

HOME & AWAY



Online Magazine



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HOME & AWAY



NOT JUST A
SIMPLE MAGAZINE...



By



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“Home & Away” Online Magazine, Not Just a Simple Magazine...

The European Project **See Me, Hear Me** (SeHeMe) aims to empower young migrants through the development of their media literacy and language skills, enabling them to effectively express their narratives and perspectives on various social and daily topics. As a pivotal component of this initiative, the "Home & Away" Online Magazine emerges as a platform for migrants to freely articulate their voices and experiences within the host society. By fostering a space where migrants can share their stories and insights, the magazine endeavours to enhance their confidence in communicating with the broader community. Through this exchange, the project seeks to promote inclusivity and understanding between migrants and the host society, ultimately paving the way for greater acceptance and integration.

Empowering Migrant Voices

In order to empower migrant voices, the "Home & Away" Online Magazine explores the challenges that migrants face during their integration process, so that they can be addressed by providing practical advice and solutions. Thus, young migrants embark on a journey of empowerment, reclaiming their identities and asserting their perspectives with confidence and authenticity. The different topics that are explored in this magazine serve as a powerful testament to the richness and diversity of migrant experiences, challenging stereotypes and preconceptions that often overshadow their voices.

Beyond mere expression, the magazine promotes meaningful dialogue and societal transformation. By providing a platform for migrants where they can find useful information and have the opportunity to share their opinions through articles on topics ranging from



discrimination and security to integration and work, homesickness, family and friends, cultural differences and similarities, and opportunities, it amplifies their voices and cultivates understanding within the host society.

Moreover, the magazine serves as a beacon of empowerment and solidarity, offering migrants a sense of belonging and agency in their new homes. Through this magazine, migrants not only assert their presence but also actively contribute to shaping narratives and perceptions within the community.

In addressing issues such as discrimination and security, migrants shed light on the challenges they face and the barriers to their full integration. By sharing their experiences, they not only raise awareness but also advocate for change, fostering a more inclusive and secure environment for all.

Similarly, discussions on integration and work provide insights into the struggles and triumphs of migrants as they navigate the complexities of adapting to a new culture and workforce. By sharing their stories of resilience and perseverance, migrants inspire others and pave the way for greater opportunities and acceptance.

Homesickness, family, and friends are poignant topics that evoke a deep sense of longing and nostalgia. Through heartfelt narratives, migrants open about the joys and challenges of maintaining connections with loved ones across borders, fostering empathy and understanding among readers.

Cultural differences and similarities serve as a lens through which migrants explore their identities and navigate the complexities of multicultural societies. By celebrating diversity and highlighting common ground, migrants foster mutual respect and appreciation within the community.

Discussions on opportunities shed light on the aspirations and dreams of migrants as they strive to build a better future for themselves and their families. By showcasing their talents, skills, and ambitions, migrants inspire others and contribute to society's collective growth and prosperity.

Facilitating Social Inclusion

At the heart of the "Home & Away" magazine lies a profound commitment to facilitating social inclusion and fostering meaningful dialogue. Beyond being a platform for expression, the magazine catalyses societal transformation. By providing migrants with a safe and welcoming space to share their stories and perspectives authentically, it actively works towards dismantling barriers to inclusion.

Through the act of storytelling, migrants reclaim their narratives and assert their presence within the fabric of society. Each shared story adds layers to the intricate tapestry of human experience, highlighting the diverse backgrounds and journeys of migrants. By amplifying these voices, the magazine not only acknowledges the existence of migrants but also celebrates their resilience, courage, and contributions.

Moreover, the magazine serves as a bridge-builder, facilitating connections and fostering empathy between migrants and the broader community. Through open and honest discourse, it invites readers to step into the shoes of migrants, to see the world through their eyes, and to empathize with their struggles and triumphs. In doing so, it challenges stereotypes and misconceptions, paving the way for greater understanding and acceptance.

By promoting empathy and understanding, the "Home & Away" magazine strives to create a more inclusive and cohesive society.



It seeks to break down the barriers that separate us and to build bridges of connection and solidarity. Through the power of storytelling and dialogue, it empowers both migrants and the broader community to come together, to listen, to learn, and to grow. In this way, the magazine becomes not just a publication but a force for positive social change, shaping attitudes, perceptions, and ultimately, the fabric of society itself.

Topics

The choice of topics for the "Home & Away" magazine is driven by the aim to provide a comprehensive platform for migrants to share their experiences and perspectives authentically. Indeed, each topic has been selected and developed with the contributions of young migrants. As mentioned before, the addressed topics range from discrimination and security to integration and work, homesickness, family and friends, cultural differences, and similarities, and, finally, opportunities.

All these themes reflect the diverse and nuanced aspects of migrant life. By tackling these topics, the magazine seeks to shed light on the multifaceted challenges and triumphs encountered by migrants as they navigate through unfamiliar territories. Moreover, the selection of topics aims to foster understanding and empathy within the broader community by inviting readers to engage with the lived experiences of migrants on a personal level. As a result, the magazine endeavours to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes, and promote inclusivity, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more empathetic and cohesive society.

Partnership

The success of the "Home & Away" magazine hinges on a strong and collaborative consortium between different partners of various European and non-European countries. This mix of international partners has contributed to have a considerable variety of views, stories, and good practices. The consortium of the Project is composed of the following partners:



COFAC (Universidade Lusófona - Portugal) is a non-profit cooperative entrusted with the management of Lusófona University, established, and recognized by the Portuguese Ministry of Science, Technology, and Higher Education in 1998. Renowned as the largest private university in Portugal, Lusófona University boasts an expansive network encompassing 10 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Portugal, Brazil, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. With a student body exceeding 10,000 and a faculty comprising 1,500 members, the university operates through nine distinct Schools offering a comprehensive range of academic programs including 44 undergraduate degrees, 45 master's degrees, 11 PhD programs, and 42 postgraduate courses. Additionally, the university is committed to lifelong learning and professional development, offering an array of vocational and continuous training courses tailored to meet evolving educational needs.



Eurospeak originated as a distinguished private English language school accredited by both the British Council and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). Over time, the commitment to excellence led Eurospeak to diversify their endeavours, resulting in the establishment of Eurospeak Ireland, a subsidiary dedicated to the development and delivery of innovative educational tools, consultancy services, and the execution of European Projects. Eurospeak operates as an educational technological consulting firm with a primary objective of fostering innovation in education and training. Their mission is underpinned by a dedication to promoting educational tools and initiatives that support an innovative and technologically advanced environment, with a particular emphasis on facilitating the inclusion of disadvantaged groups into economic and social spheres.

Eurospeak's participation in European projects has been marked by a demonstrable ability to adapt to diverse work methodologies and deliver high-quality outcomes within stipulated timelines. Our extensive experience in European project management, coupled with our expertise in the assessment and validation of informal learning, adds significant value to our collaborative efforts. Moreover, our collaborative network spans a wide range of local stakeholders, both public and private, in the UK and Ireland, further enriching our ability to deliver impactful educational solutions.





PADIL (Tunisia) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to supporting the sustainable and inclusive development of local communities. It collaborates with local stakeholders, including civil society organisations, local authorities, community groups, and social entrepreneurs, to promote innovative and sustainable local initiatives that address the communities' needs.

PADIL believes that local communities play a crucial role in the development and implementation of effective solutions to the socio-economic and environmental challenges they encounter. Its approach involves strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders, facilitating access to resources, and fostering collaboration and innovation.

Ultimately, PADIL works on projects and programs in areas such as sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, education, health, and youth employment. With a strong emphasis on capacity building, networking, and exchange of experiences, PADIL has a proven track record of success in implementing projects aimed at youth development, social inclusion, and socio-economic empowerment. Notably, PADIL has extensive experience working with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, as demonstrated by its involvement in various projects focused on supporting this vulnerable demographic group.



With a collective experience of over two decades in research and education, RESET (Cyprus) stands at the forefront of fostering societal change through the creation, evolution, and revolution of socially driven concepts, systems, and practices. Our organisation is dedicated to accelerating knowledge to amplify positive change at local, national, regional, and global levels. At the heart of RESET's mission lies the promotion of a fair and non-violent world through education, restorative dialogue, skill development among professionals, vulnerable groups, and constructive action. We collaborate closely with governmental departments, local municipalities, NGOs, commercial entities, and educational institutions to address market, social, economic, and cultural challenges comprehensively.

RESET's multifaceted approach encompasses three core pillars: Research, Education, and Transformative Dialogue, aimed at fostering creative solutions and effecting significant societal change. RESET's team comprises experienced researchers, dialogue facilitators, trainers, educators, project managers, web developers, and graphic designers, collectively contributing their expertise to address various societal challenges. Indeed, their areas of specialization include community and youth-led initiatives, education/e-learning, social inclusion, transformative dialogue, and creative empowerment.



Defoin

DEFOIN (Spain) was established in 2009 with the mission of promoting Training for Employment and Insertion of both employed and unemployed workers. Their team comprises highly qualified professionals who analyse, design, and develop each project with the aim of ensuring its success. Betting on training as a fundamental tool for development and facilitating the integration of individuals, DEFOIN operates as a training centre with over 750 trainers boasting extensive experience in designing, implementing, developing, and evaluating training programs at various levels. With a national network of more than 200 training centres across Spain, they provide training opportunities to approximately 35,000 students.

Furthermore, DEFOIN is also developing and implementing, in collaboration with more than 200 international, various European Projects. Since 2014, DEFOIN has participated in 35 European Projects focused on different topics: sports, immigration, disabilities and many more.





E-SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL GROUP (Greece) is a distinguished Adult Education Centre and VET provider situated in Greece, with its inception dating back to September 2003. Founded with the vision of equipping VET and Adult Learners with essential skills for future employability, E-SCHOOL is committed to delivering quality education and accreditation in various subjects, facilitating learners' seamless integration into the labour market.

Accredited by the Greek National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), E-SCHOOL's primary objective has been to provide comprehensive training since its creation. Over the years, their scope of services has expanded significantly. From offering ICT training and professional seminars to providing vocational training for the unemployed and upskilling programs for employees in SMEs, E-SCHOOL caters to diverse educational needs across multiple sectors. Over the years, our institution has forged collaborations with educational organizations nationwide and actively participates in EU-funded projects under Erasmus+ KA1 and KA2 programs.



