



INTERREG RESPONSE TO MIGRATION CHALLENGES

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Throughout 2020, we celebrated 30 years of Interreg and cooperation in all its shapes. As the second pillar of the Cohesion policy, European Territorial Cooperation is at the heart of the European spirit because it encourages regions and countries to tackle challenges they can solve only by working together. Several activities throughout 2020 provided the opportunity to demonstrate the achievements so far, but also the chance to focus on the future of cooperation policy beyond 2020 as we enter a crucial phase to shape the future of the programming period.

It is time to rethink and breathe new life into what we consider a fundamental value in the European Union: cooperation between people, regions and countries close to us.

At a time when the European Union is facing a lot of changes, when political dialogue often questions its function, when new European leaders and new priorities are emerging, Interreg has been acting for 30 years to leave no one behind and to build Europe brick by brick.

Following the refugee crisis of 2015 and 2016, the EU financial support provided to member states under pressure proved to be essential. It ensured an effective EU response by developing search and rescue capacities, increasing reception capacity and step up returns.

In this regard, the EU has allocated for the management of migration and asylum – under the Asylum and Migration Fund – a budget of EUR 11.3 billion for the next programming period, compared to EUR 7.3 billion for the current 2014-2020.

The Asylum and Migration Fund, as in the past, supports the very early integration of migrants and asylum applicants. But it is well known – not only by academia but especially by practitioners – that integration is a long-term process.

Therefore, medium to long-term integration needs are to be supported through the European Social Fund+ and the European Regional Development Fund – also throughout Interreg Programmes – by means of actions focussing on vocational training, education, housing, just to mention a few.

It becomes clear that partnership and cooperation with our neighbours and third countries plays a key role, being an essential component of the European Union's migration and asylum policy.

The present publication follows the desk research analysis that Interact published in June 2016 and November 2019 in the framework of its Thematic Network “Interreg response to migration-related challenges”¹.

The aim of this publication is to offer an overview and evidence of Interreg contribution to migration-related challenges through the stories of 18 symbolic and outstanding projects financed by Interreg.

No. of projects financed over the last three programming periods.

	2000 - 2006	2007 - 2013	2014 - 2020
Interreg A	9	22	11
Interreg B	8	4	7
Interreg C	4	4	0
IPA CBC	4	2	0
ENPI CBC	2	2	0
Total	27	34	18

¹. <https://www.interact-eu.net/networks#2584-Migration>

“The Urban Farmer Certificate was a huge motivational factor for immigrants to take part in the project activities.”

Project webpage

Project on Keep



In Hiedanranta, Finland, an urban farming project planted the seeds of greater social integration, bringing local communities and newly-arrived refugees together to grow, prepare and share food. The former 19th century vegetable garden at Lielahiti Manor was transformed into an ‘edible park’, including eight greenhouses built from recycled materials.

The project organised 86 events, attended by a total of 941 people; including 506 from immigrant communities. To overcome language barriers, video tutorials and an online vocabulary test were created and are still being used in the garden’s activities. A WhatsApp group connected volunteers working on partner growing projects in neighbouring countries; participants found unity through sharing advice, photographs and updates from the gardens.

After all, watching a small seed grow into food is all the more joyful when the experience is shared.

A common barrier for refugees in a new country is the lack of formal certificates to enable them to seek employment, and in turn become part of the local community. Inspired by the Swedish partner’s strategy, ARC devised the Urban Farmer Certificate in response to this challenge, which allowed volunteers’ skills and hard work to be formally recognised.

Since the project closed, the City of Tampere Social Department has guided its clients to the garden’s activities, and the community has continued to organise gardening evenings through the summer months — demonstrating that you can still harvest the fruits of your collaborative labour long after a project is over.



Area

- Finland - Pirkanmaa
- Sweden - Östra Mellansverige

Budget

Total Budget: 169 956 €

EU Contribution: 127 467 €

Partners

- Tampere Region Martat (Lead partner), FI
- Tampere Region Design Association Modus, FI
- ISSS Resilience Centre, SE
- Institute of Swedish Safety & Security, SE

4

involved areas

ARRIVAL REGIONS

“In-migration of non-EU nationals, especially of refugees and asylum seekers, is frequently framed as a “problem”... we want to contribute to a change of perspective by highlighting the benefits of migration to declining rural regions.”

Project webpage



Project on Keep



Most international migrants leave rural areas for cities – a trend that Arrival Regions seeks to counteract. Instead, this project is working with rural regions in need of revitalisation, guided by the conviction that non-EU migrants are in fact essential to kick-starting declining local economies.

Based in Leipzig, Germany, the project involves 13 partners working across ‘new immigration destination’ regions in Italy, Croatia, Czechia, Slovenia, Germany and Poland. It aims to make them more attractive to migrants who can fill vacancies in labour markets often left open by ageing rural populations.

The first step has been completed: the Transnational Strategy is an invaluable framework to guide project partners in their day-to-day work. It offers socially innovative solutions for the integration of non-EU nationals, whether in Piemonte, Italy or the Plzeň region in Czechia.

Next up is the creation of a toolkit of successful strategies and measures – currently being tested in pilot initiatives. Joint study trips across Europe have also been fruitful, with mutual learning and cooperation with stakeholders within and beyond Central Europe. Building relationships with stakeholders has also led to valuable cooperation between local partners previously unaware of each other. Because migration is a very sensitive topic, the pilots are specially designed to give partners flexibility to address specific local needs and challenges, across different groups of migrants – from unaccompanied minors to labour migrants.

This is done through collaboration with local stakeholders, NGOs, public administrations and local businesses. All being well, this vital project will re-energise rural regions. The goal is making these areas more welcoming to newcomers, resulting in smoother integration of migrants keen to make these rural locations home – for good.



Area

- Germany - Leipzig, Sachsen-Anhalt
- Czech Republic - Jihozápad
- Slovenia - Zahodna Slovenija, Vzhodna Slovenija
- Poland - Łódzkie, Zachodniopomorskie
- Italy - Piemonte
- Croatia - Kontinentalna Hrvatska

Budget

Total Budget: 2 204 872 €

EU Contribution: 1 811 190 €

Partners

13

- Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography (Lead partner), DE
- Westpomeranian Region, PL
- Łódzkie Region, PL
- Municipality of Postojna, SI
- Burgenland district, DE
- Center Rotunda, Koper, SI
- Information legal centre, HR
- University of Szczecin, PL
- National Union of Mountain Municipalities and Mountain Communities – UNCEM Piemonte, IT
- Mountain Union of Mongia e Cevetta Valley Langa Cebana Alta Valle Bormida, IT
- University of West Bohemia, CZ
- LAG Escartons and Waldensians Valleys, IT
- City of Osijek, HR

BEGIN

Boost Environmental Guardianship for Inclusion

“Social enterprises, in their various forms, represent an opportunity for greater inclusion of workers with disabilities and from disadvantaged backgrounds.”

Project webpage

Project on Keep



Imagine the possibility of a workplace that is genuinely diverse. A workplace in which employees from migrant or disadvantaged backgrounds aren't in the minority. A workplace in which people with disabilities or impairments outnumber those without. This is what the BEGIN project is working towards. A coalition of partners in Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, BEGIN is supporting the creation of inclusive social enterprises within the environmental sector.

