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**NEWCOMERS@WORK: STRENGTHENING
THE EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUNG
REFUGEE AND MIGRANT NEETS**

**Work Package 2: Development of the
Newcomers@Work Curriculum**

Needs Analysis - National Report

GREECE

Athens Lifelong Learning Institute

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More information about the **Newcomers@Work** project can be found at:

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2022-1-PL01-KA220-YOU-000089667>

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REPORT SUMMARY

Facilitating labour market entry for migrants and refugees can benefit Greece's economy by strengthening welfare systems and ensuring a sustainable workforce. However, integration challenges persist, and unemployment rates remain high among specific demographics. Efforts are being made to support labour market integration through initiatives such as job assistance and vocational training. Greece has implemented temporary protection measures for refugees from Ukraine and has seen an influx of Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian refugees.

Key labour market programs and policies in Greece aim to tackle youth unemployment and inactivity. The Ministry of Migration and Asylum oversees the implementation of social integration policies for non-native individuals. Migrant Integration Centres provide services and support, while intercultural mediators bridge communication gaps. Municipalities, NGOs, and community groups play important roles in local integration efforts. The National Integration Strategy emphasizes facilitating labour market entry, recognizing skills, promoting entrepreneurship, and improving employment opportunities. Efforts are also made to support entrepreneurship among migrants and refugees. Data shows that migrant individuals in Greece are engaged in entrepreneurship, with various ethnic groups involved.

The main obstacle for migrants in accessing training and employment opportunities in Greece is the language barrier. Interpreters and cultural mediators are essential but in short supply, making it challenging to manage situations effectively. Language instruction resources for migrants are available but may not reach the intended beneficiaries or be provided in their preferred mother tongue. Refugees face difficulties in finding employment due to lack of certifications, Greek language proficiency, job skills, and the challenges of translating qualifications obtained overseas. Additional barriers include age, disabilities, illnesses, gender, homelessness, and the exclusion from social protection measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Administrative issues and negative attitudes towards refugees also hinder their employment. Greece struggles with aligning skills with the labour market, high overqualification rates, and a focus on low-skilled sectors. The lack of information on foreign individuals' skills and qualifications makes it difficult to implement targeted employment programs, emphasizing the need for alternative routes to validate skills and recognize qualifications.



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PART 1: DESKTOP RESEARCH ON NEWCOMERS' CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES

Section 1: National context

Getting a job is an essential part of integrating into a new country as it enables participation in the economic and social aspects of life there. Making it easier for migrants, asylum seekers, and those who receive international protection to enter the labour market could have positive effects on the economy by enhancing the welfare system, insurance system, and the sustainability of the workforce. A crucial aspect is to ensure that there is a good match between the skills and knowledge of workers who have lawfully moved to the country for work, as well as those who are seeking protection, and the demands of the job market in terms of vocations and abilities. This is a particularly important factor that requires support and strengthening (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2022).

Greece is not considered by recent migrants and refugees their ultimate destination. The majority of migrants from Afghanistan (58%) and Syria (65%) have plans to relocate to another European country, with Germany, Sweden, and the UK being the most common choices. The perception of Greece as a temporary stop rather than a desired long-term destination poses a significant obstacle to the integration of recent migrants into society and the labour market (Kapsalis, 2022).

General labour market characteristics

Greece's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) volume increased by 7.7% in 2021 compared to 2020, while the eurozone saw a 4.6% increase. During the same period, the number of employed individuals was 4,053,275, with 617,431 jobseekers. The unemployment rate was 13.2%, slightly higher than the previous quarter but significantly lower than the same quarter the previous year. Employment decreased by 1.6% compared to the previous quarter but increased by 4.5% compared to the same quarter of the previous year. The highest unemployment rates were among women, individuals aged up to 24 years, and those with limited education. The majority of employees worked in the services and sales sectors, while part-time employment and temporary employment rates showed mixed trends. Most businesses in Greece are small-scale, with a majority having no more than five employees. According to the mentioned data for 2021, the services and sales sectors, along with professionals, have the highest employment numbers. The sectors experiencing growth and witnessing a significant increase in employees include processing, transport, storage, public administration, and education. The tourism sector also offers a substantial number of job opportunities (European Commission, n.d.).

Labour market of Youth / Migrants / NEETs– including statistics

All non-Greek individuals who legally reside in Greece, as per Law (4375/2016), have the same rights as Greek citizens. From April 2016, this also includes international protection beneficiaries who are allowed to work and run their own businesses, like Greek nationals, provided they have a valid residency permit. If a migrant loses their job, they can register with the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) to receive unemployment benefits for a certain period, access vocational training programs, and receive help finding a new job. To register as unemployed, migrants need to provide specific documentation to



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OAED. Seasonal workers covered by social insurance are also entitled to a special allowance (European Commission, 2016).

Refugees, those who receive subsidiary protection, and individuals with humanitarian residency permits have the right to access social security and healthcare under social rights provisions. With regards to welfare income transfers, the eligibility requirements for the pilot project "guaranteed minimum income", as set out in Joint Ministerial Decision No. 39892/GD1.2 /7.11.2014, includes having a suitable residency permit, in addition to meeting the income criteria. This applies to refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, individuals with humanitarian status, and even stateless persons (European Commission, 2016).

