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Findings of the Best Practices Analysis & End-user Needs Analysis



**Accessing and
recognising the prior
learning of migrants
Bridging the gap
and paving the road
to educational
and social
integration**

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Findings of the Best Practices Analysis & End-user Needs Analysis



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Current Situation

Logic behind the Like Home Project

Europe is currently dealing with both an important economic crisis and a refugee crisis. Even though the two facts are independent, they have one common effect: they lead to **increased immigration**. This is either organised immigration for economic purposes and seeking of a better quality of life (economic immigrants) or practically enforced immigration (refugees) because of a war.

Thus, there is increased need for the EU countries to be able assess the skills and prior knowledge of immigrants in a well-organised and efficient way, in order to facilitate their access to education, employment or training at a level commensurate with existing skills and/or qualifications.

Brief Project Description

The overall aim of the Like Home project is to foster the inclusion of **newly arrived migrants** and **refugees** to the host country education and training system, to the local economy and to the society in general. Like Home project's strategic objective is to design and deliver a framework of best practices, based on practices that have been successfully used for the assessment and recognition of migrants' prior learning, qualifications and competencies.

The “Like Home Framework”

A set of seven (7) best practices from frontrunner countries is adapted and transferred to the target countries. These best practices will form the **“Like Home Framework”**.

1. Procedures for recognition of prior knowledge for migrants without proof of formal qualifications.
2. Database development
3. Pre-migration screening and examination
4. Information provision to migrants
5. Improved recognition procedures
6. Bridging programmes to support competency-based assessment.
7. Host country language training

Best Practices Analysis

In the framework of the project, an analysis of the above listed 7 selected best practices was conducted in order to study the way **of adapting them** to the target countries' needs. In the study the positive issues and disadvantages that need to be taken into consideration when transferring and adapting these best practices were addressed.

Positive issues:

- ▼ Traditional methods such as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is no problem to introduce and adapt, the methods are very useful and good assessment for the projects target group.
- ▼ Cooperation between different organizations and for the target audience to get a good assessment and to expand their opportunities.

Disadvantages:

- ▲ Some of the best practises need a long process to change or adjust the assessment system and the process various from country to country.
- ▲ Cooperates between different assessment bodies today –There is a need for an innovative way to introduce the best practises to stakeholders and also decision makers on various levels.

- ▲ Some best practices are only useful for high educated migrants that already have a work permission.
- ▲ Also the language skills of the immigrants are high. If we look at the immigrants we have in Europe today they language barriers.

The study also identified the Barriers for the implementation of these best practices, which are summarised below into two fields (Target Group and Resources barriers):

Barriers for the target group:

- ✓ Legislation
- ✓ Lack of resources
- ✓ Lack of funding
- ✓ Lack of interest
- ✓ Don't have enough knowledge

Resource barriers:

- ✓ Problem to change the current system in the country.
- ✓ Difficulties concerning the cooperation with other organisations.
- ✓ Organisations performing assessment are competitors - would not cooperate.
- ✓ Economic issue
- ✓ The process can take a long time

Main Conclusions of the Best Practice Analysis

For Migrants, competence assessment can play a vital role. It evaluates the experiences and/or qualifications they have brought from their home countries and compares them to requirements on the national job market.

Assessment can act as a "door opener" i.e. besides evaluating an individual's strengths and weaknesses, skills and experiences it can foremost provide important impetus to (new) occupational orientation.

Competence assessment can also foster the entry into specific job sectors or industries and can foster occupational advancement opportunities.

To attain sustainability it is important to understand assessment as an active process of an assisted self-evaluation and/or self-audit. Only then can the findings help individuals make significant decisions that may have a positive impact on personal and occupational growth.

Procedures for recognition of prior knowledge for migrants without proof of formal qualifications stand as a strong mean for inclusion and building the ever important networks in the new country.