In each partner country, at least two social business models have been defined, with the aim of a majority ratio of 3:1 workers with disabilities to non-disabled workers.

Together, project partners have shared knowledge about territorial development agencies, municipalities, third-sector bodies, and facilitators specialising in social business models.

As a result, BEGIN has defined clear local action plans to support the creation of social economy and social inclusion enterprises.

It is hoped that future projects can build on this work, broadening scope to involve for-profit organisations, too. The ultimate goal? To ensure that disabled people and those from disadvantaged backgrounds feature far more prominently – and feel valued, supported and welcome – in our workplaces.



Area

- Italy - Emilia Romagna, Puglia, Sicilia
- Slovenia - Zahodna Slovenija
- Croatia - Jadranska Hrvatska
- Bosnia Herzegovina - Moravica
- Serbia - Šumadija and Western Serbia
- Montenegro - Herceg Novi

Budget

Total Budget: 1 150 200 €

EU contribution: 926 246 €



BEGIN

Partners

- Regional Development Agency of Northern Primorska Ltd. Nova (Lead partner), SI
- Consorzio Emmanuel Società Cooperativa Sociale Onlus, IT
- Consorzio Sol.Co. Rete di Imprese Sociali Siciliane, IT
- Public company of social services to the person of the Romagna Faentina, IT
- City of Labin, HR
- Municipality of Herceg Novi, ME
- City of Cacak, RS
- City of Gradiska, BA
- European Institute for Local Development, GR

“All partners had an extensive track record of working on migration or broader social cohesion – which played a significant role in the project’s successful implementation.”

Project webpage



Project on Keep



могућности
Chancen
lehetőségeket
příležitosti

Like much of Europe, the Danube region has experienced increased migration and refugee movements in recent years – but it lacked multi-level governance support structures to ensure migrants’ integration into society. Enter the DRIM partnership. Its goal? To enhance public institutions’ capacity to improve fair access to jobs and skills for new and existing migrants.

18 cross-sector partners from Slovenia, Austria, Croatia, Germany, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina worked together on trans-national solutions; namely providing better access to information for these new communities.

The Danube Compass tool, an information-sharing platform available in 21 languages, was created to address the unique needs of this trans-national area.

It is implemented in eight countries across the Danube region and has reached two target groups – migrants and the public institutions that work with them. The partners worked with national and local stakeholders to improve local information services via pilot actions, workshops and training. They strived for clear communication every step of the way. As a result of the project, cooperation among institutions working with migrants improved significantly.

Another success was that high-level decision-makers recognised the importance of making information straightforward and easy to access. Most significantly, Danube Compass solved the previous challenge of limited and fragmented information across the region – and has since gone on to be adopted outside of the partnership countries.



Area

- Slovenia
- Croatia
- Serbia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Austria
- Germany
- Slovak Republic
- Czech Republic
- Hungary

Budget

Total Budget: 1 522 169 €

EU Contribution: 1 293 843 €



Partners

18

Beneficiary Partners:

- Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Lead partner), SI
- Caritas Academy of Diocese Graz-Seckau, AT
- SPF Group, Ltd., CZ
- GS gain&sustain OG, AT
- Employment Service of SI
- Centre for Peace Studies, HR
- Institute of Ethnology, Slovak Academy of Sciences, SI
- Central Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency, HU
- City of Munich, Department of Labour and Economic Development, Local Employment and Qualification Policy, DE
- Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, RS

Associated Partners:

- Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, Government of the Republic of Croatia, HR
- Department of Integration of the City of Graz, AT
- Commissioner for the Protection of Equality of the Republic of Serbia, RS
- The Municipal Authority of Prague-Libuš, CZ
- META, o.p.s. – Association for Opportunities of Young Migrants, CZ
- Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, SI
- Institute for Labour and Family Research, SK
- Agency for Labour and Employment of Bosnia and Herzegovina, BA

“There’s huge potential to replicate EUMINT’s tools and materials to foster better cohabitation within diverse populations in Europe and beyond. They would be very useful in societies with asylum seekers and refugees – but also more generally for diverse groups with different language, religious and cultural backgrounds.”

Project webpage



Project on Keep



Working with the Tyrol–South Tyrol–Trentino and Senza Confini Euroregions, the EUMINT project responds to the regional effects of the European migration crisis. The project created tools, materials and processes to strengthen cross-border cooperation, focussing on civic and labour integration of asylum seekers and refugees, and wider social cohesion.

Two important principles guided the project. The first was bottom-up participatory methodology involving local residents, refugees, asylum seekers and beneficiaries every step of the way. The second was consideration of gender equality at all levels.

EUMINT identified three key areas through which to achieve integration: institutional cooperation, civic integration and labour integration. Within each of these three pillars, replicable tools and materials were produced – among them an Ideas Lab forum, an interactive ‘House of Common Values’ board game and accompanying library of supporting materials, and an innovative evaluation check for hard and soft labour skills.



The 17 project partners strived to involve multi-level institutions in all phases. As such, it undertook initial research to interrogate the status quo of integration measures and future perspectives. Partners met with different working groups, migration experts, social sector workers and interviewed asylum seekers, refugees and associated actors to inform the project framework.

The Ideas Lab also contributed useful ideas from previous cross-border integration projects. In total, EUMINT’s activities reached over 1,000 people – including asylum seekers, refugees and local populations across the six associated Italian and Austrian regions.

The project was invited to present at the Project Fair, Bolzano and was one of five finalists for Regiostars 2019 in the Combatting Inequalities and Poverty category. It was runner-up in the Public Choice Award, which recognises Europe’s most innovative regional projects, and selected for the Paris Peace Forum 2019. Overall, EUMINT leaves a legacy of innovative learning, toolkits, materials and training for future projects to put to good use.



Area

- Italy - Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Trentino Alto Adige
- Austria - Tirol, Kärnten



Budget

Total Budget: 1 174 728 €

EU Contribution: 998 519 €



Partners

17

Beneficiary Partners:

- Eurac Research (Lead partner), IT
- ZeMiT - Center for Migrants in Tyrol, AT
- Institute of Geography, University of Innsbruck , AT
- EGTC - Euroregion Without Borders, IT, AT
- Regio Wipptal, AT
- ARLeF - Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia , IT

Administrative Districts of:

- Burggrafenamt/Burgraviato, IT, Salten-Schlern/Salto-Sciliar, IT, Eisacktal/Valle Isarco, IT, Vinschgau/Val Venosta, IT

Associated Partners:

- Autonomous Province of Bolzano. Department of Social Affairs, IT
- Ciniformi, IT
- Autonomous Province of Trento, AT
- Land of Tyrol, AT
- Municipality of Innsbruck, AT
- EGTC - Euroregion Tyrol - South Tyrol - Trentino , IT
- Autonomous Province of Bolzano. Department of Education, German Culture and Integration, IT
- Municipality of Bolzano. Department of Services to the Local Community, IT

involved areas



FEM

Female Estonian Migrant

“The project results exceeded our expectations, and as FEM progressed we learned that there was a much bigger picture regarding the issues faced by Estonian migrant women.”