The Public Employment Services (PES) have been unable to play a significant role in integrating asylum seekers and refugees into the labour market due to the economic and social crisis. Nevertheless, other entities such as NGOs, international organizations, public authorities, municipal authorities, and private initiatives have provided support in terms of labour market services for these individuals (European Commission, 2016).

News reports suggest that several refugee centres, including Agioi Anargiroi, Arsis Refugees Shelter, Makrinitza, and Agria Volos, provide assistance with job searching, counselling, and work permit applications. In addition, a range of organizations, from international and civil society groups to municipal authorities, have taken steps to support vocational education and training for refugees and asylum seekers. Some of the most notable organizations include the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED), SolidarityNow, NGO Praxis, EEA Grants, the Municipality of Athens, NGO Metadrasi, and the Norwegian Embassy. These groups have provided training sessions, counselling, online job search resources, workshops, seminars, and networking opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers (European Commission, 2016).

Immigrants in Greece rely heavily on the agricultural sector for work and income. To support the employment of international protection beneficiaries in this sector, the Ministry of Migration Policy, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, and the Ministry of Labour, Social Security, and Social Solidarity work together. This initiative includes hiring land workers from neighbouring countries and providing employment in processing services. The goal is to improve the livelihoods of international protection beneficiaries and facilitate their integration into Greek society, while also supporting local agricultural cooperatives by providing temporary workers from other countries to meet their seasonal demands (European Commission, 2016).

Migrants also have the opportunity to find work in the seasonal sector, which is one of the most common types of employment contracts for this population. If seasonal workers are covered by IKA (Social Security Institute) and work in certain occupations such as construction, forestry, tobacco, or tourism, they are entitled to a special allowance. However, most of these jobs are part-time and only last for a limited amount of time (European Commission, 2016).

In 2018, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe reported that access to the labour market in Greece was greatly limited due to economic circumstances, a high unemployment rate, competition with Greek-speaking workers, and difficulties in obtaining necessary documents, which may lead to undeclared work. Although the unemployment rate in Greece decreased from 16.8% in 2019 to 16.2% in 2020, young people under the age of 29 faced significant challenges in finding employment. The unemployment rate for those aged 25-29 was 29.6%, 34.3% for the age group 20-24, and 44.7% for the age



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group 15-19. Women experienced an unemployment rate of 19.9%, while men had a rate of 13.3% (Greek Council for Refugees, 2021).

The rate of NEETs in Greece for young individuals aged 15-24 was 17.4%, as reported by Eurofound in 2012 and 16.9% according to the Absents Barometer Greek study in 2013. Eurostat data shows a significant increase of 54.7% in the NEETs rate for Greece from 2008 to 2011 among individuals aged 15-29. There is little information considering NEETs with a migrant background (NETnotNEET, 2015). According to OECD statistics from 2021, the rate of NEETs in Greece was 4.1% (of the total population of that age range) for those aged 15-19 and 24.2% for those aged 20-24. For the 15-19, the men were 5.8% (of the total men population of that age range in Greece) and women 2.5%, while for the 20-24 age group considering men the percentage was 22.9% (of the total men population of that age range) and women were 25% (OECD, 2023). Obtaining accurate data on the population of young migrants is challenging due to various constraints. These individuals are highly mobile, often not staying in a country long enough to be included in surveys or lacking stable accommodation that allows for data collection (Eurofound, 2016). Statistics on NEETs in Greece in 2022 may be found in the following table:

Young people (aged 15–29) neither in employment nor in education and training, by sex and age, 2022 (%)

