), which carries out first instant level international protection procedure: first in-merit interviews, Dublin decisions, Refugee status determinations and Subsequent applications, providing that first application is not successful. The Administrative Court reviews judicial reviews of asylum applications appeals that are rejected or inadmissible. Further on, the Migration Office also carries out two types of procedures, based on the first-merit interview: regular procedures (6-months) and accelerated procedures (2- months). (AIDA report 2018 - UPDATE, pp. 15-60)

Detention: Asylum seekers can be detained in the regular, accelerated or Dublin procedure. They can only be detained in the Aliens Centre or the Asylum Home, and there are no legal provisions for detention at the border. In practice most asylum seekers are detained in the Aliens Centre pending a Dublin transfer. Free legal assistance and representation are provided by refugee counsellors under the same conditions as in other cases of judicial review. No additional condition to access free legal assistance is imposed in detention cases.

Housing: Upon arrival in the Reception Centre (Ljubljana), applicants are held in the reception area of the building without free access to its other parts. Before 2017, applicants were detained in that part for short periods, rarely exceeding one day. Post 2017, due to organisational difficulties such as the unavailability of interpreters and doctors, there have been cases of persons, including families and unaccompanied children,



held in the reception area for 5-7 days on average, while waiting to lodge their application. The Reception Centre in Ljubljana (Asylum Home) has 3 branch facilities: 1 also in Ljubljana (branch facility Kotnikova), 1 in Logatec (branch facility) and 1 in Postojna (student dormitory). The total capacity of all facilities is 429. The Ljubljana Reception Centre accommodates mostly single men and some families, the branch facility Kotnikova in Ljubljana exclusively single men, the branch facility Logatec mostly families and couples, and the student dormitory in Postojna unaccompanied children. Applicants can also request to reside in private accommodation.

Employment and education: Asylum seekers acquire the right to free access to the labour market 9 months after they have lodged their application if the decision in their procedure has not yet been taken by the Migration Office and the delay cannot be attributed to the asylum seeker. Once asylum seekers have the right to free access to the labour market, they can access self-employment, employment and work without meeting other requirements such as consent to the single residence permit and work permit or EU Blue Card or seasonal work permit. The Ministry of Interior only issues them a notice stating that they meet the abovementioned conditions. After 9 months, applicants are also allowed access to vocational training. The law provides that the right to elementary education has to be ensured to asylum seekers no longer than in 3 months since they lodged their application. There is no age limit attached to this provision. Underage asylum seekers are ensured access to education in vocational and secondary schools under the same conditions as Slovenian citizens; adult asylum seekers are also allowed such access. Furthermore, asylum seekers are allowed access to post-secondary and higher education programs and programs designed for the education of adults.

Health-care: Asylum seekers have the right to urgent medical care which includes emergency medical assistance and emergency rescue services based on the decision of the doctor, the right to emergency dental service, emergency treatment based on the decision of the treating physician and health care for women. Asylum-seeking children and students up to the age of 26 are entitled to health care to the same extent as other children in Slovenia who are insured as family members, which means they enjoy full medical coverage. The Ljubljana Reception Centre employs a nurse who is present in the facility daily. A psychiatrist visits the Reception Centre weekly. Seekers of international protection accommodated in branch facilities can also make an appointment and visit the psychiatrist in the Reception Centre.

Provisions for vulnerable groups: According to Article 14 of IPA material reception conditions, health services, psychological counselling and overall treatment needs to be adapted for applicants with special needs regarding their reception. Their vulnerability can be identified during different stages of asylum procedure: at the first or second phase of the application procedure, during their lodging of application, during first or later medical check-up etc. Vulnerable persons with special needs are entitled to additional health services, including psychotherapeutic assistance, following approval from a special committee comprising of a representative of the UOIM, a nurse or medical technician employed in the Reception Centre, a representative of NGOs working in the field of international protection and a representative of the Ministry of Health. (AIDA report 2018 - UPDATE, pp. 17, 60- 66)

Refugee status is recognized with no time limitation on the status - a positive decision serves as a permanent residence permit. Beneficiaries of international protection are given a residence permit with the decision granting them international protection; this is expressly stated in the operative part of the decision. They are then issued an identity card, usually within five days at the latest. The card certifies their residence permit and is required for accessing most rights. The procedure is free of charge for beneficiaries. Access to social welfare and integration rights for beneficiaries of international protection, as well as their reunited family members, do not depend on civil registration. Subsidiary protection status is recognised for a limited period with the possibility of extension (1-5 years). Beneficiaries with subsidiary protection are issued a temporary residence permit with the duration of the status. (AIDA report 2018, pp. 67).

Sources: Asylum Information Database (AIDA): Country Report Slovenia 2018 and 2019: <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/slovenia>



Actors

The largest local authority in Slovenia, the Municipality of Ljubljana (MOL), is the most engaged local public actor in the area where most migrants, refugees and asylum seekers reside. MOL is not directly responsible for organizing integration programmes, but indirectly supports other actors such as its own public institutions (primary schools, kindergartens, adult education institutions) and other NGOs. MOL thus (co)finances various projects to assist the integration of refugees, as well as many individual events that come in direct contact with refugees or migrants and address their specific needs. The political discourse at the MOL level is relatively more positive and cosmopolitan compared to that at the national level. However, there are no specific departments in the city administration dealing with integration issues that would provide a systematic and long-term support structure. More than local authorities, various local public institutions have shown and continue to show themselves to be open in the cultural, artistic or scientific fields. However, while they open their doors this is usually more a matter of goodwill (from individuals) than of (public) policy.

As far as NGOs in Ljubljana are concerned, they cover the missing areas that are not yet covered - or only partially covered - by national institutions, by helping refugees, children and young migrants, helping the homeless and others without health insurance to access health services, advocating for the rights of migrant workers and building intergenerational cooperation. They work in the field of social and psychosocial support, providing practical forms of assistance and advice.

Activism in Ljubljana, as in other places, changes according to the most pressing matters. During the refugee crisis activist networks organized humanitarian actions at different borders along the Balkan Route, media campaigns, autonomous social spaces, political campaigns, legal aid and similar. Today they continue to work with asylum seekers and refugees in the city on a day-to-day basis, forming an alternative integration process from below. These various socially innovative practices of self-organization, inclusion and empowerment of migrants complement and/or challenge the shortcomings of the official system and constitute an “alternative” inclusion structure to Slovenian society. This structure grows out of the rich history of anti-racist or “border struggles” in Slovenia, such as the movements of Bosnian refugees, the so-called Erased (*izbrisani*), migrant workers and asylum seekers. It involves ongoing work with and by migrants, such as monitoring, advocacy, the development of social spaces, research, media and cultural interventions, volunteering and political campaigns.

Since 2015/16, this solidarity network has started to cover the entire Balkan Route. Although the refugee crisis in the Balkans is increasingly disappearing from the media and public eye, it is far from over. On the contrary, the situation is worsening: violent and brutal push-backs are being increasingly normalized, the humanitarian approach is reduced to a minimum or cancelled altogether, integration funds are almost completely cut, NGOs and solidarity activities are criminalized. Thousands of people are thus stranded without basic infrastructure, services and legal procedures. With the sharp and general political shift to the right at the European level, the situation of migrants and refugees continues to deteriorate.