Project webpage



Project on Keep



In 2019, almost half of all Estonians registered as living abroad were residing in Finland. However, integration into Finnish society is often difficult, especially for female migrants who can be more socially and economically vulnerable than the local population. Not enough research existed to understand why this is; so the FEM (Female Estonian Migrant) project was created to address the knowledge gap and improve integration of female Estonian migrants in Finland.

FEM involved two target groups in project activities; Estonian women already living and working in Finland, and Estonian women planning to move to Finland. Those planning to migrate are often unable to foresee or prepare for associated challenges, so activities were designed to ensure those relocating heard first-hand stories to help them prepare.

Three peer groups were created in Tallinn, Estonia, and Turku and Helsinki, Finland; both home to large Estonian populations.

Peer counselling techniques enabled knowledge-sharing and emotional, practical and social support. Data collection, communication activities, new walk-in information points in Turku and Helsinki, a Facebook community group and a project web site also strengthened a sense of community amongst the women, who shared advice, experiences and questions about the relocation process.

Thanks to the project, Estonian female migrants now have better tools for integrating into Finnish society – and they’re able to make better decisions in advance. FEM also succeeded in making these challenges more widely understood and acknowledged in each of the countries, across local government and society. The results are being used in advance of the Global Estonian Program 2021-2030 to ensure that the needs of female Estonian migrants feature more prominently on the agenda.



Area

- Finland
- Estonia

Budget

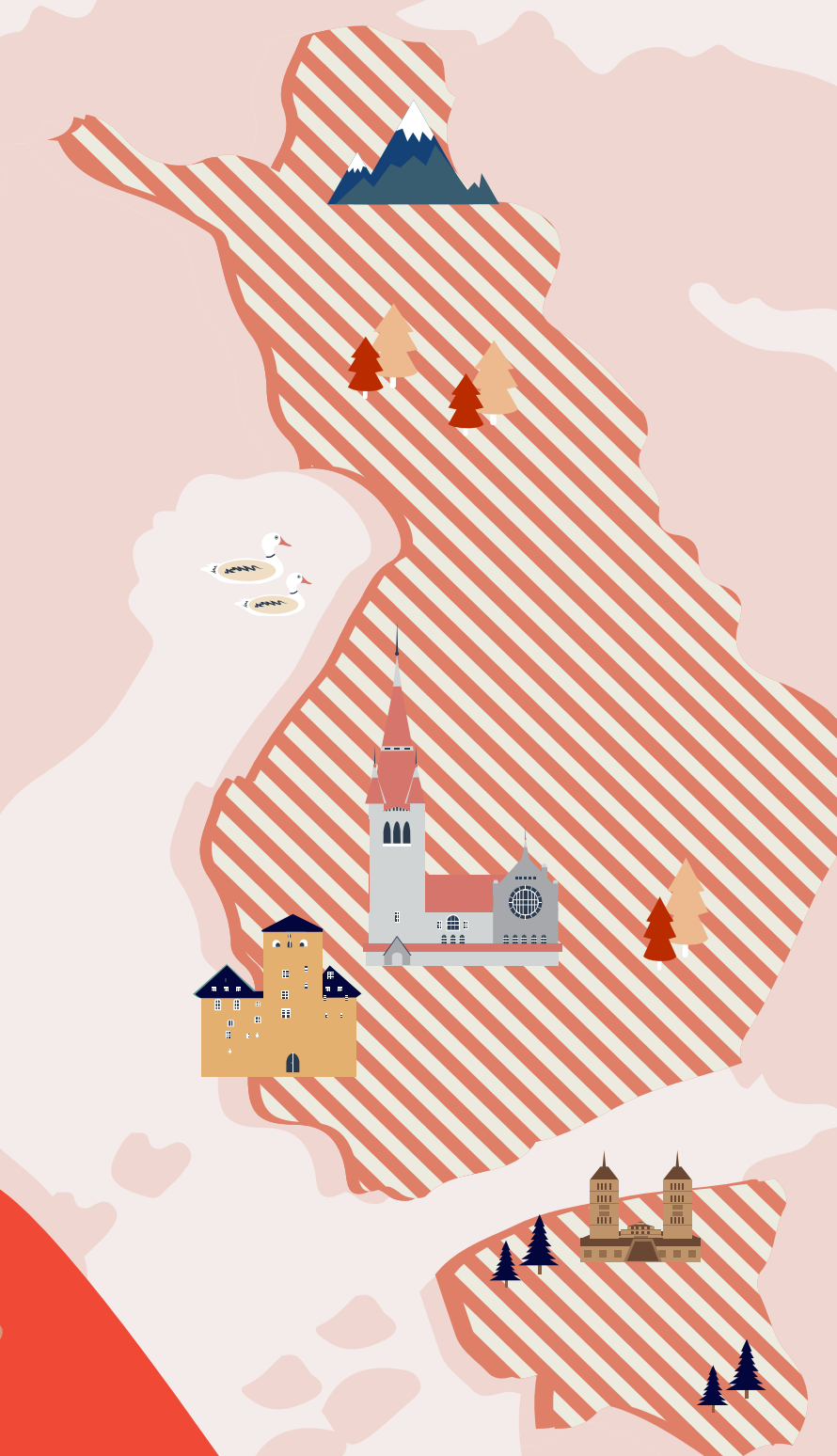
Total Budget: 210 144 €

EU Contribution: 166 204 €

Partners

3

- Chamber of Estonian Societies in Europe (Lead partner), EE
- Estonian Center of Southwest Finland, FI
- The Association of Estonia-Societies in Finland, FI



involved areas

“We are very proud to have followed a model that’s both academic and pragmatic in its research, case collection, co-design and communication.”

Project webpage

Project on Keep



Knowledge shared from previous European projects was the catalyst for MinPlus, which seeks to develop a welfare system governance model across the Italian and Swiss cross-border region. The project focuses on the unique situations arising from mass migration into communities in Piemonte and Ticino. These are small mountain areas, which have a strong sense of social control on a community level, and which can experience racial tensions and a fear of the ‘other’.

These factors have especially created difficulties for older unaccompanied foreign minors who are on the cusp of adulthood. It’s hoped that a cross-border structure of governance can solve these common challenges, through pragmatism and research informed by European success stories.

MinPlus, which is still ongoing and involves six partners, is promoting positive relations between local communities and migrant foreigners through public communication. It is also using awareness-raising initiatives that encourage a sense of common feeling within the host communities.

This has involved photographic exhibitions, videos sharing the stories of second and third-generation migrants, targetted working with decision makers and stakeholders, webinars for local media and research papers. A report, titled “The Governance of Reception of Asylum Seekers and Unaccompanied Foreign Minors -- Good Practices From the Canton Ticino to Piemonte” is also a key part of this communication toolkit.