	Total				Men				Women			
	15-29 years	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	15-29 years	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	15-29 years	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years
EU	11.7	5.8	13.3	15.7	10.5	6.1	12.9	12.2	13.1	5.5	13.8	19.3
Belgium	9.2	3.0	10.0	14.1	9.3	3.3	11.7	12.7	9.1	2.7	8.3	15.6
Bulgaria	15.1	8.3	17.0	19.9	12.9	7.5	16.1	15.2	17.4	9.2	17.9	24.7
Czechia	11.4	6.0	10.2	17.4	6.1	6.1	7.3	5.0	17.1	6.0	13.2	30.7
Denmark	7.9	3.6	9.6	10.0	7.6	3.9	8.9	9.5	8.3	3.3	10.2	10.6
Germany	8.6	4.6	8.6	11.8	7.1	4.4	7.9	8.5	10.2	4.9	9.4	15.3
Estonia (*)	10.6	6.8	15.0	10.3	11.9	8.4	19.3	9.1	9.2	5.3	10.6	11.5
Ireland (*)	8.7	3.3	10.6	12.8	7.8	3.1	9.3	11.4	9.7	3.6	11.8	14.2
Greece	15.4	4.2	18.9	24.0	14.1	4.5	17.3	20.9	16.6	3.9	20.4	27.7
Spain	12.7	6.6	14.5	17.1	12.1	7.1	14.2	15.3	13.3	6.1	14.8	18.9
France	12.0	5.7	14.9	16.1	11.9	6.6	15.8	13.8	12.1	4.7	13.9	18.3
Croatia (*)	13.3	8.7	14.7	15.9	11.5	9.6	14.5	10.2	15.1	7.9	14.9	21.7
Italy	19.0	10.1	21.5	25.2	17.7	10.8	21.6	20.4	20.5	9.4	21.3	30.2
Cyprus (*)	14.7	7.6	17.4	17.0	12.3	6.4	15.1	13.7	17.0	8.7	19.5	20.2
Latvia (*)	11.3	3.0	15.0	16.5	11.0	:	16.4	13.8	11.6	:	13.6	19.3
Lithuania (*)	10.7	5.8	13.3	12.8	9.6	6.5	13.6	8.6	11.8	5.1	13.0	17.2
Luxembourg (*)	7.4	5.0	8.9	7.9	7.9	6.2	9.3	8.1	6.9	3.7	8.6	7.8
Hungary	10.8	5.5	14.2	12.2	8.3	4.9	11.9	8.1	13.3	6.1	16.6	16.5
Malta (*)	7.2	6.3	7.7	7.3	7.0	5.8	9.8	5.9	7.3	6.8	5.3	9.0
Netherlands	4.2	1.6	3.9	6.8	3.8	1.4	4.0	5.7	4.6	1.8	3.8	8.0
Austria	9.1	6.5	9.5	10.6	8.5	6.5	9.7	9.0	9.6	6.4	9.2	12.3
Poland	10.9	3.5	12.5	15.5	8.2	3.6	11.3	9.5	13.6	3.4	13.8	21.8
Portugal (*)	8.4	3.0	9.9	12.1	8.2	3.2	10.3	10.9	8.6	2.9	9.5	13.2
Romania	19.8	11.3	24.0	24.6	14.5	11.2	17.5	14.9	25.4	11.5	30.8	34.6
Slovenia (*)	8.5	9.8	7.2	8.8	7.3	9.2	6.5	6.5	9.9	10.4	8.0	11.5
Slovakia (*)	12.3	5.7	13.3	16.8	10.8	6.5	13.5	11.9	13.9	4.8	13.2	21.8
Finland	9.5	4.5	11.0	12.6	10.3	5.3	11.9	13.0	8.8	3.7	10.1	12.2
Sweden	5.7	2.5	7.4	6.9	5.4	2.9	7.2	6.0	5.9	2.2	7.6	7.9
Iceland (*)	5.4	3.0	4.9	7.3	5.5	:	5.4	5.9	5.2	:	:	8.8
Norway (*)	6.8	5.1	7.7	7.5	6.8	5.5	7.8	7.2	6.8	4.8	7.5	7.8
Serbia	15.1	7.7	18.2	18.8	13.6	8.2	18.5	13.9	16.8	7.2	17.9	24.1

(*) Total 15-19: low reliability

(*) Men 15-19 years: low reliability.

(*) Women 15-19: low reliability

(*) Men and women 15-19 years: data not available due to too small sample size.

(*) Men and women 20-24: low reliability.

(*) Women 20-24: low reliability.

(*) Women 20-24: data not available due to too small sample size.

(*) 25-29: low reliability

(*) Men and women 25-29: low reliability.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_ifse_20)



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Key labour market programmes / policies aimed at these target groups to tackle youth unemployment and inactivity.

The most recent National Strategy for Social Integration was released in July 2019, building upon the earlier National Social Integration Strategy from 2013. The Directorate of Social Integration was created in 2016 through the enactment of law 4368, operating under the General Secretariat of Migration Policy within the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. Its primary objective is to oversee the implementation of social integration policies and strategies for non-native individuals legally living in Greece (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2022). It has implemented various programmes and projects for social integration:

In Greece, legislation has been put in place since 2016 to establish Migrant Integration Centers (M.I.C.) as branches of Community Centers in municipalities. These centers have specific goals, including providing information and specialized services to individuals from developing countries. These services encompass education and training, fostering collaborative networks, and organizing social integration activities that encourage social cohesion. The centers are located in ten regions across Greece and are staffed by qualified professionals such as intercultural mediators, social workers, legal advisors, and psychologists.

In 2019, the Ministry of Migration and Asylum issued an open invitation to multiple recognized organizations representing individuals from developing countries. The primary purpose of this initiative, overseen by the Directorate of Social Integration, is to document these organizations and assess the needs of recognized refugees and migrants. Additionally, the ministry aims to equip them with valuable information regarding their rights and responsibilities.

Intercultural mediators play a crucial role in bridging communication gaps between individuals or groups who encounter language barriers and cultural differences. Their main task is to provide relevant information to these individuals and groups. They offer their services through various channels, including Migrant Integration Centers (M.I.C.), Community Centers operated by municipalities, government entities, and non-governmental organizations. Community Centers, in particular, serve as initial reception facilities that offer comprehensive support to the residents of each municipality. Their services are designed to address poverty, social exclusion, and promote employment opportunities (Greek Organisation of Welfare Benefits and Social Solidarity, 2018).

