

DEKOLLA



Developing Migrants' Knowledge About the Local Labor Market



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about local labour market*



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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About the Project



- **The Dekolla Project, launched in 2018, was co-financed by the Erasmus+ programme and aimed to develop innovative strategies to involve the business community in the inclusion of migrants in the local society.**

THE CONTEXT

Integration in a new society can be a very long process if the receiving country does not have the appropriate structures to meet the needs of the newly arrived. Many migrants, for different reasons, find it difficult to integrate in the society and labour market.

Migration waves posed several and various challenges to the European Union and to its member states. Moreover, different welcome, integration and inclusion processes based on different legislations, praxis and public systems and its formal and informal networks posed even more difficult challenges to be approached.

Public sector reforms over the last decades has made networks and network management increasingly important. At the same time, the integration issue has moved higher and higher on political agendas.

When it comes to integration policy, implementation primarily takes place at the local level. In a policy area where many public and non-public actors are involved, the municipal administrations have the overall responsibility for coordinating public action.

The main goal should be not only to prepare the immigrants with conventional requirements such as language and validation of former experiences, but also to create intercultural meetings in the society. The main strategy for policy enhancement has been to try to strengthen cooperation and a key element in that strategy has been to create formal local cooperation agreements between the actors involved in the policy-delivery phase.

In a number of areas, however, the disparities between immigrants and European-born citizens were and are still too large. It was therefore vital to continue implementing an extensive programme of measures aimed at reducing these inequalities of condition and opportunities, to increase opportunities for people of foreign extraction to exert influence and to participate in the life of society.



In order to facilitate integration in the labour market, there were the needs both to identify and reduce the barriers that prevent the participation in the labour market and in the local business environment and set up sustainable structures for an immediate participation in different integration actions as education and training.

The Dekolla project was inspired by the Swedish project "Double Cup", implemented in the City of Trollhättan.

The project is the result of a long-term cooperation among SERN, a transnational network aiming to foster relations and cooperation between Italy and Sweden, and three of its members: City of Trollhättan, Consorzio Fantasia e Comunità Comprensoriale Oltradige - Bassa-Atesina.

“ The project focused on providing the informal educators with new skills and competences to develop innovative and more efficient ways through which engaging both the migrants and the local business community in more effective learning processes leading to a faster inclusion in the local economic context. ”

THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- » TO CREATE NETWORKS BETWEEN MIGRANTS AND BUSINESSES
- » TO INCREASE THE RECRUITMENT BASE FOR LOCAL COMPANIES
- » TO INCREASE KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS ABOUT THE DYNAMICS OF THE LOCAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND LABOUR MARKET

TARGET GROUPS:

- » CIVIL SERVANTS IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES
- » BUSINESS COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES
- » REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS



The partnership

The partnership included countries that were facing the consequences of the **refugees crisis** and for most of them, integration was a priority and the major challenge. Sweden and Germany were the main destination countries for asylum seekers and refugees, while Italy represented the first arrival country.

All the organisations represented good examples of the interaction among different social actors involved in the migration issue and they could share best practices on the theme.



Trollhättans Stad

The City of Trollhättan (SWEDEN) states that integration of people of different ethnic backgrounds is fundamental as a prerequisite for creating an inclusive society and a city with a positive living environment and a bright future. To achieve this vision Trollhättan needed a cooperation in-between a variety of parties.



Consorzio Fantasia Onlus (ITALY) is a non-profit organization which operates in the province of Parma. It works, among other things, with asylum seekers and refugees and through the years, the organization has established good practices in order to guarantee to all the beneficiaries hosted high standards for the whole duration of the project.

The partnership



The **Landratsamt Enzkreis** (GERMANY) counts 28 municipalities (190.000 inhabitants) and during in 2015/2016 received ca.3000 refugees. The district administration has put up a “Refugee Strategy”. It defines 8 fields of action, each containing several measures; one of the fields is integration to the labour market.



SERN (ITALY) is a transnational network between Sweden and Italy. Migration is one of SERN's priorities. It was involved in several projects, such as Backpack ID and WIR focused on the inclusion of children with a different ethnical background in pre-schools and schools involving the participation of families, on the insertion of new-arrived children in the school system and on a comparison of welcome and integration processes of refugees in Europe.



