ADULT MIGRANT
INTEGRATION EXPERTS

ADmiRe

Erasmus+

Contents

Executive summary

Short overview of the ADmiRE Migrant Integration Expert PROJECT

The ADmiRE (Adults Migrant Integration Experts) project relies on the design, development and testing of a new bespoke Migrant Integration Expert curriculum for those working in adult and community education settings. Immigration and the social integration of new ethnic minorities have become important policy challenges in all EU countries in recent years. As we are entering a new phase where the demand for migrant workers is growing as a result of our declining and ageing populations there is an increasing recognition of the need to achieve better integration of migrants in our societies. While economic integration is easily measured, where social, civic and political integration is concerned, apart from voter participation figures, the levels of integration are more difficult to assess.

To achieve this objective, all stakeholders needed to work together to increase migrants' integration potential and train adult experts to use advanced educational content to offer them. In fact, new pedagogic approaches are the key elements to facilitate extended expertise of trainers to serve migrant integration through basic and deep political and civic knowledge. Education must address today's issues and challenges with appropriate new learning partnerships and learning tools that are flexible, adaptable and easily updated and upgraded.

Since 2009 migrant flows to the countries participating in this project, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Spain, France and Cyprus, and the number of citizenship acquisitions in the same period, has increased significantly. While it is accepted that integration for many is a long-term process the figures clearly demonstrate the scale of disconnect between actual numbers of migrants arriving over the period and the numbers achieving citizenship which is a key benchmark of civic and political integration and assimilation). There needs to be emphasis on the integration processes of the migrant communities into civic and political life (OECD, 2018), highlighting the fact that "promoting immigrants' access to rights and fulfilment of their responsibilities as citizens allows for the creation of a closer connection with the host societies.

Although forms of participation and policies on citizenship are varied, Member States' policies on participation remain insufficient. In order to further immigrants' integration, their participation in the democratic process must be supported.

Government led supports of immigrant civil society can only achieve a limited increase in civic participation and integration. There are a number of key challenges facing new immigrants in host countries that government led initiatives to date have failed to overcome, as follows:

INFORMATION GAP – migrants experience a lack of knowledge about their new political system and are often unaware of the political processes within their new country or even that they are eligible to vote and immigrant voter campaigns, civic and language education or even direct government assistance to immigrant organizations have achieved minimal impacts (Bloemraad 2010);

 NETWORK GAP - while immigrant organizations may help to build or solidify networks within immigrant communities they do little to tie these organizations to groups outside of the immigrant communities (Strömblad

and Adman 2012) and while immigrant civil society groups create "bonding" social capital within their own communities they fail to achieve "bridging" social capital with the host community (Putnam 2007);

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION - immigrant integration focuses on the mediating role that organizations play in linking the immigrant community to politics. The term "community" is in this context somewhat of a misnomer as there are significant differences between and within immigrant national groups due to what is commonly dubbed the "home country effect" which refers to the political socialization process that immigrants experience before they arrive in their new country (Simpson Bueker 2005);

VOTER MOTIVATION – it is widely accepted that people are more likely to vote when they have a large stake in a given policy outcome (Rosenstone and Hansen 2003; Campbell 2010) however, as voter registration campaigns led by government are necessarily non-partisan they have little impact as people are generally motivated to participate in politics for explicitly political reasons.

This is why the ADmiRE project has developed a multi-layered training programme specifically designed for its target population. It is a continuous professional development training course, offered as an 'ab initio' train-the-trainer course to members of the migrant communities in each partner country in an effort to enhance the supports for civic and political integration within the migrant communities themselves. The successful integration of host and migrant communities is one of the key challenges facing political leaders in all Member States and the proposed transnational working environment provides a perfect platform for the exchange of best practices, knowledge sharing and policy learning.

The goal of this document is to capture the policy learning from the project experiences of partners and identifies critical steps moving forward.

The key issues that the proposed scientific paper will address are:

•   the essential role that appropriate initial and in-service training for adult experts education staff plays in achieving quality learning outcomes especially when working with groups on the margins of provision like migrants where specific civic and political basics are essential to integration;

•   the potential of experts to contribute to society and migrant's civic integration in Europe if appropriate supports are put in place. ADMIRE addresses that challenge by enhancing migrants' interpersonal skills in order to empower them to have access to employment, build networks and to accomplish active citizenship.