Multi-level-governance

The official Slovenian political and legal system for the integration of migrants is a combination of laws and measures at the national and EU levels, as most national laws are in line with relevant EU directives. In this respect, the national level largely implements the EU level, with a little more autonomy in the area of social policy, although EU minimum standards exist here as well. Currently, the normative framework is comparable to that of Western European countries, despite the relatively recent history of asylum policy and legislation in Slovenia. The “summer of migration”, 2015/16, brought an increase in legal cases at the national level with the increased number of asylum seekers. Their individual cases contributed to the further development of national legislation (despite the fact that many of the asylum seekers continued on their journeys and left Slovenia) with the aid of the court practice of counselors for refugees.



Slovenia's official asylum and migration policy, supported by various measures and laws, can only be discussed at the national level. In July 2019 the government adopted the first Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia in the Field of Migration, drafted by the Ministry of Interior. Asylum policy in Slovenia has always been relatively restrictive. In past years, the percentage of persons granted international protection status has been very low, at one point it was even one of the lowest in the EU. At the state level, migration is mainly an expert issue, which is not addressed with social and political measures, but with police and border control methods. Since the Ministry of Interior (MNZ) controls and manages almost every aspect of migration and asylum policy in Slovenia, this means that migration is seen mainly as a security issue, managed by repressive means, without much consideration of other factors, such as education, labor market, health, housing or psychosocial support.

Policy implementation is divided among different actors, with the main actors being the Ministry of Interior (MNZ) and Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants (GOSIM). GOSIM is divided into a) Reception and Support Division and b) Integration Division. While GOSIM is expected to fully cover the area of integration, it is only responsible for asylum seekers and people with recognized status of international (refugee or subsidiary) protection, thus excluding people with other legal statuses such as migrant workers or undocumented persons.

At the local level we can only observe the implementation of national policy, since local communities do not have formal power to develop or implement autonomous asylum and migration policies. Nevertheless, integration is actually taking place at the local level with the support of local, national and EU funding through short or midterm projects. In Slovenia, most of integration activities are thus sustained by a relatively strong civil sector implementing individual integration programs, which is its relative advantage, as the civil sector has better access to real users as well as to the majority population. On the other hand, non-state actors do not have a free hand. In the absence of institutionalized integration policies at the local level, local actors also have limited options, as they are not allowed to act in contradiction with national refugee policies.

Areas of integration and access/barriers for refugees

While it is still nearly impossible to obtain a regular status through asylum application in Slovenia, the problems and challenges of new arrivals do not stop with the completion of administrative procedures. Challenges to full inclusion persist on all social levels. For the purpose of the Guidelines we will focus on the three most pertinent areas: education and language proficiency, labour market integration and housing.

While beneficiaries of international protection have the same access to primary, secondary and higher education as citizens in law and theory, they still face obstacles while trying to exercise their rights in practice. There are no major difficulties on the level of elementary schools, since enrolment is mandatory. Challenges occur at the higher levels, because refugees and asylum seekers cannot choose the school they would like to attend. Additionally, schools can deny to enroll them on the basis of linguistic inadequacy or lack of proof of previous education. The same barriers are present in the process of enrolment to university.

There is no official refugee education policy in Slovenia at the local level, and therefore public institutions in the field of education (elementary schools in kindergartens) have been searching for some other solutions: connecting with public universities, providing Slovenian language courses, looking for active forms of cooperation with parents, organizing special events and involvement in national and international projects. Generally, local public authorities finance various national programs and projects, and also make sure the participants are informed about and directed towards educational programs.

Education for children in Ljubljana is organized and managed by the Department of Pre-School Education of MOL. It invests in spatial solutions and equipment for kindergartens and schools, enables pupils to spend quality free time in school facilities, promotes cooperation between schools and relevant institutions, and prepares and implements a comprehensive educational design, which hopes to achieve equal opportunities



for a high standard of education for refugee pupils and students as well as for pupils and students who are foreigners or whose parents are foreigners and Slovenian is not their mother tongue. All school-age children from reception centers go to one school (Primary School Livada) where they receive professional help and additional support. However, from a social point of view it would be better if the children were spread over several schools to avoid marginalization.

Adult education, with a special focus on Slovenian courses, is mainly run by the Public Education Centre Cene Štupar in Ljubljana, one of the largest adult education organizations in Slovenia. The institution presents itself as public one that is open to working with persons under international protection and asylum seekers. It was founded by MOL and has worked to alert ministries and local authorities that the educational needs of migrants have increased and differ from those of immigrants from the former Yugoslav republics in the 1990s. In the last 10 years, the number of migrants, asylum seekers and persons with international protection status in the city has steadily increased, and with it the need for more subsidized hours of Slovenian language courses and more diverse teaching programs that would accommodate students at different levels of proficiency.

With the end of the economic crisis and better economic prospects, more attention has been paid to the integration of refugees into the labor market. In 2017 the Employment Service of Slovenia launched a special counselling program and hired two counsellors to take care of beneficiaries of international protection and actively help them find employment. Refugees have been actively involved in various other activities of the Employment Service, such as an on the job training programs where they can acquire some skills. Refugees also participate in orientation programs conducted by NGOs and volunteers, where they are equipped with the basic skills they need: from how institutions work to talking about local customs, culture and society. NGO's are thus crucial in the expansion of social skills and networks of migrants, yet the financing of their projects and programs is mostly short term, ad-hoc and very precarious. Since their introduction more asylum seekers and refugees have been hired, which means that these programs have had some positive impact on labour market integration. However, a proficiency in Slovenian language is required for mid- to high-skill employment, so asylum seekers and refugees are hired by employers in relatively low-paid jobs. It is problematic when vulnerable groups are pushed to work for very low wages just to secure their existence, as this can lead to exploitation.

The system of labour market integration is still sporadic and restrictive in Slovenia. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work for their first nine months in the country, and if they get one negative decision then they cannot work for the entire asylum process, which can take years. The small minority who succeeds in getting refugee status receive subsidies for rent and welfare for two years. But if they get employed during this period and receive a salary, these benefits and subsidies end. Asylum seekers, refugees and foreigners in general are constantly confronted with various 'small' obstacles to integration: for example, many banks refuse to provide foreigners with a personal bank account. Other barriers to employment are a lack of language skills and education; and even if people have completed training in their home countries they mostly cannot provide the required certificates. Since they cannot access jobs that are adequate to their education and skills, they have to settle for low skill, mainly physical labour, adding to the already existing social and cultural marginalization. As people cannot find work or adequate work in Slovenia they are more likely to feel desperate, which makes them want to leave the country, and when they change countries this process starts all over again.

When it comes to housing, the situation is even more problematic. Life in the reception centers is stressful. After receiving their refugee status, people are finally allowed to move outside the official facilities. Even if they are formally allowed to freely choose their place of residence, most beneficiaries reside in Ljubljana and Maribor, which are also the most expensive in terms of housing rents. Even if the state provides unemployed beneficiaries with a monthly financial allowance for rent for a period of 18 months (which can be prolonged to three years), it is hard for such individuals to survive, as it is still difficult to find work after the subsidies expire. To date, refugees still do not have access to non-profit or other forms of social housing. Recognized refugees in Slovenia have the opportunity to live for a maximum one year in a so-called



integration house, which is a state institution managed by GOSIM, and otherwise they are left to the real estate market, where they are often discriminated against on the basis of prejudices and/or poorer housing conditions for above-market prices.

