

# Handbook on Best Practices Refugees and Asylum Seekers' Integration Through Social Entrepreneurship in the ADRION Area



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## Handbook on Best Practices

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# 1. Introduction

The period we live in is marked by a series of changes, including a noticeable increase in intercontinental migration. This trend is an important factor in the transformation of societies around the world, which is why the twenty-first century has been described as the 'century of migration'.<sup>1</sup> For example, more than one million refugees and migrants arrived in Greece in 2015 and early 2016, a number which declined after the Balkan border was closed in March 2016. Nevertheless, the Eastern Mediterranean route is still active and many people enter Europe each year in search of international protection and family reunion, along with many others travelling to Europe for different reasons including economic and educational opportunities. Frontex - the European Border and Coast Guard Agency<sup>2</sup> - reports that the Western Balkan route was the second-most-used path to Europe in 2021 as detections of illegal border crossings more than doubled to a total of 61,735. Therefore, the situation regarding refugees' arrival and inclusion in host societies poses a big challenge both to EU member states and non-member (transition) states, especially those in the Western Balkan route area. Indeed, refugees' integration and resettlement have become both a key policy objective, and a matter of significant public discussion in the EU.

At this point, it is important to highlight that in order for social inclusion actions directed towards refugees to be a success, a variety of barriers need to be taken into consideration as well as the use of adequate strategies to overcome them. In this sense, European governments recognize refugees as “individuals with special needs” and therefore with distinct service requirements during the initial phase of their integration in a host society. Likewise, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles<sup>3</sup> emphasizes the importance of close links and multi-sector alliances between social actors involved in refugee issues. In this context, it is also important to mention that there is a growing interest in managing increased migration into Europe in order to meet labour market shortages and the challenges of an ageing population. But in practice what needs to be done is, on one hand, for national governments to grant refugees employment rights and access to work permits, and on the other, for training and other programmes which promote refugee labour participation to be built based on a thorough understanding of the state of the labour market and in connection with economic regeneration/development strategies.

<sup>1</sup> Ian Goldin, Geoffrey Cameron and Meera Balarajan (2011), *Exceptional People: How Migration Shaped Our World and Will Define Our Future*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas and Mark J. Miller (2014), “The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 38, Issue 13.

<sup>2</sup> Frontex (2022), *Western Balkan Route*. <https://frontex.europa.eu/we-know/migratory-routes/western-balkan-route/>

<sup>3</sup> European Council on refugees & Exiles (2002), *Position on the Integration of refugees in Europe*. [https://ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ECRE-Position-on-the-Integration-of-Refugees-in-Europe\\_December-2002.pdf](https://ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ECRE-Position-on-the-Integration-of-Refugees-in-Europe_December-2002.pdf)

Unquestionably, migration is a global issue that can only be tackled through cooperation and common initiatives that take the regional dimension into account. While the recent response to contemporary migration trends has mainly been framed by regarding the unfolding events in terms of a security and emergency issue, new transnational actions and collaborations are needed to cope with our changing societies.

In order to promote the active participation of refugees in EU member and non-member states, it is crucial to enable them to use their own resources and skills. Through transnational cooperation, it is possible to draw from tried-and-tested best practices and bring together the competences needed to adapt and further elaborate these approaches. Indeed, cooperation across countries can enable a better understanding of what big transnational challenges and opportunities may lay in refugees' economic inclusion in the field of social entrepreneurship, giving rise to innovative social services and products for both local host societies and environments.

## 1.1 The REInSER Project

This handbook is the output of the REInSER (Refugees' Economic Integration through Social Entrepreneurship) project. Geographically, it covers the ADRION area whose common societal developments and challenges call for more cooperation and shared initiatives. This is especially true if the region is looking towards a common future in the EU. Indeed, the ADRION area includes four EU countries (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia), three EU candidate countries (Albania, Montenegro and Serbia) and one potential EU candidate country (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The main goal of the REInSER project is to improve the economic and consequently social integration of migrants and refugees in the host societies of the ADRION Programme area by using social economy and in particular social entrepreneurship approaches. REInSER brings together eight project partners from academia, business support organizations and local authorities, gathering different expertise, knowledge and skills from six countries:

Slovenia, Italy, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia. The short-term goal of the strategic project partnership is to find a sustainable solution for the pressing issue of refugees and asylum seekers by tapping into the networking and knowledge transfer potential of the transnational as well as cross-sectional cooperation of key stakeholders. The long-term objective of the project, in contrast, is to boost refugees' possibilities of becoming active economic actors and the agents of their own integration in a given host society on one hand and to contribute to local and regional sustainable economic development by generating employment and supporting the creation of new socially responsible businesses on the other hand.

One of the central activities of the project was to scout for and gather data on local, regional and national initiatives in the partner states and, among those which proved to work well and produce good

results and therefore having greater potential for transfer to other social and economic contexts, select the best practices (including services and tools) supporting migrant social entrepreneurship. The partners were guided by a set of assessment criteria to determine and document the best practices among the identified social economy initiatives. At the same time, the partners put together a significant database that can be used to encourage the replication and transferability of these best practices, whilst also disseminating the lessons learnt from these successful initiatives, which are presented in this handbook.

In order to share the best practices, three four-day study trips with workshops were organized in Ioannina (Greece), Ruma (Serbia) and Brindisi (Italy). During these study trips, the hosting partners presented their national contexts, organized on-site visits to some of the identified best practice initiatives and exchanged views/experiences with the other partners and invited key stakeholders. Two crucial aims of the study trips were a) to build the participants' capacity to tackle the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in local societies and economies; and b) to exchange views and experience among the participants, with a special focus on the discussion and possible implementation of the best practices in other national contexts and European society as a whole and transferability issues.

A crucial role during these study trips was also played by the associated partners and invited key stakeholders: business support organizations, development agencies and academics working in the field, as well as

representatives of local, regional and national authorities. Other important actors and indirect beneficiaries were civil society/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as (public) service providers (public employment services, healthcare services), offices for integration, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and education institutions.

The main findings and outputs of these activities are presented in this handbook which was prepared after scouting for the best practices and researching their various forms, contexts and success criteria. The handbook includes the best practices that were identified and presented during the study trips, along with the methodologies, approaches, experience and tools used at transnational level. The partners selected the best practices from those that were presented during one of the study trips, which they deemed to have the potential for transfer to other local environments/national contexts.



## 1.2 Content Description

This handbook is in the first place intended for all stakeholders dealing with the integration of refugees and asylum seekers through various forms of social entrepreneurship. To this end, it is divided into two parts. The first chapter sets out relevant EU legislation and measures in the field of access to asylum, refugees' integration and social entrepreneurship, followed by an outline of the national contexts (legislation, strategies and

policies) in the six partner states (Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) of the REInSER project. The second chapter presents a selected collection of best practices that were presented during the abovementioned study trips, with a focus on their potential for transfer to other national contexts, one of the most important aspects in selecting the best practices.



## 2. National contexts

### (legislation, strategies and policies)

The six countries part of the Adriatic-Ionic region considered in this handbook (Greece, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Italy) share a series of similar socio-economic and demographic challenges, most notably depopulation, economic stagnation and immigration. Despite these similarities, the different historical and political contexts, especially in relation to their position within or outside the European Union (EU), substantially affect the legislations and policies applied to regulate migration, access to asylum, socio-economic integration and the development of social enterprises. However, the European integration process and involvement in common regional cooperation frameworks, such as the ADRIAN Programme, is favouring the convergence of legislations and policies and strengthening their collaboration in addressing common issues.

Then, after presenting key information on EU legislations with regard to access to asylum, refugees' integration and social entrepreneurship, the section will briefly introduce the most relevant national policies and legislations in these sectors.