Projects of this kind are an opportunity to reflect on the wide-ranging issues that arise from creating totally new models. It’s also a chance to move away from the self-referential thinking that can exist within organisations. So far, MinPlus has successfully dedicated time and space to the larger questions that have cropped up along the way, despite the limiting consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Area

- Switzerland - Canton Ticino
- Italy - Piemonte Region



Budget

Total Budget: 867 298 €

EU Contribution: 552 739 €

Interreg



Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale
ITALIA SVIZZERA - ITALIE SUISSE - ITALIEN SCHWEIZ



Partners

6

- Cantone Ticino - Dipartimento dell'educazione, della cultura e dello sport (Ticino) (Lead partner), CH
- Consorzio Intercomunale Servizi Sociali Ossola - Domodossola (VCO), IT
- Integra società cooperativa sociale - (Novara), IT
- Centro di ricerca e documentazione Luigi Einaudi - (Torino), IT
- Regione Piemonte - DG Coesione sociale (Torino), IT
- Formazione inserimento lavorativo orientamento servizi società cooperativa - (Novara), IT



involved areas

MINTEGRATION

Migration and Integration in the Bavarian-Czech Border Region

“The project led partners to deepen their research into international migration and even motivated the creation of a specialised institute.”

Project webpage

Project on Keep



Sure, it may sound obvious, but networking and productive cross-border communication so often leads to incredible lightbulb moments. That was the case for the Migration and Integration in the Bavarian-Czech Border Region project, which concluded in 2020. Rather than working in isolation, partners realised what could be achieved when they talked to each other. This led to new conversations about migrant integration between cross-border and interregional institutions, the public sector and NGOs. The project encouraged vertical networking, offering meeting spaces for national and regional institutions to collectively solve common challenges. The project also held fruitful networking workshops for the likes of Upper Franconia’s police force and the Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior, Czech Republic (RFA MOI). This led to mutual visits to migrant-related facilities and activities on both sides of the border.

Local networks were established too, notably with the city of Weiden in der Oberpfalz. In collaboration with Diakonie Weiden, strategies to tackle local problems were developed with partners across economy, administration, government, education and volunteering.

The wealth of shared expertise gathered throughout this project was put to good use when partners established the new Migration and Integration Research Centre at the University of West Bohemia. The centre is offering valuable workshops to institutions including the Czech Republic prison service, and RFA MOI, all in the spirit of interdisciplinary and interdepartmental cooperation. The University of West Bohemia has since become a project partner in another Interreg project, Arrival Regions, ensuring that yet more great work will continue.



Area

- Czech Republic - Jihozápad (Southwest), Severozápad (Northwest)
- Germany - Niederbayern (Lower Bavaria), Oberpfalz (Upper Palatinate), Oberfranken (Upper Franconia)

Budget

Total Budget: 495 920 €

EU Contribution: 421 532 €

Partners

- University of West Bohemia (Lead partner), CZ
- University of Bayreuth, DE

2



involved areas

PAIONAS

“For Greece, it’s anticipated that more effective incident handling will occur both at sea and on land, while in Cyprus, the improvement of the temporary refugee host area will ensure greater flexibility to accommodate people who need protection.”

Project webpage

Project on Keep



In Greek mythology Paieon was the physician of the Gods – known for his ability to bring relief through healing. The Paionas project pays homage to this idea, through its name and its actions. Led by the Special Service of European Union Structural Funds for the Ministry of Maritime Affairs & Insular Policy in Greece, partnering with Cyprus Civil Defence and the National Emergency Center (Greece), Paionas set out to better confront the humanitarian refugee crisis taking place in Greece and Cyprus – and invest in its infrastructure.

In Greece, this involved supplying a new fleet of pick-up trucks to better assist refugees arriving onto craggy coastlines, boats specially designed for medical equipment and assistance, and the recruitment of ambulance crew members.

Meanwhile in Kokkinotrimithia, Cyprus, the capacity of the temporary refugee host area was increased to accommodate more people. Creating suitable, welcoming conditions in accordance with the European Directive was the priority. Existing facilities were improved and new spaces were created – including a kitchen, dining room, laundry room, warehouse, administration office, sanitary spaces, worship sites and a playground.

This has led to improved conditions for those passing through the host area at a personally traumatic time. Together the partners worked to improve the countries’ migrant crisis toolkits, resulting in stronger cooperation between Greece and Cyprus as they continue to efficiently tackle this humanitarian disaster.



Area

- Greece - North Aegean, South Aegean
- Cyprus

Budget

Total Budget: 3 450 466 €

EU Contribution: 2 932 896 €



Partners

3

- Special Service of European Union Structural Funds for the Ministry of Maritime Affairs & Insular Policy (Lead partner), GR
- Cyprus Civil Defence, CY
- National Emergency Center, GR



involved areas



PLURALPS

Enhancing Capacities for a Pluralistic Alpine Space

“We should not underestimate the power of inspiration. Regions often compare themselves to other regions and don’t want to fall behind. Therefore, transnational cooperation within Interreg projects like PlurAlps stimulates conversations and ideas-sharing between regions.”

Project webpage

Project on Keep



For many Europeans, the sight of Syrian refugees fleeing the war left an unshakeable impression. In the Alpine region, the Regional Development Vorarlberg and like-minded organisations believed that concerted regional efforts were needed to ensure the successful integration of these migrant communities.

As such, the PlurAlps project was born as a consortium of partners united in purpose across the Alpine Space. With an ageing population and the need for social innovation, these regions saw migration as an opportunity for positive change, rather than a source of fear and conflict.

There were three objectives: first, improve strategies and practices for social planning and the integration of migrants; second, improve multi-level, multi-actor and cross-sector cooperation and third, increase public awareness to ensure bottom-up policies.



Seven pilot cities developed action plans to improve social and economic integration of immigrants in Les Belleville and Guillestre, France; Sattel, Switzerland; Ruggell, Liechtenstein; Gaschurn, Austria; Aschau im Chiemgau, Germany, and Budoia, Italy. Piloted services included regular welcome events and information delivery for newcomers, intercultural mediators on issues like jobs and housing, local and migrant volunteers to support integration, and language training for women; with provisions for child care. The action plans led to concrete changes and improvements on a municipal level, and improved access to services. They demonstrated that integration issues can – and should – be tackled at local government level, where they can be consciously designed to bring local partners together.

Other outcomes included the Alpine Cooperation Potential report, the Social Planning Instrument, the PlurAlps white paper, the creation of the Alpine Pluralism Award, and the PlurAlps innovation toolbox, which summarises the pilots’ key lessons for easy replication. Thanks to PlurAlps, these local communities are actively engaging in diversity and seeking bespoke solutions to local needs and challenges.



Area

- Styria
- Upper Bavaria
- Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen,
- Piedmont Region
- Autonomous Province of Trento
- Western Slovenia
- Rhône-Alpes Region
- Central Switzerland

Budget

Total Budget: 2 429 998 €

EU Contribution: 2 065 498 €

Interreg
Alpine Space
PlurAlps



Partners

10

- Auvergne Rhone-Alps Region, FR
- CIPRA International Lab GmbH, AT
- Community Network Alliance in the Alps, DE
- European Academy of Bolzano, IT
- Franco Demarchi Foundation, IT
- Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, CH
- Piemonte Region, IT
- Regional Development Agency Upper Styria East GmbH, AT
- Regional Development Vorarlberg eGen (Lead partner), AT
- Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, SI

involved areas

“Close cooperation between Estonia and Finland’s social authorities was vital in tackling the issues that work-related migrants and their families face.”