Main Conclusions of the Best Practice Analysis

Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) is a traditional assessment it's useful and many organizations have the resources for this, it has been implemented for many years, it fits the target group and it is customizable if needed.

Assessment is a process that needs continuous development - to find new solutions and make these methods adaptable to the host country, present different assessment proposals and language learning courses for education organisations and stakeholders.

The scope of the sectoral professional validation could be increased by using more internships. Occupational validation can be adapted to and owned by industries and should be directed to

areas where there is real need for recruitment. Occupational validation could also be combined with a matching task. Employment agencies can be used in the process of organizing validation practice.

Development and implementation of validation arrangements relies on several interconnected steps. The central message of these guidelines is that validation is about:

- (a) How to make visible the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning;
- (b) How to attribute appropriate value to outcomes of non-formal and informal learning.



End-user Needs Analysis

Description of the Analysis

In the framework of the project, an end-user needs analysis was implemented with the goal to analyse the challenges encountered by newly arrived migrants for integration into the educational & training system, as well as into the employment system and to examine the difficulties from the host country side. The analysis took the form of a survey as well as the implementation of focus group meetings addressing four (4) target groups/stakeholders:

- 1. Newly arrived Migrants and Refugees**
(that plan to stay in the host country)
- 2. Representatives of the Government & Bodies** responsible for certifying the prior knowledge and skills of migrants
- 3. Representatives of the Local Economy**
(employers, associations etc.)
- 4. VET Staff**

The survey employed four (4) questionnaire templates, each one of them addressing a specific aforementioned target group. The questionnaire targeting the newly arrived migrants and refugees was translated into Spanish, English, Italian, German, Swedish, French, Greek and Arabic. The other three questionnaires were produced only in English.

The questionnaires were transferred in an online-survey tool in order to increase the reach of the study.

In total, 524 questionnaires were completed from stakeholders belonging to all four (4) target groups. More specific: 301 newly arrived migrants or refugees participated in the study. 66 representatives from the local economy answered the relative questionnaire. Furthermore, 87 VET experts have completed the LikeHome questionnaires. Finally, 70 representatives of governmental organisations and certification bodies participated in the study.

The survey was conducted in all partner countries and additionally in Turkey. Approximately 39 % of the questioned newly arrived migrants and refugees originate from Syria. The other countries of origin were Iraq, Afghanistan, Albania, Turkey, Iran and Serbia. It also has to be mentioned that there was detected a surprisingly high number of stateless persons and of participants who did not reveal their country of origin – in total for 136 people their country of origin couldn't be identified.

Evaluation method and evaluation tool

513 questionnaires have been completed by using an online-survey which was distributed via the project consortium. After the completion of the survey, a reporting tool for statistical analysis of the raw data, as well as for graphical presentation of the survey results in the four distinct target groups was employed and relevant conclusions on all categories in the four different target groups were available.

Apart of the above analysis, and based on that the four (4) different questionnaire template are consisted of the same topic-related categories, the next methodical step was to connect and compare the conclusions made in each topic for the four target groups, in order to produce the final findings of the quantitative survey.

Findings of the quantitative survey in the four target groups

The main results of the survey divided into the four (4) target groups are presented below:

Newly arrived Migrants and Refugees

- 46.5% are currently attending a language class.
- 12.7% were participating in a vocational training.
- 27.8% were employed
- 13% of the migrants and refugees were not in training or in an employment relationship.
- Only 49,7% of the employed are sure that they are not working below their qualifications.

Analysing the potential obstacles for newly arrived migrants and refugees regarding their integration into the labour market and education system of the receiving society, it was established that the **language barrier is seen as the biggest obstacle**, followed by the **limited availability of employment** and by **difficulties in the recognition of qualifications and prior learning**.