Identification of barriers produced by structures and legislation

Although Slovenia is a net immigration country, with this being dominated by regular labour migration, it has not made significant progress in terms of integration policies and practices. The first official government strategy on integration was adopted only two years ago. As with all other areas relating to migration, it was written by the Ministry of Interior, which remains the main actor in policy and decision-making in this context. Consequently, this strategy also focuses mainly on issues of asylum, irregular migration and border control, once again moving the issue into the realm of security rather than social affairs. Despite some tentative attempts to give more influence to non-repressive government agencies, such as the recent creation of the supposedly independent Governmental Office for Support and Integration of Migrants, the Ministry of Interior remains responsible for creating most relevant legislation. Moreover, it remains the main distributor of the very limited national integration funds to civil society, which ensures constant competition among relatively small but important actors, as well as self-restraint and self-censorship by civil society, which is reluctant to criticize its source of funding.

Other obstacles to successful integration as a two-way process include administrative barriers, lengthy procedures, insufficient involvement of educational institutions, lack of language programs, employment opportunities, adequate housing and equal access to health and other social services. As in other parts of Europe, refugee policy in Slovenia has been influenced by some populist tendencies in recent years, so a major problem is also the lack of imagination at the level of policy makers, who remain very rigid and security-oriented. There is no strategic thinking and newcomers are constantly presented as a burden rather than a potential.

Identification of “what works best” in the current context of structures and legislation

Five years after the official closure of the so-called "humanitarian Balkan corridor", the situation of irregular migrants, asylum seekers and persons with international protection status (refugees) in Slovenia remains far from ideal. Nevertheless, there is an informal network of actors working on a daily basis for solidarity with migrants, whose work is increasingly difficult but also increasingly important. This broad network includes local communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), activist movements, humanitarian organizations, public and private research institutions, youth cultural centers, libraries, theatres, groups of individuals, and even some autonomous government agencies that want to create something new. In this way, practices of solidarity continue to be exchanged, experiences shared, knowledge produced, and actions planned, carried out and evaluated. This new development does not cover the field of integration in a textbook sense, but helps to fill the small everyday gaps while people are stuck in limbo, and has emerged from the lack of a formal long-term strategy in the field of reception and integration of migrants and refugees. This alternative ‘system’ that is developing from below learns from the struggles of the past and present and includes a variety of old and new practices and actors, most notably the migrants themselves. On top of being one of the main actors of integration, these alternative networks engage in political discussions: they try to expand the boundaries of the existing narrow legal and political framework and constantly work to awaken more political and social imagination.

5) INTERIM FINDINGS

- Recommendations regarding changes in structures and policies:



The refugee crisis of 2015/16 certainly sparked new discussions, but the system has not adapted to the reality of increased numbers of asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and undocumented people. Slovenia still considers itself a transit country, and consequently there are minimal or no efforts to find new and durable solutions. A very small percentage of people actually receive refugee status, and even those who want to contribute are constantly faced with obstacles at all levels. Some cities and organizations at the local level are trying to fill the gaps by applying for projects and implementing social programmes for their new residents. But there is a need to develop local policies in this area and transfer certain competences from the state to the local community. It is not certain that this will work immediately, as local authorities are quite inflexible. But the fact is that integration needs to take place in some smaller areas, with integration policies being developed and implemented at the local level, where integration actually takes place. In order to achieve these developments, we have identified the following recommendations:

- Migration policy should be less security and more socially oriented. Drafting of migration policies and strategies should not be primarily the concern of the Ministry of Interior, but of the *Ministry of work, family, social affairs and equal opportunities* as well as other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. Policies should be drafted in constant dialogue with local communities, civil society and migrants themselves.
- National funds for integration programs should not be managed by the Ministry of interior in order to avoid self-restraint and self-censorship by civil society, which is reluctant to criticize its source of funding. Funds should be sufficient to cover all necessary services provided and should be more long-term oriented in order to prevent extreme precarity and constant competition among relatively small but important actors.
- Funds and operational tasks of the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants (GOSIM) should expand to cover all residents with migration background and not only refugees and asylum seekers.
- Slovenia has to ensure that all asylum claims on its territory are being individually processed and should avoid returning asylum seekers to Croatia on the basis of bilateral agreements, thus participating in so-called chain push-backs to Bosnia and Serbia.
- Slovenia should significantly increase its engagement in resettlement and relocation schemes.
- Local communities should be encouraged to engage more actively in policy drafting and decision making. Municipalities with a high percentage of residents with migration background should establish special departments or branches in regard to integration, that can be more flexible, operational, social and dialogue-oriented as state structures.
- In regard to education, it should be easier to certify the official education and unofficial skills acquired in home countries. There is a great need for more subsidized hours of Slovenian language courses and more diverse teaching programs that would accommodate students at different levels of proficiency.
- In regard to work, proficiency in Slovenian language should not be required for all mid- to high-skill employment, so asylum seekers and refugees can also get hired by employers in relatively better paid jobs. More funds should be allocated to orientation programs conducted by NGOs and volunteers, which are crucial in the expansion of social skills and networks of migrants. Financing of their projects and programs should also be more long term, strategic and stable. Asylum seekers should be allowed to work as soon as they want, not only after nine months.
- In regard to housing, the capacities of existing integration houses should be expanded and the maximum period of stay prolonged for the most vulnerable beneficiaries. Refugees should be



allowed to have access to non-profit or other forms of social housing. Municipalities should encourage alternative housing schemes such as housing cooperatives and inter-generational housing.

6) EVALUATION OF PILOT ONLINE REFUGEE MARKET

Leverage of this best practice project

Local context in Ljubljana is strongly influenced by several factors, the most important one being the gap between the national and local policies and level of support. The national level tends to impose solutions from above without the necessary knowledge of the situation and challenges of the local contexts. The local communities address the day per day pressing issues in the field of education, labor market integration, housing, health system, social integration, family reunification, counseling, psychosocial health... without a possibility to influence the imposed policies from the above. They are reluctant to act as finances are in the most cases not provided directly to them by the national level. So local authorities put asylum seekers and refugees in the already existing programs for general population (schools, health system, employment service, courses...) without the additional support (cultural mediators, language, orientation) and rarely expand their activities. So day by day support is provided mostly by the NGOs, volunteers, activists, informal organizations, friends...

In Ljubljana employment and self-employment is a pressing issue since research shows that most of asylum seekers and refugees are unemployed or involved in short term precarious labor arrangements. (Gombač, 2018, Ladič and Alali, 2021) With female asylum seekers and refugees, the situation is even worse (Alali and Klun, 2021) Some support like language courses and trainings is provided also by the employment service but is not sufficient. To tackle unemployment and open business possibilities on the local level but not only, the pilot (social business, Online refugee market) opens a space for asylum seekers and refugees to use their skills, knowledge and creativity in order to provide them with small scale business opportunities, income, connections with local population and gain experiences and skills necessary for further inclusion into the labor market either via employment or self-employment. It was also created by the refugees with the refugees which means special needs were recognized and addressed by the "experts" in this field.

The identified barriers were defined by the asylum seekers and refugees them-self and are connected with inclusion to the labor market and to some extend also with social integration. Legislation barriers in the case of integration to the labor market are prohibition for asylum seekers to work before a period of 9 months from their claim ends, qualifications (diplomas, certificates, driving licenses) are not recognized by the state, banks do not want to open personal accounts and/or offer loans or credits, language is recognized as an important asset by the majority of population, which migrants are not able to master, women after family reunification are prohibited to work for 2 years, without recognized qualifications mostly 3D jobs are available, which are mostly precarious jobs with high percent of exploitation, legislation and regulations for self-employment are complicated, social enterprises which would support migrants are rare and so are other supporting programs. (Beznec, Kastelic, Gombač 2020). These barriers create other barriers which influence social integration as they trap people in a vicious circle of poverty, marginalization and insecurity. One of them is accommodation because with precarious or no job at all it is hard or impossible to find it, as no public/special housing is available for asylum seekers and refugees. Landlords often discriminate and demand extra money for insurance, damage and other unspecified costs, because they can. Families became dependent on social money and they move a lot which prevents their integration into the local community (through jobs, school, associations, friends, cultural events and institutions, sport...). There are also many other challenges which are connected with inability of asylum seekers and refugees to join the labor market...