### 2.1 Relevant EU legislation and measures

#### Access to asylum

The most relevant EU legislation on matters of access to asylum is the **Dublin Regulation (no. 604/2013)** which identifies which country is responsible for processing the asylum application of a person belonging to a non-EU country or a stateless person. The criteria to be considered are, in order of importance: family considerations, recent possession of a visa or residence permit of a member state, and whether an applicant entered the EU legally or illegally. In most cases, the country responsible for processing the application is the first country where the applicant sets foot. Moreover, the regulation establishes a series of procedures intended to ensure that each applicant receives a fair examination, despite the persisting differences between EU countries in matters of asylum legislation. The **European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)** provides member states with operational and technical assistance to assess applications for international protection.

#### Refugees' integration

The main EU policy instruments for the integration of non-EU nationals is the **Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027**, which replaces the previous Action Plan 2016-2020. The new action plan identifies four key areas for integration: education, employment, health and housing. Furthermore, it stresses the

importance of promoting anti-discrimination measures and gender equality. One of the main EU funds contributing to integration initiatives is the **Asylum, Integration and Migration Fund (AMIF)**. With the aim of supporting the labour integration of third-country nationals within member states, the EU has developed the **EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals**, which is intended to help map the skills, qualifications and work experience of the third-country nationals and give them personalized advice on further steps, for example, referrals for the recognition of diplomas, skills validation, further training or employment support services.

### Social entrepreneurship

In the policy framework of the EU, the main initiatives dedicated to social entrepreneurship include the **Social Business Initiative (SBI)**, launched in 2011, followed by the programme for **Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)** adopted in 2014. Recently, the growing attention to policy has also extended to the OECD agenda. In 2020, the EU's foreign partnership instrument funded the Global Action on **Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems**, launched jointly with the OECD. The action aims to support the development and internationalization of the social and solidarity economy by focusing on two critical policy aspects that can help unlock its potential: legal frameworks and the measurement of social impact. Finally, in December 2021, the European Commission adopted the **Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP)**, whose aim is to boost social entrepreneurship and create a positive ecosystem for its uniform development within Europe.



## 2.2 Overview of national legislations and policy measures in the participating countries

### 2.2.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina



#### Access to asylum and integration

The main laws currently regulating access to asylum and integration are the **Law on Foreigners**, which came into force on 25 November 2015, and the **Law on Asylum**, which came into force on 27 February 2016. According to the law, asylum seekers can apply for asylum as soon as they come into contact with the border police or with the **Service for Foreigners' Affairs**. The Service for Foreigners' Affairs will issue them with an “Attestation of Expressed Intent to Seek Asylum” (also known as the “white paper”), with a validity of up to 14 days. Then the asylum sector at the Ministry of Security formally processes the request for asylum and the asylum seeker can seek legal support from the Vaša Prava organization (a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) free legal aid partner). The application is examined by a refugee status determination officer, who will issue a decision within a six-month period. In exceptional cases, this period can be extended to up to 18 months. Asylum seekers are entitled to stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina while the decision is being made and they have the right to ask for an interpreter and free legal aid from the beginning of the asylum procedure. Asylum seekers can seek employment nine months after applying for asylum, unless their status is approved or denied sooner by the relevant authorities.

#### Reception and integration system

The Service for Foreigners' Affairs provides a series of reception facilities, unless asylum seekers choose to reside in private accommodation. Currently there are six **temporary reception centres** in Bosnia and Herzegovina, three in Una-Sana Canton, two in Sarajevo Canton, one in Mostar and one in Trnovo. Some of the reception centres are managed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), while others are governed by the Ministry of Security. Asylum seekers in Bosnia and Herzegovina are entitled to primary health care and assistance. However, the services assisting asylum seekers are mostly offered by international NGOs and organizations such as the Danish Refugees Council (healthcare), UNICEF (assistance to mothers and children) and Save the Children (unaccompanied minors, education). The Ministry of Security is expected to release a

new **Strategy in the Area of Migrations and Asylum**, as well as an action plan for the period 2021-2025.

### Social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still at an early stage of development. Recently, one of the two entities making up the country, the Republic of Srpska, adopted a **Law on Social Entrepreneurship** regulating the concept, goals and principles of social entrepreneurship. The law of 25 November 2021 also regulates the requirements and procedure to acquire the status of “socially owned enterprise”.

## 2.2.2 Croatia



### Access to asylum and integration

The **Law on International and Temporary Protection** has been in force since 2015. Asylum seekers must request protection/asylum as soon as they enter Croatia. It can be requested at the border crossing, at a police station, from the first police officer they encounter, or at the reception for foreigners detention centre. Asylum applications are received and processed by the **Ministry of the Interior**, while a number of NGOs offer legal assistance with support from UNHCR. The whole procedure, until a decision is made, takes one year on average. Until then, the state provides accommodation, food, financial aid, health and legal protection. Asylum seekers in Croatia have the **right to employment** nine months after the date of submission of an asylum application.

### Reception and integration system

When they have been granted protection status or temporary residence, foreigners under international protection are provided with integration support. This primarily includes free learning of the Croatian language, history and culture, free legal aid, accommodation and an allowance awarded based on their financial situation. The **Ministry of the Interior** runs **reception centres for asylum seekers** in Zagreb and Kutina and is responsible for providing services through NGOs. Currently, the ministry has contracts with the Croatian Red Cross and Médecins du Monde. The Croatian Red Cross seeks to respond to the psychosocial, educational and humanitarian needs of asylum seekers during their stay in reception centres. It also actively participates in planning quality programmes tailored to the asylum seekers' interests, age and cultural values. Médecins du Monde mostly provides healthcare assistance and combats gender violence.

### Social entrepreneurship

In 2015, Croatia adopted the *Strategy for Social Entrepreneurship Development*. Defining social entrepreneurship, the strategy indicates nine criteria for the identification of social enterprises, broadly in line with the EU operational definition of social enterprise. The strategy defines social entrepreneurship as a “business based on the principles of social, environmental and economic sustainability, in which generated profit or surplus is entirely or largely reinvested for the benefit of the community”.<sup>4</sup> Although the official definition does not indicate the legal forms of possible social enterprises, those existing forms that meet the criteria may be considered social enterprises. Following recent evolutions, the few legal forms in Croatian legislation that meet some of the EU operational definition criteria are: associations pursuing social entrepreneurship and undertaking relevant general interest and economic activities; cooperatives; companies pursuing relevant general interest activities; companies pursuing explicit social aims (operating as not-for-profits); private foundations pursuing relevant general interest activities and undertaking economic activities; and institutions founded by associations pursuing relevant general interest activities.

### 2.2.3 Greece



#### Access to asylum and integration

There have been several changes in asylum legislation over the recent period in the context of the refugee crisis and Greece's international legislative commitments. In 2016, **Law 4375/2016** was introduced and then amended with Article 86 of Law 4399/2016. Various provisions in the new asylum legislation substantially reformed reception and asylum procedures. A main aspect of the implementation of the new legislation is the different asylum procedures for those applicants arriving in Greece after 20 March 2016 (according to the EU-Turkey statement) compared to those who were relocated to the mainland and had reached the country before this date. Beneficiaries of international protection and asylum seekers' access to **employment** was further facilitated with the abolition of possession of a work permit as a condition for participation in the labour market. The national asylum legislation was then radically

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2019), “Social Enterprises and Their Ecosystems in Europe. Updated country report: Croatia”, author: Davorka Vidović. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

reamended in November 2019. The previous legislation on asylum and reception was replaced by **Law 4636/2019**, which was adopted on 1 November 2019 and came into force on 1 January 2020.