Project webpage



Children E-book



Project on Keep



Work-related migration can come with considerable challenges for family units; an issue that the REGI project aimed to tackle in Estonia and Finland. When the project was planned in 2015, 48,000 Estonians were living permanently in Finland, with as many as 17,000 additional undocumented work migrants, according to the Estonian Embassy in Finland. But for families in which one or both parents are working in Finland while their children (and potentially one parent) continue living in Estonia, this situation can be untenable. It can lead to emotional distancing, family breakdowns, social exclusion, negative impacts on education, and wider discord within communities.

While these challenges have been visible on an anecdotal level for years, they weren’t sufficiently addressed by either country. As such, teachers, social workers and the professionals in Estonia and Finland didn’t have the proper knowledge

or tools to support such families. This is where REGI came in, encouraging collaboration between public officials, NGOs and education institutes across the two countries. Heivi Mäekivi, a psychologist who trained Estonian social workers and teachers, stressed that an ideal community provides support to its resident families when they face challenges. REGI sought to create such an environment of associated parties ready to step in and help.

The project aimed for a more comprehensive and visible understanding of work-related migration challenges, and new methods to reach and support these communities. As a result, Estonian migrants and their families gained a wider support network in both countries, increased peer-to-peer support and better access to services. It led to overall improved wellbeing of Estonian migrants and their families, and a greater commitment to the societies they were living in. A book was also created for migrant children, which was a wonderful tool for communicating these personal issues within families.



involved areas

SEE ME IN



“Thanks to co-developed activities and reciprocal exchange between migrant and existing businesses, the socio-cultural gap within central European cities and regions will narrow.”

Project webpage



Project on Keep

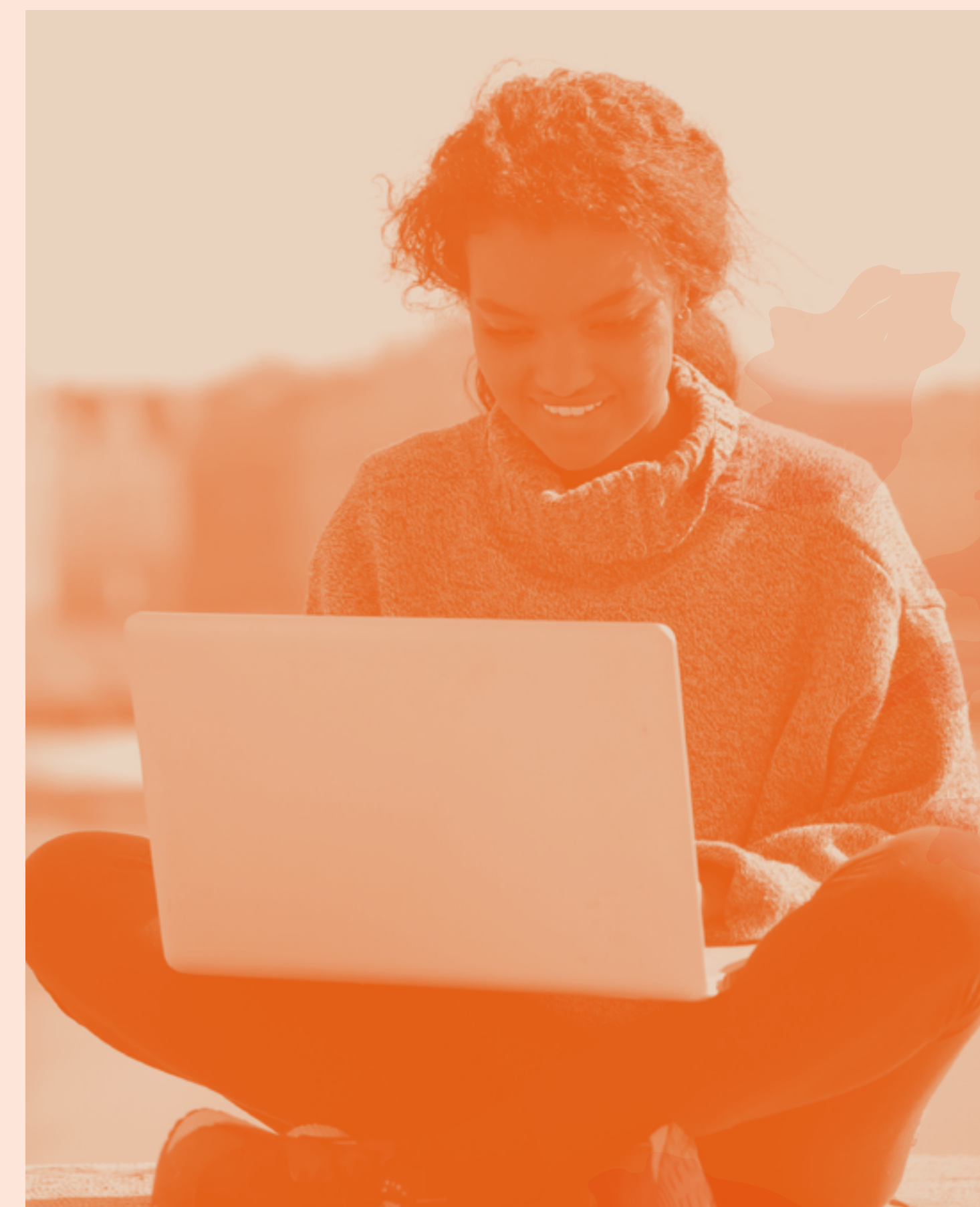


Migrant entrepreneurs are crucial to the rich tapestry of a city – but they often face cultural, legislative and language barriers when trying to get their business off the ground. The SEE ME IN project was created to improve the support offered to migrant businesses in central European cities. Whether it's a falafel seller, a beachwear designer or a talented leatherworker, the aim is for these entrepreneurs to have the tools they need to fulfill their potential. Such business owners enrich the market with innovation, creativity and the creation of new jobs, so they deserve to be properly supported, and visible in local open markets, high streets and internationally, too.

An important first step was defining the target demographic, which in this case is non-EU natives with the right to live in a EU country, and who either already run a business in the food, fashion or craft sectors, or are trying to do so.

Next, the 10 partners, which represent cities across Northern Italy, Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia and parts of Germany, put their heads together to evaluate the needs of enterprises and check that existing tools adequately support immigrant businesses. A transnational framework was then created with tailored guidelines and actions according to the needs of different sectors and regions. Italy and Hungary, for example, currently have large numbers of migrant-run businesses, while Slovenia and Croatia have less.

One of the most important elements of this work has been building networks between public authorities and stakeholders. This has allowed them to improve their ability to prioritize migrant-focused policy and strategy within business. A modular, easy-to-use platform will be built to deliver support, marketing and communication tools, as well as management training. This will update previous services that failed to serve migrant-run businesses. SEE ME IN, which is still in progress and funded under Interreg Central Europe Programme, will offer a joined-up approach, allowing metropolitan cities to properly support a new generation of talented entrepreneurs.



involved areas

Area

- Italy - Regione Lombardia
- Slovenia - Zahodna Slovenija and Vzhodna Slovenija
- Croatia - Kontinentalna Hrvatska
- Hungary - Közép-Magyarország and Nyugat-Dunántúl
- Germany - Freiburg



Budget

Total Budget: 2 126 052 €

EU Contribution: 1 751 142 €

Partners

10

- Fondazione Politecnico di Milano (Lead partner), IT
- Association Social Economy Slovenia – social company, SI
- ACT Group, HR
- Municipality of Nova Gorica, SI
- Municipality of Milan, IT
- Budapest Chamber of Commerce and Industry, HU
- Aiforia GmbH, DE
- Cooperative Group CGM, IT
- School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica, SI
- West Pannon Regional and Economic Development Public Non-Profit Ltd., HU

SlforREF

Integrating Refugees in Society and the Labour Market through Social Innovation

“We are proud of introducing social innovation into the discourse around the integration of refugees, because it is poorly addressed by official policies.”