The pilot is addressing these barriers through an online transnational social business where asylum seekers and refugees can sell their products and earn money. As the platform is not expensive, initial investment of



already interested asylum seekers and refugees is not high which is good for them and also for the sustainability of the business. If everything works according to the plan with the knowledge and skills they possess, they can earn some additional money or create a business and diminish their precarity and poverty. If it doesn't, then losses are not high and are bearable. In order to achieve results they have to meet, plan, cooperate, work together with other migrants and also general population, which prevents marginalization and alienation. It can give them opportunity to open their own business if their products sell well. They can do that without a demand for Slovenian language, which is kind of obligatory for other jobs on Slovenia labor market.

It is made by migrants and refugees for the asylum seekers and refugees. It empowers asylum seekers and refugees through individual and group work. By planning the homepage, creating the products, choosing and presenting them and finally selling them they can become a part of community with common goal: creating a successful social enterprise with their knowledge, competences, skills, experiences and possibly broke the circle of poverty, dependence, marginalization... On the other hand if the pilot fails, which is quite common with online business, asylum seekers and refugees will not carry the financial costs (or their losses will be minimal) there is no danger of going bankrupt as mostly social capital and work is invested in this enterprise. So its an entrepreneurship playground with lots of experienced people which know how to fail and move on.

Assessment of transferability of this best practice project

The pilot can be expanded to other contexts and it is possible to scale it up. As a transnational online platform Refuge online market can sell products from asylum seekers and refugees around the globe and thus expand globally. It can also sell products from indigenous groups, various minorities etc. Again the important factor of this pilot is that migrants and refugees identified the problems and borders themselves and are addressing them with means that are available to them. So it tends to be quite realistic, flexible and possibly up scalable if necessary. Instead of looking for space, accountant, packaging material, furniture they can invest in online marketing and storytelling... which also sells...

Evaluation of this best practice project with the indicators of social innovation developed by the SiforREF project

The project follows the objectives and indicators of SI which were developed by the Siforref in the following ways:

As the idea was developed by collectives and initiatives that are led by migrants (labor migrants with permanent or temporary status, asylum seekers and refugees) who work with the migrants (labor migrants with permanent or temporary status, asylum seekers and refugees) it tackles unemployment and precarious employment as one of the most serious integration issues in Slovenia. Needs are clearly defined as they are experienced by asylum seekers and refugees on daily basis and there is little or no support by local communities or the state. It offers innovative approach for inclusion to the labor market for undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, refugees which also effects social integration in the local communities in a positive and creative way. It offers simple and inexpensive solution which can activate the people and give them possibilities through innovative social enterprise.

Social movements, collectives and initiatives which connect migrants and civil society in Slovenia started in 1990 during the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina. They developed further during "the Erased" fiasco (Zorn 2006) in the beginning of this century also following the first Balkan route in 1999-2004 (Čebren et al. 2007), exploitation of migrant workers in Construction sector in the period of 2004 to 2011 and the second Balkan route 2025-2021. Main actors were social movements (activists, students, migrants, workers etc) which challenged local communities and the state. They created an alternative integration system which tried to address the most pressing issues, identified mostly by migrants during border struggles.



Pilot is aimed mainly at asylum seekers and refugees as general population has developed safety nets aka tools for assistance like public employment services, social support, additional education, public works and accommodation etc. So the pilot is not really aimed at connecting asylum seekers and refugees with local community with the help of cultural mediators through diversity training and cultural and sport associations but is focused at offering the possibility for asylum seekers and refugees to earn some extra money or create a business with already existing skills and without huge investments. It addresses the pressing basic need and also human right to work identified by asylum seekers and refugees themselves. Their qualifications are not recognized by the state, language lessons are not enough to master Slovenian language good enough to work in Slovenian companies and public sector, additional training is rare and focused on shortage occupation. In the case of PTSD or depression waiting lines are long even for citizens and cultural mediators are rare and often not qualified enough to follow the counseling.

Special programs aimed especially at women's employment are not yet put in place in Slovenia. There are women's groups in Ljubljana, Škofja Loka and Jesenice which are run by NGOs and are mainly addressing the problems of social orientation, loneliness and marginalization. Women gather to learn the language, get some basic skills in navigating the society, do craft etc... Recent research on refugee women situation on the labor market (Klun, Alali, Gombac, 2021) shows that even if they are qualified and willing to work they are mainly unemployed and additional courses, workshops, specializations, offered by employment service are not available for them because of language barriers (translators and cultural mediators are not available), non-recognized qualifications or other reasons, which are specific for every woman like family obligations, hijab etc.

All this shows that local administrations are still very traditional in their understanding of integration. They are namely very reluctant or even hostile towards education in the field of intercultural dialogue. The consequence is that they are unable to offer proper services to asylum seekers and refugees. Sometimes they also deny them certain services because they can. Employment service employed people from NGO sector to provide services for asylum seekers and refugees through EU founded projects which is a progress but at the same time it also shows that the long term commitment is just not there.

That actually means that there is little or no support for asylum seekers and refugees to get integrated to local communities. There are no specially tailored policies discussed in city councils, no Refugee welcome initiatives, good practices at the local level are rare and it seems that migrant`s self-organization is the only possible way out of poverty, precarity, marginalization, alienation and further migration to Germany.

Mainstream integration system is neglecting pretty much all the defined indicators and objectives. It starts with the field of integration to the labor market and also partly social integration for asylum seekers and refugees which creates tensions, unemployment, poverty and marginalization. It continues with lack of supporting programs from local communities. Also in the field of housing, support of free time activities, hanging with the locals there is much to be desired. So pilot did not go that way.

Pilot has to create a working online platform with facilitators, producers and customers in order to sell products created by asylum seekers and refugees and earn and distribute the earnings. This way asylum seekers and refugees will be able to buy the materials, tools, work, sell and earn. They could be self-employed or employed by a social enterprise. Being employed in an occupation where they could use their skills, knowledge and expertise would improve their situation on the labor market and also their social integration on the local level.

We do not see objectives and indicators as linear and progressive but as something flexible and adaptable. Housing, additional support of asylum seekers and refugees, local communities support and focus on vulnerable groups and especially employment through a social enterprise or self-employment in order to achieve a long(er) term occupation is still pretty elusive concept for asylum seekers and refugees in Slovenia. Still defined objectives and indicators can contribute to the design, implementation and outcome of the pilot in the following ways: asylum seekers and refugees experience the gaps in the official employment system and are aware of current barriers so they create an optional possibility which takes into consideration



the obstacles and create working solutions through digitalization. An online platform-market with products made by asylum seekers and refugees with access to global audience and potential buyers can create possibilities for long(er) term occupation, self-employment, employment without the barriers like lack of language, education, limiting and discriminatory legislation, lack of status, certain competences, social networks...

The outcome of the pilot is measured mainly by number of products being sold, number of people participating and money earned and distributed. In the longer term (if achieved) by people employed directly and indirectly via self-employment.