### Reception and integration system

Asylum applications are filed before the asylum service. Thirteen regional asylum offices (RAOs) and 12 asylum units were operational at the end of 2019. The asylum service is also competent for applying the **Dublin Procedure**, with most requests and transfers concerning family reunification in other member states. A fast-track border procedure is applied to applicants subject to the EU-Turkey statement, that is, applicants arriving in the Eastern Aegean islands after 20 March 2016. This takes place at hotspots set up in the **reception and identification centres (RICs)** and before the RAO of Rhodes. Appeals against asylum service first-instance decisions are made before the independent appeals committees which operate under the appeals authority. As far as **access to the labour market** is concerned, the provisions remain the same as in Law 4375/2016 for beneficiaries of international protection. Thus, beneficiaries of international protection and their families have the right to employment under the same conditions as nationals. The only condition for their participation in the labour market is possession of a residence permit, namely, the “international protection applicant's card” or “asylum seeker's card”.

### Social entrepreneurship

The turning point for the development of social entrepreneurship in Greece came in 2011 with the enactment of **Law 4019/2011**, the first act regarding the social economy and social entrepreneurship. The definition revolves around the social, economic and inclusive governance criteria set out in the EU operational definition. However, legislative and administrative documents prefer to use the term “social and solidarity economy organization” (SSE) over social enterprise, and the legal typologies do not correspond exactly to the EU definition. Although **Law 4430/2016** replaced the former Law 4019/2011, the social enterprise is conceived as a distinct legal entity. Among the legal forms included in the social and solidarity economy organization sector, social cooperative enterprises (SCEs) and limited liability social cooperatives (KoiSPEs) match the EU operational definition. This law broadened the spectrum of SSEs to include additional organizations meeting the given criteria. In addition, Law 4430/2016 paved the way for developing the fields of activity of Greek social enterprise, broadening the meaning of social aim and including



## 2.2.4 Italy



activities for the general public (instead of exclusively focusing on vulnerable groups). More importantly, this law introduced and operationalized the concepts of “social innovation” and “social impact”.<sup>5</sup>

### Access to asylum and integration

Access to asylum is regulated by Law 189/2002, commonly known as the **Bossi-Fini Law**, which established **territorial commissions** for the examination of asylum applications. This law has been reformed several times since 2015. The last of these reforms, adopted by the new Minister of the Interior, Luciana Lamorgese (Legislative Decree 130/2020), extended the range of cases, previously reduced by the reform of 2018, in which international protection can be recognized, introducing a new “special protection” status granted to asylum seekers who do not qualify for refugee status or subsidiary protection, but who nevertheless arrived in Italy for serious humanitarian reasons, such as health issues or the risk of being victims of political turmoil. In addition, the reform established a **reception and integration system (SAI)** that aimed to favour the integration of both refugees and asylum seekers, although it only ensures the full range of integration services to those already entitled to a form of protection. According to Italian legislation, all asylum seekers are **allowed to work** two months after applying for asylum.

### Reception and integration system

The reception and integration system is divided into **three phases**, the first being the **hotspots** where all individuals entering Italy illegally (usually through the Mediterranean Route) are placed for a couple of days for registration. After this, those who express the intention to request asylum are moved to **primary reception centres (CPAs)**, intended to be a transition facility, before entering the third phase of the SAI, consisting of a series of reception and integration projects run by local municipalities which can apply for funds for this purpose. This system is based on the will of the local authorities to apply for funds and host asylum seekers, and is not mandatory at any level. For this reason, the SAI projects do not offer enough places for all asylum

<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2019), “Social Enterprises and Their Ecosystems in Europe. Updated country report: Greece”, authors: Angelos Varvarousis and Georgios Tsitsirigkos, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.



seekers and refugees, the majority of whom are then placed in **extraordinary reception centres (CASs)**. **Integration in the labour market** is considered one of the main objectives of the SAI system, which offers a series of opportunities and services with this purpose. Along with legal education and support and language courses, integration into the labour market is mostly promoted through internships in private and public enterprises that can then turn into regular employment or provide a first work experience.

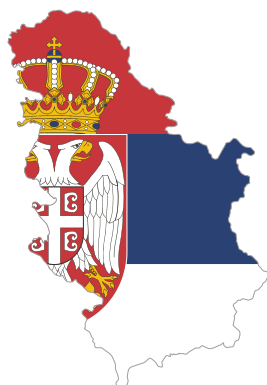
### Social entrepreneurship

In Italy, social entrepreneurial initiatives have a long tradition, with the first forms appearing in the 1980s under the name of “social solidarity cooperatives”. After a decade of unregulated development, **in 1991** these organizations were recognized and fully institutionalized as “social cooperatives” by **Law 381**.<sup>6</sup> The law regulated two different forms of social cooperative: type A and type B. Later on, the significant development of social cooperatives encouraged the emergence of other forms of non-profit organization (or the transformation of the legal status of existing ones) and stimulated the introduction of a new legal framework with **Law 118/2005** and **Legislative Decree 155/2006**. The new regulation legally introduced the category of social enterprise, recognizing it as an organizational model and also enlarging the set of legal entities that can be used to launch a social enterprise. More recently, significant changes were introduced by “third sector” reform bill, **Law 106/2016** and **Legislative Decrees 117/2017** and **112/2017**, whose aim is to regulate social enterprises, provide a common framework and promote their development.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Social cooperatives are defined as operating to “pursue the general interest of the community in the human promotion and social integration of citizens”. See European Commission (2020), “Social Enterprises and Their Ecosystems in Europe. Updated country report: Italy”, author: Carlo Borzaga, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

<sup>7</sup> The term “third sector” is defined as “the group of private entities pursuing civic, solidarity and social aims that are not profit oriented”.

### 2.2.5 Serbia



#### Access to asylum and integration

The asylum procedure in Serbia is governed by the **Asylum Act** as a *lex specialis* overriding the General Administrative Procedure Act (GAPA). The Asylum Act sets out that the regular procedure for decisions on asylum applications must be concluded within a maximum period of three months from the date when the asylum application or the subsequent admissible application is lodged, with the possibility of extending this period for a further six months. Appeals against asylum office decisions are reviewed by the asylum commission, a body comprising nine members appointed to four-year terms of office by the government. The Asylum Act sets out that persons granted asylum in Serbia shall be equal to permanently residing foreigners in terms of the right to work and rights arising from employment and entrepreneurship. The **Integration Decree** further provides for assistance in accessing the labour market as an integral part of the integration process. With the **Employment of Foreigners Act** adopted at the end of 2014, asylum seekers were recognized as members of a specific category of foreigners entitled to obtain a work permit. This is obtained once international protection is granted.

#### Reception and integration system

In 2020, Serbia had **asylum centres** in: Banja Koviljača, Bogovađa, Tutin, Sjenica and Krnjača. Assistance for the integration of asylum seekers and refugees is provided by the **Commissariat for Refugees and Migration** and forms part of the integration plan of every individual beneficiary of refugee status. The assistance includes help in gathering all the necessary documents for registration with the national employment service, the recognition of foreign degrees, enrolling in additional education programmes and courses in line with labour market requirements and engaging in active labour market policy measures. The **National Employment Strategy of the Republic of Serbia** for 2011-2020 identifies a number of vulnerable groups, whose status with regard to the labour market is to be prioritized in the timeframe in question. Refugees and asylum seekers are not specifically mentioned as a group whose increased access to employment is a national objective. However, the strategy covers refugees from other former Yugoslav republics and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

#### Social entrepreneurship

According to recent research, in Serbia there is no legal act that comprehensively regulates the field of social enterprises as the

concept is not yet recognized by the legal system.<sup>8</sup> In general, six types of social enterprises have been mapped out and recognized, relying on the combination of legal form and type of business. The most frequent legal forms include associations of citizens and foundations, cooperatives, work integration social enterprises (WISEs) for people with disabilities, spin-off enterprises (limited liability or joint-stock companies), business incubators and development agencies. However, there are several acts that go to create a favourable environment for the development of social enterprises. They include the Social Protection Act, the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, the Act on Associations of Citizens, the Act on Endowments and Foundations, the Company Act, the Cooperative Act, the Act on Volunteering, the Profit Tax Act and the Value Added Tax Act.