Finally, this document offers to make recommendations for policy change on the basis of the experience collected in the 6 European countries involved in the ADMIRE partnership.

What is the ADmiRE project?

The ADMIRE project [Project number: 2017-1-EL01-KA204-036117] is funded by the EU through the Erasmus+ Programme, Key action 2 (Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices): Strategic Partnership for Adult Education.

The ADMIRE consortium is composed by 6 partners from 6 Member States:

- UOP, UNIVERSITY OF THE PELOPONNESE (GREECE- coordinator)
- OXFAM Italia Intercultura Società Cooperativa Sociale di tipo A Onlus (ITALY)
- MEATH PARTNERSHIP, MEATH COMMUNITY RURAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP LIMITED (IRELAND)
- ELC, European Learning Centre (SPAIN)
- CDESAP, Coopérative pour le Développement de l'Emploi dans les Services A la Personne en Corse (France)
- CARDET, Centre for advancement of Research and Development in educational technology LTD (Cyprus)

The ADMIRE project partners have developed the following tools and resources during the 25 months of its implementation:

• a bespoke, training programme for adults to develop their skills and enrich their educational content as adult migrant education professionals

• a digital competence toolkit that develops all the necessary IT skills to conduct desk and field based research and to analyse and present research findings

• a comprehensive in-service training programme for adult educators to support them in delivering the new curriculum resources

• an e-learning portal and an e-observatory to facilitate the training of all project target groups: https://www.ADmiREproject.com/en/

What has the project achieved?

-Migrant Integration Expert Curriculum –

The design, development and testing of the bespoke Migrant Integration Expert curriculum for adult education professionals, other front-line practitioners working with migrant communities and members of the migrant communities themselves. This development work aims to train front-line professionals to harness the potential of readily available and accessible technology platforms and put these technologies to work to support migrant integration objectives.

Project partners have conducted a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) with their local working group to identify the key elements to be addressed in the Migrant Integration Experts curriculum. The coordinator provided a few indicative questions as a guideline as well as some further guidelines regarding the structure of the report. Two sessions of communication with local migrant communities provided ample information. The report combining scores and statistical information for each country from MIPEX with more insight and qualitative interpretation for each country based on country specific political, cultural and financial incidents. Based on the results of the local TNAs, UOP defined the key learning outcomes of the curriculum and the skills, knowledge and competences to be developed. UOP presented this Curriculum Framework at the partner meeting. The target group of the curriculum consists of both professionals and migrant community leaders. 12 professionals/leaders (from each of

the 6 countries, a total of 72) registered in the website and each engaged a minimum of 10 migrants (a total of 720). Meath Partnership lead the development of the learning manual and resources to build the skills, knowledge and competences required in the learning framework, with the support of UOP, Oxfam Italia, ELC and CDESAP. The learning manual and resources was available for external peer review and translated in all partners' languages. Then each partner piloted the Migrant Integration Expert curriculum in their own partner country.

In detail, the Curriculum consists of 5 Modules of 3 units each:

Module 1: Addressing the Network Gap

Unit 1 – Cultural Competence

Unit 2 – Intercultural Communication

Unit 3 – Using Psychographic Profiling Tools to Promote Community Development

Module 2: Political Socialisation

Unit 1 – Introduction to political socialisation

Unit 2 – Politics in my Home and Host Country

Unit 3 – European Migration Trends

Module 3: Empowering the Migrant Community

Unit 1 – Participatory Action Research

Unit 2 – Interpersonal Skills

Unit 3 – Campaigning, Advocacy and Lobbying

Module 4: Social Media and Civic Engagement

Unit 1 – Online communication and e-moderation

Unit 2 –The right platform for the right message: benefits of each social media platform

Unit 3 – Social Media as a tool for civic education

Module 5: Changing the Narrative on Social Media

Unit 1 – Understanding the Current Narrative

Unit 2 – Communication Rights & EU Law

Unit 3 – Planning a Social Media Campaign

-Digital Toolbox - A suite of sample media-rich resources that can be used to support integration objectives has been developed and presented in a Digital Toolbox. These include audio, visual, blog posts, etc. and are designed for use in group settings but also on the most common and popular social network or media sites.