Number of unemployed asylum seekers and refugees, gender structures, skills and ingenuity of refugees and asylum seekers, discriminatory labor market, strict legislation and regulations, new technologies are used as indicators/measures. Also asylum seekers and refugee`s precarious situation and their skills and ingenuity especially in using digitalization in order to sell goods globally.

Actors targeted in the pilot are unemployed, precariouly employed and self-employed refugees and asylum seekers with skills, knowledge and competences to create goods that Refuge online market can sell. Local population which can help asylum seekers and refugees to create goods which Refuge online market can sell.

Getting more stakeholders and members of local community to be incorporated in the pilot is always welcome but in the case of Refuge online market its asylum seekers and refugees WITH asylum seekers and refugees during the first stage, because they know the challenges and obstacles best. It is however possible for locals to assist if needed or to join with their plans, goods, ideas later if possible.

As the government of Slovenia has no special body (council) where migrants could be included in governance or influence policies and legislation at the moment (there was a body at the Ministry of Interior but at the moment its work is suspended)) and the city of Ljubljana has no special office or person responsible for asylum seeker`s and refugee`s integration there are certain limitations in this field. Still we hope to achieve bigger presence with gradual and persistent work on day per day support, projects and pilots, with a strong network of, grassroots movements, activists, NGO`s, trade unions, social enterprises, local communities and asylum seekers and refugees plus labor migrants which can press for a change. One of the pressure groups will be the network which is involved in the pilot of Refugee market online since they know the changes that should be introduced really well from their experiences.

The needs of the target group can be assessed by recognizing their qualifications, giving them opportunities like job shadowing, internship, jobs, with proper education (language, skills, knowledge, courses, primary, secondary schools and Universities) by offering them support (mentoring, small credits, workshops on marketing, HASAP, finances) by allowing them to have a bank account, presenting the opportunities at the employment services, agencies...

Mainly the needs of the target group can better be addressed via employment or self-employment, possibility to work and getting paid. Also via long term working agreements and potentially not 3D jobs...

Slovenia has a relatively long history of border struggles and strong civil society when it comes to human rights. It also has developed strategies on how to survive permanent economic crisis from 2009 on and even before. It is also used to migrant workers. So local communities already have several strategies to integrate migrants. These strategies have to be upgraded and adapted to current situation (asylum seekers and refugees from the Global South). Everybody should get the opportunity to work, be self-employed or have an enterprise in order to earn a living, invest, develop their ideas and cooperate with other actors on the local level.



Basic indicators for social needs of the target group

INDICATOR	Yes	Partly	No
Agency - the initiative respects the equality and agency of the refugees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation - the refugee must have a voice and be heard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve the status quo - increase the capabilities of the target group	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide access to resources - empowering the members of the target group/ refugees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability - Institutionalization and long-term funding concept	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing a holistic approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mainstreaming -Adaption beyond refugee status, for other immigrants and locals who need guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Indicators that contribute to changing the mind-sets of the local population toward refugees

INDICATOR	Yes	Partly	No
Activities that create trust between local population and refugees share common interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Root the activity, practice at the local level within local communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer opportunities for local population and refugees to meet in smaller group activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusion of exchanges among a diversity of ethnicities, ages, regions, gender, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide intercultural mediators / “animateurs” in local settings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use when possible the concept of the Co-creation workshops.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Indicators for social innovative policies and practices that - Enhance Labour Market Opportunities of Refugees

INDICATOR	Yes	Partly	No
Increases opportunity of “refugees” to have a job that matches their skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offers a reasonable / practicable assessment of their occupational skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offers the refugee access to potential auxiliary training and an opportunity for an equivalent job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Links additional specialized language training to specialized technical courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Provides a practicable training to achieve full recognition that can be mastered in reasonable time schedule and will be concretely required for the exercise of this occupation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Includes equal pay /fair wages and social-security;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Indicators that would empower women refugees			
Access to education and training at all levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Accessible professional childcare facilities are available for the training-period;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Childcare facilities are available, subsidized by the local government for all families/ with working mothers, or single women who work who are seeking work or training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

7) EVALUATION OF SELECTED BEST PRACTICES

Best Practice: Slovenia, Ljubljana: SLOVENSKA FILANTROPIJA - SF

Leverage of this best practice project

Non-governmental organization Slovenska filantropija (Slovenian Philanthropy, SF) is considered to be one of the most powerful and essential institution in the field of integration of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in general in Slovenia. The presented best practice Slovenska filantropija (SF) Daily center for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, orientation program and experiences from the project Job to stay is tackling issues and challenges arising from the local context in following ways:

- help and support with integration (Orientation program)
- advocacy (Legal Support for asylum seekers, refugees)
- daily center for migrants in Ljubljana and Maribor
- work with young migrants
- festival of migrant film

It is one of two NGOs in Slovenia which is involved in integration of asylum seekers and refugees and receives support from local communities and also national authorities (Ministry of internal affairs) for their orientation program, advocacy and workshops for young migrants, children and women. They are also involved in several EU sponsored programs like AMIF, COSME, DAFNE etc. Their main problem is they are understaffed and their employed are on temporary contracts, which is a short term solution. They are heavily dependent on city and governmental support in terms of projects and if they are not successful in obtaining them then their activities are hindered or canceled which means rupture in services offered.

Still their staff is very experienced and with their volunteers and cultural mediators, they try to maintain the level of services being critical towards the official integration system. They also have good relationship with other NGOs, research institutions, collectives and activists which allows them to address also the more complex and pressing issues.

SF mainly tackles the barriers through its activities in Daily centers in Ljubljana and Maribor, where the staff and volunteers meet its users (asylum seekers, refugees, family members, youth women groups) on daily basis and offer support. They address several day per day challenges line housing, advocacy, health issues, documentation, education... but also more complex and longer term issues like employment, psycho-



social support, etc. They also have some projects that address local population in the terms of intercultural dialogue, prevention of racism and discrimination like Festival of migrant movies etc.

The key program to work with refugees with status is Orientation program (OP), which provides useful information related to everyday life and the way how different systems are functioning in the Republic of Slovenia. Between 2016 and 2018 only beneficiaries on the basis of relocation and resettlement agreements were included in OP. From 2019, the program involves all refugees who have been guaranteed statuses of international and subsidiary protection. It is a very intensive program, which lasts one month, five times a week and three hours per day. Financed by the AMIF and UOIM (Government office for the Support and Integration of Migrants).

Daily centre (2017) is a crucial space in Ljubljana offering migrants (refugees, asylum seekers) a safe space for socializing, expanding their social networks with respect to local populations, preserving social activity of migrants experiencing long-term unemployment, learning (Slovenian and English languages and other courses), individual teaching, a space for migrant women gatherings, different workshops and open to public events with emphasis on migrants' lives. It is open from Monday to Friday between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. and located relatively close to the biggest reception centre for asylum seekers in Slovenia.

In terms of advocacy, SF actively strives for suitable legislature and practice in the field of migration and cooperates in preparing legislative propositions and comments on proposed changes to the existing legislature with other NGOs.

In last years SF is actively included in development of the system of cultural mediators, giving a light to work of informal translators in health and other structures. Many supportive institutions in regard to integration are not developed properly in Slovenia in comparison to other European countries, even the institute of cultural mediator, for example.

SF is a recognized partner to different state bodies and local authorities that are involved in general and specific integration areas (education, minor protection, social rights), thus it participates with proposals and critiques on policies, active practices and legislation. Assistance to young migrants and work with unaccompanied children, acting as guardians to separated children for 4 years. SF is counseling official guardians to minors without parents and tries to co-establish systemic solutions in this area.