The **Comunità Comprensoriale Oltradige-Bassa Atesina** (ITALY) represents 18 municipalities (75 inhabitants) and during the years preceding the project received 2000 refugees. It was involved in the SPRAR protection system which means working with asylum seekers and refugees in very close cooperation with the local employers.

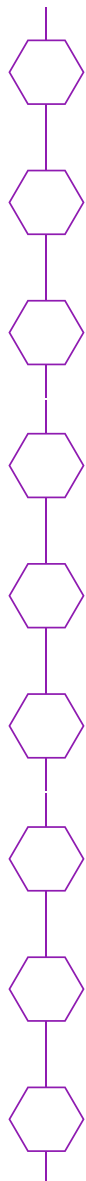
The activities



The project consisted of six events, four of which took place in the different municipalities of the project partners. The last two events took place online due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

During these events, the partners had the chance to discuss and reflect on the themes of the project, but above all, they exchanged information and BEST PRACTICES among them.

This exchange eventually led to the identification of the **three key elements that facilitate the integration of migrants in the labour market.**



1st TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT MEETING

November 2018
Tramin (IT)

1st TRAINING SEMINAR

April 2019
Trollhättan (SE)

2nd TRAINING SEMINAR

June 2019
Pforzheim (DE)

2nd TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT MEETING

December 2019
Parma (IT)

3rd TRAINING SEMINAR

November 2020
Online

3rd TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT MEETING

March 2021
Online



The results

THE KEY ELEMENTS FOR THE INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

NEED BASED TRAINING

BRIDGE BUILDERS

NETWORKS AND PLATFORMS



Key element 1

NEED BASED TRAINING

- Trainings tailored to the needs.
- Migrants should be more interacting: not only receiving information about what they should do, but experience interview and taking over an active role in the process of for looking for a job.

THE EXPERIENCE OF ENZKREIS

Newly arrived migrants encounter multiple obstacles when they try to enter the local labour market. Besides, the lack of language skills and knowledge about the culture, their working skills and experience often do not match the necessities of the companies and the “bureaucratic” requirements of the local business world. On the other hand, employers tend to avoid the “risk” of hiring migrants, especially when they have the impression that they cannot communicate to a satisfying extent.

Too many courses, trainings and formations are “ready-made” for local / domestic people. They do not take into account the different countries (and cultures) migrants come from, the different level of education and the variety of previous knowledge among them. Often, also the number of participants in trainings is too high to be able to address their different needs.

It is crucial to get a deep analysis (not assumptions!) of both, the requirements of the local labour market (what jobs are available? what skills do the companies need and look for?) and of the person’s knowledge and skills, taking into account the dilemma that discovering one’s training needs, means discovering his inadequacies. To make integration sustainable and to avoid that people quit their jobs after a short period, it is crucial to analyze the persons’ wishes and expectations for their (work) life.

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL NEEDS-BASED TRAINING



- ✓ **SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR OPEN COMMUNICATION (WARM-UP, "KITCHEN TABLE" CONVERSATION, FACE-TO-FACE DIALOGUE),**
- ✓ **SMALL GROUPS**
- ✓ **ASSESSORS WHO LISTEN AND OBSERVE (ASK, ASK, ASK; DON'T ASSUME!) AND WHO ARE OPEN TO IDEAS COOPERATION WITH AND AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS AT ALL LEVELS OF PROGRAM (WHAT CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE TRAINING?);**
- ✓ **LANGUAGE LEARNING INTEGRATED IN TRAINING, FOCUSED ON THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE (AND THE VOCABULARY NECESSARY FOR THE TRAINING/THE JOB)**
- ✓ **TRAINING BASED ON COMPETENCES**
- ✓ **CONDUCTING A MARKET ANALYSIS: ECONOMIC COMPETENCES, INFORMATION ON LOCAL MARKET AND LEGAL REGULATIONS (E.G. FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO FOUND THEIR OWN BUSINESS)**
- ✓ **WELL-BALANCED COMBINATION OF INTERNSHIP AND TRAINING ON THE JOB PLUS THEORETICAL INPUT**
- ✓ **BEST PRACTICES AS POINT OF REFERENCE**

THE STORY OF ABDULKARIM AL DAGHLI

Process of self-employment as a tailor in Wurmberg

The story of Mr Al Daghli represents an example of successful integration in Germany. Indeed, Mr Al Daghli and his wife arrived from Syria and opened a tailoring.