More specific:

- The language barrier is seen by 68.48 % of the respondents as a big obstacle for their integration.
- 66.26 % of the questioned individuals from this target group identify the limited employment opportunities in their host country as a barrier in their integration process.
- 56.38 % of the questioned individuals from this target group identify that obstacle for integration in difficulties with the recognition of their qualification and working experiences in the host country.
- 55.65% of the interviewees from this research field think that lack of information and available support is an obstacle for integration in the host society.
- 52.15 % of the questioned individuals from this target group identify the lack of personal connections and networks as an obstacle for integration.
- 47.95% of the interviewees think that an obstacle for their integration is the fact that they have too little knowledge about the labour market or about educational opportunities in their host country.
- 46.28% have the opinion that the lack of proof of professional as well as educational qualifications acquired in the home country

Findings of the quantitative survey in the four target groups

is an obstacle for the integration into the labour market or educational system in the receiving society.

- ➔ 45.16% of the questioned individuals identified the lack of specific training in their host country as an obstacle for integration.
- ➔ 45.75% identified the prejudices and discrimination towards migrants as an obstacle for integration in the receiving society.
- ➔ 30.33% of the interviewees think that the lack of mobility of migrants (no car, no driving licence, expensive public transport) is an obstacle for integration.
- ➔ 26.25 % have the opinion that the lack of interest from newly arrived migrants to find jobs or training opportunities is an obstacle for integration in the labour market and in the education system of the host country.
- ➔ Only 14.05 % of the questioned individuals from this target group identify physical or mental health problems as a barrier for a successful integration in the labour market or education system.
- ➔ 36.51 % of the interviewees believe that the lack of financial support for requalification is an obstacle for the integration in the receiving society.
- ➔ 22.84 % have the opinion that lack of childcare is one of the barriers for integration.

- ➔ 49,79 % identify administrative problems (e.g. insecurity of asylum status, asylum process)
- ➔ 24.58 % identify housing insecurity as an obstacle for integration.
- ➔ 61 % of the newly arrived migrants and refugees arrive without any host country language skills.
- ➔ According to the survey, 33% of the newly arrived migrants and refugees arrive without any proof of qualification or competencies.

Government and certification bodies









It was important to involve government organisations and certification bodies in the study, because these institutions are very much concerned with the formal integration (e.g. recognition, counselling, admissions, etc.) of newly arrived migrants and refugees. On this basis it was very interesting for the research team to know which competences the representatives of the government organisations and certification bodies think are the most important for newly arrived migrants and refugees.

- ➔ 98.5% of the respondents state that language skills are the most important tool for a successful integration.
- ➔ 57% think that the “willingness to learn” is a very important for newly arrived migrants and refugees.

Findings of the quantitative survey in the four target groups

- 47.7% feel that supporting newly arrived migrants and refugees to acquire literacy skills is very important.
- Only 15.4% think that digital skills are important for migrants and only 3.1% of questioned individuals feel that creativity is an important competence which newly arrived migrants and refugees need to acquire.

All relative results are presented in the table below:

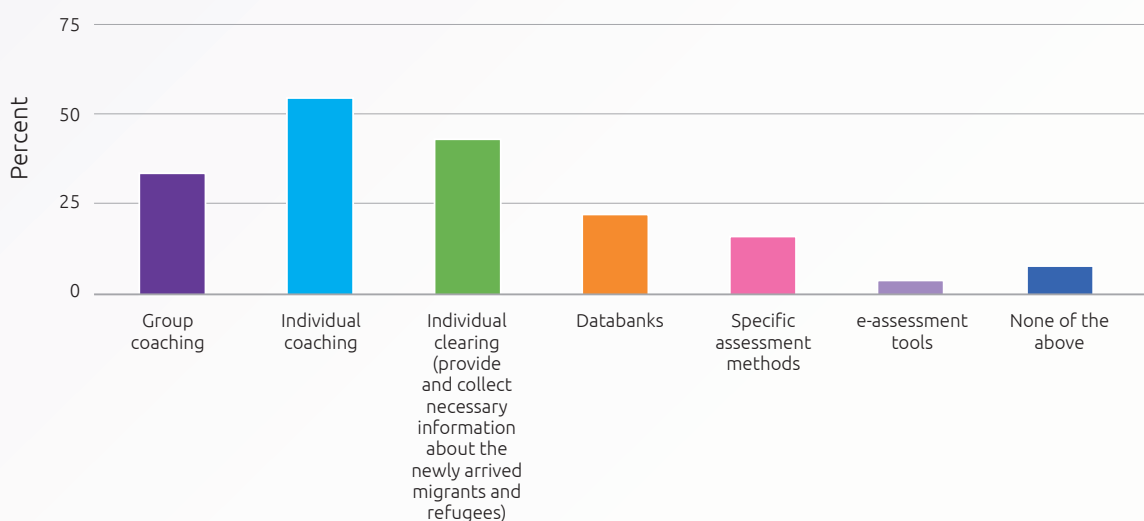
Value		Percent	Responses
Working (employed)		27.8%	83
Entrepreneur (self-employed)		9.0%	27
In training (preparing for work un a job-related training)		12.7%	38
Attending a language training		46.5%	139
Attending a scholl, university or other educational institu- tion		10.0%	30
In the process os having my prior learning, qualifications and competencier assessed/reconsized		6.7%	20
Unemployed (receiving unemployment benefits or other social benefits)		13.0%	39
None of the above		7.4%	22

One of the most important findings of the research phase in LikeHome was to gain knowledge about the way of working which is conducted by government organisations and certification bodies in order to support the integration of newly arrived migrants and refugees.

It is especially interesting for planning the future tasks in LikeHome that individual coaching is used by over 50% of the questioned test persons and that e-assessment tools are so far hardly applied.

Findings of the quantitative survey in the four target groups

The following graph provides information about the working method of the questioned representatives.



- 81.97% of the interviewees from this research field think that it is an obstacle for integration that they have too little knowledge about the legal framework in their host country.
- 68.33% of the questioned individuals from this target group feel that uncertainty about legal status of newly arrived migrants and refugees is an obstacle for integration.
- 78.69% of the questioned individuals from this target group identify uncertainties about the level of education of newly arrived migrants and refugees as an obstacle for integration in the receiving society.
- 59.02% of the interviewees from this research field think that uncertainties about cultural habits and social norms are an obstacle for integration.
- 75.41% of the questioned individuals from this target group identify uncertainties about the professional competence of newly arrived migrants and refugees as an obstacle for integration in the receiving society.
- 55.93% of the questioned test persons from this target group have the opinion that prejudices and discrimination towards migrants within the host country are obstacles for integration.

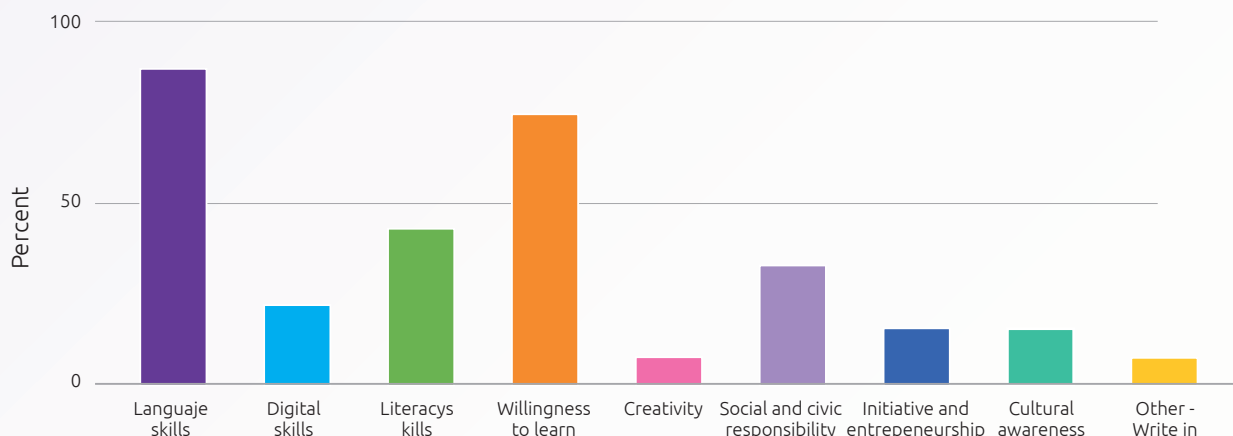
Findings of the quantitative survey in the four target groups