HOME & AWAY



DISCRIMINATION



By

Defoin





Racism, xenophobia, and discrimination: what are they?

When migrating to another country, immigrants can face a variety of challenges that can affect their full integration in the new host country. Indeed, integration can be a very long and demanding, and this is because there external and internal factors:

- *Internal challenges* - psychological reactions and personal experience that can lead to discomfort and stresses.
- *External challenges* - all potential barriers such as language, stereotypes or bureaucracy that can limit the access to work, goods, and other services.

These challenges, especially the internal ones can lead to a so-called “culture shock”, which, according to OSCE (2018), is a set of emotional reactions to sudden or unexpected change. This happens when a person loses the support of significant members of their family, friends, and culture. As a result, there is a high risk of increased stress levels and misunderstanding.

Therefore, migrants not only face these challenges that they must overcome, but also risk to be rejected by the host country, as well as suffer cases of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination. Because of these factors, migrants can experience:

- Unemployment, poorly paid jobs, or illegal jobs
- Educational underachievement
- Social exclusion and resources deprivation
- Housing issues
- Abuse, verbal and physical violence

The latter ones, can negatively affect the migrants’ perception of safety.

Definitions

In order to better understand the concepts of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination, let's have a look at their definitions according to OSCE (2018):

- *Racism* – it entails a distinction on based on physical characteristics (phenotypes).
- *Xenophobia* – this entails the idea that a person is foreign to or originates from outside the community or nation.
- *Discrimination* – these are all the forms of intolerance put in practice (verbal and physical violence, social exclusion, unemployment..).

These concepts are followed by other sub concepts that, unfortunately, are often the cause that instigate and provoke these forms of intolerance. Indeed, racism and xenophobia generate most of the time from stereotypes that people hold and/or perceive of particular group. As a consequence, these assumptions tend to make people draw conclusions and/or generalisations that in many cases are wrong and false.





What does the law say about this?

The majority of states in Europe have some kind of laws that punish discrimination and all the forms of intolerance linked to it. Nevertheless, there are also a number of international standards such as treaties and conventions that protect people from being discriminated. Since 1945, fundamental human rights have seen a progressive increase and have developed into a comprehensive legal body that compels states to implement these standards at national level.

The starting ground was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognises “the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family”. Therefore, it is clear that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms proclaimed in this Declaration, without any distinction or discrimination of any kind. Apart from the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Fundamental Human Rights, there are other several conventions and charters that tackle this issue:

- The Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), established in 1965.
- The International Covenant Civil and Political Rights, developed in 1966.
- The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950.
- The European Union Directive on Racial Equality of 2000.

Hate Crimes

Although human rights have seen a progressive increase in the past decades, hate crimes have not yet disappeared from the crime sphere. According to OSCE (2018), hate crimes must always have a base offence to have occurred so that legislation can be applied.

For this reason, hate crimes include murder, acts of intimidation, threats, property damage, assault or any other criminal offence. Many times, the target of a hate crime is a person, group of people or property that belongs to a group that shared protected characteristics. The perpetrator chooses the target based on one or more of their protected characteristics, which would be a core characteristic shared by a group, such as “race”, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or culture.

According to the Spanish Interior Ministry’s latest report on hate crimes (2017), between 2016 and 2017 there has been an increase of hate crimes of 11,6%, as it went from 1.272 to 1.419 reported cases to the Spanish Forces authorities. Of all the protected characteristics, race and ethnicity related crimes were the most reported ones: 524 reported cases in 2017. The most common type of hate crime has been physical injuries (276 reported cases), followed by threats (253 reported cases), and damage (109 reported cases). 31% of these hate crimes have been reported to the Spanish authorities by foreigners, the majority of which comes from African nationals (17%).



As a result, it is widely accepted that hate crimes are the most serious and dangerous manifestations of intolerance and xenophobia. Indeed, the OSCE (2018), warns that hate crimes can only escalate if not



stopped, can threaten community stability, and can have a deeply destructive effect on the victims. This clearly shows that this issue must be taken seriously into account, effective measures must be taken to tackle this and raising awareness needs to be fomented for prevention.

Good practices to prevent and address racism, xenophobia, and discrimination

Many ways exist to prevent and address racism, xenophobia, and discrimination. A good example is the Good Practice in Migrant Integration Manual, developed by OSCE in 2018, which explores different practices and projects that aim to prevent discrimination and foment integration in Europe. Thus, in order to prevent and address racism, xenophobia, and discrimination, the following measures and directives shall be taken into account (OSCE, 2018):

- *Awareness raising* - Initiatives to raise awareness of racism and xenophobia against migrants aim to bring positive and sustainable change to societies by promoting universally respected values. Their initiators show leadership in condemning racism and xenophobia against migrants and reject generalizations or the stereotyping of individuals and different groups.
- *Community liaison* - Individual and collective security is a major concern for migrants and their communities. Over the past few years, there have been arson attacks against migrants' homes and their community centres, as well as violent assaults and serious bodily harm. Many of these incidents tend to go unreported owing to the extreme marginalization of these communities in some participating States.



- *Community engagement and intercultural communication* - Community engagement programmes can help to tackle negative attitudes and build positive relationships and understanding between receiving and migrant communities.
- *Positive action* - Positive action includes measures or policies, prescribed by the relevant legislation, aimed at addressing inherent discrimination. These measures are implemented to enable or encourage members of the affected groups to overcome or minimize disadvantage, or to meet the different needs of those groups and enable or encourage their members to participate properly and fully in the pursuit of employment, among other activities.
- *Confidential and third-party reporting* - It is a widely known fact that the majority of hate crimes and other serious acts of discrimination faced by migrants are not reported to law enforcement or state authorities. This under-reporting is due to a number of factors, including victims' fear of reprisals, further attacks, and unwanted attention; victims' lack of trust in law enforcement officers and other state officials; and migrant victims' fear that they may compromise their legal status if they "make a fuss" or expose their uncertain or undocumented status.



Barriers

According to the policy study of the Council of Europe (2020) *Identifying and Preventing Systemic Discrimination at the Local Level*, there are many good practices that can be implemented to tackle discrimination, but there are also other aspects that must be carefully analysed and taken into consideration before the start of their implementation. Indeed, as reported by the Council of Europe (2020), there are three key barriers that could limit the implementation, and therefore the impact, of your practice to tackle discrimination. They are the following:

1. The invisibility of the processes involved in systemic discrimination, the absence of evident intent, and the difficulty in directly linking the resulting situations of disadvantage to specific systems within a community or organisation (Council of Europe, 2020).
2. Lack of knowledge about and understanding of the complex nature and widespread implications of systemic discrimination (Council of Europe, 2020).
3. Fear or defensiveness in a community that preclude acknowledgement of systemic discrimination as an actual or potential problem (Council of Europe, 2020).

Good Practices

“Conflict kitchen” (Kuchnia Konflikту) serves international dishes in Poland

This project in Warsaw, Poland, which is a good example for community engagement and intercultural communication. is an initiative to employ refugees and migrants with the aim of giving them an opportunity to cook their favourite dishes. The result is a restaurant open five days a week serving food from all over the world.

They have recently opened a catering service. The aim is to provide refugees and migrants with employment and a vehicle to integration.

Starbucks refugee recruitment programme

Private companies such as Starbucks have implemented specific positive action initiatives aimed at providing employment to refugees and migrants across Europe. This is part of their global programme to recruit as many as 10 000 refugees by 2022.

The “Next Door Family” project in the Czech Republic

The “Next Door Family” project aims to address the insufficient communication between migrants and majority communities. The project was first launched in the Czech Republic by the non-governmental organization Word 21, and brought Czech families together with migrant families for a casual lunch in order to encourage (informal) communication and personal friendship ties between native and non-native citizens, and to promote intercultural dialogue. With time, the idea spread to many other countries. By 2012, the project had spread to Belgium, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Slovakia, and Spain.

By mediating direct contact between foreign and Czech families, the project contributes to fostering mutual knowledge and understanding. The goal is not only to ameliorate the negative perception of foreigners within society, but also to influence migrants’ attitudes towards the majority, who they sometimes perceive as “closed” and “unfriendly”. The project derives from the “inclusive neighbourhoods concept”, which seeks to promote individual friendship ties.

Source: European Commission, “The Next Door Family Project”, <https://ec.europa.eu/>



A closer look at the real situation: Articles written by migrants

What do you look for when you migrate?

By Scarlett Obando

A few days ago, the President of Chile, Gabriel Boric, convened the National Security Council (Cosená) to take action on the current security crisis facing my country, an instance led by the President of the Republic, which aims to advise the Head of State on matters related to national security.

This decision comes after a series of violent events that have occurred over the last few weeks. Among them, the homicide of two farmers who were intercepted by four foreign criminals on their way back from a day's work. It was in broad daylight, in front of the 16-year-old son of one of the victims. That same day, two nuns were taken hostage for an hour, bound hand and foot in a convent located three blocks from the president's residence in downtown Santiago. Bodies dismembered on the side of the highway, robberies, assaults, and an endless list of crimes that we saw so far away.

From here, "on the other side of the pond", in the city of Madrid, it is impossible not to stop and think about how far we are from that reality. To live in this city, or at least what I have experienced, is to walk alone in the street at any time and not feel afraid, is to go out partying with your friends and know that you will get home safely, is to ride public transportation at dawn and know that your life is not at risk. Are there exceptions? Of course! They always exist, but the feeling of security of those of us who have migrated, at least to Spain, and see from afar the reality that today strikes my country and Latin America is incomparable.

Are there other insecurities? Of course there are. There is the insecurity of housing, not knowing if you will be able to find a rental at a good price (something extremely difficult in Madrid) or if you will be discriminated against because of your origin. There is a feeling of vulnerability and lack of protection when you do not have access to the public health system unless you have the foreign identification card (TIE), something complex because getting an appointment in this country to carry out procedures is an odyssey, we must wait months for an answer, which translates into anxiety and fear because you do not know what will happen to you.