In the case of countries such as Greece, the specific ideological views held by municipal political leaders can result in diverse political approaches at the local level regarding the reception of refugees and displaced populations (Sabchev, 2021). The absence of an established institutional framework for migrant integration means that the local administration plays a crucial role in determining the overall favorability of the local environment for the development of integration prospects (Anagnostou et al., 2016). Nonetheless, the ultimate outcome also relies on the engagement and collaboration of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and various community groups and activists at the local level (Turam, 2021).

The July 2019 National Integration Strategy includes provisions regarding the labour market, particularly in terms of actions related to registering and recognizing skills and qualifications. These measures aim to facilitate access to the labour market, with a specific focus on the agricultural sector, and promote entrepreneurship. However, there is a notable emphasis on reception and early integration, with insufficient coverage of long-



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term integration aspects (Koubou et al, 2020). Likewise, the draft National Integration Strategy, which focuses on the social integration of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, was put forward for consultation in January 2022. It acknowledges several notable objectives and measures, as well as the principles and recommendations outlined in the Integration Action Plan of the European Commission and recommendations from international organizations like the OECD. However, it appears that not all of these recommendations are fully embraced within the text of the Strategy (Greek Council for Refugees, 2022).

The National Strategy document highlights the importance of implementing intensive programs to facilitate direct entry into the labour market. Specifically, it outlines two significant actions. The first action involves the collaboration between the government, professional associations, and employer associations to develop an integrated program. This program would encompass guidance, skills assessment, validation of skills, job placements, as well as vocational and language training. The second action focuses on improving employment opportunities and access, based on the country's needs. This involves providing information about the Manpower Employment Organization (OAED), familiarizing individuals with social security procedures, offering information about employment alternatives (such as websites and employment agencies), assessing skills, and certifying qualifications obtained in third countries (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2022).

The Ministry of Migration Policy, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Economy and Development have concentrated their efforts on promoting entrepreneurship and small businesses for third-country residents. They have created legislation to address issues related to visa and residency permits for entrepreneurs, the process of establishing small businesses, and the possibility of joint funding from banks and government grants. Other initiatives are aimed at promoting women's entrepreneurship among migrants and refugees through social and solidarity economy firms, as well as connecting domestic and migrant entrepreneurs through public awareness campaigns. Entrepreneurship consultants, in collaboration with Chambers of Commerce, provide training programs for young third-country residents interested in starting a business (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2022).

Data obtained from the Hellenic Statistical Authority in 2011 indicate that in Greece, migrant individuals who are employers themselves comprised 2% of the population (2.3% being men and 1.8% being women). Among various ethnic groups, migrant women from Romania, Moldova, Bangladesh, and Pakistan were more likely to be employers compared to their male counterparts. The largest group of migrant employers in Greece consisted of individuals from China (11%), followed by Polish (3%) and Russians (2.5%). In Athens, in the period from January 2000 to September 2016, a total of 14,724 new businesses established by migrants were identified based on records from the Athens Chamber of Tradesmen. The majority of these businesses were operated by Albanians (ELIAMEP, 2022).

In terms of labour market integration considering refugees from Ukraine, the Ministries of Labour, Agriculture, and Tourism in Greece have taken on the task of documenting the requirements of the Greek labour market for both temporary and permanent positions that are not being filled by domestic workers. The sectors of agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, hospitality, and technology have been examined to identify job vacancies. As a result of this effort, a registry of available job positions and employment opportunities for displaced individuals from Ukraine has been created, which can be accessed online (CEDEFOP, 2022). Based on official reports, as of March 2022, a cumulative number of



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14,429 Ukrainian refugees, including 4,580 children, had crossed the border into Greece (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2022).



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Section 2: Key challenges of NEETs / Youth / Migrants in the Country

The main obstacle preventing migrants from accessing training and employment opportunities appears to be the language barrier. Interpreters and cultural mediators are essential when working with migrants, whether as an educator or an employer. However, due to a shortage of these professionals, particularly for certain dialects, managing such situations can be challenging. While services are available that offer language instruction to migrants, these resources do not always reach the intended beneficiaries, and the information may not be disseminated in the migrants' preferred mother tongue. (Ghandour-Demiri, 2017).

The economic integration report by Caritas Switzerland highlighted that refugees face difficulty in finding employment due to a lack of required certifications, Greek language proficiency, and job skills. The absence of transferable skills and qualifications, along with the language barrier, makes it challenging for refugees to access education, vocational training, or job opportunities. These factors, coupled with the lack of opportunities and isolation, contribute to the disempowerment of refugees (European Commission, n.d.). Even when they hold qualifications, there are challenges faced in translating those qualifications obtained overseas to the Greek context, as highlighted by the Greek Forum of Refugees. Additionally, refugees frequently encounter difficulties in getting their qualifications certified by the government of their home country, which can be impossible due to the circumstances that forced them to flee in the first place (International Rescue Committee, 2022).