### 2.2.6 Slovenia



#### Access to asylum and integration

In Slovenia, the procedure for international protection is regulated by the **International Protection Act (IPA)** and it is initiated in two phases. First, the individual expresses the intention to apply for international protection. This can be done before any state or local authority, which then has the duty to inform the police. The individual is then transferred to the **asylum home** where he or she starts the second phase of the procedure by lodging an application for international protection. The IPA does not provide free legal representation for applicants in the first-instance procedure. Instead, this is provided by the Legal-Informational Centre for NGOs (PIC). According to the law, asylum procedures normally need to be concluded within six months. However, this is often not respected, resulting in an excessively long procedure. If a decision has not already been made, asylum seekers obtain the **right to work** nine months after the application.

#### Reception and integration system

The **Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants**

<sup>8</sup> Cvejić, S., Veleš, B., Jelačić, M. and Veleš, G. (2011) “Zaključci i preporuke za unapređenje socijalnog preduzetništva u Srbiji”, in Veleš, G. (ed.) *Socijalno preduzetništvo: modeli, komparativna praksa i pravni okvir socijalnog preduzetništva u Srbiji*, Belgrade: Grupa 484. See also European Commission (2019), “Social Enterprises and Their Ecosystems in Europe. Country Fiche: Serbia”, author: Slobodan Cvejić, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

(UOIM) is responsible for the reception and accommodation of asylum seekers in Slovenia. Before lodging the application, individuals are accommodated in the **pre-reception area** of the asylum home or in the separate building or prefabricated buildings in Logatec. After the individuals lodge their application, they are accommodated in the main asylum home or its branches: single men are accommodated in the asylum home or its branches in Kotnikova; women and families are generally accommodated in Logatec and only exceptionally in the asylum home; unaccompanied minors can be accommodated in Logatec or in the student dormitory in Postojna. After being granted international protection, the asylum seekers have to leave the accommodation centre within 15 days of receiving the decision. If they are able to obtain private accommodation within this timeframe, they can move outside the reception centre. If they are not able to secure private housing, they are accommodated in the **integration house** in Maribor or Ljubljana. After obtaining protected status, the individual or family is assigned an **integration consultant**, who provides all the necessary information for the fastest possible integration and prepares a personal integration plan.

### Social entrepreneurship

The first act to define and regulate social enterprises in Slovenia was **the Social Entrepreneurship Act** in 2011, followed by the launch of the Strategy for Social Entrepreneurship Development 2013-2016. The act defines the criteria for obtaining and maintaining formal social enterprise status, implying that social entrepreneurship is not a mandatory legal organizational form. However, in 2018 the act was amended, introducing a reform aiming at eliminating the restrictions for the creation of social enterprises, administrative barriers and yearly reports and the conditions to preserve the status, as well as the distinctions between the different types of social enterprise (type A and type B). The 2018 amendment follows the European framework, for the first time defining the concept of social economy as an “economy, which is composed by social enterprises, cooperatives, companies for people with disabilities, employment centres, non-governmental organizations (associations, institutes, foundations), that are not established solely with the purpose to gain profit, operate in the benefit of their members, users or broader society and produce commercial or non-commercial products and services”.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> European Commission (2019), “Social Enterprises and Their Ecosystems in Europe. Updated country report: Slovenia”, authors: Tatjana Rakar and Zinka Kolarič, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

### 3. Collection of best practices and transferability possibilities

The REInSER project partners had the opportunity to scan the social entrepreneurial landscape in search of successful examples of social enterprises that involved migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. This collection of best practices was presented in the three study trips (to Ioannina, Ruma, Brindisi) and all of the partners had the opportunity to try to think creatively about the possibility of transferring them to their respective national contexts. There are few exceptions to this general rule, namely those countries where the social and solidarity sector of the economy has yet to reach its potential. In these cases (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia), we alternatively present attempts in the social and solidarity economy with potential for a social impact involving the refugee and migrant population.

#### 3.1 Methodology note

It is important at this point to mention the initial set of criteria employed in order to select the best practices from each participating country. According to these criteria, in order to qualify as best practices, the social enterprises should

- have clear objectives and activities that fit the main objective of the REInSER project, that is, involve migrants and refugees either in managing the enterprise or in employment (or both);
- include the participation of multiple stakeholders, thus demonstrating the participation /integration/collaboration of different stakeholders/institutions;
- show their significant impact and effectiveness, judged both in economic terms, that is, the challenge of marginal revenue had effectively been overcome, and in terms of achievement of a degree of social integration, together with significant, tangible benefits and a positive impact, according to the specific context where each social enterprise operates;
- meet the criterion of sustainability, that is, prove to be economically and socially sustainable (or give very strong indications that it will become so), or, alternatively, show benefits that prove sustainable for a certain period of time;
- show that it can serve as a benchmark and the lessons learned can be transferred, that is, all of the specific social enterprise could be replicated on a larger regional, national or international scale or certain parts or functions could be adopted and serve as a starting point in a different context;
- exhibit a certain degree of originality in the way of meeting certain social challenges in the local context.

Furthermore, the scouting methodology consisted of two main phases. The first phase entailed completing the information showing the extent to which each social enterprise met the aforementioned

criteria, while summarizing all the general information about the identified best practices; in the second phase, the evaluation template was completed through an interview with agents who had been involved mainly as stakeholders and not as beneficiaries in the project/initiative identified as a best practice.

Hence, in general, the practices presented here are the ones that seemed to carry a higher transferability potential. What is hoped is that the short presentations of the practices included in this handbook will inspire activists and entrepreneurs to support migrant and refugee integration through social entrepreneurship.

The number of best practices varies considerably from country to country. The majority come from Italy and Greece, which have a longer tradition of various forms of social entrepreneurship, while a lot less were seen in Slovenia and Croatia, and above all in the two countries that are not part of the EU (Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina).



## 3.2 Presentations and transferability

### 3.2.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sigurna ruka d.o.o.  
Bosanska Krupa, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
<https://www.sigurnaruka.ba/>



#### Short description

The Sigurna ruka d.o.o. social enterprise was established in 2016 through the Mozaik Foundation social business incubator, based in Bosanska Krupa. It provides services for the elderly, cleaning for residential and commercial premises, and deep cleaning of furniture, carpets and car interiors.

#### Objectives and rationale

The social challenge that Sigurna ruka attempts to face is the social exclusion of vulnerable individuals, particularly women, who have problems finding a job due to a lack of education, skills, age, etc. In the long run, the social enterprise aims to reintegrate a vulnerable social group in the labour market.

#### Results achieved / impact

At present, the enterprise employs seven local women. Thus, the impact of Sigurna ruka d.o.o. in Bosanska Krupa is not immense in terms of the number of women entering the labour market. However, it contributes by providing income for its employees and their families.

#### Transferability potential

The simple structure of Sigurna ruka and the commonality of the social challenge faced can be the basis for its replication in different national contexts.

### 3.2.2 Croatia

Zeleni inkubator / Green Incubator  
Osijek - Baranja County - City - Belišće, Croatia  
<https://udrugazvono.hr/>



#### Short description

The association focuses on marginalized and vulnerable groups, in particular people with disabilities. The project's principal aim is to support and empower young people who suffer from social exclusion in order for them to participate in social enterprises.