The objectives and indicators are the following:

They address special needs of a group of people which would otherwise struggle on every step of their inclusion to the society. From basic orientation to legal help with asylum claims, support for unaccompanied youth, family reunification, employment, education, health system, housing, language classes, getting the right documents for the right things, registration, etc, etc, etc... They also work with cultural mediators (that they cannot employ because of lack of funds) and volunteers which has its own problems... Also they work for the migrants not with them so there is a moment of paternalistic relationship present...

They also have to adapt their work according to regulations from Ministry of Interior and other Ministries which is not always in their or asylum seekers and refugees best interest.

On the other hand they are influencing local community, its administrative units, political bodies like City council, mayor, political parties active at the city level. Constant research of the gaps that engulf asylum seekers and refugees. Designing innovative practices that potentially upgrade the already existing structure of integration. Designing of pilots that tackle most pressing issues like inclusion to the labor market. Networking of all actors in order to reach the goals.

As housing is a problem in Ljubljana for asylum seekers and refugees (they don't have a possibility to get social housing, they compete for apartments with others on the market) they move a lot and local communities are not able to develop inclusion tools, employ cultural mediators because asylum seekers and refugees become invisible moving from community to community. So communities do not feel the need to develop welcoming and supporting mechanisms. Usually most of the pressure falls on schools, employment



service, health system, kinder-gardens and of course Asylum seekers and refugees themselves. So it is hard to work with Siforref indicators all the time since certain objectives are there only in the way of bundle of good wishes but indicators are just not possible to define in these situations where problem is defined as temporary and also the official system is designed as temporary one even if people in Ministries, who are responsible for its development are there employed for life.

Assessment of transferability of this pilot activity

It is the oldest of two existing programs in Slovenia and its added value is cooperation with many actors in the field of inclusion which are active in Slovenia. There is a strong connection between SF and civil society, activists, other NGOs, volunteers, research institutions, employment services, companies and former beneficiaries of their services that form a strong network of support for migrants. The improvement is possible with bigger financial stability of the services by the local communities and the state, also by other donators (companies, individuals) and improved cooperation between the actors, involved in the network. It is not the most innovative and ground braking, it has its problems, making compromises but it is something that works against odds, it is something that is possible at the moment and it is learning and evolving.

Best practice can be adapted to other local communities in Slovenia where migrants are present. It can be scaled up by offering asylum seekers and refugees possibilities to access the labor market. (Job shadow, internships, short term employment possibilities...) That way different stakeholders like companies, chambers of commerce, craft associations, agriculture associations...

Evaluation of this pilot activity with the indicators of social innovation developed by the SiforREF project

Best practice follows the objectives and indicators of Social Innovation, developed by the SiforREF project in the following ways:

Slovenian Philanthropy addresses most of special needs of their target group with persistence, relatively stable programs and a good network of institutions, organizations and civil society. They work close with local communities, if possible, city administration and state institutions. Together they define special needs for the migrants which is not always in refugee and asylum seekers best interest. They address very difficult situation of a temporary supporting regime of Slovenian Ministry of Interior and try to do their best. They try to change the mindset with educating their volunteers, inviting companies to do voluntary work, and organize Migrant film festival. They also try to organize cooperation with sport, art, cultural associations and formal and informal groups (for women). They also cooperate with employment service and employers directly (EU projects).

Still finding employment for refugees and asylum seekers remains a big problem mainly because of language and also availability of third country nationals from ex Yugoslavia which take most of jobs that could be filled by Asylum seekers and refugees. Especially with women the situation is much more complex as there is no supporting programs and only basic workshops and meetings are possible. SF also made some steps towards offering of psychological help but for now they outsource it from Slovenian Psychological Society pro bono if possible. If not... it is not possible.

SF is also trying to help refugees to find apartment on really problematic housing market in Ljubljana. As no social housing is available in Ljubljana they call different land-persons and persuade them to host a refugee. It is a painstaking and difficult task which often ends with zero results. But for the moment no other strategy, policy is available.

In Slovenia it is quite a struggle for asylum seekers and refugees to open their account so SF is helping them and fight legal and administration fights with the banks which can last for months. Also banks are reluctant



to give loans to refugees and there are no microcredit giving banks or and NGOs at the moment. Asylum seekers cannot open a company.

Strengthening the social integration through the network of civil society, activists, NGOs, volunteers, research institutions, employment services, companies and former beneficiaries in order to open the possibilities for labor market integration of asylum seekers and refugees. Also local community integration through contacts with local people - volunteers, educators, mentors, employers, friends, neighbors, customers...

Following defined indicators/objectives that have been neglected by the mainstream integration system in the local context we can stress the following: integration to the labor market and accommodation. Also to some extend social integration since some people fall into gaps and also after certain period of time asylum seekers and refugees are left on their own or completely dependent on alternative networks of friends, possible marginalization and alienation. Also the issue of discrimination by majority population could be addressed in a more effective

The outcome of the Best Practice is being measured by number of attending asylum seekers, refugees, volunteers and by the number of organizations in the supporting networks.

The inclusion in local communities where all (most?) aspects of integration would be included in day to day practices with special focused interventions for the most vulnerable groups (women, children minors, traumatized...) is still a goal worth struggling for. There all the important actors like city council, administration, education and health system, employment service, different associations and civil society would develop practices together with asylum seekers and refugees as equal partners (political participation) with media supporting these ideas.

Also new developments worth mentioning are two special exams which beneficiaries of international protection can take (while asylum seekers cannot).

- 1) For beneficiaries who cannot prove they have already completed primary school but would want to continue their education at the secondary level in Slovenia.
- 2) For beneficiaries who cannot prove they have completed secondary school or high school but would like to enroll in tertiary education.

In December 2019, skills, competences and qualifications of cultural mediator was listed as vocation/occupation (Intercultural mediator with code 20871150) in the National Reference Point for Occupational Qualifications - Slovenia. SF also participated in the promotion and recognition of this particular profession.

Asylum seekers and refugees with status, children and adults are targeted in the Best Practice. Also civil society and general population. One of the major obstacles in terms of integration is overwhelming centralized system of care for refugees, outsourcing to NGOs the vital parts of life defining experiences, the lack of spaces for socializing, the lengthy procedures rooted in bureaucracy and tremendously poor housing availability. And the labour market inclusion needs a true social innovative approach that involves refugees' initiative and dignity.

Slovenia consists of more than 200 local communities (municipalities) and these communities are not involved in providing integration programs or measures. Particularly for beneficiaries of international and subsidiary protection is not enough to have a free access to the labor market written on paper (by law). A lot more should be done to make the labor market more inclusive and responsive to the needs of refugees. More mentorship, motivating financial support to employers to implement programs on enhancing existing skills and learning new competences during on-the-job trainings.

More hours of the Slovenian language course for those who wish to learn more. Around 300 hours of language classes with possibility of 100 more is not enough, especially if person is willing to find a better paid jobs.



Housing is one of the biggest challenges that impact not only refugees but all migrants and citizens without real estate property. And still the real estate market (regardless of Covid-19, decrease of Airbnb, tourism) is extremely expensive both for rent and purchase. Additionally, the real estate market is openly discriminative with elements of direct racist conditions. There is no public housing scheme for beneficiaries of international protection.

Access to education on a higher level. Enhance the possibilities of recognition of education obtained in the countries of origin.