Project webpage



Project on Keep



During the peak of Europe’s refugee crisis, SlforREF was founded on the urgent desire to create a new, inclusive mindset towards refugees. Its mission? To create inclusive cities, where integration is part of policy makers’ agenda – rather than an afterthought.

This came from the nine project partners’ belief that not only refugees, but all European citizens stand to benefit from a more inclusive environment. It was also felt that existing regional and local official policies failed to properly address the smooth transition of refugees within their new communities.

The regions covered by the project are across the Veneto and Emilia-Romagna, Italy; Vienna, Austria; Western Slovenia; and Berlin, Germany. Sharing best practice and creating strong connections between the project partners has significantly benefitted the ability to deal with the same issues across regions.

Although there have been challenges – namely the Covid-19 pandemic and the complexity of navigating hostile government policies - cooperation and mutual learning has so far made it all possible.



Area

- Italy - Veneto, Emilia-Romagna
- Austria - Vienna
- Slovenia - Zahodna Slovenija
- Germany - Berlin

Budget

Total Budget: 2 2213 206 €

EU Contribution: 1 788 503 €

Partners

9

- Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Lead partner), IT
- University of Vienna, AT
- Public Company for Personal Services – ASP City of Bologna, IT
- ISI-eV Initiative for Self-Employment of Immigrant Women, DE
- Gmajna Cultural Association, SI
- Municipality of Parma, IT
- Caritas Vienna, AT
- Berlin University of Technology, DE
- Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts, SI



involved areas

“The teachers are now more accessible; [before] it was a bit difficult to talk to them... I also notice that more parents are present at the school’s activities.”

Nadia Zeroual, a parent at the Abeel Learning Community in Belgium.

Project webpage

Project on Keep



In 2015, 1million refugees and migrants arrived on European shores, with some 3,735 people missing and believed to have drowned or died en route. This significant migration rise led to widespread media attention on the refugee crisis. In response, SIREE (Social and Economic Integration of Refugees through Education and Self Employment) planned to highlight the benefits that migrants contribute to society. It focussed on the value that a family unit brings when it’s better integrated into educational and entrepreneurial systems within their new home countries. ‘Co-creation’ was also essential in this project – ensuring that actions were designed in collaboration with the refugees and migrants they would impact.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic forced the postponement of some activity, much had already been achieved. In education, 46 ‘Learning Communities’ were set up to create an inclusive educational environment, with 340 meetings so far.

Activities included teaching young people about self-reflection, inviting parents to share recipes from different countries, and celebrating diversity. One parent noted that the activities made the teachers more accessible, and the children liked to see their parents at school.

Together with the online toolbox, these experiences will provide educational professionals with a clear vision and practical guide for social and educational integration for newcomers.

The work within entrepreneurship saw over 100 individuals create action plans to develop and test their business ideas. Over 10 new businesses were started, which SIREE will continue to support until the end of the project. A website designed to teach newcomers about starting a business was created in three languages and has been used by over 350 people.

The learnings and successes of this project, which were all down to partner collaboration, will be turned into an e-book and dissemination guides to help organisations to replicate and understand tools for social integration.



Area

- Belgium
- France - Nord-Pas-de-Calais
- UK - East, South and Southwest of England
- Netherlands - West Netherlands



Budget

Total Budget: 4 880 801 €

EU Contribution: 2 928 480 €

Partners

- University of Greenwich (Lead partner), UK
- Huis van het Leren, BE
- ARhus (vzw Het Portaal), BE
- Municipality Middelburg, NL
- Association pour le Développement des Initiatives Citoyennes et Européennes (ADICE), FR
- City of Mechelen, BE
- University College Roosevelt, NL
- Medway Plus, UK
- Vives Zuid, BE

involved areas

TELL ME ABOUT IT

“The participants reported that they enjoyed the workshops and wanted more of them because they could see themselves learning new things.”

Project webpage

Project on Keep



When two communities find themselves facing the same challenges, and they're both seeking a common goal, it makes sense to collaborate. That's what led Xamk (South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences), Uppsala Folkuniversitetet, Sweden and Ekami (Etelä-Kymenlaakso Vocational College), Finland to work together.

Both countries shared similarities in the immigrant situation since the 2015 refugee crisis. Their common goal? Social inclusion, by enabling immigrant communities greater agency in their new adopted homes, and to grow their self-esteem as citizens. Both of the organisations wanted to amplify the voices of immigrant youth, and let these newly-arrived communities share their stories with local people.

Through research methods and drama-based lessons designed to improve their language learning, participants were encouraged to share their experiences and stories with the others. In Finland, these sharing activities empowered and united the participants, especially because many of them heard similar stories from one another. Meanwhile in Sweden, participants reported that they enjoyed the workshops and would like to have more because they could see themselves learning new things. One of the activities in Sweden involved a 'human rights game' which enabled discussion and development of new approaches to social inclusion.

The Tell Me About It project results will be fed into immigrant integration practices locally and nationwide in both Finland and Sweden. Happily, there are plans to extend the project outcomes in the next programming period, which will be outlined in early 2021.