- 44.26% of the questioned individuals from this target group identify health problems may they be physical or mental as a barrier for a successful integration of migrants and refugees in the labour market or education system of the receiving society.
- 58.33% of the questioned individuals from this target group think that there is too little knowledge about managing cultural diversity in educational institutions and feel that is an obstacle for the integration of migrants and refugees.
- 40.00% of the interviewees from this research field think that the lack of interest in education or the unwillingness to learn is an obstacle for the integration of migrants and refugees in the receiving society.
- 45.76% of the questioned test persons from this target group have the opinion that various personal obstacles of newly arrived migrants and refugees that prevent them from prioritizing education and training (e.g. lack of childcare, housing insecurity, lack of mobility) lead to problems in the integration process.
- 81.36% of the questioned test persons from this target group have the opinion that the lack of proof of professional as well as educational qualifications acquired in the home country is an obstacle for the integration into the labour market or educational system in the receiving society.
- 75.00% of the questioned individuals from this target group identify the limited availability of training/education or employment opportunities as an obstacle for the integration of migrants and refugees.
- 84.75% of the interviewees from this research field think that the bureaucratic burden regarding the recognition and validation of qualifications, competences and prior learning is an obstacle for migrants and refugees in the integration process.

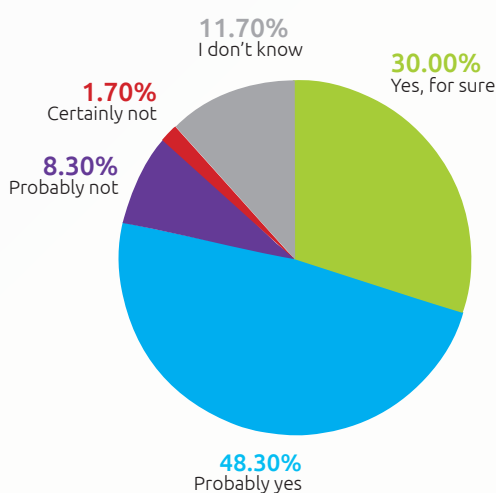
Representatives of the local economy in the project partner countries

The project LikeHome aims to support the integration of newly arrived migrants and refugees into the labour market of their host country. Therefore it was very important to acquire knowledge about the key competences which they should have according to the representatives from the economy in the partner countries. Similar to previous findings, it can be seen that language skills and the willingness to learn are perceived as very important competences regarding a successful integration process of newly arrived migrants and refugees., as it can be seen in the next diagram.

Findings of the quantitative survey in the four target groups



The graph below illustrates perception of the representatives of the economy in the partner countries regarding the advantage which enterprises can gain from hiring migrants and refugees. As it can be seen, over 78% of the questioned individuals have positive feelings when it comes to employing migrants and refugees and less than 2% are sure that they will not hire them.



More results of the survey in this target group are depicted below:

- 80.65% of the questioned individuals from this target group identify the language barrier as obstacle for integration.
- 69.35% of the interviewees from this research field think that too little knowledge about the legal framework from company representatives regarding employing newly arrived migrants and refugees is an obstacle for their integration in the receiving society.
- 68.85% of the questioned individuals from this target group feel that uncertainty about legal status of newly arrived migrants and refugees is an obstacle for integration.
- 55.74% of the questioned individuals from this target group identify uncertainties about the level of education of newly arrived migrants and refugees as an obstacle for integration in the receiving society.