A digital toolbox with a selection of useful resources to support migrant integration objectives is provided. Resources identified have been collated and categorized and addressed at some of the key issues that impact on migrant civic and political engagement and their wider integration into their new host community. Resources provided are useful both for members of the migrant communities but also for the migrant integration experts addressing basic issues like language learning and digital literacy as well as issues that are more pertinent to specific integration activities. 12 learning resources in each partner language is included in the toolbox.

Conducting research to identify best practices that have already been developed and revitalizing them for use as part of the digital toolbox makes good sense. There are very few on-line repositories with collections of materials that address single issues like migrant integration. Collating these materials and presenting them as valuable resource to the newly trained migrant integration experts makes significant economic sense and represents considerable value for money. The digital toolbox represents a minor innovation. Each country has contributed digital Resources with the following structure: *Name* of the resource, *Theme/topic* (Interculturalism; Communication, local language; Access to information; Fundamental rights; New technologies and online tools; Employability; Media Management; Political socialization; Political system; Integration of children), *Format* (book; Video; ppt), *Target group* (type of population; Gender; Age) *Group size* (individual; small group; large group), *Activity* (Description, Brainstorming) etc.

- Induction Training Programme -

The design, development, testing and implementation of an Induction Training programme to support adult education professionals to deliver the new blended learning Migrant Integration Expert curriculum. It has been developed in conjunction with the local working groups and comprises 8 hours of face-to-face instruction and 12 hours of on-line, self-directed learning.

The induction programme introduces the new curriculum and the logic behind the approach taken by the consortium. It also addresses the challenges that educators face with demands for education and training through a variety of on-line and alternative learning environments and endeavours to provide the supports necessary for those professionals working in non-conventional environments. It places a significant emphasis on underpinning the reputation, professionalism and standing of adult education staff especially where working in on-line,

interactive environments is concerned. The induction training programme comprises of 8 hours of classroom or workshop based instruction and 12 hours of self-directed learning.

-   On-line Observatory of Political Systems and E-learning Portal -

The design, development and testing of the e-learning portal to facilitate delivery of the training, elicited from the local working groups throughout the development process. The objectives of this observatory are to:

(1) present the snapshots of the political systems in each partner country that have been develop by partners to support a greater understanding and awareness of the political structures and mechanisms that pertain;

(2) provide instant access to a library of information resources identified by partners that might be useful to migrant integration experts in the course of their work with migrant communities;

(3) provide a range of on-line environments and forums where migrant integration experts and migrant communities might congregate, share experiences and support each other.

 The online observatory and the e-learning portal is regarded as an innovative output of the ADMIRE project for the following reasons:

(1) The online observatory is developed as a one-stop-shop information resource to raise awareness of the different local realities in each country. In the past, in partner countries, no such comprehensive and accessible information resource exists for migrant communities. Where online information services existed, often the language used was too technical for communities whose first language is not their host-country language. Therefore, when writing the text and identify the resources for inclusion on the observatory, partners ensured that all language used was accessible and easily understood for speakers of other languages.

(2) The observatory is Web 2.0 enabled and developed in all partner languages and both the observatory and the e-learning portal will be optimized for mobile access and will function equally well on laptop, tablet or smart-phone. This ensures that the resources can be accessed by all stakeholder and individuals, on-the-go and at a time that suits them. This is important when working with marginalised groups who may not have access to a laptop or PC, but who may have access to smart phones and devices.

(3) The e-learning portal is developed on cutting edge open source technology to allow for low cost maintenance and will incorporate a learner tracking mechanism to enable adult educators and migrant support workers to monitor the progress of learners through the various different resources provided. The inclusion of this learner tracking functionality represents a minor innovation.

The online observatory contains up-to-date information on the political systems in each partner country. This information is presented in a user-friendly, accessible format and has directly impact on the information gap which constitutes a great challenge which is faced by migrant communities when they move to their host country and are trying to access information on basic services and their rights. This observatory is populated with information and resources identified as essential by partners and informs migrant communities, as well as educators and support agencies working with the target group, ways to improve awareness and understanding of migrant rights. It also constitutes a review a best practice across the consortium countries and has allowed for sharing of best practice between practitioners in participating countries.