Migrating has two faces, there are joys and sorrows, you experience a great loneliness in the process and in my case, every day I want to return to my country, but I stop to think about everything I have lived and the efforts I have had to make to achieve personal and professional goals, I also think about the security I feel when I walk down the street without the feeling that something can happen to me and I think: it was worth it.



Systemic discrimination in Spain

By Sofía Zambrano Ortega

According to the National Statistics Institute (INE), immigration in Spain is growing year by year. The main destination of newcomers tends to be large cities, such as the country's capital. In 2022, immigration from Central and South America increased by 60%. Year by year, the number of immigrants of diverse origins grows and generates new social and economic dynamics.

Spain's migration policy is influenced by its history and the relations it has maintained with other countries. For example, it is possible to obtain Spanish nationality by residence (legal and continuous immediately prior to the application) and the period of residence varies depending on the nationality of the applicant. The general term of residence is ten years; for refugees, five years; and for nationals of Latin American countries, Andorra, the Philippines, Equatorial Guinea, Portugal, and persons of Sephardic origin, only two years. This, in addition to the shared language, makes Spain the main European destination for immigrants from Latin America.

However, many immigrants arrive without residence permits, which prevents them from finding legal work and hinders all aspects of their lives: education, healthcare, and housing. In addition, they face stigma, discrimination, and institutional racism in the country. This situation ends up forcing migrants to accept irregular conditions, where they have no access to labour or social rights and are constantly in legal and social limbo.

Given this situation, new social movements have arisen, such as the organisation Territorio Doméstico, a women's collective created 20 years ago, which exists to fight for their labour rights. In Spain, the majority of domestic workers are mestizo and racialised migrant women.

This struggle stems from the labour vulnerability that migrant women face when they arrive: they take jobs without a contract and end up in an irregular situation, where they have no access to social security, unemployment, or pension contributions. Without a contract, no matter how many years they work, they can be dismissed and find themselves in a vulnerable situation at any time.

Legislation on domestic work in Spain is progressing slowly. In 2022, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled that Spanish domestic work legislation discriminates against women workers on the basis of gender by not allowing them to pay unemployment contributions. From that year onwards, improvements were made to the law with Royal Decree-Law 16/2022 of 6 September for the improvement of working conditions and social security for domestic workers.

Despite these small advances, the discrimination and racism faced by migrants of any nationality remains a reality. Domestic workers are only one of the vulnerable groups: there are Chinese, Romanian, Latin American and African immigrants, who face institutional racism and social stigmas that are still present in Spanish society on a daily basis. These advances, although small, are important because everything indicates that immigration in Spain will continue to grow year by year and efforts to integrate the immigrant population will have to be constant.



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HOME & AWAY



CULTURE



By



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Cultural differences and similarities

When thinking about integration of immigrants or refugees, it is essential to acknowledge that cultural differences and similarities need to be addressed if intercultural understanding and tolerance are to be achieved as the decisive factors for social inclusion.

In this text, we chose to focus on three major topics that can be explored to ease the integration process, namely games, food, and language.

Games as a way to explore cultural differences and similarities

We can identify some positive aspects related to the importance of traditional games, such as cultural preservation, development of social skills, fostering imagination and creativity and providing learning opportunities.

Traditional games have their roots in the history and traditions of a given group/region/territory/country and people can get an understanding of their own cultural heritage while preserving traditions and practices. Many times, these games involve face-to-face interaction, and they help to develop social and communication skills, teamwork, negotiation skills. Creative thinking and imaginative play are also involved in traditional games, role playing is sometimes an important part of these games, and all this stimulates imagination. In addition to the knowledge that may be acquired during these playful activities, traditional games can bring people together, they are an opportunity to share experiences and different points of view and to create memories. allows people from different countries and cultures to connect and interact with each other.

Different cultures play different types of games, and this can be a starting point to explore and discuss cultural differences and similarities and subsequently foster a context that promotes cultural understanding, cultural exchange, and empathy, and more tolerance. When using gamification as a way to promote inclusion among people from different cultures it is important to choose games that are not very difficult, can be enjoyed by all and can be adapted to integrate elements from different cultures.

There are several ways in which games can be addressed with a group of migrants, starting by introducing traditional games from different cultural origins. Using a variety of games from around the world may be interesting since participants will have the chance to get a different view of different cultures. The objectives and rules of each game can be compared and discussed, and people can try to identify similarities and differences. This encourages group discussions during which participants share their opinions, overcome the fear to communicate and may feel more confident. They also have an opportunity to learn about new things and show respect and appreciation for cultural differences.





A practical example could be:

1. Select a variety of traditional games from the countries/cultures that correspond to the people in the group.
2. Identify the topics that are common to the selected games, such as storytelling, strategy, cooperation, teamwork, etc.
3. Explore the origins and histories of the selected games. Give information about how the games originated, what are the geographical, historical, or religious factors that were the bases for these games.
4. Explain the rules and objectives and compare them, inviting participants to discuss how the rules may reflect different cultural values or rules.
5. Promote the sharing of experiences by the participants. They can talk about their memories of these traditional games, or they can even introduce other traditional games.

Other gamification activities that can be used to discuss and explore cultural diversity may be:

Storytelling game

Participants share stories about their cultural backgrounds, or they can tell a traditional story. The others may ask questions or identify similarities.

Cultural discovery game

Teams are formed and given challenges whose objective is to learn about different cultures. These challenges may be identifying flags, traditional food, costumes, popular music, dances, among others. This way, participants can learn about other cultures and realise similarities between the others' and their own cultures.

Word game

Participants teach each other words and phrases in their own languages, promoting intercultural communication and linguistic diversity.

Family tradition game

Participants share a family tradition, and the others can ask questions to learn more and compare with the traditions in their own cultures.

Alphabet box

Participants form a group, and each group is given a piece of paper with a grid that contains a letter per square. They are given a common topic, for example, the host country and then each group must fill in the squares with words related to the topic. Each group then presents its findings.

Cooking session

Participants come together for a friendly cooking competition, where each team prepares a dish typical of their culture. After preparation, the dishes are shared among all participants, allowing everyone to try and appreciate the gastronomic diversity. This game highlights the importance of food in culture and promotes interpersonal relations through cooking.





Food: the expression of a culture

The importance of food goes well beyond meeting the need for nutrition. Food plays a crucial role in all cultures around the world, it is part of the cultural identity and of the traditions of a people and is also important in establishing interpersonal relations and preserving family ties. Specific ingredients and specific dishes are often associated with a given culture or country, such as sushi, pasta, paella, pastéis de nata, just to mention a few, becoming known internationally.

In some cultures, food is present in rituals and traditions, such as food festivals, ceremonial banquets or foods that are prepared for special events such as religious festivities, funerals, or weddings. When it comes to family ties, what better way to celebrate them than with food prepared according to recipes that are passed on from generation to generation?

Having lunch or dinner with family or friends is a great opportunity to create wonderful memories, share stories or make plans. It is interesting to think about the way foods and dishes travel from region to region, are adapted to local tastes, receive local influences in terms of new ingredients, and turn into local versions of the originals. A very good example of this is the case of Portugal, Brazil, and Africa.

The Portuguese arrived in Brazil in April 1500 due to the expedition of Pedro Álvares Cabral and the systematic colonization of the territory, which began in 1530, had three economic cycles: brazilwood, sugar and gold. When part of the court moved to Vila de São Vicente (currently São Paulo), some foods from the Portuguese kingdom and the Portuguese islands were introduced, such as watercress, onion, garlic, rice, chives, lettuce, cabbage, turnips, carrots, chicory, coriander, kale, spinach, fig, ginger, pomegranate, mint, orange,

lemon, basil, melon, mustard, wheat, sugar cane, vine, trees, among others. Rice cultivation was also introduced, and dishes based on this cereal began to appear, salt also began to be used, essentially for salting and preserving meat.

In addition to those brought from the Portuguese territories, foods such as yams, okra, and gherkin, among others, were also introduced in Brazil as a result of the African slave trade carried out by the Portuguese. Let us mention the very popular Brazilian dish feijoada, a bean stew with pork and beef, that is now a different version from the Portuguese original and that is also very popular in countries like Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, and obviously Portugal (in its original version).

Brazilian sweets and pastries also have a great Portuguese influence, such as marmalade, rice pudding, among others. Quindim is a Brazilian sweet inspired by the Portuguese sweet Brisas-do-lis. The Portuguese version uses almonds, which were not found in Brazil and, therefore, was replaced by coconut, which is found in abundance in that country. Baba de Moça is another very typical Brazilian sweet, but based on the Portuguese Doce de Ovos.

Vatapá is a dish of African origin, which arrived in Brazil in the mid-16th century brought by slaves who came on Portuguese slave ships and its name originates from the term Yoruba vata'pa. Currently, Vatapá is a typical dish from Bahia, but it is also popular in other regions, such as the north and northeast of Brazil, especially the states of Amazonas, Amapá and Pará, with some variations.

There is even a Brazilian song “Vatapá” by Dorival Caymmi, a Brazilian songwriter, that celebrates this dish and whose lyrics describe the recipe with the ingredients and gives the basic instructions for the preparation:



Vatapá

Quem quiser vatapá, ô
Que procure fazer
Primeiro o fubá
Depois o dendê
Procure uma nêga baiana, ô
Que saiba mexer
Que saiba mexer
Que saiba mexer
Procure uma nêga baiana, ô
Que saiba mexer
Que saiba mexer
Que saiba mexer



Bota castanha de caju
Um bocadinho mais
Pimenta malagueta
Um bocadinho mais
Bota castanha de caju
Um bocadinho mais
Pimenta malagueta
Um bocadinho mais

Amendoim, camarão, rala um coco
Na hora de machucar
Sal com gengibre e cebola, iaiá
Na hora de temperar



Listen to the song!