State services could improve their work on family reunification by shortening the length of procedures.

The areas of integration covered by the practice presented in Ljubljana by the stakeholders' peer-reviews are listed here according to the frequency of responses related to a certain area:

- ✓ overcoming institutional barriers
- ✓ building relations with local communities
- ✓ labour market integration
- ✓ education
- ✓ participation of migrants in civil society

- There are a lot of ideas that could be done in other towns.
- We need to have relation between the ordinary people, refugees and academic.
- Slovenska filantropija (SF) provides really helpful information for newcomers. Besides it seems very helpful to have a place, where people can gather.
- Probably we're facing same problems (mostly about language learning and job opportunities as a way for integration) and so it's really important to share our experiences.
- The project has to be very broadly based. The project tries to build bridges to the local population. SF manages to offer many different services in different locations.
- The number of refugees in Slovenia is comparatively small.
- We have to work firstly on awareness.
- Slovenia has problem with respecting human rights. It pushes systemic problems on NGO sector.
- All jobs are respectable and all workers should be treated fairly.
- Many different types of places of inclusion need to be build.
- Family, young men and women, seniors - all of these groups have different needs and need their own type of safe inclusion space.

Basic indicators for social needs of the target group

INDICATOR	Yes	Partly	No
Agency - the initiative respects the equality and agency of the refugees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation - the refugee must have a voice and be heard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve the status quo - increase the capabilities of the target group	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Provide access to resources - empowering the members of the target group/ refugees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability - Institutionalization and long-term funding concept	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing a holistic approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mainstreaming -Adaption beyond refugee status, for other immigrants and locals who need guidance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Indicators that contribute to changing the mind-sets of the local population toward refugees

INDICATOR	Yes	Partly	No
Activities that create trust between local population and refugees share common interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Root the activity, practice at the local level within local communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer opportunities for local population and refugees to meet in smaller group activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusion of exchanges among a diversity of ethnicities, ages, regions, gender, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide intercultural mediators / “animateurs” in local settings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use when possible the concept of the Co-creation workshops.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Indicators for social innovative policies and practices that - Enhance Labor Market Opportunities of Refugees

INDICATOR	Yes	Partly	No
Increases opportunity of “refugees” to have a job that matches their skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offers a reasonable / practicable assessment of their occupational skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offers the refugee access to potential auxiliary training and an opportunity for an equivalent job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Links additional specialized language training to specialized technical courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Provides a practicable training to achieve full recognition that can be mastered in reasonable time schedule and will be concretely required for the exercise of this occupation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Includes equal pay /fair wages and social-security;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Indicators that would empower women refugees			
Access to education and training at all levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Accessible professional childcare facilities are available for the training-period;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Childcare facilities are available, subsidized by the local government for all families/ with working mothers, or single women who work who are seeking work or training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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8) VISIBILITY, POTENTIAL & FUTURE CHALLENGES

This chapter reviews the main insights, generated within the five Local Policy Guideline Reports of the SiforREF partner cities. Particularities of the specific local context, future challenges as well as strengths and weaknesses of the implemented projects for refugee integration through social innovation were co-creatively developed during a review process¹. The review interviews revealed a number of commonalities and patterns between the five European cities. Therefore, this chapter is a first step towards the comparative analysis within the Transnational Guideline Report (DT.4.1.2), the final report of the SiforREF project.

This first summary of results shows that the transnational perspective adopted by SiforREF is necessary to identify and address the interconnected challenges of refugee integration through policy responses. This approach is particularly promising in order to avoid a fragmented way to address refugee integration at the local level.

Lack of sustainable integration of refugees

Regardless of particular starting positions (e.g., GDP, political orientation or geographical position of the five cities), the lack of sustainable integration of refugees into the host society can be traced back to the same fundamental issues. First, although the four federal governments (Italy, Germany, Austria, Slovenia) apply a comprehensive and adequate integration policy, which is based on the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention, our analysis shows that actual practice does not meet the legally mandated requirements. This discrepancy is attributed to the spread between centralized legislation at the national level and highly fragmented implementation at the local level. Additionally, differences in the quality of integration occur due to diverse reception processes at the local level, e.g. in Italy. Furthermore, the implementation of respective measures is mostly outsourced to the third sector, which is embedded into precarious structures with regard to funding and temporal sustainability. Confronted with underfunding and unstable perspectives, actors of the third sector are not capable to shoulder the entire burden of integration work.

Best practices and pilot projects

All of the SiforREF best practices investigated and pilot projects implemented rely on underpaid and/or voluntary staff and are located in time-limited spaces, which leads to a limited scope of the projects in scale and in time. Therefore, long-term successes are limited and the high personal efforts do not reflect the output of the projects or the impact for the participating refugees. Regardless of demands for structural improvements, our analysis points out the necessity of an increased and regular knowledge exchange between stakeholders of all different levels (local, regional, national and transnational) in order to streamline efforts and benefit from what works best. In addition to internal communication between involved stakeholders, external communication towards a broader public audience must also be more closely coordinated between the involved actors. Our analysis reveals the necessity to speak with a common voice and to coordinate media outreach in order to create a counterpoint to prevailing anti-refugee sentiments in politics, the media and society.

¹ Review interviews with all PPs took part on Dec 7 and 9, 2021 led by the UNIVIE team.



Housing crises

Another pattern that emerges from our analysis identifies a severe housing crisis which all cities are facing. This crisis is also greatly affecting refugees in Parma, Bologna, Berlin, Ljubljana and Vienna. Real estate prices and rental costs have been rising steadily due to the lack of newly created housing, municipal and social housing or rent regulation. Refugees are unable to withstand fierce competition due to their low financial strength and a lack of housing options. Especially on the private housing rental market, discrimination and reservations to rent out to foreigners can be reported for the cases in Austria and Italy. The accommodation of refugees in state-funded special accommodations also harbors the risk of stirring up resentment within underprivileged strata of the host society. Since the tight housing market is a serious problem in all European countries, it should be dealt with more intensively at the level of EU policy.

Access to (precarious) labour market

The poor financial situation of refugees results equally in all cities from the highly restrictive access to the regular labor market, which actively excludes the majority of incoming refugees and makes them either dependent on low government support payments or pushes them into self-exploitation, temporary employment or the irregular labour sector. In these areas of the labour market, capitalist market logic comes into play to an unregulated extent and the precarious situation of the refugees is likely to be exploited. Due to a lack of residence permits, work suspensions during asylum procedures, the need for language certificates or long procedures for the recognition of existing qualifications, refugees are artificially kept for a long time in a state in which they are incapable of self-determined acting and cannot earn a living. As a result, social integration is also made more difficult, as they are not only deprived of points of contact with members of the host society, but they are also deprived of the opportunity to earn respect and recognition by demonstrating their skills and abilities.

Limited potential for future wellbeing

This state of uncertainty also has a deep mental dimension, since the high level of dependency, the constant state of uncertainty and the limited perspectives undermine the willingness of refugees to further contribute their share to the integration process (e.g., participation in integration courses, language courses or training programs). In addition, our analysis recognizes the high load of everyday-life issues that are mostly neglected when talking about the integration of refugees. Because family, financial, or mental problems naturally demand a great deal of energy and attention, these circumstances must be considered within the design and implementation of integration programs or individual projects.