Why is ADMIRE a model for the promotion of Empowerment, Participation and Active Citizenship of all migrants?

Migration is a growing European - and global - reality, as a result of conflict, political and financial volatility and changes in the climate (Bempong et al, 2019). Certain European countries have a relatively recent experience concerning immigration, however it should be stressed that migration is not a new phenomenon for Europe. Migration has buttressed the economic growth of the European Union and has also contributed to the cultural diversity of the Europeans. Nowadays, most member states face migratory phenomena and realize the need to tackle integration challenges (EC, 2005). In that direction, there needs to be emphasis on the integration processes of the migrant communities into civic and political life (OECD, 2018).

A significant number of studies (Gesemann, 2006; Ouald Chaib, 2011 in Akua-Sakyiwah, 2016) on migration underline the significance of education in assisting migrants' integration. Education serves pluralism and broader societal aims (Murray, 2012 in Akua-Sakyiwah, 2016). As Korac (2003) highlights, the countries of the industrialized world face challenges in terms of facilitating the integration of the increasing number of refugees in the receiving societies. Even the different notions that illustrate the integration process – absorb, assimilate etc. – indicate the complexity and vagueness of the process (Robinson, 1998 in Korac, 2003). The term integration is used to describe the shift that takes place when different cultures co-exist in a society (Korac, 2003). Usually, steps towards integration involve access to reskilling and educational activities in order to boost employment opportunities and to promote community constructing. Without such actions, migrants will remain isolated – in certain cases even after receiving full citizenship rights.

However, in many countries there is still a lack of migrant integration activities, a shortage of state institutions to promote such activities, or even projects funded by external - and thus unsustainable - resources (Glytsos, 2012: 4). ADMIRE adopts new approaches on migrant integration efforts. The project acknowledges the need to holistically enhance the competences of those involved in the context - the adult education staff and the members of migrant communities - via a new continuous professional development training course, accompanied by an Induction Training Programme for adult educators, a Digital Toolbox with useful resources for migrants and an e-Observatory of Political Systems in six European countries. ADMIRE's Migrant Integration Expert Curriculum addresses gaps such as the lack of knowledge and participation on the civic and political life of the new countries and network gap between migrant organisations and local communities. The project's approach is that members of migrant communities are perhaps best placed to address the issue of civic and political engagement of migrants. Designing a training programme that supports them to acquire the key competences necessary to participate as Migrant Integration Experts represents a significant innovative approach that could release a considerable new, and cost effective, training asset to help address the issue of migrant integration. In many situations, migrants have become cultural mediators for migrant or ethnic minority groups, or even in global partnerships involving their home countries (Erel, 2010; Waters, 2006 in Morosanu, 2016)

Seeking - and achieving - integration implies reflecting on the different histories, backgrounds, traditions and finally respecting the basic values of the EU (EC, 2005). On the other hand, lack of integration mechanisms hinders migrants' empowerment, equality, antidiscrimination, solidarity, tolerance and active citizenship. In this context, placing strong emphasis on the promotion of empowerment, participation and active citizenship of all

migrants is essential. According to the European Commission (2005), a key component of this procedure is to establish migrants' grasp of the nature of the society they are joining. Therefore, the ADMIRE project supports McAuliffe's (2013) definition of culture as a broad definition enabling us to comprehend that it is possible to belong to many cultures at the same time.

Hence, a migrant integration expert should have a firm understanding of migrants' cultures in order to build relationships and promote a sense of community and foster integration. Our societies constantly change, therefore cultural competence and intercultural communication are at the forefront of the ADMIRE approach. Similarly, ADMIRE fosters research and analysis of the migration trends and the political socialization process in different countries of origin and also enhances the ability to design and develop an appropriate integration plan that reflects and encompasses prior political and social experiences of individual migrants.