#### Objectives and rationale

Through educational workshops, young people are acquainted with innovative forms of employment, develop their own communication skills, acquire new knowledge and self-presentation skills and are prepared for further participation in social life. In this way, they are empowered either to be self-employed and/or participate in social entrepreneurial projects.

Furthermore, job interview simulation exercises prepare the young people for interviews with potential employers. Workshops are organized to encourage them to be creative in solving problems and to empower them to cope with different life situations.

#### Results achieved / impact

Fifteen young people with special needs and disabilities acquired new knowledge and skills. They set up an agricultural social cooperative and managed to produce their own products, thus contributing to the sustainability and functionality of their common home.

#### Transferability potential

The transferability potential of the project stretches to national and international level as it covers the need for vocational training and the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

This approach has often been recognized as an example of a good practice by actively and passively involving vulnerable groups in social entrepreneurship.



Breza Association Social Entrepreneurship Socijalno  
poduzetništvo udruge BREZA  
Osijek, Croatia  
<https://breza.hr/socijalno-poduzetnistvo/>



### Short description

The Breza Association entered the world of entrepreneurship in 2003, when the Ministry of Social Welfare first contracted it as a social service for housing and care for children and young people without adequate parental care. It offers the following services:

- housing with comprehensive support;
- housing with occasional support;
- temporary accommodation in crisis situations.

### Objectives and rationale

The main goal of Breza is to promote the interests of children and young people, aiming at their inclusion in the community. The organization is very active in promoting the social entrepreneurship model.

The Breza Socially Therapeutic Community provides support for children and young people who have had traumatic experiences preventing them from living with their parents, foster parents or in the institutions in which they were placed. The support includes: upbringing; housing; leisure organization; education; inclusion in the labour market; participation in cultural, sports, environmental and volunteer programmes; and development of personal potential through various creative and experience-related pedagogic and free-time activities.

Furthermore, by providing constant training for independent living in

the community, Breza aims to achieve the highest possible level of personal and collective quality of life for the children and young people.

### **Results achieved / impact**

Social service with comprehensive support is provided in three separate housing units, with a total capacity of 12 beneficiaries, in the city of Osijek.

There are two apartments for independent living, offering four places. Half-day stays are provided for children at risk in Vukovar. In addition, a house with a capacity of 16 places provides temporary accommodation in crisis situations.

### **Transferability potential**

The organization participates in several partnership projects through international and cross-border cooperation programmes and is often recognized as an example of a good practice propounding a multicultural approach and the promotion of tolerance. Hence, it can be successfully transferred to other contexts as well.



### 3.2.3 Greece

Staramaki  
Kilkis, Greece  
[www.staramaki.gr](http://www.staramaki.gr)



“As the Staramaki case exemplifies, creative, local and sustainable solutions can be found for everything, if we work together - even for the notorious single-use straw.”

#### Short description

The Staramaki Social Cooperative Enterprise (Staramaki SCE) is a civil law cooperative based in the rural region of Kilkis in Central Macedonia (Greece). It utilizes the byproduct of local wheat and rye cultivation in order to produce a viable eco-friendly alternative to single-use plastic straws and, at the same time, to create employment opportunities for vulnerable members of the population and promote social cohesion, as well as local and regional development.

#### Objectives and rationale

Through social innovation, Staramaki (SCE) addresses the following societal challenges:

- economic and social development - it brings growth and social value to rural areas of Greece, where the decade-long debt crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated the problems of unemployment, depopulation and population ageing. The Kilkis region has experienced a population decline in the post-2008 period and has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country (21%), far higher than the EU average;
- environmental degradation and biodiversity loss - it provides a sustainable alternative to conventional plastic straws, thus contributing to the reduction of plastic pollution across

Greece, in compliance with the EU directive on single-use plastics banning plastic straws as of 3 July 2021;

- environmental degradation and biodiversity loss - it addresses the compelling issue of land degradation and desertification in the Kilkis area and other rural areas in Greece through work on regenerative agriculture coordinated with its suppliers and local universities;
- climate change mitigation and adaptation - it reduces the production and use of fossil fuel-based plastics, and promotes less intensive agricultural practices.

### **Results achieved / impact**

Staramaki SCE produces straws from a wheat by-product with the aim of replacing conventional plastic straws. The production unit is in the village of Metalliko, in the Kilkis region, Central Macedonia, Greece. The cooperative is managed equally by its members and its purpose is to ensure collective benefits. Its profits only come from activities of social interest. Its aim is to serve local and collective interests and to promote employment, social cohesion and local or regional development. A key factor in Staramaki's success is that the creation of employment opportunities has met the labour needs of a vulnerable population (unemployed Greeks and refugees).

Launched in December 2019, the straw production is currently expanding thanks to a number of critical partnerships with major corporations. At present, Staramaki is collaborating with the Agricultural University of Athens to provide scientific evidence to local farmers in their attempt to optimize sustainable wheat production practices. In addition, Staramaki is investing in new practices to cut down production costs (use of biomass for energy production). This investment is expected to reduce the energy bill by the end of 2024.

### **Transferability potential**

Staramaki's innovative idea to produce a banal product such as a straw with organic materials, along with elements of its production process such as the use of a local rural product and the cost- and labour-saving device of alternative forms of energy, offer the potential to be transferred to social environments facing similar social issues. The necessary prerequisites are local agricultural production that lacks market dynamism, an existing workforce that faces social exclusion and an entrepreneurial know-how that understands both the local environment and the market in question. The importance of the latter extends to the possibility to lure the necessary capital from European and local (state and private) funds.

Changemakers Lab  
Lesvos, Greece  
[www.changemakerslab.com](http://www.changemakerslab.com)



“Our vision for the island of Lesvos is to become a Global Humanitarian Tech Hub, a living lab in which we test, pilot, implement and accelerate leading, impactful tech solutions into Europe. This would speed up access to free education and healthcare.”

### Short description

Changemakers Lab is an NGO based on the island of Lesvos that initiates and codesigns digital skills and entrepreneurship programmes with diverse stakeholders. The initiative brings together and empowers local people and asylum seekers/refugees, and helps to shape an inclusive and socially just future of Europe.

### Objectives and rationale

The main idea of the Changemakers Lab was to create a two-part programme. The aim of the first part was to train the trainers, and the second to introduce digital skills to over 400 participants during the SAP Refugee Code Week on both Lesvos and in Athens. A three-month Entrepreneurship Incubation Programme was created, aiming to offer entrepreneurial solutions. The projects were presented to a panel at the Changemakers Summit.

The main objectives of the Changemakers Lab were to:

- support the creation of a vibrant, sustainable social tech ecosystem, showing how social impactful tech solutions can solve social challenges and enable social cohesion amongst refugees and host communities;
- attract, convene and bring together local and foreign investors, the brightest technical talent and the most promising entrepreneurs/students to foster the creation and growth (acceleration) of world-class global IP start-up

companies that solve social challenges;

- test, pilot and implement leading impactful tech solutions on Lesbos, establishing a best practice which can be scaled across Europe;
- brand and position the region as a competitor to other similar hubs around the world, as a gateway to Europe and as one of the most beautiful islands for life, work and play (future of work);
- position Lesbos as a leading hub for culture, technology and art.

### **Results achieved / impact**

Changemakers Lab has been a catalyst for several initiatives, which subsequently led to the founding of new initiatives and organizations. It has also built an international network of key stakeholders in refugee entrepreneurship, coworking spaces and has also helped shape policies.

It has been at the forefront in advocating for digital skills and social tech entrepreneurship as tools for empowerment, integration and social cohesion.