Trigger for self-employment

- Intensive support by a local entrepreneur;
- Previous experience proved by certificates;
- Officially recognized refugee status;
- Intensive learning of the language
- Will and determination to enter in the process of self-employment;
- Mentoring and support in administrative and business-related issues;
- Information about business environment.





THE EXPERIENCE OF CONSORZIO FANTASIA

Key element 2

BRIDGE BUILDERS

- Matching the needs of the immigrants and companies
- Try to have NGO/ association involved in the process of inclusion to build relations with candidates and mapping the competences, looking the cv, supporting the person in specific activities.
- Change the mindset, dialogue and relations with the companies/ starting a collaboration with them.
- Need of guide/ person helping the migrant to have a better understand of the context (maybe a volunteer) or a mentor inside the company to help with misunderstanding and general problems at work, maybe a volunteer that retired.
- Try to find some NGO or association with people with foreign background.

A BRIDGE BUILDER IS SOMEONE WHO ENABLES INTEGRATION IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT MATCHING REFUGEES' AND COMPANIES' NEEDS. THE REALIZATION OF THIS OBJECTIVE AND THE CREATION OF A DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN IMMIGRANTS AND LOCALS WILL TRIGGER A GRADUAL CHANGE OF OPINION, PUTTING THE BASES FOR AN OPEN AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

In our project, the role of the Bridge Builder was played by Innovation Farm together with Consorzio Fantasia.

Innovation Farm is a new non-profit association that aims at the production of a network between professional schools, technical institutes, high schools and the local companies operating in the international mechanical engineering market.

**It takes both sides
to build a bridge.**

— Fredrik Nael



The role of Bridge Builders is accomplished by multiple actions. Firstly, Consorzio Fantasia together with cultural mediators from Dimora d'Abramo and World in Progress meets Innovation Farm presenting an alternative mind-set.

Secondly, Innovation Farm, acting as a proper “Bridge builder” and sharing its transcultural factors, elaborates accurate matches between companies and refugees. During this phase, the staff of Consorzio Fantasia, Dimora d'Abramo and World in Progress supports and pursues the development of the new point of view. The same procedure of cultural adaptation is carried out with the refugees introducing them to the Italian working environment, to its social dynamics, its legislative and practical aspects.

“ Main problem: huge gap between refugee’s educational background and required working skills ”

At the beginning, Consorzio Fantasia and Innovation Farm identified two main difficulties for the success of the project.

1. The first one was represented by the difference between schools preparation and companies' real needs. The theoretical and technical training offered by technical institutes and training schools offer is often inappropriate to work in mechanical companies.

2. The second problem was refugee’s lack of educational background. In fact, most refugees do not reach the educational standards required by our local job market. These people have to face more difficulties than standard educated people because they have to start from the very beginning having no cultural background at all.



ACTIONS

SPECIFIC TRAINING COURSE OF 100 HOURS FOR MECHANICAL WELDERS

PLACEMENT IN ONE OF THE PARTNER COMPANIES

POSSIBLE INTERNSHIPS IN OTHER DIFFERENT POSITIONS

POSSIBILITY OF AN EXTENSION PERIOD FINANCED BY THE COMPANY

FINAL GOAL: RECRUITMENT BY ONE OF THE PARTNER COMPANIES

Innovation Farm and local companies observed that the main working demand is represented by skilled labor such as welders. A professional profile that is difficult to find among Italian citizens.

For this reason, they designed a specific professional course for refugees different from those usually organized on the territory (often too theoretical and short in time). This course was customized to fit students' schedules, timetables, and educational needs. The educational institute Forma Futuro organized a welding course for refugees following Consorzio Fantasia and Innovation Farm directives and needs. The educational path designed for this project was based both on class lessons and practice. A final evaluation would eventually activate placements in companies through internships.

**The internships were supposed to start on March 9 2020 but at the same time the lockdown was established in Italy. The Emilia-Romagna Region blocked all traineeships in all professional fields. Despite all this, one internship started!*



Key element 3

NETWORKS AND PLATFORMS

- Networking – with different companies/organizations and active persons

THE EXPERIENCE OF TROLLHÄTTAN

In Trollhättan, the municipality's labor market unit has a coordinating function for building networks and being able to easily match and manage internships and jobs both internally within the municipal operations, but also in dialogue with the local business community.