It should be stressed that the lack of skills, appears to be a key factor limiting migrants' integration processes (OECD, 2018b). ADMIRE addresses that challenge by enhancing migrants' interpersonal skills in order to empower them to have access to employment, build networks and to accomplish active citizenship. The EC (2005) underlines the significance of employment, as a vital aspect of integration and civic participation. In a similar direction, the role of social media is critical. ADMIRE provides training for managing social media. In many countries significant political capital has been gained by people presenting negative images of migrant communities and proposing radical changes to migration policy, contradicting the whole historical experience of Europe - which was always based on trade, interchange and mobility between regions and peoples. ADMIRE

supports the integration experts' ability to empower migrant communities to change the narrative on social media and select a platform that serves their aims.

When it comes to migration, the Internet re-contextualizes the traditional concepts of migrant networks and migration in general. Social media platforms provide the opportunity to more efficiently integrate migrants and engage diaspora. Social media can be a really beneficial tool for promoting migrant integration. Social media makes migration much easier; migrants receive the support - psychological boost - they need to strengthen their links in the host countries through broadening their networks in their offline worlds. Online networks' usual purpose is to tackle everyday issues and improve migrants' well-being. They can be survival toolkits for those that are still in the process of migration by providing navigation instructions or recommended routes - and thus helping migrants avoid - keep away from smugglers (see Komito, 2011; Meeteren & Pereira, 2016).

It is of importance to emphasize the vital role that social media play in migrants' occupational attainment (Lancee, 2012 in Morosanu, 2016). Such platforms achieve migrants' bonding and bridging processes. To be specific, there is a distinction when it comes to terminology, where bonding refers to homogenous ethnic connections and bridging to heterogeneous ones (Putnam, 2000 in Morosanu, 2016). The literature suggests that bridging ties – with the receiving societies – has positive effects for the area and for migrants' occupational opportunities (Lancee, 2012 in Morosanu, 2016) – although further research needs to be conducted. Many scholars of the field (Ryan, 2011 in Morosanu, 2016) suggest that there is a lot of room for research that will shed light in migrants' different cultures, mobilization and career progress. In that direction, a significant aspect of the

curriculum seeks to tackle the social media challenge for the integration experts and the migrant community members.

Sustainability of the ADmiRE methodology and training

The ADmiRE project is suitable for adaptable implementation in many countries with minimal requirements. It does not require extensive technical expertise, thus ensuring considerable access. Furthermore, migrant policy issues are going to be in the forefront of social and education policy measures which makes it easier to secure funding and dissemination.

Why should Policy makers consider the ADmiRE approach?

Migrants' Integration is a dynamic and constant two-way process between migrants and the receiving end (EU, 2018). If one considers the rise of migrant flows in the last decade, it is easy to realise the potential challenges. Policy makers within the EU emphasise the importance of achieving effective integration, in order to gain economic and social benefits for the countries where migrants settle (ibid). In that process, education and skills development is the key for host communities and for migrants, who - unfortunately - often have limited access to educational opportunities (UNDP, 2009).

Migrant integration is not new in the European policy agenda. However, it is on the adult education sector and migrant support NGOs where the responsibility for integration lies. While adult education is defined by its

versatility, adaptability and widespread accessibility, it is often regarded as the poor relation where investment in, and availability of, continuous professional development training supports for people working in the sector is concerned. Apart from those involved in the sector, the ADMIRE project suggests that men and women drawn from the migrant communities themselves, if appropriately trained and supported, can be a considerable asset to support the work of existing service providers to foster the integration of migrant communities in civic and political life. With this in mind, any new intervention should involve members of the migrant community. Members of migrant communities are perhaps best placed to address the issue of civic and political engagement of migrants.

Skilled migration is one significant aspect of economic prosperity and innovation (Bailey and Mulder, 2017). The important growth in the past 30 years has raised the need for highly skilled transnational migrants – especially in areas where there is a shortage of skilled workers. Especially in the European context, where ageing is a growing reality, there is a clear dependency on foreigners – especially skilled personnel for low - and middle -income countries to enter the globalized market (Lowell and Findlay, 2001 in Bailey & Mulder, 2017). If one considers the constantly altering worldwide scenarios when it comes to demography, politics and economy, then there needs to be emphasis on designing and developing a competency enhancing approach for migrants – given the diversity that exists within the migrant communities.