### **Transferability potential**

The concept of creating a niche for the implementation of digital and entrepreneurial skills involving asylum seekers and locals in the same incubating programme carries great transferability potential. Human-centred code design can create a win-win scenario, benefiting both refugees and locals. Strategic partnerships across the EU supporting analogous initiatives would be a key factor to aid the integration of refugees and use social entrepreneurship to help change the narrative across the EU.

Emantes  
Athens, Greece  
[www.facebook.com/emantesInternationalLgbtqiaSolidarity](https://www.facebook.com/emantesInternationalLgbtqiaSolidarity)

“Emantes' services are personalized in their delivery, as the solutions we generate are tailored to each individual. Therefore, the positive impact Emantes has is on the life of every single person we work with, those who are keen to live independently, or those whose mental well-being has been undermined by their experiences of trauma.”



### Short description

The Emantes Social Cooperative Enterprise was founded in July 2018 by active members of the LGBTQIA+ Refugees Welcome collective in collaboration with migration and refugee experts. The collective was created in September 2016 by refugees and people active in the solidarity field. Most members had personal experience with refugee and migration issues and/or were involved in queer, LGBTQIA+ and feminist activist groups. They came together to focus their attention on one of the most unseen facets of the refugee “crisis”: that of the LGBTQIA+ community.

### Objectives and rationale

Its extensive network of LGBTQIA+ refugees and three years of grassroots experience providing daily support put the LGBTQIA+

Refugees Welcome collective in a unique position to provide strategic assistance, community-building opportunities and direct services support to LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers. Following a year of action, the members of the collective concluded that its lack of legal form limited its potential, namely, the collective could not access hotspots, camps, detention centres, asylum services, public services or other agencies. Furthermore, funding resources were limited, thus making the coverage of the refugees' basic needs (food, housing, education, etc.) difficult or even impossible.

As a social cooperative enterprise, Emantes aimed to overcome these barriers. The creation of this legal entity facilitated fundraising, visibility and collaborations, while its main objectives continue to be support of the LGBTQIA+ community and raising awareness about their struggles. Emantes' members participate in educational seminars and are interested in expanding their knowledge. They network in order to enrich and upgrade the content and expertise of the organization. Emantes' services are personalized in their delivery, with solutions tailored to each individual.

### **Results achieved / impact**

After involving the refugees and host communities in decision-making, Emantes attempts to improve the lives of LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers or refugees with settlement status in Greece. In this context, Emantes provides information and advice, welfare, housing, education, goods and medicines, employment and therapeutic support.

More specifically Emantes offers:

- a helpline via WhatsApp;
- long-life and fresh food;
- referrals to other organizations' housing programmes;
- emergency accommodation in a paid hostel;
- clothing (directly and/or referral);
- cover for the cost of prescription drugs (active);
- a dance class project (2018-2019) - through Emantes' collaboration with a local dance school, trans women were given the opportunity to work as dance teachers and earn part-time income;
- legal support (directly and via referrals);
- facilitated access to medical and mental health services;
- information on legal, educational and health issues;
- coordination of regular community meetings on a variety of subjects with beneficiaries and members of the LGBTQIA+ Refugees Welcome collective;
- organization of empowerment and awareness-raising actions;



- educational opportunities, by carrying out research and using its network to provide skills development opportunities through educational programmes in Athens to TGNC people expressing the desire and need;
- DIY magazine project (2020-ongoing) - Emantes coordinates a community magazine project with the TGNC community, which is also represented in the magazine's editorial team. The TGNC community members are given the opportunity to participate and earn a range of qualifications in creative skills and express their voice in Greece and worldwide through the Emantes' network of collaborators and online publications.

### **Transferability potential**

Emantes has identified a real gap in refugee support, which would seem to be present as a need wherever there is a refugee population. However, two criteria need to be met in order for the practice to be transferable: 1) the vast involvement of volunteers and 2) the strategic engagement of the community in general. Thus, its transferability potential is interconnected with the degree of development of local civil society.

Archipelagos  
Athens, Greece  
<http://acoop.gr/>



“For its employees and members, Archipelagos is an environment that excludes no one, and whose goal is to live together. It takes an interest and sensitively attempts to integrate, support and empower individuals who face or are threatened by social exclusion, with the ultimate goal of social integration. Healthy professional relationships are formed among the employees in the social cooperative, which very often expand into warm, sincere interpersonal connections. This has a great impact on their self-respect, giving them hope and giving their life meaning.”

### Short description

The Archipelagos social cooperative aims to create jobs for individuals, also including migrants and refugees, who have been socially excluded on mental health grounds. It runs under special legal status as a social cooperative of limited liability and has developed a range of projects to support its goals. At the same time, it is considered a mental health unit and is supervised by the Greek Ministry of Health, supporting the rehabilitation and financial independence of individuals facing mental health problems.

### Objectives and rationale

Like all social cooperatives of limited liability in Greece (Κοι.Σ.Π.Ε.), Archipelagos is a financial entity whose goal is the social integration of individuals suffering from social exclusion due to mental or social problems by funding activities that create job openings for its members. The Archipelagos cooperative members consist of mental patients, mental health professionals and institutional partners. Currently, Archipelagos runs four different activities that offer

employment and create financial value:

- cleaning services for public and private institutions;
- a second-hand retail shop;
- cultural mediation;
- micro-repair services in buildings (plumbing, electrical appliances etc.)

The social cooperative also plans to launch yet another activity: a pop-up restaurant that will be able to offer services, not at a fixed location, but in different venues around the city.

### Results achieved / impact

In 2019, the Archipelagos social cooperative received the accolade of “Best Social Enterprise” in Europe during the 33rd Social Firms Europe (SFE) CEFECE annual conference.

During the same fiscal year, the cooperative managed to break even while securing important funding from the Stavros Niarchos foundation, to fund its restaurant/catering activities.

The second-hand shop activity (mainly run by volunteers) added extra value to the cooperative's operations.

In 2019, the cooperative employed 78 people:

- 65 in cleaning services (83.3%);
- four in the second-hand shop (5.1%);
- four in catering (5.1%);
- five in administration (6.4%).

The total working population included:

- 26.9% refugees/asylum seekers (including many with mental health problems);
- 14.1% migrants;
- 28.2% individuals from the general public.

### Transferability potential

There is no doubt that Archipelagos tackles a social challenge. Indeed, in many regional and national contexts it is quite common for individuals with mental health issues to have difficulty finding employment. In this sense, it seems quite an important idea to have a social cooperative that supports these individuals' (of diverse backgrounds) need for employment and social integration. However, an important factor in the success of this social cooperative is the special legal context in which it operates, providing support through state funds allocated to mental health support.

SOFFA  
Athens, Greece  
[www.soffa.gr](http://www.soffa.gr)



“Soffa is unique because it operates within the fashion world, contemporaneously tackling four main issues at the centre of this universe: the environmental crisis and exploitation of resources; human rights, fair wages and working conditions; waste management and adopting an environmentally friendly approach to resources; and the lack of relevant action from existing fashion brands and institutions. It has pioneered the Green Social Fashion Factory Solution, a humanitarian manufacturing process based on 'Fashion Production Islands' to help break down the inhumane paradigm of working conditions in assembly-line production units. ”

### Short description

SOFFA is a social cooperative whose goal is integration in employment. It is a creative tailoring production studio run by a cooperative of fashion designers and professionals whose aim is to create sustainable fashion garments with a high social but low environmental impact. It supports the global ecosystem of sustainable fashion brands and designers by offering an ethical solution to manufacture their garments. Its customers are international sustainable brands and it also produces corporate merchandising for festivals and conferences.

### Objectives and rationale

SOFFA is a circular, eco-sustainable fashion manufacturing studio that provides work to refugees and women survivors of human trafficking

and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) through vocational training in circular fashion principles and zero-waste processes using recycled, natural, vegan and plant-based textiles that support environmental regeneration. Its main goal is to provide integration in the sustainable fashion field.