Não para de mexer, ô
Que é pra não embolar
Panela no fogo
Não deixa queimar
Com qualquer dez mil réis e uma nêga ô
Se faz um vatapá
Se faz um vatapá
Que bom vatapá

Bota castanha de caju
Um bocadinho mais
Pimenta malagueta
Um bocadinho mais
Bota castanha de caju
Um bocadinho mais
Pimenta malagueta
Um bocadinho mais



Amendoim, camarão, rala um coco
Na hora de machucar
Sal com gengibre e cebola

The language barrier

When moving to a new country, communicating in a new language can be a challenge, and usually language is indeed pointed out as the factor that represents the biggest obstacle to integration in the society. Not only language can make immigrants life difficult when they try to solve their daily problems such as going shopping or going to the doctors, but can also turn into a factor that prevents them from getting a job and thus become fully integrated and independent in the new country.

It would also be important to draw people's attention to some details when communicating with immigrants that do not know the host country language. Avoid slang, speak slowly, keep sentences simple, be careful with humour as this may be the origin of misunderstandings, and above, all be supportive, after all, it is not easy to be in a strange country, surrounded by new rules and a new way of life, and not be able to communicate.

Authorities in host countries are devising strategies to cope with immigrants problems and try to ease their integration. One such example is a project developed in a municipality in greater Lisbon, Portugal, whose strategy is to use a set of different activities to integrate the immigrants in the municipality. The name of the project was “ÓNIS_Boleia para a Interculturalidade” (ÓNIS_ A ride to Interculturality) and it was carried out between 2019 and 2022.

“ÓNIS_Boleia para a Interculturalidade” (ÓNIS - A ride to Interculturality).

The project arised from the growing migratory flow in the municipality of Odivelas (in greater Lisbon, as we said), Portugal.



This flow shows a series of procedures, measures, and local strategies, which need to be taken care of in order to guarantee the full rights of migrants/third-country nationals and their descendants. This project was co-financed by the Fund for the Asylum, Migration, and Integration – Secretariat General of the Portuguese Ministry of the Internal Administration) and by the EU.

The target of the project were third-country nationals in the European Union residing in the municipality of Odivelas and the technicians who work with this population and the general public. The objectives of the project were to improve and intensify the responses and support to these people, to encourage and promote learning contexts that facilitate integration and inclusion, to contribute to a greater knowledge and demystification of the cultures and religions of the migrant population and to stimulate the civic participation of various elements representing migrants. The project intended to facilitate the inclusion of the municipality's migrant population and corresponds to the creation of a municipal plan for the integration of migrants in the municipality of Odivelas that has a comprehensive approach, focusing on every aspect of life in society, and also including language as one of the main intervention areas, which are: welcoming, integration and social support, culture and citizenship, education and language, housing, health, gender equality, and labour market.

In terms of education and language, the project intended to:

- a) offer language courses (Portuguese beginners' level)
- b) extend the offer of “Portuguese as a non-native language” courses
- c) offer a Guide for welcoming and supporting school integration
- d) training teachers in the field of sports (namely, cricket) to promote inclusion in and between communities.

This project is a good example of how an integrated response can meet the needs of more vulnerable populations and it is interesting to see that the municipality as taken.

A closer look at the real situation: interviews with migrants

COFAC had the opportunity to interview three immigrants coming from different countries and asked them about cultural differences and similarities and the impact they had on their integration process. As we can see, these are good examples of successful integration into the Portuguese society. The cultural differences identified are not relevant, quite the opposite, these immigrants point out that Portuguese culture is not that different. It is also interesting to see that as a barrier to integration, all three people pointed out language as the major one.

Interview 1

When you arrived in Portugal, what were the main cultural differences/traditions that you found in this country?

Well, there are not really many cultural distinctions between Serbia, where I am from, and Portugal. People and kids spend a lot more time in parks and the natural environment here in Portugal, which could be related to the country's beautiful climate. This is something I really enjoy about Portuguese culture; I believe that family time is highly valued. What's most unusual for me is that everyone pays a part of the bill when they are invited to dinner or coffee. In Serbia, the person who invites the other ones, gets to pay the bill, but friends typically "argue" about who will pay. This is not because they are richer; rather, It's just the way we express respect for each other. It is also usual for an event to happen on someone's birthday.



Do you feel that these cultural differences had/have an impact on your integration process? In what ways?

I wouldn't say they had an effect on my integration because there are not any significant cultural differences. I felt welcomed from the very first day. I had nice interactions with the Portuguese, and I had the impression that they were always there to help.

Is it hard for you to accept these differences?

I still did not accept the mentioned difference regarding the payment of the bill.

Do you feel that you have already changed something in the way you accept/don't accept these differences?

Of course, I believe that the differences have enriched me. I became more grateful for the time I spent with my family and friends.

What about similarities? Can you identify any? If yes, do you feel they made your integration process easier?

Absolutely! We enjoy good cuisine, nice company, and extremely similar traditions. I believe it was easier for me to integrate because we are both very kind and easy to get along with.

We know that language play a crucial role in integration processes of immigrants. What do you know about this?

The crucial element, in my opinion, is language. It makes the process of acceptance and integration easier. Speaking English with older individuals can be a little trickier, although the majority of the younger generations speak it very well. Being unable to say anything more to your neighbour than "Good morning" is very strange.

Interview 2

When you arrived in Portugal, what were the main cultural differences/traditions that you found in this country?

One obvious difference that I found is that Portuguese people get offended very easily and often avoid to tell what they think to other person so that they don't hurt their feelings. In general, I think that people from my country are quite similar to Portuguese people. Another thing that I did find different was the "praxe" that students at Portuguese university practice, for example.

Do you feel that these cultural differences had/have an impact on your integration process? In what ways?

Not really. Perhaps people found me a bit rude, but I think that they quickly realized that I am like that and that if I tell them something, it is not to hurt their feelings.

Is it hard for you to accept these differences?

No. I think that I came about the right age to Portugal, so I didn't have difficulties to adapt, nor people to me.

Do you feel that you have already changed something in the way you accept/don't accept these differences?

Not really. Sometimes, perhaps I keep my mouth shut when I could say something.

What about similarities? Can you identify any? If yes, do you feel they made your integration process easier?

In my opinion, we are very similar. We like to socialize very much, like to watch/play sports, etc. Yes, this definitely made my life much easier. During my first week in Portugal, I was invited to a friend's house to have dinner and watch football with a group of friends. I felt that I blended in easily.



We know that language plays a crucial role in the integration processes of immigrants. What do you know about this?

I didn't speak a word of Portuguese when I first came. As soon as realized that I like living in Portugal, I started learning the language. I think that my friends liked my effort and supported me, even though we were communicating perfectly in English.

Would you like to tell us about your experience in terms of this language barrier?

I didn't find this a big barrier. Most young people speak English, and I could communicate with most of my friends normally. However, it wasn't easy to learn the language, but I think it was even funny sometimes when I was trying to speak Portuguese at the beginning. Anyway, I wouldn't change a thing even if I could. I find it all necessary in my evolution as a person.

Interview 3

When you arrived in Portugal, what were the main cultural differences/traditions that you found in this country?

Honestly I don't feel that there were that many differences, overall Ukrainian and Portuguese cultures are quite similar, but the biggest challenge was to adapt simply because we couldn't understand it because of the language barrier. But what made everything easier was how welcoming people were and how they have tried to help us since day one even though we couldn't communicate properly with them. Maybe the biggest difference was the food, which is quite different.

Do you feel that these cultural differences had/have an impact on your integration process? In what ways?

Not really, overall the integration was quite easy thanks to the people.

Is it hard for you to accept these differences?

No, each culture is rich on its own and it's really important to respect other cultures especially when we are trying to integrate.

Do you feel that you have already changed something in the way you accept/don't accept these differences?

Yes, I feel that it was very easy to adapt and accept them and nowadays we incorporate them on a daily basis.

What about similarities? Can you identify any? If yes, do you feel they made your integration process easier?

Overall, I think the values of the family are very similar, families like to spend time together on the weekends. Also the most important part of the integration was the people, since I arrived in Portugal everyone was always ready to help me.





We know that language plays a crucial role in the integration processes of immigrants. What do you know about this?

Language is definitely the biggest challenge when you move to another country, especially when there are no similarities at all, even our alphabets are completely different, so that creates a big challenge to integrate, because it creates a barrier in communicating with people around.

Would you like to tell us about your experience in terms of this language barrier?

Learning Portuguese was definitely the biggest challenge that I had when I came to Portugal, because I couldn't express what I needed, but eventually I found private lessons for foreigners that were taught by Ukrainian teachers, so slowly everything became easier.

HOME & AWAY



OPPORTUNITIES



By





"Don't wait for the right opportunity: create it."

George Bernard Shaw

"Your big opportunity may be right where you are now."

Napoleon Hill

Opportunities young migrants can have or can find in the host society

The European Union and the Irish Republic are replete with opportunities for young migrants, refugees and asylees. These young people need opportunities at an important time in their lives, and societies welcoming them have a moral responsibility to help. This is already acknowledged at international level through laws that establish the right of migrant, refugee and asylee children to be treated equal to children who are citizens. In Ireland as in other European Union countries, those young migrants over the age of 18 are also provided with opportunities in education and work through government sponsored initiatives, NGOs, or community initiatives.

The effects of migrating to another country can vary from positivity to traumatic depending on the person involved, their reasons for migration, their background, health, wealth, and the circumstances of their departure from their homeland. Overall, migration is a complex and mentally challenging experience that can profoundly affect individuals, families, communities, and societies on many levels.

For all people migrating to Ireland, culture shock, disorientation and cultural adaptation are challenging. Migrants often experience a cultural shock as they navigate unfamiliar social norms, local customs, and practices, language, and unfamiliar language use in their host country.

Successfully adapting means personal growth, educational and professional opportunities and a broader experiences and insights on different cultures, not only Irish culture, but the culture of other migrants residing in Ireland. Accepting and embracing Irish cultural norms will ensure rapid access and success in employment and education potentially leading to higher wages, which subsequently can improve the standard of living for migrants and their kin.

Embracing the local culture allows migrants access to social and community networks, other migrants, local residents, and community organizations. Having access to these connections provides crucial and valuable emotional support for younger migrants who may lack family networks and support in Ireland.

When someone moves to a new country, it is often challenging to integrate or 'fit in'. However, a distinction needs to be made between refugees and asylum seekers and those migrating because of work. The distinction is important because the two groups are often confused by mainstream media organisations (MSM). Whilst all migrants need time to adapt, refugees and asylees maybe traumatised and require speedy, specific and targeted help to access opportunities in the host country. These distinctions further intersect with age and gender which could affect access to opportunities as require their own specific remedies.