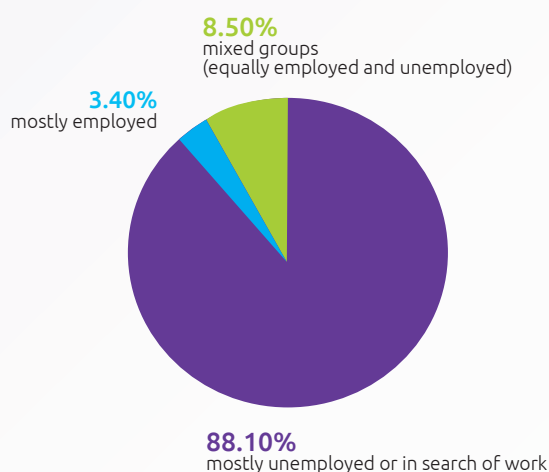
Findings of the quantitative survey in the four target groups

- ➔ 53.33% think that uncertainties about cultural habits and social norms are an obstacle for integration.
- ➔ 56.67% identify uncertainties about the professional competence of newly arrived migrants and refugees as an obstacle for integration in the receiving society.
- ➔ 29.50% have the opinion that prejudices and discrimination towards migrants within the host country are obstacles for integration.
- ➔ 35.00% identify health problems may they be physical or mental as a barrier for a successful integration of migrants and refugees in the labour market or education system of the receiving society.
- ➔ 45.00% think that there is too little knowledge about managing cultural diversity in educational institutions and feel that is an obstacle for the integration of migrants and refugees.
- ➔ 28.33% of the interviewees from this research field think that a general preference for domestic applicants on the labour market from is an obstacle for the integration of migrants and refugees in their host country.
- ➔ 37.70 % of the questioned test persons from this target group have the opinion that lack of interests of migrants and refugees and their unwillingness to work lead to problems in the integration in the host countries.
- ➔ 16.95 % have the opinion that wage standards defined by the national governments lead to problems in the integration into the labour market of the host society.
- ➔ 66.67% have the opinion that the lack of proof of professional as well as educational qualifications acquired in the home country is an obstacle for the integration into the labour market or educational system in the receiving society.
- ➔ 62.30% identify the limited availability of training/education or employment opportunities as an obstacle for the integration of migrants and refugees.
- ➔ 84.75% of the interviewees from this research field think that the bureaucratic burden regarding the recognition and validation of qualifications, competences and prior learning is an obstacle for migrants and refugees in the integration process.
- ➔ 62.30% of the questioned individuals from this target group identify the lack of available information and support for companies who are interested in employing newly arrived migrants and refugees as a barrier for a successful integration in the labour market of the receiving society.

Findings of the quantitative survey in the four target groups

Vocational education training staff

The VET trainers can be seen as a valuable source for the study, since they have confronted various issues regarding the integration of Refugees and migrants during their daily professional life.



According to the previous chart only 3.40% of the interviewees in this research field are counselling migrants and refugees who are already employed, 8.50% work with both, unemployed and employed migrants and refugees and the vast majority (88.10%) are working with people who have experienced migration and are currently in search of work.

The results of the survey in this target group are depicted below:

- 89.33 % of the questioned individuals from this target group identify the language barrier as obstacle for integrating newly arrived migrants and refugees into the labour market and education system of their host country.
- 68.49 % of the interviewees think that an obstacle for integration of Refugees and Migrants is the fact that they have too little knowledge about the legal framework in their host country.
- 72.60 % of the questioned individuals from this target group feel that uncertainty about legal status of newly arrived migrants and refugees is an obstacle for integration.
- 65.28% identify uncertainties about the level of education of newly arrived migrants and refugees as an obstacle for integration in the receiving society.
- 60.00% of the interviewees think that uncertainties about cultural habits and social norms are an obstacle for integration.
- 63.38% of the questioned test persons from this target group have the opinion that prejudices and discrimination towards migrants within the host country are obstacles for integration.