Future challenges ahead

Overall, it is apparent that integration efforts in all cities are encountering the same problems, albeit to varying degrees. This may also be due to the fact that the reception of refugees is considered and treated as a temporary crisis that is to be overcome promptly. Accordingly, policies and measures do not take a comprehensive and sustainable approach, but foster an uncoordinated and everchanging environment in which it is difficult for actors to operate and for refugees to find their way into their new society. In doing so, we overlook the enormous potential that the refugees bring with them.



9) SYNTHESIS & CONCLUSIONS

Although Slovenia is a net immigration country, with this being dominated by regular labor migration, it has not made significant progress in terms of integration policies and practices. The first official government strategy on integration was adopted only two years ago. As with all other areas relating to migration, it was written by the Ministry of Interior, which remains the main actor in policy and decision-making in this context. Consequently, this strategy also focuses mainly on issues of asylum, irregular migration and border control, once again moving the issue into the realm of security rather than social affairs. Despite some tentative attempts to give more influence to non-repressive government agencies, such as the recent creation of the supposedly independent Governmental Office for Support and Integration of Migrants, the Ministry of Interior remains responsible for creating most relevant legislation. Moreover, it remains the main distributor of the very limited national integration funds to civil society, which ensures constant competition among relatively small but important actors, as well as self-restraint and self-censorship by civil society, which is reluctant to criticize its source of funding.

Nevertheless, Slovenia, even as a small country, has a relatively strong civil sector implementing individual integration programs, which is its relative advantage, as the civil sector has better access to real users as well as to the majority population. On the other hand, non-state actors do not have a free hand. In the absence of institutionalized integration policies at the local level, local actors also have limited options, as they are not allowed to act in contradiction with national refugee policies. Other obstacles to successful integration as a two-way process include administrative barriers, lengthy procedures, insufficient involvement of educational institutions, lack of language programs, employment opportunities, adequate housing and equal access to health and other social services. As in other parts of Europe, refugee policy in Slovenia has been influenced by some populist tendencies in recent years, so a major problem is also the lack of imagination at the level of policy makers, who remain very rigid and security-oriented. There is no strategic thinking and newcomers are constantly presented as a burden rather than a potential, the refugee crisis of 2015/16 certainly sparked new discussions, but the system has not adapted to the reality of increased numbers of asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and undocumented people. Slovenia still considers itself a transit country, and consequently there are minimal or no efforts to find new and durable solutions, while a ridiculously small percentage of people actually receive refugee status, and even those who want to contribute are constantly faced with obstacles at all levels. Some cities and organizations at the local level are trying to fill the gaps by applying for projects and implementing social programs for their new residents. But there is a need to develop local policies in this area and transfer certain competences from the state to the local community. It is not certain that this will work immediately, as local authorities are quite inflexible. But the fact is that integration needs to take place in some smaller areas, with integration policies being developed and implemented at the local level. Local communities do not just need to speak out for or against something, they need real leverage to organize and implement programs. A local level alliance between the civil sector and city authorities working together against the Ministry of Interior is the only way to change refugee policies. In Ljubljana, the national capital and a diverse city, there is some desire to act in this direction, but as yet there is still no capacity in terms of finances or people able to implement such programs. For this to happen, Ljubljana would have to have a serious policy of multiculturalism and diversity.

So we share our vision of Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, and the whole country which is aware of the fact that migration is a constant process. We are aware some people immigrate and some people emigrate. We are a multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious society and we are proud of that. We are prepared for the integration and inclusion (not assimilation nor segregation) of people that were forced to migrate and for the people that chose our country as an opportunity for better life for themselves and their children (asylum seekers, economic migrants, people who are discriminated in their country of origin because of their language, religion, sex orientation, etc.).



The integration policy is supportive, respectful and inclusive. We do not see our country as a transit country, but as a country that people have chosen to stay. We respect all people that decide to come to our country. An interpreter and free legal assistance is guaranteed for every person. We are aware people bring their knowledge and competences with them. We know they will contribute to our society and its development. We make interviews with them and give them credit for their work experience, even if they couldn't bring their certificates with them. Asylum seekers have the right to free access to the labour market 1 month after their arrival and we offer them support to find a job.

We see them as an opportunity, not a threat. We know that we are an ageing society and that we need them. And they need us. Together, we can work towards a society that is evolving and respectful, intercultural and economically prosperous, and respectful of people and nature.

There is a strong cooperation between different ministries: Ministry of education, science and sport, Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities, Ministry of interior, etc. Our politicians and policy makers cooperate, since they are aware that integration is a process and it has to be done at different levels to be successful: education, employment, healthcare. We see people not just a workforce, so we take care of family reunion and support legislation that enable access to permanent residence, nationality (citizenship) and political participation. We are aware of possibility for discrimination, so we have developed many anti-discrimination policies.

Housing and employment is supported by government financially and at local levels: every company and the landlord who rents out the apartment gets financial support for employing or renting for a person with refugee status. Students (future teachers, workers in social work centre, health centre, employment service, administrative units) are educated and prepared to work in multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious society. Courses for intercultural competences are obligatory for city officials and teacher that are already employed. Anti-discrimination, anti-racist and anti-hate speech campaigns take place on regular basis.

Private sector addresses the social topics, which are important in their local communities, integration of asylum seekers and refugees being one of them. Their roles include possibilities of job shadowing, internship and employment of asylum seekers and refugees, sponsoring organizations and initiatives, that support the integration, Slovenian language class specific for specific workplace or occupation, organizing workshops and classes to teach additional skills and knowledge, intercultural education for co-workers.

Local communities have formal power to develop or implement autonomous asylum and migration policies. There is no concentration of power, money and decisions only at one institution at a national level. Financial support, autonomous decisions, possibility to act regarding local situation is possible around the country. Special local body supervise the integration process in collaboration with relevant actors: local authorities (city municipalities) are supported by legislation and financially to act for integration. Each city municipality has at least three integration advisors: for family reunion and housing, for education (of children and adults), for labor market. These advisors work together with migrants and with organizations like administrative units, social work centre, health centre, employment service, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, adult educational centres - they all work hand in hand in order to give people support they need in integration processes.

There are always available additional or constant free language courses focused on asylum seekers and refugees, affordable housing in local communities, which are willing and prepared to interact and include asylum seekers and refugees (possibly connected with finances), expert cultural mediators, which are able to facilitate integration, recognition of qualifications.

Access to education is possible not only for children and youth, but also for adults. Classes and workshops support enterprises that can use already existing competences and skills of asylum seekers and refugees migrants. Interviews with translators are offered to discover their competences and skills so they can be referred to a suitable employer.

Psycho-social support, psychological help is offered for the traumatized.



There are daily centers for children (additional help with school work, language), support of inclusive sport and other associations, support of migrant cultural associations, public events with refugees - but not only food, dances, handicraft, but also about their culture, language, literature, architecture, so we get to know their rich culture and cultural heritage. There is for media like radio programs, TV programs for asylum seekers and refugees, offering of social bonds ...

Slovenia adopted amendments to the Aliens Act, that does not recognize migration as a threat, but as an opportunity. The Aliens Act is supportive and inclusive.

Health-care: asylum seekers are entitled to health care to the same extent as other residents of Slovenia, which means they enjoy full medical coverage.

Refugee status is recognized with no time limitation on the status - a positive decision serves as a permanent residence permit. There is no more subsidiary protection status (with a limited period with the possibility of extension 1-5 years), asylum seekers all get refugee status and are equal residents of Slovenia. They also have a possibility to get a Slovenian citizenship (within 2 years). When they get Slovenian citizenship, they do not have to renounce their original citizenship. They can be citizens of both the country of origin and the country of reception.



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