Age, disabilities, illnesses, and gender are additional barriers to accessing training and the labour market for migrants. Women migrants face greater challenges finding employment in Greece compared to men. Homelessness due to lack of money and accommodation is another issue that hinders their integration. Many migrants have been found homeless, lacking language skills and necessary documents, and without support. As a result, they struggle to survive and meet basic needs instead of seeking training. The COVID-19 pandemic has further worsened the integration process for refugees and asylum-seekers who were not part of the formal labour market and thus excluded from expanded social protection measures in Greece (International Rescue Committee, 2020; UNHCR, 2020).

Employers have expressed that their primary challenges in hiring refugees are related to administrative issues. One example is the requirement for refugee employees to possess the necessary documentation (AMKA and PAAYPA) before they can work in the hospitality sector on an island. However, obtaining these documents can be challenging, which can discourage potential employers. Furthermore, employers often feel uncertain about the specific documents needed and how to verify their authenticity. In certain cases, a combination of administrative and structural issues can hinder refugees' access to specific industries. For instance, although refugees and asylum-seekers may be permanently settled in major cities like Athens and required to regularly report back there, many job opportunities in the hospitality industry are available only on the islands. Negative attitudes towards refugees can also serve as an obstacle to their employment. Workathlon acknowledged the significant impact of success stories in challenging such narratives and emphasized the importance of expanding and amplifying these stories (International Rescue Committee, 2022).



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Section 3: Skills required from NEETs / Youth / Migrants to enter the labour market

Greece is positioned in the bottom 20% globally when it comes to the alignment of skills with the labour market. Among the countries and economies participating in the Survey of Adult Skills, Greece has the highest proportion of workers who are overqualified for their jobs. Moreover, adults in Greece who are not part of the labour force demonstrate similar literacy levels as those who are actively seeking employment or currently employed. Additionally, Greece ranks in the bottom 20% regarding the intensity of skills utilized in workplaces and the adoption of high-performance workplace practices, which are known to encourage skill utilization in the work environment (OECD, 2019).

Due to the structural characteristics of the Greek economy, the majority of the employment recovery has occurred in sectors that require low skills and have low value-added, such as retail, tourism services, and the food and beverage industry. It is noteworthy that the retail trade sector became the leading sector in terms of youth employment in 2019, with its share increasing to 16.2% from 14.1% in 2008. Additionally, the food and beverage service activities sector climbed to second place, doubling its share compared to 2008 (14.7% versus 7.3%). This data highlights the shift towards these sectors in terms of employment opportunities. These sectors experience a significant prevalence of overqualification, which has notably escalated since the economic crisis. As a result, they have become the primary sources of employment positions that require qualifications surpassing what is necessary for the job. The convergence of elevated youth unemployment rates and widespread overqualification can eventually lead to the depreciation of the qualifications and skills acquired by young individuals. Consequently, many of them become stuck in low-skilled, low-paying jobs, rendering their educational investments futile and hindering the economic growth potential of the country (Katsikas, 2021).

The government highlights that the absence of information regarding the skills, employment history, and educational background of foreign individuals makes it challenging to implement focused employment programs. As a result, it is difficult to align them with occupations that align with the market's requirements or positions that demand specialized skills beyond what the domestic workforce can offer. In particular, alternative routes for validating skills and recognizing qualifications are crucial for asylum seekers and refugees, particularly in cases where documentation supporting their education and qualifications is lacking (Kapsalis, et al., 2020).



Section 4: Good practices

Good practice 1	
Title of the practice	Project HELIOS
Implementing organisation and involved stakeholders	<p>International Organization of Migration – IOM (implemented by)</p> <p>Ministry of Migration and Asylum (funded by – currently)</p> <p>Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission - DG HOME (funded by – before December 2021)</p> <p>Partners: Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Danish Refugee Council Greece (DRC Greece), Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), Solidarity Now, INTERSOS, Municipality Development Agency Thessaloniki S.A (MDAT), Metadrasi, PLOIGOS, KEDHL</p>
Short description of the practice	<p>IOM aims to promote the integration of beneficiaries of international protection and temporary protection into Greek society in close collaboration with national authorities and experienced partners under the HELIOS project through the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration Courses • Accommodation support • Employability support • Integration monitoring • Sensitization of the host community
Groups targeted by the practice	<p>The HELIOS project focuses on beneficiaries of international protection who have been recognized after January 1st, 2018, as well as beneficiaries of temporary protection as defined by the Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of the Council of the European Union. Ukrainian refugees are also beneficiaries of the project.</p>
Main objectives of the practice	<p>The project has two main goals:</p> <p>To enhance the opportunities for individuals with international protection and temporary protection to become self-reliant and participate fully in Greek society.</p> <p>To assist the Greek government in creating a durable mechanism for the integration of individuals with international protection and temporary protection,</p>