Migrants who have gone through the established visa process prior to moving to a new country tend to have a job on arrival and a ready-made support network in play which is one less obstacle. However, young migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees do not always have this opportunity and required a proactive response by the community to reach out to them to help them take advantage of the numerous opportunities available to them in the host society for them to thrive and contribute positively to their new communities.



Education

Education offers refugees and migrants access to opportunities to integrate socially with the local community, further their educational prospects and find worthwhile employment work. Ireland like other members of the EU offers accessible education especially for young child migrants to enrol in schools, colleges, or vocational training programs allowing them to integrate rapidly and acquire new skills and qualifications. According to European Union law, asylum-seeking children can attend local national primary and secondary schools just like Irish children. This is right under the Reception Conditions Regulations.



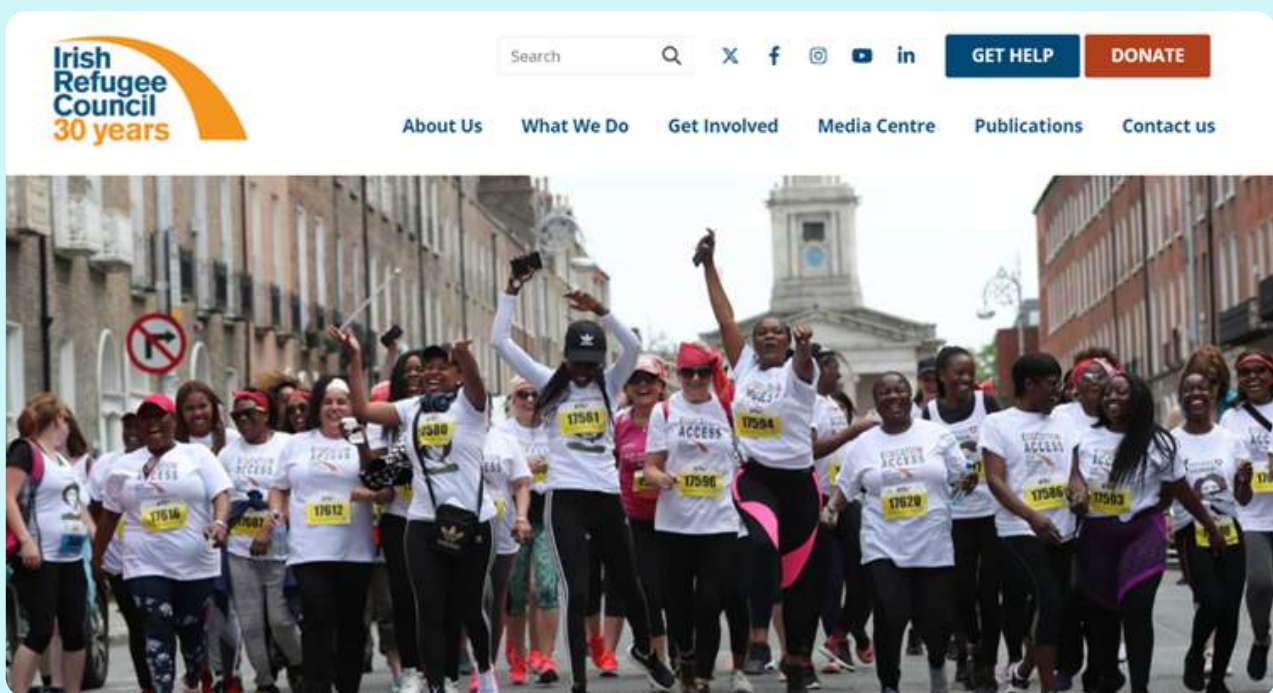
In theory, child migrants have easy access to the educational system of Ireland at Primary, Post Primary Junior and Senior Cycles and children can begin the integration process as they are considered on par with Irish children and have access to the same educational opportunities.

Finding opportunities for young migrants over 18 can be extremely challenging for a number of reasons. Firstly, some of the rights enjoyed by under 18s such as provisions under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) obligating signatories to uphold the rights of all children within its jurisdiction, including asylum seekers do not apply to over 18s. The European Union also has frameworks in place to support all children have timely access to healthcare and psychosocial support, as well as to inclusive formal education, regardless of status. Secondly, young migrants over 18 require additional support to find educational opportunities be they academic or vocation.

However, there are organisations for those over the age of eighteen such as **SaorEd**, meaning free education. SaorEd, a partnership between Doras, New Horizon, and Dignity, is one such organisation that offers a range of free courses from beginner to advanced that includes language teaching, IT and job skills, CV templates, information on obtaining drivers licences, information on volunteering, labour market access information and job information pack with cv templates. It provides open access to online learning opportunities ensuring that free education is available anytime, anywhere and to anyone. Providing access to a wide range of courses gratis for international protection applicants and refugees, SaorEd bridges the gap in existing education in Ireland and vocational training programmes. SaorEd provides English language for those wishing to enter higher education, Arabic speakers, and English for the workplace. IT courses include basic to advanced digital skills and web design. The organisation also provides educational programs from third-party education providers. The majority of the SaorEd study programmes are accessible to international protection applicants. A completion certificates is provided on conclusion of the course.



Additionally, the Irish Refugee Council provides a comprehensive resource interface that can provide young migrants and refugees wishing to access universities and colleges with key information on how to proceed with their applications and sources of finance for further education study in Ireland. University of Sanctuary Ireland (UoSI) is a programme that offers scholarships to refugees in many Irish universities around Ireland. For example, the University of Galway's University of Sanctuary (UoS) Scholarship Programme that is designed to increase participation at the University of Galway among International Protection applicants and refugees provides a scholarship that includes a full fee waiver, an annual stipend of €3,300 and student support that includes academic mentoring. Finally, the Open University is an open learning platform allowing refugees to access specific resources free of charge, including language programmes. The Father McGrath Family Resource centre provides English language courses to members of immigrant communities in Kilkenny in addition to its outreach and community services.



Employment and entrepreneurship

There is a lot of positivity when it comes to migrants in employment. A job is important in welcoming and integrating young migrants into Irish society. Young migrants need an accessible way to find information they might need. Young migrants can access job opportunities in various sectors of the Irish economy, contributing to the workforce and the economy and raising not only their self-esteem but also improves their finances. They may find employment in industries such as construction, hospitality, healthcare, retail, and technology; furthermore, some migrants may seek to start their own business in Ireland using their skills and experiences to create innovative startups and contribute to the local economy.

Damilola said that he was very lucky to have found people who were very kind to him. Finding employment was quite difficult. So, he enrolled in online courses to upskill himself and acquire new skills and knowledge to increase his chances of getting a job.

But how would a migrant access these opportunities? The Irish Refugee Council is an interface for refugees to access opportunities. It offers support and advice for those wanting to enter the labour force provides a useful guide for those wishing to enter the workforce. Recruit Refugees web presence for example helps refugees with upskilling and training, accessing work providing assistance with CV writing, language courses and places potential candidates in contact with employers.

Open Doors Pathways to Progress is a resource for people from migrant backgrounds to find work or to create pathways to employment. It is a resource for people such as migrants, refugees, or people seeking asylum or living in direct provision. Information can be found about working in Ireland, searching for work, preparing applications, on training and education.



In a case study *Why Hiring Refugees Makes Sense for Liferay* by the Open Doors Initiative by Veronica Rodriguez Cabezas Director of Operations at Liferay International, she talks about how beneficial it has been hiring migrants hiring people to work as sales representatives. This she is convinced has been mutually beneficial where people they have employed have gained soft and hard skills citing the presence of members of the refugee community in the workforce has enriched their business. Hiring refugees is a good business decision benefiting the community in which they work.

The Integration Centre has published a *Guide for Migrant Jobseekers* in Ireland. In the booklet, it discusses all the migrants need to apply for a job, the hard and soft skills they need, application processes CVs, interviews, and training.

In an article entitled *Migrant Owned Businesses in Ireland* by Vithória Escobar (2020) in the online Medium human-interest magazine, Escobar states that “immigrants are twice as likely to become entrepreneurs,” playing a vital role in driving the economy forward creating jobs, attracting foreign investment, contributing to the life of Ireland. Creating an A-Z list of a number of migrant owned businesses in Ireland, it demonstrates that Ireland isn’t averse to migrant entrepreneurship. These include artist collectives; hair and beauty salons; florists creating bouquets, wreaths; art and cultural enterprises; businesses making handmade dolls and soft toys for children and providing sewing lessons; lifestyle and fashion brands; personalised gift businesses; and vintage clothes store.

NASC runs open evenings for migrant start-ups, entrepreneurs, innovators, and business owners. The consensus is that migrant's entrepreneurship is a good thing and John Kennedy (2023) on the Bank of Ireland’s Think Business support this supposition.

Kennedy referenced the Open Doors Initiative which supports and provides opportunities in training, education, employment and entrepreneurship refugees, asylum seekers and migrants among others. Migrant entrepreneur stories in Ireland Utilising migrants' entrepreneurs also creates a fertile ground for businesses with other countries the migrants come from.

The Your Y Network organises regular community events in support of integration, connecting with migrant startups, social entrepreneurship, hosting monthly online networking events, promoting gender equality, and reducing inequalities.

Volunteering

Eurospeak interviewed a young migrant Damilola as part of its young migrant research and he explained to help him deal with homesickness, he volunteers at various organisations that help empower and upskill people in Ireland. Damilola volunteers as a tutor at Age Action Ireland teaching the elderly how to use the internet, laptops and joining zoom calls or using their phone to do text or call their loved ones. He also volunteers almost every Saturday in a park close to where he lives to run with older people, and he volunteers at other organisations as well.

Volunteering is also an opportunity for young people to foster valuable links with the local community and participate in the life of Ireland. Core Ireland is a community-driven organisation providing volunteering opportunities in the local community. Core are active across a number of sectors including youth and community work. It is an organisation where a young person can develop transferable hard and soft skills volunteering or training.