Currently, SOFFA runs four different activities:

- vocational training in sewing and fashion design in a programme simulating real;
- working conditions leading to a certificate in fashion;
- a circular fashion tailoring programme;
- a circular fashion design programme;
- a job matching programme.

### **Results achieved / impact**

In 2020, SOFFA created employment positions for 43 people, used 300 kilos of recycled textiles and clothes, donated fabric stock and created income for 50 business partners, suppliers and service providers.

The income is then used to:

- offer vocational training in sewing and other inclusion programmes to refugees and women survivors of human trafficking and SGBV;
- run awareness and fundraising activities in Athens, Alexandroupoli, Lesvos, Thessaloniki, Arta, Ioannina and Cyprus, involving city leaders, friends and collaborators, within the frame of Fashion Revolution Greece.

### **Transferability potential**

SOFFA targets the empowerment and social inclusion of women survivors of human trafficking and women at risk of exploitation. Such challenges, that is, the need to offer some kind of support for the inclusion of minority groups in society and employment, are common to several national contexts. People should have the chance to live and work in whichever country they want, whatever their cultural differences. Furthermore, SOFFA controls its entire supply chain to make sure that the human rights of all its workers are protected in all stages of the supply process. It also offers full transparency, thus creating a transferable administration model. The main challenges regarding this best practice example model are the stereotypes surrounding minority groups. Cultural context and language barriers may provide challenges as well. But above all, in our opinion the main challenge is to have a legal context that allows state or EU funding to be secured in the setting-up phase.

### 3.2.4 Italy

Colori Vivi  
Turin, Italy  
[www.colorivivi.it](http://www.colorivivi.it)

“In 2016 we had an idea, perhaps a crazy one: to create a business with a social purpose and give the women we welcomed real help to fit in better in our contexts. And so the Sartoria Colori Vivi was born: a dressmaking workshop to offer women a concrete, professional job that would allow them to become autonomous and to choose their own future. The only way to fully achieve integration and autonomy, self-determination and dignity is through work, which allows everyone to take part in community life and earn the economic income necessary to determine their present and future.”

#### Short description

Colori Vivi is a creative dressmaking workshop where migrant women from different countries of the world find employment. Colori Vivi creates clothes and accessories that are the result of a process of “contamination” between different cultural universes.

#### Objectives and rationale

Colori Vivi aims to respond to the risk of social exclusion and help minimize social exclusion through artisanal activities.

Currently, Colori Vivi runs the following activities:

- a creative dressmaking workshop, where migrant women from different countries of the world find employment;
- creation of clothes and accessories;
- “contamination” between different cultural universes.

The solution offered is integration of vulnerable social groups (specifically migrant women) in the labour market; this is achieved through workshops which offer the women concrete skills and

professional work, enabling them to become autonomous, independent and able to choose for their own future.

### Results achieved / impact

In terms of economic sustainability, Colori Vivi has not yet reached the breakeven point. However, it has developed an expansion plan which is due to end in 2025 and should lead it to break even.

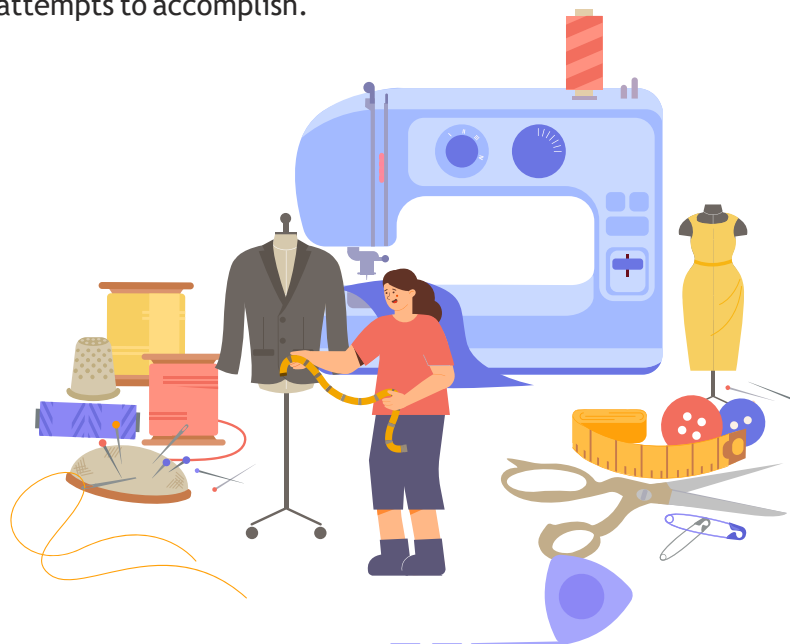
In terms of social and environmental sustainability, Colori Vivi has expressed its interest and openness to actively engage in activities to preserve the environment. It will publish its first social impact report next year. However, it lacks a concrete plan to address social and environmental issues.

Currently, it has three employees and three collaborators. The intention is to grow to 40 people within five years; however, no detailed plan has been made yet. Two of the employees and one of the collaborators are migrants.

As yet, the people who completed the training have not found employment. Nevertheless, they still benefited from the one-year placement.

### Transferability potential

The idea could be replicated within the national and international context. The problems tackled, that is, the employment of unemployed vulnerable women who experience social marginalization and exclusion and the creation of job opportunities in different service areas, in this case sewing, are common social issues in several regional and national contexts. However, in order for a similar project to be sustainable, it is essential to have supportive financial networks willing to invest in a social mission like the one that Colori Vivi attempts to accomplish.



Mygrants  
Catania, Bologna, Italy  
<https://mygrants.it/en/>

“We believe that in a rapidly changing global economy, skills largely determine competitiveness and the capacity to stimulate innovation. They are an attractive factor for investment, a catalyst in the virtuous circle of job creation and growth, and constitute essential elements for social cohesion.”



### Short description

Mygrants is a benefit corporation that has put together and runs the first application to provide immigrants with a broad range of useful resources to achieve full employment in the labour market in salaried work or as a freelancer or entrepreneur. Through a series of themed quiz modules in three languages (Italian, French and English), the application aims to increase personal awareness and provide training and mentoring in order to encourage the emergence of unexpressed potential.

### Objectives and rationale

Mygrants tackles the social challenge of the lack of job opportunities and training for immigrants within the Italian labour market. Mygrants aims to encourage individuals to achieve their full potential and use it in creative ways. The solution offered to the social challenge consists of training programmes, entrepreneurship mentoring, work



placements, CV creation, while using a variety of learning methodologies, such as adaptive learning, learning through gamification, mobile learning, etc.

### **Results achieved / impact**

Since its inception, Mygrants has identified 43,000 talents and made 3,992 job placements.

The main innovative strength of the project does not lie in the app itself but in the way in which Mygrants, through a platform called PICK ME, connects trained migrants to companies looking for workers.

In terms of economic sustainability, it aims to break even in 2023.

Having recently become a benefit corporation, Mygrants will publish its first social impact report in 2022.

### **Transferability potential**

Mygrants has already been implemented in eight countries, including Africa. This shows the extent to which the idea can be replicated. The app offers training and workshops in three different languages (Italian, French and English) to address the local language diversities between the countries in which it operates. Soon, Mygrants will also enter the US and Canadian markets due to the issues of unemployment encountered by migrants in those countries too.

Progetto QUID  
Avesa, Italy  
[www.quidorg.it](http://www.quidorg.it)

“At QUID we strongly believe that fashion -with its message of beauty, harmony, colours and creativity - is a powerful tool for tackling social inequalities and promoting social innovation.”