	<p>which will be a part of the broader Migration Management System of the country.</p>
<p>Scope of practice (pilot project, national measure, etc.)</p>	<p>HELIOS organizes integration courses at Integration Learning Centres (ILCs) throughout Greece. These six-month courses cover various modules, including 280 hours of Greek language instruction and 80 hours of soft skills training, such as cultural orientation, job readiness, and life skills. The courses are open to individuals aged 16 and above who are beneficiaries of the program.</p> <p>Accommodation support: HELIOS assists beneficiaries of international protection in finding accommodation by helping them rent apartments in their own name. This support includes contributions towards rental and move-in costs and involves connecting with apartment owners. More detailed information and specific amounts can be found in the attached handbook.</p> <p>Employability support: HELIOS offers individual support for employability and job readiness. This includes job counselling, facilitating access to job-related certifications, and establishing connections with private employers.</p> <p>Integration monitoring: HELIOS regularly evaluates the integration progress of the beneficiaries to ensure they are well-prepared to navigate public service providers in Greece confidently once the project concludes.</p> <p>Sensitization of the host community: The project conducts workshops, activities, and events to foster interactions between migrants and the host communities. Additionally, a forthcoming national media campaign aims to raise awareness about the importance of integration and highlight its value to both migrants and the host communities.</p>
<p>Time of implementation (including start and end date if indicated)</p>	<p>(June 2019 – ongoing)</p>
<p>Effects / Outcomes / outputs of the practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration Courses • Accommodation support • Employability support • Integration monitoring • Sensitization of the host community
<p>Lessons learned / success factors</p>	<p>According to 2021 survey with participants in the project: According to the average response, 68% of individuals who attended integration courses regularly</p>



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	<p>expressed that the program helped them develop language skills and gain a deeper understanding of Greek society. These acquired abilities have improved their ability to engage with the local community. Furthermore, a majority of the participants agreed or somewhat agreed that they now feel more self-assured in handling communication with locals independently, such as during activities like shopping, seeking directions, or placing food orders.</p> <p>Additionally, a majority of the respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that reading Greek text, including signs, labels, bills, websites, and social media posts, has become easier for them.</p> <p>In general, 48% of respondents who had a lease in their name reported feeling empowered and more capable of achieving self-reliance due to their involvement in the program. Additionally, 41% of these respondents expressed their intention to continue leasing their apartment even after the support from the project concludes.</p>
<p>Sources used (including website / links)</p>	<p>https://www.accmr.gr/en/services/helios-project/</p> <p>https://migration.gov.gr/en/migration-policy/integration/draseis-koinonikis-entaxis-se-ethniko-epipedo/programma-helios/</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/iom-feedback-helios-programme-beneficiaries_en</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/integration-practice/helios-project_en</p>

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Good practice 2</h2>	
<p>Title of the practice</p>	<p>Curing the Limbo</p>
<p>Implementing organisation and involved stakeholders</p>	<p>City of Athens</p> <p>The Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA)</p> <p>National and Kapodistrian University of Athens</p> <p>Catholic Relief Services (CRS)</p> <p>The International Rescue Committee (IRC)</p>
<p>Short description of the practice</p>	<p>"Curing the Limbo" aims to introduce a dynamic and innovative approach to integration, enabling refugees to actively participate in society. The program</p>



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	<p>encompasses various components, including language courses in Greek and English, Creative Expression and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) classes, access to affordable housing, and specialized counselling services that cater to the specific needs of refugees. By engaging in these activities, refugees can effectively integrate into the city's life, fostering interactions with local citizen groups and participating in public events held in various neighbourhoods of Athens. Through this collaborative effort, both refugees and the city can overcome their state of "limbo," promoting increased activity, cooperation, and coexistence.</p>
<p>Groups targeted by the practice</p>	<p>Refugees who have received asylum but have not yet managed to normalise their lives in Athens by engaging in everyday activities are the main participants of the program.</p>
<p>Main objectives of the practice</p>	<p>"Curing the Limbo" collaboratively develops a proactive approach to tackle the state of stagnation by involving participatory activities and engaging in consultations with various stakeholders, including the refugee population, active citizen groups, owners of unoccupied properties, and city authorities. The program's innovative action plan is designed to create a ripple effect and generate a wide-reaching impact that extends beyond the immediate participants. At its core, "Curing the Limbo" is built upon the principle of giving back to both citizens and the city, which serves as the program's distinctive value proposition.</p>
<p>Scope of practice (pilot project, national measure, etc.)</p>	<p>The University of Athens employs an action research methodology to drive the implementation of the "Curing the Limbo" program. This involves meticulous planning of courses, retraining instructors and participants, and establishing a shared approach among team members. The action research methodology enables the capture, analysis, and continual redefinition of the implementation strategy throughout the program's duration. This includes various aspects such as organizing affordable housing, conducting capacity building workshops, hosting public events in Athens neighborhoods, and providing employment services like job counseling and assistance in job searching. Each step is thoughtfully planned, executed, evaluated, and refined based on evidence-based results. By utilizing data analysis and tangible outcomes, the process becomes more dynamic and adaptable. The overarching philosophy of the program is to propose sustainable</p>