- 34.29% of the questioned individuals from this target group identify health problems may they be physical or mental as a barrier for a successful integration in the labour market or education system.
- 63.38% of the questioned individuals from this target group think that there is too little knowledge about managing cultural diversity in educational institutions and feel that is an obstacle for the integration of migrants and refugees.
- 39.44% think that the lack of interest in education or the unwillingness to learn is an obstacle for the integration of migrants and refugees in the receiving society.
- 58.33% have the opinion that various personal obstacles of newly arrived migrants and refugees that prevent them from prioritizing education and training (e.g. lack of childcare, housing insecurity, lack of mobility) lead to problems in the integration process.
- 64.79% have the opinion that the lack of proof of professional as well as educational qualifications acquired in the home country is an obstacle for the integration into the labour market or educational system in the receiving society.
- 57.53% identify the limited availability of training places as an obstacle for the integration of migrants and refugees.
- 44.59% of the interviewees think that the lack of information and available support for vocational education centres who are interested in supporting integration of migrants and refugees is an obstacle.

Major and common findings of the four target groups' quantitative analysis

According to the participants' responses in all of the targets groups some findings have been strongly and commonly emerged:

Most of the participants stressed the importance of **the language barrier**, as being a big obstacle for the integration of Migrants and Refugees, into the labor market and education system of the respective European host country. This finding is more obvious and intense in government organization and certification body representatives' perception.

The above finding becomes even more important, taking into consideration that according to the survey, the 61 % of the newly arrived migrants and refugees arrive without any host country language skills.

Another point that was made clear after the analysis of the data, is that **prejudices against newly arrived migrants and refugees** are still existing.

One of the key insights which came out during the analysis is that there is a need for a better overview of **competences and prior working experiences** of newly arrived migrants and refugees as well as a need for more information regarding **assessment and recognition of qualifications**.

It is also necessary to highlight that a significant part of respondents identified the **bureaucratic burden** as an obstacle for the successful integration of newly arrived migrants and refugees in combination that a key finding of the quantitative analysis is that there is a **general need of support and information** in order to make process of integration for all involved groups easier. Already existing information needs to be more visible and easy to understand.

Focus groups/ Qualitative Analysis Results

Complementary to the above quantitative method (survey), focus group meetings with the participation of representatives of the four target groups (newly arrived migrants, VET educators, stakeholders from government bodies and local economy) were conducted in each partner country. The aim was to define the needs and biggest challenges from their perspective as well as to discuss the results of the questionnaires analysis.

The findings of the Focus Groups are summarized into the following key issues:

Obstacles to a successful integration of newly arrived migrants into the education system or local economy

- Similar to the quantitative study, all the focus groups identified the **language barrier** as the biggest obstacle for the integration of newly arrived migrants and refugees in the host countries labor market and education system. Furthermore the **bureaucratic burdens** in combination with the **complex legal framework** are according to the findings an obstacle for success in the integration process. Additionally **companies need support when it comes to hiring newly arrived**

Focus groups/ Qualitative Analysis Results

migrants or refugees, because the legal requirements for that are in some cases very complicated.

- ➔ **Lack of information** causes problems and the available information should be better organized and adapted to the target group (newly arrived migrants and refugees).
- ➔ During the qualitative study it came out, that **immigrants still face prejudices**. Integrating them into several aspects of the society becomes therefore even more important.
- ➔ One other essential finding is that newly arrived migrants and refugees often have **false expectations** regarding the opportunities in the host country. It is not only the different culture and way of life which they have to face but also a different approach to work, education and the legal framework in the project partner countries.
- ➔ Another point which has to be mentioned is that **recognition process which includes the working permit lasts too long**. In addition to that the **lack of an existing network**, which is needed to find access to the society and also to get professional experience in the host country.
- ➔ A lot of projects, programmes and initiatives are working to support integration activities. These measures need to be coordinated and structured. **The lack of cooperation** is an obstacle for success in the integration process of newly arrived migrants and refugees.