Designing a training programme that supports them to acquire the key competences necessary to participate as Migrant Integration Experts, represents a significant innovative approach that could release a considerable new, and cost effective, training asset to help address the issue of migrant integration. Adult educators provide essential services in a wide range of work settings and concerning the widest range of educational topics. They are

often the first line of defence where tackling social issues is concerned and adult education staff are often placed in the firing line without adequate training and support. Such a programme represents a valuable resource for policy makers aiming to design and develop policies that foster and facilitate the long-term social and economic integration of migrants. The lessons learned from the project could lay the foundations for more effective future policies that shall not perceive migrants as a homogenous group (see also OECD, 2018), but instead should be customised to the challenges, the backgrounds and previous experiences of the individual migrant.

Furthermore, Penninx et al (2008) underline the need to introduce new policy perspectives that shall also involve the societal systems into which the phenomenon of migration and the immigrants themselves are to be integrated. Usually, the effects of migration on societal structures are more researched from a sending-country perspective, than the societal effects of migrants' arrivals on the receiving ones (Black et al. 2006). On the contrary, the social dynamics of integration and social cohesion are embedded in the holistic structure of the ADMIRE project, thus providing insights that should inform policies that promote inclusive growth and social cohesion - equally important for both migrant and native populations.

Additionally, a key issue that this policy paper raises, is the essential role that appropriate continuous professional development for adult education staff plays in achieving quality learning outcomes - especially in areas like migrant integration, where specific skill sets are essential. According to Albert and Hallowel (2013), adults are deeply interested in learning collaboratively, where the emphasis is on focusing on solutions for real-life problems. Similarly, Knowles et al. (2011), suggest that continuous professional development programmes should concentrate on learners and implement andragogic principles, which foster reflections and place emphasis on the

process, rather than plain authoritative transmission of knowledge. Andragogy acknowledges that adults carry prior experience, focus on goals and need learning to be relevant to real life/work challenges (ibid). ADMIRE adopts the andragogic principles and also constructivism, which perceives learning as an active, ongoing process and that knowledge is constructed through combining previous and new experiences (Libin et al, 2010).

Finally, as part of the ADMIRE project, the experiences and challenges of those involved in the project were examined in order to offer valuable insights for future efforts. First, adult educators acknowledge the significance of continuous professional development for migrants' integration - it should be one of the EU's main priorities. Migrants on the other hand referred to the challenges they faced and the reasons behind their choice to migrate. Concluding, the partners emphasised on the methodological challenges of the Migrant Integration Expert curriculum - potential issues with the way best practices are used in different contexts - and raised the significant benefits of the ADMIRE approach.

Conclusions and recommendations

The ADMIRE project has provided valuable information and policy-related guidelines for further consideration and immediate implementation.

Initially, it has become clear that any project and/or policy reform should take it into consideration the political and cultural context in each country. As the migrant landscape varies extensively and disproportionately through Europe, policy guidelines need to adhere to this reality. Countries like Greece face a heavy portion of the incoming migrant population thus needing to create a more hands-on and theme-specific curriculum. This may not be the case in other countries where the emphasis could be on more theoretical elements.

Furthermore, the skills provided in the curriculum and in any other training medium have to be constantly updated and enriched to reflect contemporary political developments. Migration is a complex European policy issue which evolves constantly mirroring political changes in areas such as the Middle East and Africa. Thus context adjustments are in order both in terms of the material and the teaching needs as well in terms of evolving areas covered like human rights, religious issues, political fluctuations in Europe, etc.

Finally, any policy-induced intervention has to have a bottom-up approach. Thus, communication and constant dialogue at any level (mostly grassroots) is essential. Policymakers ought to have a reliable feeling of the situation on the field in order to promote the optimal solution. This also assures that the timing of any policy initiative is the appropriate one, an acceptable level of consensus has been reached and policy implementation does not falter which will cause further delays and regressions.

Taking everything into account, policy changes in the migration landscape could face many hurdles. The stakeholders involved should exercise caution and constant communication in order to achieve the utmost

positive effect, keeping in mind that sometimes less is more, i.e. achieving certain, few things could be better than planning for grandiose reforms.

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