



SMILE

Supporting Migrant Inclusion In Lifelong Learning and Education

IO4: Peer Mentoring for supporting migrant communities

All I Want: Project info



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

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

[Project Number:2017-1-MT01-KA204-026966]



Overview

The Supporting Migrant Inclusion in Lifelong Learning and Education (SMILE) project aims to build the capacity of adult educators to improve and increase the knowledge, skills and competences of both teachers and migrants in promoting migrant inclusion in adult education. The project aims to develop resources to support all those who, whether in a formal or a non-formal manner, are supporting migrants to lifelong learning: policymakers, education institutes, teachers, and migrant organisations who can provide good learning environments in the community. These groups have different functions and roles, but they are all part of the education environment, and therefore need to develop competences and skills in order to address barriers to learning, education, and social inclusion, whether in the classroom, in the community or within society in general. In this way the project is supporting recruitment, selection and induction of educators by meeting demands for required cultural and social knowledge and competences required in migrant education.

The Foundation (FSM) is a founder of the Third Country National Support Network in Malta (TSN Malta), and leads this network together with 16 other member organisations from countries like Somalia, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Ethiopia, Serbia and Pakistan. Research among these groups shows that migrants experience great difficulties in understanding Maltese culture and navigating the Maltese system of education. These difficulties are harder for those facing high risks of poverty and social exclusion, who struggle to meet their basic needs and usually lack the resources necessary to motivate themselves to learn, often depending on privileged members of their community. Even financially migrants can sometimes experience poor social integration. Their qualifications may be unrecognised, and they may perceive aspects of European culture as superior or inferior. They often face social and cultural pressures from the host community or their own community, that prevent them from experiencing inclusion in Maltese society, as well as a poor knowledge of migrant adult education pedagogies in the classroom, and the lack of valuable psychosocial support.

Additionally, teachers find themselves struggling to deal with the culturally diverse classroom. Although the experience can be enriching, many teachers find they are unexposed, unprepared and unequipped to address the challenges of cultural diversity. Inadequate policies in relation to integration and education of migrants also impedes teachers, educators, school administrators, and migrant communities in finding coordinated, innovative solutions. The project will explore these gaps and develop the tools to address these various needs.

Research among these groups shows that migrants experience great difficulties in understanding Maltese culture and navigating the Maltese system of education. These difficulties are harder for those facing high risks of poverty and social exclusion, who struggle to meet their basic needs and usually lack the resources necessary to motivate themselves to learn, often depending on privileged members of their community. Even financially migrants can sometimes experience poor social integration. Their qualifications may be unrecognised, and they may perceive aspects of European culture as superior or inferior. They often face social and cultural pressures from the host community or their own community, that prevent them from experiencing inclusion in Maltese society, as well as a poor knowledge of migrant adult education pedagogies in the classroom, and the lack of valuable psychosocial support.

Additionally, teachers find themselves struggling to deal with the culturally diverse classroom. Although the experience can be enriching, many teachers find they are unexposed, unprepared and unequipped to address the challenges of cultural diversity. Inadequate policies in relation to integration and education of migrants also impedes teachers, educators, school administrators, and migrant communities in finding coordinated, innovative solutions. The project will explore these gaps and develop the tools to address these various needs.



Aim and Objectives

Project aim

The project's main objective is to promote migrant inclusion in lifelong learning and adult education.

Objectives

The project aims to study gaps in migrant inclusion in adult education and find best practices, while developing innovative educational resources to train migrant peers, learning support staff, as well as teachers in adult education programmes.

Through a participatory process with relevant stakeholders, the project will use this information to develop guidelines and/or recommendations to support education policymakers and programme administrators in implementing comprehensive, coordinated and effective solutions for promoting migrant inclusion in adult education.

The main target groups of the project are:

- Teachers within lifelong learning and adult education programmes, who will have the opportunity for obtaining certified training on migrant inclusion in adult education;
- School administrators and education policymakers, who will be informed about gaps and best practices in migrant inclusion in adult education, and provided with tools for improvement;
- Learning support workers who provide psychosocial support to migrant learners, who will benefit from a training programme;
- Migrant peers and communities, who will benefit from non-formal training on how to guide migrants towards education opportunities, and provide them with psychosocial and mentoring support.

Methodology

The methodology of the project uses a holistic, cross-sectorial, bottom up approach, where the project considers several groups supporting the inclusion of migrants in adult education in real life: language and vocational institute teachers, school administrators, education policymakers, migrant peers and learning support workers. This makes the programme more innovative than past programmes, because it connects migrants, support workers, teachers and policymakers so that the project is informed by all these groups and develops intellectual outputs based on their feedback. It also addresses the training needs of teachers, as well as migrant themselves as mentors and educators, for improving motivation, access and performance of migrants in education. This approach stems from the need of adult educators, mainly education institutes and NGOs, to work together in order to establish more cooperation between teachers providing formal education, migrant educators providing non-formal education in their community, and learning support workers providing social support - these all supporting and promote migrant inclusion in adult education.



Outputs

- A blended, accredited 3 ECTS Study Unit (Level 5) for teachers of Further Education, on Migrant Inclusion in Lifelong Learning.
- A non- formal training course to train migrant communities and peers in confidence building, mentoring and cultural mediation;
- A support handbook for developing the capacity of learning support staff to mentor and support migrants in lifelong learning institutes;
- A project website including project results;
- A set of guidelines/recommendations for education policymakers, institutes, municipalities and administrators of education programmes;
- A research document analyzing challenges and best practices in 4 partner countries (Malta, Slovenia, Cyprus and Sweden).