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	solutions that address the genuine needs of refugees, neighborhoods, citizens, and cities as a whole.
Time of implementation (including start and end date if indicated)	2018 - 2021
Effects / Outcomes / outputs of the practice	The integration of refugees in the "Curing the Limbo" program was significantly influenced by the initiatives of the city and the engagement of Civil Society organizations operating in Athens. The Municipality of Athens had already established a network of institutions, civic groups, and proactive citizens through the acclaimed synAthena (συνΑθηνα) platform. This network served as a valuable resource for connecting with the most engaged segments of the local community, presenting them as potential partners and collaborators in the collaborative vision of the program. This partnership aimed to facilitate the integration process and shift refugees from being recipients of humanitarian aid to becoming active participants in society.
Lessons learned / success factors	Athens was the winner of 2020 European Capital of Innovation Awards. One of the innovative initiatives that were implemented through that period and let Athens receive the award was "Curing the limbo" by giving refugees and migrants the possibility to connect with other residents in order to learn the language, develop new skills, find employment opportunities, and engage in active citizenship.
Sources used (including website / links)	https://curingthelimbo.gr/en/home https://smartcitiesconnect.org/athens-wins-european-capital-of-innovation-awards-receiving-e1m/



PART 2: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

Section 1: Analysis of semi-structured individual interviews (IDIs)

ID of interview	G01	G02	G03	G04	G05	G06
Date	06.12.2023	17.12.2023	17.12.2023	17.12.2023	17.12.2023	17.12.2023
Location	Athens	Plataies, Viotia	Plataies, Viotia	Plataies, Viotia	Plataies, Viotia	Plataies, Viotia
Name (or initials) of interviewee	T.P.	I.A.	A.Z.	P.A.	W.A.	Z.H.
Type of interviewee	<i>Migrant</i>	<i>Migrant</i>	<i>Migrant</i>	<i>Migrant</i>	<i>Migrant</i>	<i>Migrant</i>
Contact details of interviewee (e-mail or phone)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interviewer	M. Vlachou	D. Karampetsos	D. Karampetsos	D. Karampetsos	D. Karampetsos	D. Karampetsos
Duration of the interview	15min	15min	15min	15min	15min	15min

Introduction

The Athens Lifelong Learning Institute conducted six (6) interviews with representatives of the target groups in order to further explore their needs considering the determinants and risk factors in accessing education and employment, the barriers they have met, the support they need, their future plans. The results of the interviews showed that migrants hold low paid temporary jobs. Language seems to be a crucial factor in order to find a permanent well-paid job. Most of them do not focus on education and employment as their goal is to eventually leave Greece.

Respondent background information:

The six (6) interviewees were all migrants:

- One (1) woman from Ukraine, 36 years old, who left her country of origin because of the invasion of Russia. She holds a University Degree and have worked in her country as an English teacher and as a notary. She is now working as a cook in Athens.



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- Five (5) men from Pakistan, 31, 24, 32, 32, and 16 years old respectively, who left their country of origin in order to seek for a better job. They have attended school and one of them also college in Pakistan. The two of them have worked in their country in various sectors and all of them are working in Greece in the agricultural sector, in Plataies village, in Viotia, nearby Athens. Their families live in Pakistan and some members of their families in other European countries.

The five of them consider their stay in Greece as a temporary condition and they would like to either move in another European country or return back to their country. The woman from Ukraine would like to stay in Greece.

Determinants and risk factors:

All the interviewees faced difficulties in finding a job in Greece. The lack of knowledge of the national language and also the fact that some jobs are seasonal and dependent of the weather such as the agricultural sector are major difficulties. These difficulties don't let them find a permanent job in the sector they desire but they settle for low paid jobs that don't require high qualifications. Taking into account that they mostly consider their stay in Greece as temporary, they don't put much effort in finding a better job.

Key conclusions:

- The lack of knowledge of the Greek language makes it difficult to find a permanent well-paid job.
- Seasonal jobs lead to long periods of unemployment and uncertainty.
- Their temporary stay in Greece is also a barrier in finding a better and permanent job.

Barriers of education and employment:

The barrier of language is crucial in the search of job. Most of them try to learn the language and receive support but there also cases that they feel that the support they get is not enough. Two of the interviewees would like to become entrepreneurs and build their own small business in the future. None of them expressed a strong desire to seek for another job from the one they have found, even if it is seasonal and even if they recognise the difficulties of having a temporary job.

Key conclusions:

- The barrier of language is crucial.
- When finding a job, even if not the ideal one, it is quite difficult to leave it to search for a better one.

Supports to finding employment and education:

Most of them would like support in learning the Greek language. One of the interviewees mentioned that he would like support in making better the living conditions and then he would focus more on employability and education. Their temporary stay in Greece is also a factor of not seeking support considering employability and education. The woman from



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Ukraine that would like to continue staying in Greece focuses more on the support she could receive and the possibilities of finding a permanent well paid job.

Key conclusions:

- Support in learning the Greek language is crucial.
- Their temporary stay in Greece is a major reason of not seeking support.

The future:

The five men from Pakistan would like to either return to their country or move to another European country to meet other members of their family. The woman from Ukraine would like to continue staying in Greece. They all desire to eventually work in a different sector of the one they are working now once they leave Greece. The woman from Ukraine would also like to find a different job even though she likes her current job but it is low paid.

Key conclusions:

- The desire of leaving Greece is strong.
- Those that would like to leave Greece do not focus on their job development in Greece.



