

Gaining experience in the European Unions refugee migration



PASSWORLD



problem issues, case studies and integration tools development

“Gaining experience in the European Union's refugee migration problem issues, case studies and integration tools development”

2. part, 2.2 Activity “City networks”

In connection with this project, 7 events were implemented:

1. Activity

Participation: The Activity allowed us to bring together 43 participants, from them 25 were from Latvia, 10 from Lithuania, 6 from Estonia, and one from Croatia and Germany.

Place/date: The activity took place in Latvia (In Ropazi, Iecava and Rundale municipalities), the duration of the activity was from 18th until 19th of July 2016.

Short description: The main aim of the activity was to learn more about the situation in the asylum seeker center "Mucenieki". The organizers of the activity brought together several specialists from the local government of Latvia to discuss the situation in Latvia and to learn from partners from other countries and their planned activities in the Project. A press information about the meeting was prepared and was publicized in 4 countries wide and 4 regional media.

2. Activity

Participation: The activity brought together 279 participants (4 of the participants were from countries which did not participate in the project – Turkey and Eritrea) from 275 participants 156 were from Latvia, 36 – Estonia; 69 – Lithuania; 9 – Croatia; 1 – Bosnia and Herzegovina; 2 – Germany; 2 – Spain.

Place/Date: The activity took place in Riga, Latvia in the National Library of Latvia. The date of the activity was from 5th until 6th of October 2016.

Short description:

Lecturers from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Croatia, Sweden participated in the conference entitled "Conference on Immigration Processes, Problems and Prejudice" (PASSWORLD 2016 LATVIA). Rebels Tages from Eritrea shared his experience of being an immigrant and trying to integrate in Latvia, he

arrived in Latvia only a few months ago, also the deputy of the Latvian Parliament Hosam Abu Meri who came to Latvia from Lebanon to study in 1993 shared his experience. He is now residing in Latvia and became a citizen of Latvia and is currently a member of the Latvian Parliament. The conference was opened by the representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Culture, the State Employment Agency, the Latvian Language Agency, and others. Lecturers from other countries reported the situation in their own country. Representatives of the academic field also shared their ideas and proposals on how to make the integration process more successful in avoiding the mistakes of other countries as well as their own past. The conference took place for two days and was widely visited, reflected in the media and received the attention of the society.

Before this conference, the attitude of the society was strongly rejected and hostile to the crisis of migrants in Europe and its impact on Latvia. The conference became a breakthrough when representatives of ministries actually initiated dialogue with the public for the first time. This was encouraged by the participation of representatives from other countries and their experience, which reduced the tension and opposition from the representatives of local governments and society.

Publicity: National TV-2 Scenes; LETA - photo post and live internet; Radio - 7; Internet media - 19 publications; press conference - 1; Print media (newspapers) - 3 articles, 2 promotional article - interview with pedagogical doc. prof. Liesma Ose "Study: intolerance towards immigrants pronounced among young people" and Hosam Abu Meri: "The refugees should be integrated properly, so they become loyal citizens".

3. Activity

Participation: The activity allowed us to bring together 85 participants, 33 were from Croatia, 16 from Latvia, 21 from Lithuania, 7 from Estonia, 8 from Bosnia and Hercegovina.

Place/date: The activity took place partly in Croatia in the city Metkovich, and in Bosnia and Hercegovina in the city Mostar and Sarajevo from 26th until 29th of October 2016.

Short description: A Conference was held in Croatia, in the city Metkovič. The Conference was organized to reflect on the immigration crisis that hit Croatia at the end of 2015 and early 2016. The main topic of the Conference was the analysis of the situation in the country, the solutions for the future and to find ways on how to deal with such crisis. Moving on to questions about integration processes and integration, we talked about Lithuania's experience in working with refugees and on the involvement of young people, as well as on the starting point of integration, which actually began upon landing in a country where refugees (migrants) are prepared to stay and live for a longer period of time, or to remain permanently. Language learning is one of the main issues in the integration process. Taking into account that such countries as Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia are small and motivation to learn a language, in which only approx. 1.5-3 million people speak, is very poor. One of the solutions and tools to teach a language and to motivate refugees to learn it might be games. Consequently, during the conference, the PASSWORLD GAMES games were created as a practical task for the participants of the conference. The second part of the event was a visit to Sarajevo in order to learn about the experiences of the various religious communities living close together and the problems they are facing in everyday life. In addition, the participants had a chance to meet with young people in Mostar and to watch a youth amateur movie "Over the bridge of love". The film talks about breaking stereotypes and the love of young people from two different religions.