The municipality receives many trainees for education or jobs in both pre-school, elderly care and in other workplaces, but also engages and activates employers and trade unions in collaboration together with these people.

Another example is the mapping of job seekers and companies to better match skills and recruitment needs, for example through surveys and interviews within various projects and initiatives. These types of discussions are usually held in networks between the public sector, academy and business sector to facilitate matching of job seekers such as newcomers to workplaces with skills and recruitment needs.

Social support networks are expected to facilitate immigrants' integration into their host countries. Recent research has indicated that higher levels of economic wellbeing are not themselves sufficient to lead to positive integration outcomes, but social capital, defined as social support networks relating to both the structure and quality of social interactions, plays a critical role on the integration process of immigrants.

Support Group Network has started an Intercultural Center where, in combination of other projects run by SGN, they support and guide both asylum seekers and newcomers to get closer to the labor market by including the target group in the choice of activities which are used to do so. This combination and strategy have together increased the digital skills of the job seekers and developed their interview and presentation techniques where in some cases, have been matched to workplace based on skills and interest. This has also led to self-employment for some of the target group where some have chosen to start a business and enhance their experiences and skills that they have brought with them.



THE DOUBLE CUP PROJECT

The City of Trollhättan Business Council wanted an easy way to engage in the integration issue:

- Welcome to Trollhättan!
- Change the “mindset”
- Integration starts in the meeting between individuals
- Social engagement without demands
- Mobilizing the business community

DoubleCup creates integration and networking through personal and simple meetings at workplaces. It happens at an open-ended “fika” between a Futureguide (person from a business/organization) and a Candidate (newcomer or asylum seeker). The Futureguide becomes a mentor for an hour. With their knowledge and experience of how the Swedish labor market works, can the questions of the Candidate be answered. Maybe the Futureguide has contacts in their network that might help the Candidate further, both professionally and socially.

The business sector requested a simple, smooth and undemanding way to engage in questions of integration. The need to meet existed for the business sector as well as the newly arrivals. Even the authorities working with the newly arrivals showed a great need of breaking the barriers preventing integration into society. To “fika” is amongst the most “Swedish” things to do and almost all workplaces take a “fika”. Therefore inviting a newly arrival for a “fika” doesn’t steal any ordinary work time and it’s not a big obligation that can seem frightening. It’s a simple way of engaging.



Integration doesn’t need to be hard – it’s just opening your door and offer a “fika”!

--Per Frykner, CEO Leissner Data



From the **city's/municipality's perspective** DoubleCup is part of the integration work, a volume-project aiming to give the newly arrivals a warm and pleasant welcome. It is also a way of establishing and maintaining relationships with the business sector. It's a grace to take care of the interest and engagement of the business sector to welcome new and future inhabitants. The engagement of the business sector is a cornerstone in the development of society and through the relations making of DoubleCup, one can work together for a better society. DoubleCup is also a piece of the puzzle for contributing to the need of competence within workplaces.

From the **perspective of the business sector**, DoubleCup is largely about making a contribution to society. The companies both want and must participate in the big issues of society, integration being one. DoubleCup makes a difference as the business sector takes some of their time from work to generate worth in the form of being helpful and letting the staff feel a sense of pride. DoubleCup might also be the CSR-work of the corporate and at least be a valuable part of competence provision. Sweden needs more competence at the same time as people in work age are declining. The newly-arrivals are an incredible resource to take care of. Some DoubleCup-meetings are so good that some of the individuals continue with meetings of themselves, which we are very happy for.

As a **newly-arrival** DoubleCup can be inspiring and motivational. In Sweden it is important to have a contact network and as a newly-arrival you must build it from scratch, which is both hard and time-consuming. Through DoubleCup we've seen that a meeting can act as a catalyst to begin creating contacts and be of help in language learning. To be invited for a meeting at a workplace in the middle of the week strengthens the sense of welcoming for the newly-arrival unlike a meeting with an authority meant for other purposes.

CONCLUSIONS

Trollhättan. Dekolla has been an eye opener for new perspectives and ideas to the integration development in Trollhättan. It includes new knowledge and ideas to future projects and existing initiatives in the supply of skills and integration. The study of the German trainee system has, for example, been a door opener for new local initiatives related to need-based training in Sweden and will be developed more in the future. The skills among key persons will be important in the development of new job tracks with combined education, internships and language improvement that can help migrants into the labour market. The study of individual Italian projects such as Innovation Farm has also led to an increased knowledge of how a successfully civil society can be developed and how the focus on bridge builders can improve the migrant´s matching progress into the labour market. In addition, Support Group Network has spread their informal network that contributes to both empowerment and self-organization of migrants and newcomers. The exchange of experience that has taken place during the project also has contributed to interesting comparisons of innovative methods to improve the integration in a local, regional and national level in Sweden.