Problem-solving approach

In this section the focus group participants have brought in their ideas for solutions regarding the above discussed problems.

- ➔ It has to be guaranteed that **enough language classes for newly arrived migrants and refugees** are available. Language classes should be more intense and application oriented. Games, which can be played on smartphones could help the integration, because it is possible to learn about culture habits of the host country and also to perform language quizzes while playing games.
- ➔ For integrating the newly arrived refugees and Migrants into the local community the idea of mentorship or sponsorship came up. The basic message is here that individual support is needed. But there was also found an agreement on the fact that this approach is very hard to implement because of the voluntary basis of it.
- ➔ Explanations/guidelines regarding the labor market system and education system (e.g. recognition of qualifications, competences, education, and professional experience, skills assessment, etc.) need to be available in the mother language of the newly arrived migrants and refugees.
- ➔ Incentives for the local economy for hiring newly arrived migrants and refugees are necessary.

Focus groups/ Qualitative Analysis Results

- A simplification of the recognition process is needed.
- Stronger cooperation between all involved stakeholders is needed.
- Another interesting finding solution approach is that training centers should cooperate and also involve universities to create a migration specific open forum on training and education opportunities. Cooperation between the country of origin and the host country should be implemented in order to facilitate the recognition of former education.

Assessment of competences without proof of former education or work experience

Below are listed the summarized relevant ideas and comments from focus group participants regarding the situation of immigrants without proof of former education or work experience.

- Process of validation of competences needs to be shorter. Findings should be produced in less time.
- Without proof of formal education it is very difficult for highly educated migrants to find a job which corresponds to their qualifications, even if they go through the whole recognition process. For migrants or refugees without higher education, the assessment of their prior learning is in some

countries not that important. In this specific field the project partner countries are very diverse, because in some geographical areas education is needed to successfully apply for a job. In other countries at least proof of competence is needed for any kind of position on the labour market. But there are also nations where employers conduct interviews and decide on the basis of them if someone is suited for the advertised position. This is of course only true for job opportunities designed for low-skilled workers.

- Individual support is needed because there are newly arrived migrants and refugees who don't have a vocational goal. The whole labour market and education system as well as the way in which they are connected have to be explained to them.

Possible improvements regarding the recognition of competences

In the points below the produced relevant content regarding the recognition of competences is summarized and listed.

- Guidelines which help migrants to face the country specific challenges should be produced. These guideline should be online and applicable on smart phones.
- A preliminary competence check which can be performed online would be desirable.

Focus groups/ Qualitative Analysis Results

- A connected and centralized online database which includes requirements and education opportunities would improve the situation.
- Clear communication about what needs to be done by the involved groups is desirable.
- An upload function for qualifications and a preliminary language assessment should be integrated in the E-Tool.
- It would be advisable to integrate a matching platform in the E-Tool, in order to support the employment of newly arrived migrants and refugees. This section could be used by the local economy, if they are interested in hiring newly arrived individuals.

LikeHome E-Tools

low relevant ideas, comments and wishes regarding the production of the LikeHome E-Tools are listed.

- The platform needs to be available in all relevant languages.
- The tools should provide information about the educational system not only for adults but also for children. This section has to include information about educational opportunities in the project partner countries and the specific requirements for educational routes.
- Interactive communication in form of a forum would be desirable.
- Links to civil society organisations and government organisation have to be provided.
- The platform should illustrate guidance cases which could be used as best practice examples.

Following the survey and design meetings, a needs and challenges analysis report as a basis for the development of the Like Home framework was developed.



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