4. Activity

Participation: The activity brought together 51 participants, of which 17 were from Estonia, 10 from Latvia, 13 from Lithuania, 9 from Croatia, 1 from Bosnia and Hercegovina and 1 from Germany.

Place/date: The activity took place in Estonia, from 21th until 22th of November in 2016.

Short description: The activity was planned as a whole series of activities. The participants were practically using these two days of the activity to visit Estonia along its border. The participants visit the Lillekju Gymnasium in Tallinn, which is specialized in integration of immigrant children in school for 20 years and currently has 450 pupils learning in the school, 58 are children of different nationalities and cultural immigrants who have just arrived in Estonia for various reasons. We also attended the Kiltsi

School where children from the asylum seekers who are living in the Vao and Vjageva asylum centers, are studying. The participants also had the chance to visit two asylum centers. On the next day, we met with the representatives of the youth center and together with the local government representatives discussed their experience about the cooperation with the local society. At the end of the study visit, we had a final discussion about the experience gained in the past two days.

5. Activity

Participation: The activity brought together 136 participants. 92 from Lithuania, 23 – from Latvia, 9 – from Estonia, 9 – from Croatia, 2 from Bosnia and Hercegovina and one from Germany.

Place/date: The activity took place in Vilnius, Rukla, Kelme in Lithuania from 17th until 18th January in 2017.

Short description: An international conference was held in Vilnius, Lithuania. The conference was entitled: Are the European Union and Lithuania ready for refugees? Lectures from countries such as Latvia, Lithuania, Croatia, Germany, Estonia participated in the conference, a participant from Bosnia and Hercegovina shared his experience as a war refugee. He fled from the Balkan war in Sajarevo as a 13-year-old boy. His experience was very valuable as it allowed the participants in the conference to meet and talk with a person who understands and has survived the refugee race. He returned to his country and home after 9 years. This presentation allowed participants in the conference to go deep into the problems of refugees and change their thinking and beliefs.

6. Activity

Participation: The activity brought together 63 participants, 33 from Germany, 7 from Latvia, 8 from Lithuania, 8 from Estonia, 6 from Croatia, 1 from Bosnia and Hercegovina.

Place/date: The activity took place in Bonn, Collonge, and Hennef in Germany from 28th February until 3rd March 2017.

Short description: The activity was designed with the aim that German partner could share their experience as they are the most experienced from all Project partners. In Germany, the participants had the chance to meet several politicians, to visit several integration centers and asylum seeker centers. At the end of the activity a round table discussion a round table discussion was held, where all the participants divided into three groups and discussed the experiences gained with the experts with whom meetings were held in the previous days. Also as several experts were invited who answered to participants' questions, as well as sought solutions for partners in countries with far less experience and negative attitudes in the local society.

7. Activity

Participation: The activity brought together 70 participants (one from Turkey who can't be listed in the project). Out of 69 participants, 30 were from Latvia, 9 from Estonia, 16 from Lithuania, 8 from Croatia, 2 from Bosnia and Hercegovina, 3 from Germany and one from Sweden.

Place/Date: The activity took place in Riga, Latvia from 8th May until 9th May 2017.

Short description: The activity was dedicated to the closing of the Project, to reflect on the project and to learn from the goals reached and tasks learned. The conference took place in the National Library of Latvia. A part of the conference was a discussion held on the results of the Project and the next steps to be done to ensure that the experience and knowledge gained during the project will continue to bring results and solutions for integration issues. The last activity was postponed from April to May 8th and 9th as they are ambiguous dates in Latvia. May 8th is celebrated throughout Europe at the end of the Second World War. May 9 is a European day, but a part of the population of Latvia today marks the end of the Second World War as it was adopted in the Soviet Union. The celebrations take place in the center

of Riga near the Uzvaras monument, built during the Soviet Union in honor of the Latvian Liberators, soldiers of the Soviet Army. The festivities annually bring together around 50,000-800,000 Russian-speakers each year. The selected dates clearly show that the integration of issues in Latvia needs to be given greater importance and the system must be changed, because at the moment we are faced with new challenges when talking about the integration of young immigrants and refugees, but we have not yet managed to integrate Russian-speaking people, who live in Latvia even in several generations. In general, the results of the project were evaluated very high and there are new ideas and cooperation proposals for continuing the project in the future, to focus more on the topic and find new solutions.

Publicity: National TV-2 Scenes; LETA - photo post and live internet; Radio - 1; Internet media - 8 publications. Video footage of the conference is published at www.balkansflower.com

2016 – 2017