Area

- Finland - South-Eastern
- Sweden - Uppsala

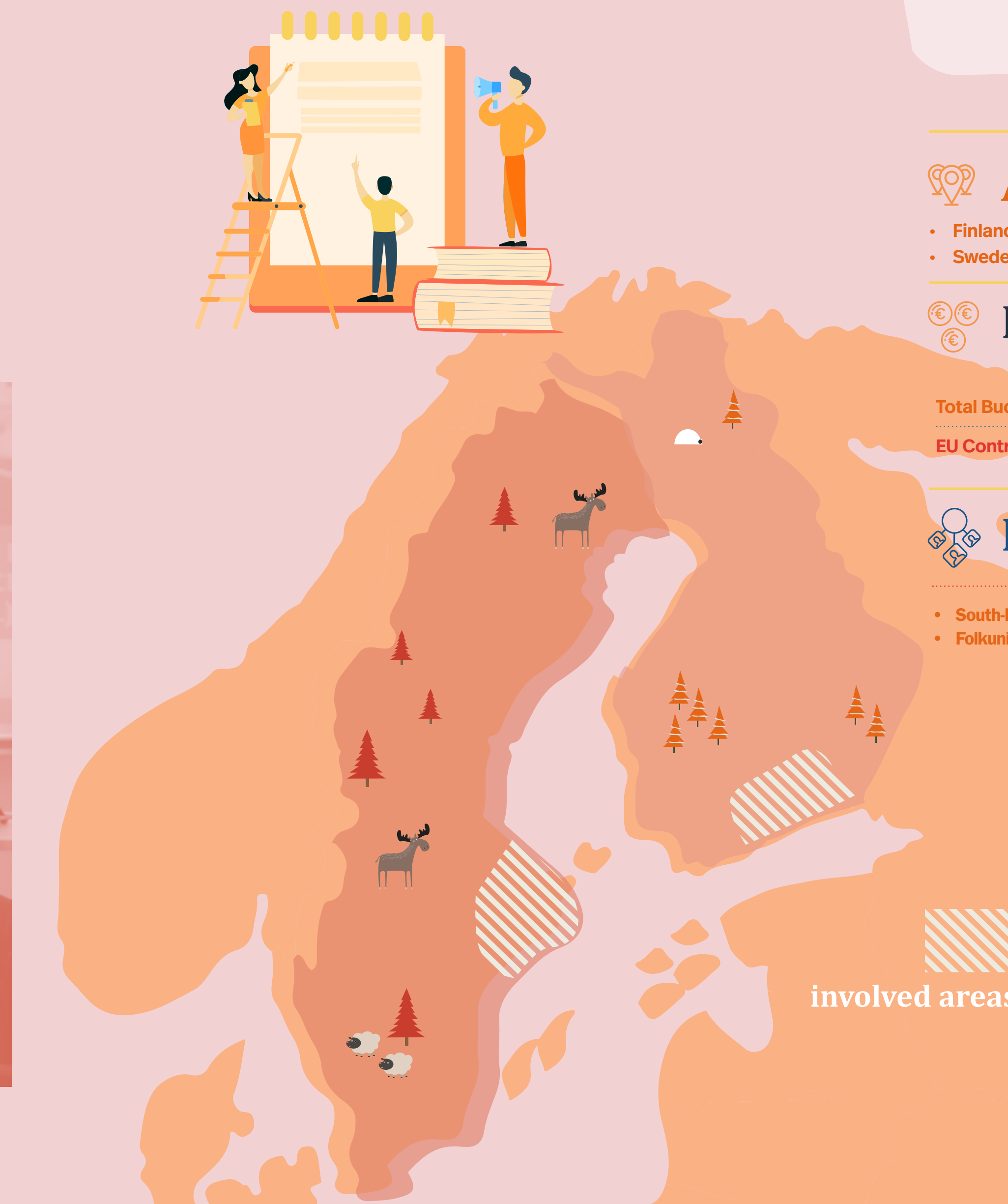
Budget

Total Budget: 266 567 €

EU Contribution: 199 925 €

Partners

- South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (Lead partner), FI
- Folkuniversitetet stiftelsen kursverksamheten vid Uppsala universitet, SE



involved areas

URBAN DIVERSITY

“We’re proud of our network of people – they continue to create new opportunities for migrants within society and the labour market – even after the end of the project.”

Project webpage

Project on Keep



In 2016, project partners in Ljubljana, Slovenia and Graz, Austria began discussing how to meet the needs of new migrant communities arriving in each city. Migrant entrepreneurship and creativity were identified as two key areas for better supporting integration – and so with the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts as lead partner, the Urban Diversity project got to work.

The project established a network of educational, municipal, research and regional institutions to work with local NGOs and grassroots movements to open up local spaces and opportunities to migrant entrepreneurs. Co-working spaces, technology parks, creative, educational and research institutes, galleries, streets, parks and municipal halls became important sites for established migrant entrepreneurs, and asylum seekers and refugees who wanted to explore starting a business.

The project successfully educated Ljubljana and Graz city officials on issues relating to migrant entrepreneurship. It also created pitching opportunities in co-working spaces, creative ‘vouchers’ to facilitate young migrants developing business ideas, diversity study tours, and facilitated involvement of target communities in Design Month events. It also launched multiple initiatives for migrant and non-migrant entrepreneurs within the publicly prominent spaces of Trubarjeva Street, Ljubljana and Griesplatz, Graz.

Consistent attendance of migrant entrepreneurs and families on creative workshops at Schloss St. Martin, Graz, was recorded, while guidelines to help entrepreneurs open and conduct business offered invaluable support.

Overall, stakeholders responsible for the inclusion and support of migrant entrepreneurship gained knowledge and developed strong collaboration between the cities. With an increased presence of migrant entrepreneurs in the city hubs, and established relationships between partners long after the close of the project, there is plenty of scope for future work together.



Area

- Austria - Styria
- Slovenia - Western Slovenia

Budget

Total Budget: 839 934 €

EU Contribution: 713 944 €



involved areas



Partners

4

- Znanstveno raziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts) (Lead partner), ZRC SAZU, SI
- Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region, SI
- Abteilung für Wirtschafts- und Tourismusentwicklung der Stadt Graz (The Department for Development of Economy and Tourism of the City of Graz), AWTSG, AT
- Land Steiermark, Abteilung 10, Bildungshaus Schloss St. Martin, AT

WOHEALTH

Empowering Immigrant Women in
Supporting Their Family's Health and
Wellbeing

**“The project is ongoing,
but we are happy that
groups of immigrant
women have had a
chance to participate in
empowering, informative
workshops and study
groups.”**

Project on Keep



Migrants communicating with healthcare professionals in their adopted country can face all sorts of challenges; from language barriers to cultural differences. WOHEALTH, a partnership between Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland, and Flyktingmedicinskt Centrum, Sweden, seeks to resolve these barriers, which commonly affect migrant women using healthcare services for themselves or their families.

WOHEALTH is striving to increase health and wellbeing standards for these communities through the development of a training programme and easy-to-read health communication materials.

In Finland, partners are working with local migrant women who have lived in their adopted country for many years, to create a peer support system for newer arrivals to the country. The scheme pairs volunteers from migrant backgrounds with newly-arrived women with similar needs and backgrounds.

Meanwhile in Sweden, a multicultural health advisor undertaking WOHEALTH's training programme will be equipped with the proper tools to help immigrant women within the healthcare system by taking care of their wellbeing.

Turku University of Applied Sciences's history of working with multicultural communities, and Sweden's advanced practice working with women and families from migrant communities formed the basis of the partnership. Because of its vast experience integrating immigrant women into society, Sateenkaarikoto, a Turku-based NGO, was also informally involved.

Although the project is still in progress – it is due to finish in spring 2021 – early signs show that immigrant women who have participated in workshops and study groups enjoyed and benefited from the experience, while their feedback has been useful to the direction of the project itself.



Area

- Finland - Etelä-Suomi
- Sweden - Östra Mellansverige

Budget

Total Budget: 265 833 €

EU Contribution: 199 375 €

Partners

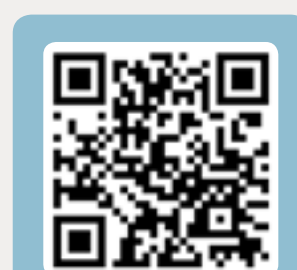
- Turku University of Applied Sciences (Lead partner), FI
- Region Östergötland, Flyktingmedicinskt centrum, SE

involved areas

“Bringing together researchers, statisticians and local decision-makers with diverse perspectives on the same theme made for an overall richer cooperation.”