Landratsamt Enzkreis. Dekolla, from an Enzkreis point of view, has been a perspective-changer in many ways: The experience of the Support Group Network taught us to acknowledge that refugees have loads of skills - which they want to and need to use in their new life. From the Italian initiatives we learned that it makes a lot of sense to combine language learning with handcraft doing so the result is fruitful in at least two ways. And for our own regional network, Dekolla has been a well-used chance to improve exchange and cooperation in a field with many different "players".

Consorzio Fantasia. Ideas obtained from "Need-based Training" & "Networks and platforms" projects: our Swedish colleagues through their Support Group Network remarked that every immigrant has skills, abilities and brings peculiar knowledge from his homeland. It is our mission to individualize and develop them. This process, which is not granted, easily takes place if triggered in an informal context. Work and social inclusion through informal networks facilitate dialogue with local companies.

Consorzio Fantasia is used to organize multicultural dinners and parties but always focused on the development of social awareness. Now, we figured out that by adding this new point of view to our work we will be able to reach a better working inclusion for our immigrants. The input given by our German colleagues showed us the most important aspects for a fruitful interaction with the local stakeholders. The key elements of the "need-based training" enhanced our action in creating a strong contact network and focusing on the employer's sensibility. If we want to find jobs for our immigrants, a new methodology is needed. We have to spend more energy on stakeholder and new company research. Furthermore, we have to develop major support from those people already part of our network.

The positive outcome of the experience: our customized path on immigrant's needs and skills developed together with Innovation Farm had a positive outcome. The project managed towards the recruiting of a refugee with a short term contract and concrete perspective for the future.

A look to the future: The Dekolla project was an occasion for professional growth. Now, the operators have a broader approach towards problems and they are less bounded by their particular working context. The collaboration with Innovation Farm was a pioneering experience and we want to keep it active and replicate it, expanding the network with local businesses and stakeholders, because "both parts are needed when building a bridge".

Comunità comprensoriale Oltradige-Bassa Atesina. Our SPRAR / SIPROIMI (System of Protection for Asylum Seekers and Refugees/System of Protection for holders of International Protection and unaccompanied foreign minors), project of the Comunità Comprensoriale Oltradige Bassa Atesina, was in force in the territory from 2018 to the end of 2020. These 3 years of the project have been a pioneering work for the territory and the participation in the Dekolla project has been a very important guide to reach the aim of (re)conquest of individual autonomy of the beneficiaries in the working field. The siproimi team supported the beneficiaries in their orientation between services and in the development of skills concerning finding, obtaining and keeping a job, while respecting their autonomy. This was done by interacting with the work mediation centre, employers, trade unions, social cooperatives, etc., in order to facilitate the job placement of the beneficiaries and create cooperation networks.

In this context Dekolla project was an opportunity for the development of ideas and strategies and gave us the opportunity to start a more structured work on the following aspects: creation of a formal network, agreements and good practices with the informal network (public and private entities), meeting concerning the labour law, creation of a system of analysis of skills.

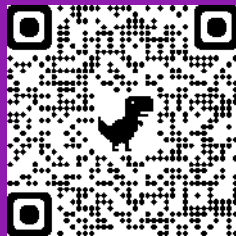
While for the creation of a formal network we identified possible stakeholders without reaching specific protocols or agreements, we were able to consolidate the partnership with some enterprises at an informal level. The involvement of trade unions, with whom we were able to structure and organise meetings on the labour market, as well as create a availability to carry out individual consultations, was also successful. The ideas given to us by the exchange between countries promoted by the Dekolla project seem to have contributed to obtaining excellent results, not only in terms of the number of jobs found despite the health emergency (a total of 38 contracts of various kinds between September 2019 and September 2020), but above all in terms of empowering the beneficiaries (enhancing individual capacities and previous skills).

Participating in the Dekolla project has been an opportunity for professional growth, that has given our project more qualification in the context of work integration of migrants.

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