Section 2: Analysis of focus group interview (FGI)

Focus Group Interview Reporting Template - Greece

ID of interview	
Date and time of FGI	29.01.2024
Location of interview	ZOOM
Names (or initials) of participants + type of youth worker/organisation they represent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T.K. – NGO working with refugees, Athens 2. M.F. - NGO working with refugees, Athens 3. M.P. - NGO working with refugees, Athens 4. J.W. – NGO focusing on social inclusion, implementing amongst others projects with refugees, Athens 5. S.K. - NGO focusing on social inclusion, implementing amongst others projects with refugees, Athens 6. A.Z. - NGO working with refugees, island of Mytilene 7. V.A. - NGO working with refugees, island of Mytilene 8. V.T. - Vocational training centre, Athens 9. N.R. – NGO providing services to vulnerable populations, Athens 10. A.D. –NGO focusing on social inclusion, Athens
Interviewer	Ourania Kappou, Margarita Defingou
Duration of the interview	1.40h

Introduction

The Athens Lifelong Learning Institute conducted a focus group discussion with ten (10) participants and two (2) moderators on the 29th of January 2024 focusing on migrant youths and the barriers they face regarding employment and education, the youth workers approaches and applied good practices.

Respondent background information:

The participants of the focus group were youth workers, project managers, social workers, researchers working for NGOs and educational entities that implement projects on human rights and mostly on the integration of refugees and migrants. Some of these NGOs are primarily working with migrants/refugees and serve as a reference point regarding migration issues in Greece. Most of them are based in Athens, the capital city of Greece,



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but also have subunits all of Greece and especially at the areas that accommodate great numbers of refugees. One of the entities is based in the island of Mytilene, which serve as a hot spot for refugees.

Target groups of migrant youths:

There are many differences from 2012 on the refugee/migrant issue. The refugee issue, especially with its intensity in 2015-2016, has shown us that with the EU-Turkey deal there was a massive wave of people who passed through Greece to go to other countries. A large number of people, whether migrant or refugee, moved after the period of turbulence and changes in the political context in their countries. Since then, until today, there seems to be a constant presence of people who are passing through the country and not necessarily staying here. The recent wave of refugees from Ukraine changed the profile of people coming in Greece, as they bring a high level of education and a desire to stay in Greece or return to their country after a period of time and not just pass through. In addition, there are still unaccompanied minors coming from Afghanistan and other countries and the issue of their integration and more specifically education is still not managed fully. However, for those it's easier to access the education and the labour market than for the older.

Key conclusions:

- After the invasion in Ukraine, there is a change in the profile of people coming to Greece considering their education.
- There are still people coming from the East as well as unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan and other countries.

Barriers for different groups of youth migrant NEETs:

Barriers may be related to lack of knowledge of the Greek language, difficulty in recognition of educational degrees and professional experience, access to education and vocational training, lack of a network of support, lack of knowledge considering bureaucratic procedures, the lack of resources to apply integration programmes, the lack of a common approach from the government.

Youth workers approach towards different groups of young migrants:

The representatives of the entities that took part in the focus group described the activities they implement in order to facilitate the integration of the target groups. These activities include, amongst others, mentoring sessions, language lessons, legal support, job orientation. They underlined the need of in person sessions and not only online.

Good practices in youth work with migrants:

The post-COVID era is characterised by distance learning which gives the chance to more people to participate but in the case of refugees and migrants, it is important to implement in-person sessions, for example in language learning.



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The Helios programme is one of the good practices that the entities working with refugees have implemented and there are positive results considering the integration issues.

Projects and tools on the assessment of previous knowledge and qualifications have been also implemented. Assessing and acknowledging previous knowledge and qualifications is quite important in order to access easier and faster education and employment.



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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the report shed light on the significant challenges faced by migrants in Greece regarding education and employment. Language proficiency emerges as a critical barrier, hindering migrants' ability to secure stable and well-paid jobs, exacerbated by the prevalence of seasonal employment that perpetuates cycles of unemployment and uncertainty. Despite efforts to provide support and language learning opportunities, the temporary nature of migrants' stay often deters them from seeking assistance, while the desire to seek better opportunities elsewhere remains strong among many respondents. This underscores the urgent need for comprehensive policies and initiatives aimed at integrating and empowering migrant communities in Greece. Youth workers and organizations play a vital role in this process, offering mentoring, language lessons, and legal support. Promising practices such as the Helios and the Curing the Limbo programmes and other projects focusing on skills assessment and qualification recognition offer avenues for enhancing migrant youth integration prospects.

However, concerted efforts from government bodies and stakeholders are necessary to address systemic barriers, promote inclusive policies, and ensure access to education and employment opportunities for migrant communities. Efforts to facilitate labour market entry for migrants and refugees can not only benefit Greece's economy but also strengthen welfare systems and ensure a sustainable workforce. However, persistent challenges such as the language barrier, administrative hurdles, and negative attitudes towards migrants must be effectively addressed through targeted interventions and collaborative initiatives. Only through such concerted efforts can Greece realize the full potential of its migrant population and foster a more inclusive and prosperous society.



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