[Project webpage](#)

[Project on Keep](#)

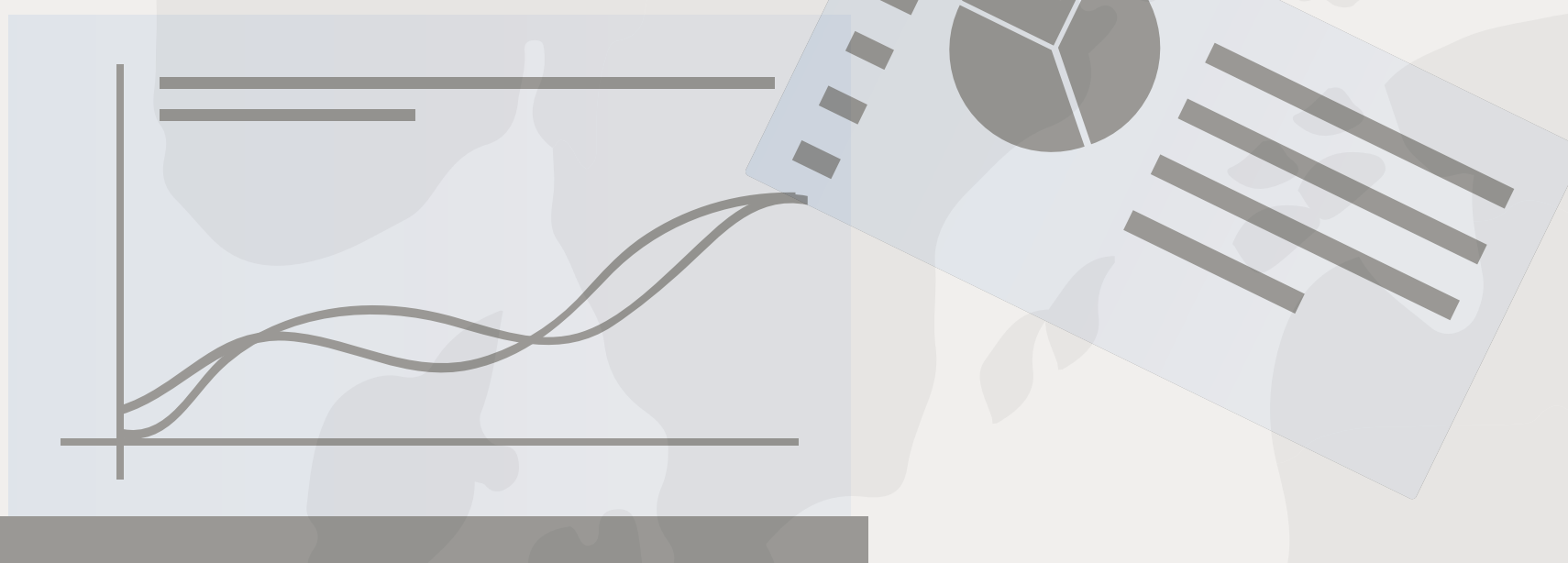


Migration policy tends to be made at the national level. But without localised data about migration patterns, local authorities are often left in the dark about their own situation. These twin challenges led to the creation of YOUMIG, a project with 19 partners working across the Danube region between 2017-19. The project, which focussed on youth migration (ages 15-34) saw statisticians and academic organisations analyse how youth migration affects local communities across seven cities; Burgas, Bulgaria; Graz, Austria; Maribor, Slovenia; Kanjiža, Serbia; Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania; Szeged, Hungary; and Bratislava-Rača, Slovakia.

Each city was given the chance to test an idea that stakeholders expected to be helpful in managing youth migration locally. Using The Good Practices Guide, which offered examples of success stories from elsewhere, YOUMIG partners each designed their pilot action.

Some of the ideas involved a virtual business incubator in Burgas, a mentoring programme for migrant girls choosing technical careers in Graz, co-working spaces and programmes boosting creative entrepreneurship in Maribor and Kanjiža, an online platform for returnees in Sfântu Gheorghe, multicultural training for preschool teachers in Szeged, and language courses for migrant communities in Bratislava-Rača.

By the end of the project, YOUMIG partners had together created well-targeted, high-quality solutions at a municipal level, as well as invaluable data about local youth migration. This spells a bright future for the lives of young, mobile people in the Danube region, and for the city-level professionals who now have the appropriate tools to understand and work with them.



Area

- Austria - Styria state
- Bulgaria - Southeastern planning region
- Germany - Karlsruhe government region
- Hungary - Csongrád-Csanád county
- Romania - Southeastern region
- Serbia - Vojvodina region
- Slovakia - Bratislava oblast
- Slovenia - Eastern Slovenia macroregion

Budget

Total Budget: 2 574 202 €

EU Contribution: 2 311 025 €

involved areas

Partners

16

- Hungarian Central Statistical Office (Lead partner), HU
- National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria, BG
- University of Vienna, AT
- Municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe, RO
- INFOSTAT - Institute of Informatics and Statistics, SK
- Maribor Development Agency, SI
- Institute for Economic Research, SI
- Burgas Municipality, BG
- Municipality of the City District of Bratislava- Rača, SK
- Municipality of Szeged, HU
- Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, DE
- Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, RS
- Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities, RO
- City of Graz, AT
- Institute of Social Sciences, RS
- Municipality of Kanjiža, RS

CREDITS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all the Interreg programmes and projects which provided us with data, information and illustrations. Your cooperation is very much appreciated!

PROGRAMMES

Interreg Alpine Space: Stefania Amorosi and Clotilde Mahé

Interreg Central Europe: Chiara Casarella

Interreg Danube transnational programme

Interreg Adrion

Interreg Italy – Austria: Lisa Stuefer and Petra Hedwig Amalia Caldonazzi

Interreg 2 Seas: Céline Van Den Abeele

Interreg Italy – Switzerland: Elena Romanelli

Interreg Slovenia – Austria

Interreg Finland - Estonia - Latvia - Sweden (Central Baltic): Tiina Keinänen

Interreg Germany/Bavaria - Czech Republic

Interreg Greece – Cyprus: Vaya Tsiagande

PROJECTS

Youmig: Marcell Kovács and Zoltán Csányi

WoHealth project: Sirppa Kinos

TELL project: Sirkka Komulainen

Urban Diversity project: Jure Gombac

SIREE project: Elaine King

SiforREF project: Pamela Pasian

See me in: Maria Cristina Collini

REGI project: Kaisa Jokela and Anita Narbro

PlurAlps project: Robert Moosbrugger and Aurelia Ullrich-Schneider

Paionas project: Ioannis Apostolopoulos, Lt Cdr HCG Andreas Lykoudis

MinPlus Project: Elena Romanelli and Massimo dell’Oro

Mintegration: Mgr. Jan Pěchota

FEM: Liia Urman

EUMINT: Anna-Kira Pirhofer, MSc, Roberta Madda, Zeqo Erjon and Laura Dellagiacoma

DRIM: Nataša Rogelja and Martina Bofulin

BEGIN: Jasmina Nikic and Greti Manfreda

Arrival region: Tim Leibert

ARC project: Heidi Ovaska

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editorial team:

Besiana Ninka, Ivano Magazzu and Guillaume Terrien, with the contribution of Stevie Mackenzie-Smith.

Publisher:

Interact Programme

Graphic design:

ThisProjectWorks – www.thisprojectworks.com

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This publication related to the Interact’s Thematic Network “Interreg response to migration-related challenges” is financed by European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Interact Programme 2014-2020.

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