On the **I-VOL website**, opportunities are categorised as Practical, Professional, Promotion and Fundraising and Supporting Others. Under each category to suit many different wants and abilities. According to Volunteers Centres Ireland (n.d) “Asylum seekers and refugees are allowed to volunteer [and] receive reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of volunteering. People who have refugee status, humanitarian protections or exceptional, indefinite, or discretionary leave to remain, and their family members, are allowed to do any type of paid work as well as volunteer. Asylum seekers are permitted to volunteer as soon as they arrive in the country. This includes people who are in the process of appealing against a decision to refuse them asylum.” However, as of 2023 visa required and non-visa required nationals must apply before they travel to Ireland and can volunteer in Ireland for up to 2 years, with the possibility of a third year. Although this right can be amended or suspended at any time.

It can be overestimated how important volunteering is especially at an early stage on entering Ireland whether one is a refugee or a visaed migrant. It is an invaluable way to build bridges and network with the local community as well as learning about life in Ireland.



Access to healthcare, well-being, and social services

Host societies typically provide access to healthcare services, social support programs, and legal assistance, ensuring the well-being and rights of young migrants are protected. Isolation can impact the health outcomes of a young migrant and affect a person's well-being, and it can lead to a downturn in someone's mental health including stress, anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation or homesickness that could potentially be fatal. Thus, easy access to mental health services and community support mitigates the effects of social isolation and helps migrants cope with these challenges. It can also lead to a reflection and changes to one's personal identity as old certainties and values are challenged by being in another countries as one's image of one's self-changes as one navigates multiple cultural identities. This is where access to opportunities in Ireland is crucial to bring stability to an individual.

For a migrant who acquired a visa and job prior to entering Ireland, they would, to a certain extent be mentally prepared for the experience and their journey to Ireland would have been less traumatic. For those who arrived as refugees and asylum seekers are issue related to their flight, journey and arrival. These could range from pre-existing medical conditions, physical, mental and sexual abuse during the journey to their country of residence, and a seemingly frustratingly long and complicated asylum process with no access to work.

Young migrants have full access to health services with a medical card. A Medical Card entitles young migrants access to a general practitioner, hospital in- and out-patient services, prescription medicines, women's health services, psychological services for trauma victims, ophthalmological services, hearing tests and hearing aids, dental treatment for adults.



Spirasi provide psychosocial support, therapeutic interventions, befriending programmes, and LGBTQ+ support, free language education, cultural competency education, self-care, and coping techniques for both victims of torture and those who have suffered cruel and inhuman or degrading treatment.

Good practices

What follows are suggestions for good practices to help young migrants access opportunities available to them promoting migrant engagement and community. They are a set of approaches and strategies that could be implemented across the EU and are effective in achieving beneficial outcomes for migrants wanting to progress in their host society. They include activities and initiatives aimed at supporting refugees.

The provision of free language classes

- Provision of free quality language skills classes including conversation classes.
- Skills training programs tailored to meet the refugees' specific language needs such as practical language skills required for the local job market.

Access to quality education

- Provision of easily accessible primary and secondary education including extracurricular activities and school trips for refugee children together with language and remedial support.
- For over-18s, provide education support and access to tertiary academic and vocational course at colleges and universities.
- Employment support and skills training.

Employment support and skills training

- Establish job placement services, vocational training, and entrepreneurship initiatives.
- Provide help with CV writing, job applications, personal statements, job interviews.
- Provide financial literacy training to help refugees manage their finances and use banking services.

Community integration and engagement

- Support community events that facilitate social integration including cultural mentorship initiatives.
- Volunteer opportunities to promote friendship between refugees and the local community including engaging women's groups to raise awareness of their role in promoting integration.
- Encourage refugees and migrants to participate in community decision-making processes through development initiatives, and advocacy efforts that affect their lives.
- Establish a multilingual community integration and dissemination forum including people from all cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds to help migrants' engagement in community.
- Run friendly informal social gatherings that include food and refreshments to encourage participation and ensure that migrants including refugees feel welcomed to the community.

Legal advice and assistance

- Promote legal assistance and advocacy support groups to help refugees navigate immigration processes and access legal advice.



Physical and Mental Healthcare and well-being

- Help refugees access healthcare services including physical and mental health services, family planning, and support for survivors of trauma and violence.
- Provide counselling services for domestic and sexual abuse.

Housing support

- Help refugees find safe and affordable housing, including temporary accommodation.
- Provide support negotiating the rental markets, securing housing subsidies for affordable housing and accommodation, or accessing emergency over-night shelters.
- Provide women-only domestic abuse refuges.
- City governance should be equipped with the resources to ensure that tenants in the private rental accommodation live in well-maintained, clean, and comfortable accommodation.

Cultural orientation

- Establish programmes to teach cultural orientation and competency help refugees acclimatise to and understand the nuances of the local culture, customs, laws, and social norms of their host country, as well as their rights and responsibilities conferred upon them as residents.

HOME & AWAY



HOMESICKNESS, FAMILY & FRIENDS



By





Homesickness, Family & Friends

Migration often brings up feelings of homesickness, a deep longing for the places we have left behind and the loved ones we miss. Yet, amidst the challenges of adapting to new surroundings, there is a quiet strength within us that can help us navigate the unfamiliar terrain and find our footing in this new chapter of life. Family, whether they're nearby or far away, is always there – mentally if not physically- during uncertain times, offering comfort, love, and unwavering support regardless of how far apart we may be. Through late-night phone calls, long video chats, even handwritten letters, we maintain a sense of connection, reminding us of where we come from and the ties that bind us together. Friendships too, can blossom amidst the unfamiliarity of new surroundings, demonstrating the remarkable resilience of our spirit. Despite language barriers and cultural differences, shared experiences and common bonds can create connections that transcend borders, and offer, companionship and a sense of belonging in a new foreign world that could feel even scary.

Migration and loneliness

The journey of migration begins with profound decisions and emotional upheaval. For many, the realization dawns that moving to a new country offers greater opportunities. This sparks a series of tough choices: Why leave? How is the new place going to be like? And what about loved ones, pets, and favourite places left behind? Some face even graver circumstances, fleeing their homeland in fear of persecution or harm, seeking refuge or asylum in a foreign land. Regardless of the reasons for leaving, the journey is riddled with significant challenges, that are always there when arriving in a new country.



But does the journey truly end upon arrival? Settling requires securing a home, a job, enrolling children in school—milestones that while help them establish themselves in their new reality. Yet, of course, for many migrants, the emotional journey persists long after the physical journey ends. Loneliness, an uninvited guest, often sneaks up on them, catching them unprepared. Despite forming new friendships, embracing colleagues, and adapting to the customs of their adopted land, the ache of what was left behind lingers — the warmth of family love, the familiarity of their homeland, once was unnoticed but suddenly becomes missed.

Research insights and perspectives

Drawing from recent research, exploring the nexus of loneliness, age at immigration, familial relationships, and depressive symptoms among older immigrants offers valuable insights (Jang and Tang, 2021). The convoy model of social relations underscores the pivotal role of family in shaping the psychological well-being of older immigrants. While migration introduces stressors that elevate loneliness, familial relationships serve as a buffer, offering solace and support.



However, the interplay between loneliness, age at immigration, and family relationships is intricate. Late-life immigrants may face heightened loneliness, compounded by challenges in adapting to a new environment. Despite living with family, satisfaction with the level of companionship may vary, influencing well-being. The quality of familial relationships—perceived positive support versus negative strain—emerges as a critical factor. Close family networks, characterized by frequent contact and emotional support, mitigate loneliness's adverse effects. Acknowledging the dynamics of familial relationships and their impact on loneliness and depressive symptoms is vital for tailored interventions and policies supporting immigrant well-being.



Experts suggest that in navigating both the physical and the mental terrain of migration, understanding the multifaceted nature of loneliness and its intersections with age, family relationships, and psychological well-being empowers individuals and communities to foster resilience, connection, and belonging.

Homesickness

Feeling homesick is a natural and common experience for immigrants adjusting to life in a new country. It's entirely normal to miss the familiarity of home, including loved ones, cultural customs and traditions, and familiar surroundings. Homesickness can manifest in various ways, such as feelings of sadness, longing, or nostalgia for the life that is left behind. However, there are strategies that can help cope with homesickness and navigate through this challenging period of adjustment. As evinced during the interviews conducted by the SeHeMe project for the conduction of the case studies booklet, there were numerous examples of migrants who felt homesick and tried to mitigate these feelings of loneliness. For example, Agrima, an Indian student studying law in Ireland, found solace in the familiar flavors of the local Indian cuisine restaurants abroad. Similarly, Elsayed, an Egyptian captain who works seasonally in Cyprus, shared with us that he always misses home when he comes to Cyprus for work.

To confront that homesick feeling, it's essential to try to keep yourself busy and avoid lingering in solitude, which can intensify feelings of loneliness even more. Try to engage in activities that you enjoy or explore new hobbies to distract your mind from dwelling on thoughts of home. Seeking out the company of others and building social connections in your new community can also provide the much-needed support during times of loneliness. Joining clubs, attending community events, or participating in cultural activities can help you meet new people and feel more integrated into your surroundings.



Additionally, another idea, is keeping a diary; it can be a therapeutic way to process your emotions and reflect on your experiences. Writing down your thoughts and feelings can provide a sense of release and help you gain perspective on your difficult journey of adaptation. While it's natural to feel the urge to stay virtually connected with friends and family back home, try to do it in moderation- focus on living in the present and embracing the opportunities that your new environment offers. Try to keep reminding yourself that feelings of homesickness are temporary and will eventually fade as you become more accustomed and used to your new surroundings.

By implementing these strategies and giving yourself time to adjust, you can effectively cope with homesickness and embrace the journey of building a new life in your adopted country.

You can watch here this short video as an inspiration for your journey:




What do experts suggest?

Experts in the field of migration and mental health emphasize the significant impact of loneliness, homesickness, and relationship difficulties on the psychological well-being of migrants. Studies highlight the prevalence of negative emotions associated with migration, including a sense of impending loss, fear of the unknown, and anxiety about those left behind (Hamid 2022). These research underscores the importance of addressing psychological distress and homesickness among migrants, as they can have detrimental effects on mental health and overall functioning.

Furthermore, research in the realm of international human resource management sheds light on the adverse effects of homesickness on migrant workers and expatriates (Stroebe 2015). These effects range from psychological disruptions to physical manifestations, impacting both health and work performance. Coping strategies play a really important role in mitigating the negative consequences of homesickness, as evidenced by empirical evidence gathered in the field. However, it is important to mention that there is a recognized need for further research to better understand and address the challenges faced by migrants in managing homesickness and its repercussions.

Considering the above findings, here are several tips and suggestions to support the mental health of immigrants who might feel lonely and start developing the above feelings:

- Utilize online therapy resources: platforms like CIMHS (**CIMHS Free Online Therapy for Depression**) offer free online therapy for depression, providing accessible  support for individuals experiencing mental health challenges.



- Engage in virtual support groups: websites such as HeyPeers (**HeyPeers - Where Peers and Support Groups Connect**) provide a platform for connecting with peers and joining support groups tailored to specific needs. Virtual support groups (**Virtual Support Groups | Advocates**) offer a sense of community and understanding, helping individuals combat feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- Seek professional counselling: if possible, consulting a mental health professional can provide personalized guidance and support in coping with loneliness, homesickness, and relationship difficulties. Therapists can offer strategies for managing stress, improving coping skills, and enhancing overall well-being.
- Stay connected with loved ones: maintain regular communication with friends and family members, even across geographical distances. Video calls, phone conversations, and social media can help bridge the gap and foster a sense of connection and belonging.
- Engage in self-care practices: try to prioritize self-care activities that promote mental and emotional well-being, such as exercise, mindfulness meditation, journaling, and hobbies. Taking care of oneself physically and emotionally can help build resilience and cope with the challenges of migration.
- Explore local community resources: Get involved in community organizations, cultural groups, or religious institutions that offer opportunities for social interaction and support. Building connections within the local community can provide a sense of belonging and support networks.

Good Practices

Friendships

Navigating the landscape of friendship in a new country as an adult immigrant can be very difficult. The familiar bonds of home are replaced by the challenges of establishing connections amidst differing routines, schedules, and cultural differences and obstacles. Language barriers and unfamiliar customs further compound the journey. However, amidst these difficulties, always lies the potential for personal growth, cultural exchange, and the potential cultivation of a lifelong friendship. Making friends in a new country demands courage, resilience, and a willingness to step beyond your comfort zone. Yet, the rewards are always welcome and irreplaceable; social confidence, a deeper understanding of the local culture, and a sense of belonging that transcends borders. For example, Marco, a young Brazilian who immigrated to Portugal, who shared his story with us during the creation of the booklet because of the project's needs, shared a success story with us. He shared that after a long time of difficulties, he has now a good life; he has his hobbies, spending time with friends going to the beach, expanded his network by meeting other immigrants who were very helpful. Similarly, Kinan, an immigrant from Lebanon who moved to Greece for studies, told us that the fact that he managed to learn the language and instantly started socialising, helped him in immediately forming friendships in his local community.

Here, we present some tips to help you in creating a new circle of friends, drawing upon experiences and insights to illuminate the path forward to new friendship relationships. From coming out of your comfort zone to embracing small talk as a gateway to shared interests, each tip offers a form of guidance to navigate the complexities of friendship-building in your new home:



- *Get out of your comfort zone:* make efforts to meet locals beyond expatriate circles.
- *Try to make small talk an opportunity to find common interests:* you can be surprised by how many people might also feel lonely. Try to engage in friendly conversation with neighbours or coworkers. If you are open in sharing more details about your everyday life, others will respond in kind. In the meanwhile, try to be patient with language barriers.
- *Say yes more often:* accept invitations to social gatherings even if they seem unfamiliar and embrace new experiences by being open to meeting people from diverse backgrounds. Give every opportunity a chance as you may be surprised at the outcome.



- *Learn more about your new country's culture and language:* explore resources to improve your language skills, communication abilities and familiarize yourself with local customs, traditions, and societal norms.

- *Volunteer:* get involved in community service initiatives by contributing to causes that align with your interests and values. At the end you will find yourself connecting with like-minded individuals while making a positive impact in your new community.
- *Find your favourite hang-out spot:* discover local coffee shops, libraries, and bookstores to frequent. Cultivate a sense of belonging by engaging with staff and regulars.
- *Go online:* explore virtual communities; join online groups, forums, or social media platforms to connect with people in your area. Try utilizing digital spaces to meet individuals with similar interests and hobbies.
- *Get to know other parents:* if you are a parent, initiate conversations with fellow parents at your child's school or activities. Try to arrange playdates to build relationships with other families.
- *Learn a new skill or advance what you know:* enrol in classes, workshops, or sport groups to meet people with similar interests. Try attending language courses, cooking classes, or job training programs to enhance your skills while connecting with classmates and instructors.

Loneliness as a form of artwork inspiration

It is proven, that loneliness, often a pervasive emotion experienced by immigrants adjusting to life in a new country, can often serve as a powerful form of expression of those feelings. Immigrants, faced with the challenges of adapting to a new culture, environment, and social landscape, frequently turn to creative outlets as a means of processing and articulating their complex emotions. For example, in one of our interviews, N. (her name is not provided due to disclosure issues), who moved in Tunisia, started taking arts courses to equip herself with the skills needed to establish her own business.



Throughout history, there have been several examples of how feelings of loneliness and homesickness have been channelled into various forms of artwork, including poetry, literature, and paintings.



Literature

In the realm of literature, authors have drawn upon their experiences of loneliness and displacement to craft poignant narratives that resonate with readers worldwide. Works such as **“The Namesake”** by Jhumpa Lahiri, **“The Joy Luck Club”** by Amy Tan, and **“Americanah”** by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explore themes of cultural identity, belonging, and the immigrant experience, offering readers a window into the emotional turmoil faced by characters navigating unfamiliar territories. Another example collection **“The Good Immigrant USA”** where the authors delve into the complex emotions of loneliness and displacement experienced by immigrants in America. These essays illuminate the ways in which loneliness can shape one's perceptions and interactions, highlighting the challenges of navigating cultural identity and societal expectations.

Poetry

Similarly, poetry has provided a platform for immigrants to convey their innermost thoughts and feelings with raw honesty and vulnerability. Poets like Langston Hughes, who wrote about the African American experience in the early 20th century, and Warsan Shire, a Somali-British poet whose work often touches on themes of migration and displacement, have used their verses to capture the essence of loneliness and longing in a foreign land.

“A Homesick Refugee” by Francis Duggan, that captures the struggle of displaced person from their homeland and grappling with the ache of homesickness.

*So tall dark and lean looking and so light on his feet
One must feel were he so inclined he would make a great athlete
But in his mid to late thirties he's past his physical prime
And he like all the rest of us is losing out to time.*

*Homesickness it is hard to cure and harder to disguise
He has the look of sadness in his sad looking brown eyes
He fled from persecution from a Land beyond the sea
And he arrived here in a crowded boat this poor sad refugee.*

*To feel Homesick for your Homeland is such a natural thing
But unlike the migrant swallow he can't go home for the Spring
Fear for his life that brought him here and here he's destined to stay
And here in the Homeland of the roo perhaps his bones will lay.*

*So many more are like him in the bigger World out there
People who want to stay at home but are forced to live elsewhere
To be different in his Homeland is a punishable crime
And why say he is lucky if he feels homesick most of the time.*

*So tall and athletic looking the tribesman from far away
'Twas circumstance that brought him here in that he had no say
At least of the fear of persecution he now is living free
But one can only feel for him a homesick refugee.*



**Listen to
the poem!**



Visual Arts

In the world of visual arts, paintings and other visual expressions have also served as powerful outlets for immigrants to communicate their sense of isolation and yearning. Artists like Marc Chagall, a Russian-French painter known for his dreamlike, fantastical imagery, and Frida Kahlo, whose vibrant self-portraits often reflected her feelings of loneliness and alienation, have left behind a rich legacy of artwork that speaks to the immigrant experience.

Similarly, Zarina Hashmi's "Letters from Home" showcased at the Tate Museum, provides a poignant narrative of displacement and longing. Through her monochromatic woodblock and metal-cut prints, Hashmi shows the emotions of dislocation and nostalgia, echoing the sentiments expressed in Chagall's and Kahlo's works.



Overall, the creative arts provide immigrants with a means of processing their emotions, preserving their cultural heritage, and forging connections with others who may share similar experiences. Through literature, poetry, paintings, and other artistic forms, immigrants have found solace, catharsis, and a sense of belonging during their journey towards adapting to a new country and forging a new identity.

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HOME & AWAY



INTEGRATION & WORK



By





Immigrants, refugees & asylum seekers in Europe

Over the course of the last twenty years, the rate of international migration to Europe and the rest of the world has overtaken the rate of population growth on a worldwide scale. According to information that was made public by the United Nations, it is predicted that the global population would reach 272 million by the year 2019. This is an increase of 51 million people, which is equivalent to 3.5% of the total population since the year 2010. In 2022, countries experienced a record-breaking inflow of immigrants, with over 6 million people entering the country for the first time. This number does not include refugees from Ukraine. When June 2023 rolled around, it was anticipated that 4.7 million people in Ukraine were living in a situation of displacement. The United States of America, Germany, and Poland are the countries that have taken in the biggest number of refugees from Ukraine. This is measured in absolute terms. On the other hand, Estonia, the Czech Republic, and Lithuania have taken in the biggest number of Ukrainian refugees in terms of the percentage of their total population (OECD, 2023).



The demographic composition of the Member States of the European Union (EU) and, by extension, the EU has been profoundly altered because of the massive influx of migrants from third countries to Europe that has occurred over the course of the last several decades. As of the first of the year 2021, Eurostat estimated that the European Union had a total population of 447.2 million people, of which 23.7 million (5.3 percent) were not citizens with citizenship. At that time, there were around 13.7 million members of the European Union who were living in a different EU Member State. Germany had the greatest absolute count of non-nationals residing in EU Member States as of this date, with 10.6 million individuals. This was the highest number seen in any country. After Spain, France, and Italy each had 5.2 million people, while Spain came in second with 5.4 million.

Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027

In 2020 the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 was designed to support members in the development and fortification of their integration policies, the document establishes the measures that the Commission intends to implement and urges Member States to undertake additional tangible measures. Further enhancing the achievements of the action plan that was executed in 2016, the novel action plan incorporates additional measures and a more comprehensive structure to advance the cause of integration and inclusion. The newly devised course of action prioritises the essential elements required for effective assimilation and inclusion into the host community. These elements consist of housing, health, education, training, and employment.

Integration of individuals with a migrant origin may have positive economic effects. Recent research by the Joint Research Centre indicates that substantial fiscal gains could result from the complete integration of migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background into the labour market.



In general, individuals born within the European Union contribute a greater amount to the fiscal system than those born outside the EU. This circumstance will likely change soon, due in part to the ageing of the European population. In addition, the average non-EU migrant's net fiscal contributions in 2035 would increase by as much as 3,500 euros if non-EU-born residents enjoyed comparable wages and labour market participation as EU-born citizens. This year, in 2024, the mid-term review is planned to check the achievements so far in each sectoral area and furthermore plan for the next period.

Ensuring the successful assimilation of migrants into the host societies

Ensuring the successful assimilation of migrants into the host societies and their favourable contributions to the European Union economy are contingent upon their sustainable integration into the labour market. This requires them to maximise the application of their abilities, credentials, and motivation. Migrants have the potential to make substantial contributions towards mitigating skills shortages across all sectors and skill levels.

While numerous migrants possess skills that are in high demand on the labour markets of EU Member States, they frequently encounter difficulties in effectively applying them. It is critical to ensure that migrants acquire skills in the host country's language, are informed about their rights and employment prospects, and receive appropriate training.

Bureaucratic Procedures

- *Skills Validation*: The skills validation process allows individuals to identify, record, assess and certify their skills. Such a process can help them to acquire partial or full professional qualifications. Skills validation and qualification recognition are critical concerns: over forty percent of highly educated nationals of third countries who are employed do not hold positions corresponding with their qualifications and expertise, i.e., in occupations requiring moderate or even low levels of skill. Both member states and the European Union at large have a vested interest and a duty to effectively utilise all available skills.
 - **How can you validate your skills?**
In Greece you can validate your skills through **EOPPEP**.
- *Work Permits*: Before you move to a European country for work, you must seek for information on the procedures as well as your rights.
 - Work permits for non-EU nationals; You may have the right to work in the EU and be considered equally with EU nationals regarding working conditions if you are not a citizen of the European Union. These privileges are contingent upon one's nationality or familial status with EU citizens.
 - National of third countries with establishes agreements with the EU; nationals of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Russia, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Ukraine, Andorra, San Marino or one of the 79 countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, you have the same rights and working conditions as nationals of your host EU country.
 - For Nationals of countries with no agreement with the EU, your rights and working conditions depend on the rules of the respective country.



You can find more information on the topic **on the page of the European Union**. Information about the European Union Law is available **online**, translated in all languages.

Illegal Work

There is a significant connection between migration and employment that is not reported. It is not uncommon for migrant workers, particularly those with an irregular or unauthorised status, to be forced into performing work that is not reported. As a consequence of this, individuals become more susceptible to assault and have lower standards. In the European Union (EU), there are between 4.5 and 8 million undocumented immigrants working in various industries such as agriculture, construction, and hospitality. Employers who engage in illegal working conditions may be liable to fines, according to a new guideline that is being submitted for consideration.

As stated in the European Commission's Communication on Undeclared Work, undeclared work pertains to "compensated undertakings that are lawful in their intrinsic characteristics but remain undisclosed to public authorities; consideration must be given to variations in the regulatory frameworks of Member States." A similar definition has been set by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which employs the phrase "hidden employment" to refer to labour "which although not illegal in itself, has not been declared to one or more administrative authorities" (Organization, 2010).

There are numerous important labour sectors in the European economy that are dependent on illegal work and undocumented migrant workers. Numerous employers, to reduce their labour costs, choose to hire undocumented workers. In doing so, they subject these workers to deplorable working conditions, such as working for excessively long hours and working without breaks daily.

Additionally, they withhold wages and blackmail employees without compensation if they report the employers to authorities. These are both extremely serious phenomena.



Illegal work over the years in Europe

In 1998, European Commission Communication on undeclared work, estimated that illegal work accounted for approximately 16% of EU's GDP and was equal to 19% of total employment. In 2017, a study conducted estimated that 11.6% of total labour input in the private sector in the EU is undeclared and undeclared work constitutes on average 16.4% of EU's total GDP.

A study conducted by the European Labour Authority on February 2023, measuring the extent of undeclared work in European Union, found significant differences between 2019 and 2023 in 19 out of 23 member states of EU. The finding in 2023, estimated that on an average, 11.1 % of total labour input in the private sector in the EU is undeclared, counting for about 14.8% of EU's total GDP (compared to 11.6% in 2013).



It is important to mention that there are also significant variations among different European countries with respect to undeclared work. Undeclared labour is notably prevalent in the following countries: Bulgaria (19.3%), Lithuania (20.8%), and Romania (21.7%). Austria (5.1%), Germany (3.9%), and the Netherlands (4.8%) exhibit the lowest levels. In general, the majority of countries that rank higher than the EU average is those that became EU members in 2004 or later (Josip Franic, 2023).

Future migration flows and adaptation measures related to work & employment

The number of migrants and refugees who are now in transit, as well as the migration flows themselves, have a significant influence on the development of countries and help to determine the labour markets and welfare systems of the countries that are hosting them.

To this day, migration of workers is dependent on the availability of labour and/or the demand for labour. On the occasion that a company takes the effort to acquire a work permit for a prospective employee who possesses specific abilities, the analysis places a larger emphasis on the demand for labour. Not only does this apply to a large number of countries that are members of the European Union, but it also applies to a large number of countries all over the world.

Worker migration organised by public authorities and employers is restricted, in contrast to other forms of migration such as humanitarian or family migration. Family migrants and refugees, on the other hand, are cognizant of wage and employment opportunity disparities. Although global international migration is on the rise, flows and net migration have been influenced by economic crises. Historically, during periods of economic recession, governments have altered their policies to restrict labour migration by reducing numerical restrictions to reduce the number of entries.

Primarily, the diminished employment prospects in the countries of destination have undermined the migrant's motivation. For example, the immigration and flow policies have been profoundly affected by the current economic crisis (El Mouhoub, 2014).

Gender equality and migration

Nearly half of all migrants worldwide are female. The United Nations (UN) estimates that in 2020, men comprised 51.9% of global migrants while women comprised 48.1%. Once more, in 2020, the EU-27 and Norway constituted a population of 452,687 496 individuals, of which 51% were female. The proportion of females in each Member State fluctuated between 49% and 53%.

In the past few years, the way in which women migrant has changed dramatically. Previously, most women travelled to Europe to join or accompany their partners. International migration trends indicate that the number of women migrating to and within Europe is nearly equivalent to that of men. Historically, migration research has predominantly focused on the experiences of male migrants, with women being acknowledged merely as secondary reunification migrants. Women now frequently migrate alone in pursuit of employment. While certain individuals enter the European Union (EU) irregularly, others enter on a regular basis but subsequently revert to irregularity, frequently due to gender-based barriers to the formal labour market (Orav, 2023).

New trends are emerging in the migration of women to European Union member states. Historically, most women travelled to Europe to join or accompany their companions. International migration trends indicate that the number of women migrating to and within Europe is nearly equivalent to that of males. Historically, migration research has predominantly focused on the experiences of male migrants, with women being acknowledged merely as secondary reunification migrants.



Women now frequently migrate alone in pursuit of employment. While certain individuals enter the European Union (EU) irregularly, others enter on a regular basis but subsequently revert to irregularity, frequently due to gender-based barriers to the formal labour market. This may compel them to seek employment on the informal sector or in occupations that are traditionally associated with women, such as customer service, hospitality, or domestic assistance. Migrant women, through their work as labourers remitting funds overseas, assume a progressively significant socio-economic role in both the countries of origin and destination.

Employment and legal status are interdependent; the migrant woman's access to public services is affected by both. However, many migrant women encounter obstacles when attempting to enter the workforce, particularly those who have young children. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), migrant women comprise the largest proportion of the EU labour force that is unemployed or economically inactive (Orav, 2023).

Migrant Women & Unemployment

Migrant women often face unique challenges when it comes to employment and unemployment. There are some key factors and obstacle that may lead to these challenges. They include language and cultural barriers, discrimination, and stereotypes as well as lack of skills and qualification. Moreover, migrant women usually have extensive caregiving responsibilities, including household chores, taking care of the elderly and the underaged children. Another key factor leading to inequality is limited access to education and training; migrant women lack opportunities for training and education, which affects their ability to acquire labour skills and competences that are necessary for the current workplace needs. Many migrant women don't have an immigration status and legal rights in their host countries, which add up and are considered as additional barriers to employment.

In 2021, in 14 out of 35 EU member countries, women had higher unemployment rates than men. In 2021, the unemployment rate for men in the European Union was 6.7%, while for women it was 7.4%. When considering migrants, it was observed that third-country migrant women experienced a higher unemployment rate compared to other women and men with an equivalent level of education. 22% of foreign-born men and 25% of foreign-born women in the European Union reported encountering employment-related obstacles in their host country in 2021 (Orav, 2023).



Integration of migrant women in the labour market

Integrating migrant women into society's norms is a complex and multi-step process. It is dependent on the migratory community to which the woman belongs, the country in which she is living, and her propensity to accept the societal and cultural norms of the group that is dominating in the country. Women are subjected to marginalisation, exclusion, and a lack of chances in certain groups and cultures. Because of their religion or culture, individuals may be excluded from professional, personal, and social settings. This may occur on all three levels.



Important facts and figures about migrant women in labour force

Migrant workers globally



42%
Women

(approx. 68 million)

58%
Men

(approx. 96 million)

Share of women in the labour force



Migrant women



Non-migrant women

Migrant domestic workers globally



Women: 74%

8.5 million

Men: 26%

3 million

Distribution of women migrant domestic workers



40%

of national labour laws in countries worldwide do not offer protections for domestic workers

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