### Short description

Progetto QUID is a new fashion brand which employs women from vulnerable social groups in the production of clothes and accessories. These products are made from high-quality textiles donated by some of Italy's top fashion firms.

### Objectives and rationale

The idea behind the project is to use fashion as a way to promote social equality and social innovation. The social challenge addressed by Progetto QUID is the social exclusion of vulnerable women by reintegrating them in the labour market. Progetto QUID has placed strong emphasis on public and private partnerships in order to launch its activities and in this context has created *a solid network of collaboration with well-known Italian fashion brands*. Human capital has played a key role in the success of Progetto QUID, since the knowledge, experience and expertise of the people involved has made a real difference in the project's management and realization.

The project has further distinguished itself from other analogous attempts due to a strong focus on the circular economy and the use of recycled material in its products.

Currently Progetto QUID runs the following activities:

- textile activities and workshops with raw materials provided by the most renowned Italian clothing companies;
- design of different models playing with colour and material, and production of one-of-a-kind pieces of clothing.

### **Results achieved / impact**

The project has won several prizes for its innovative idea, for example at the European Innovation Competition in 2014 and the Green Carpet Fashion Awards in 2020, winning the Responsible Disruption Award.

It runs 11 projects with a high social impact and 84% of those employed are women. The project employs people of 16 different nationalities, while 50% of its employees are migrants.

In terms of economic sustainability, the project has reached breakeven point and already makes profit. In 2016, QUID achieved financial sustainability, having doubled its number of employees and turnover every year.

In terms of social and environmental sustainability, Progetto QUID adheres to circular economy principles, and uses recycled material or materials that would otherwise be thrown away. Specifically, it recovers fabric scraps, remnants and off-cuts from the entire textile production chain that would otherwise remain unused in warehouses and reworks them into beautiful fabrics.

### **Transferability potential**

It is important to note that human resources have played a significant role in the successful outcome of the project. The involvement of skilled designers and stylists has been essential to boost the strategic potential of its commercial activities.

Therefore, even though the activities themselves could be reproduced elsewhere, the people who manage and have helped the project grow are motivated and extremely experienced in the field in question. As a result, it would be necessary to invest in highly skilled individuals.

Sfrutta Zero (Zero Exploitation)  
Nardò (Lecce), Italy  
[www.dirittiasud.org](http://www.dirittiasud.org)



“ The production and sale of an ethical tomato sauce is essential to promote the association's institutional integration mission. ”

### Short description

Established in Puglia in 2014 and run by the Diritti a Sud association in Nardò in the province of Lecce and by Solidaria in Bari, Sfrutta Zero is a cooperative project - registered as a “social promotion association” - involving young Italians and migrants. Its aim is to reclaim the right to work and to earn an income outside the current system of habitual exploitation and insecurity present throughout the agricultural food chain, from the field right through to logistics and distribution.

### Objectives and rationale

Sfrutta Zero uses underutilized land for the production of an ethical tomato sauce through the social and work integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and the promotion of the values of hospitality and integration. A fundamental element in its rationale is the creation of a project that is a model of environmental and human sustainability.

Sfrutta Zero aims to raise awareness among the general population on the issue of migration, illegal work, exploitation, the re-appropriation of agricultural land and the potential of social agriculture to be used as a tool for social and labour inclusion.

By countering illegal hiring and offering an instrument of economic support to migrants and people in difficulty, the project also aims to create job opportunities with a focus on securing the dignity of workers in the agricultural sector.

Through its main activities, the project attempts to

- promote access to knowledge, education and culture, through education and training activities;
- protect the rights of the person by affirming a culture of legality and fighting against mafias, organized crime, abuses of power and all forms of discrimination;



- promote the culture of civil coexistence, linguistic diversity and interculturality through the creation of discussion and meeting spaces;
- promote equal opportunities for cultural, ethnic, religious and gender differences, by organizing cultural events and preventing phenomena of social exclusion, racism, xenophobia, intolerance and marginalization;
- promote the protection of workers' rights, the fight against insecurity, discrimination and all forms of exploitation, as well as the right to work, education, health and housing;
- promote active citizenship, participation, inclusion and social cohesion, democracy and rights at European and international level;
- develop projects in the social agriculture sector with the aim of creating job opportunities for migrants and young people in precarious situations, recovering abandoned land, promoting the protection of biodiversity and creating a network of relevant stakeholders.

### Results achieved / impact

The Sfrutta Zero project provides work placement for ten migrants, about half of whom are refugees and asylum seekers. It allows them to obtain a regular agricultural work contract, which can also be used to transform and extend their residence permit. By giving migrants and refugees contracts, the project offers them support to regularize their documents. Furthermore, as well as achieving economic independence from other private and public entities, it has launched a political movement to combat illegal hiring and exploitation in agriculture.

Economic sustainability was first achieved through a bank loan, but the breakeven point was reached and exceeded in 2021. The turnover increased from 30,000 to 70,000 euros in 2021 and the forecast is even better.

### Transferability potential

The creation of an organization to combat the exploitation of agricultural labour, strategies for the use of underutilized agricultural land and the creation of a network of organizations that work on good ethical consumption practices are points that can be transferred to other regional, national or transnational contexts.



Artemisia  
Bari, Italy  
[www.artemisiabari.it](http://www.artemisiabari.it)

“It is important that the reception activity is carried out in the same space as the commercial activity, allowing the migrants to mingle with the guests and to later become their hosts, giving an interesting twist.”



### Short description

Artemisia is a social entrepreneurship project comanaged by a cooperative. It combines a reception centre for unaccompanied migrants with commercial activities and job placements for disadvantaged people, in particular refugees and asylum seekers.

### Objectives and rationale

In repurposing an asset confiscated from the Mafia for commercial and social ends, the objective of the Artemisia project is the work and social integration and acquisition of job-related skills by young refugees and asylum seekers (over 18 years old); this includes processes to facilitate employment in the catering and hospitality sector and building social networks.

The initial internship lasts one year, consisting of 30 hours a week spread over six days. During this period, the internees get to know the area, create their social network and connect with future companies that will be able to hire them.

The commercial activity consists of a B&B, bistro and American bar managed by young adults who have entered or left the reception path provided by the state. The aim is to upgrade their professional skills

and connect them to regional opportunities in the hospitality and catering sector.

**Results achieved / impact**

Due to the health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, only one training course and training internship have been completed which nevertheless resulted in the successful hiring of the trainees.

**Transferability potential**

The idea of placing cooperatives with different ends under the same management carries a strong transferability potential. Organizations combining refugee reception with vocational training that leads to job placements in their own commercial activities (catering and culinary services) can function as self-sustained units. As a result, they can overcome the need for constant financing through external sources. Furthermore, the idea that refugees and asylum seekers can become hosts, and reverse their position, is particularly interesting, creating a novel path of social integration.

Ghetto-Out Casa Sankara  
San Severo, Italy  
[www.casasankara.it](http://www.casasankara.it)



“ The project is an experiment in the creation of a space for the training of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, whose aim is to facilitate the acquisition of skills in the agricultural sector and to bring out relevant knowledge and experiences from their countries of origin. In so doing, it can result in some migrants going back, but it can also lead to the creation of job opportunities and combat illegal immigration. ”

### Short description

Ghetto Out - Casa Sankara is a voluntary association which was formed in 2016 to continue the work that was started informally in 2012 by a group of African migrants engaged in the creation of an alternative reality to the ghetto, where they could live and set out a legal and dignified path for their economic and social integration. The association runs a housing project that also operates a reception facility; furthermore, it offers guidance and training services, and has an agricultural company that produces and processes tomatoes, offering job placement, skills acquisition, vocational guidance and employment rights.

For several years, the group has managed the Fortore farm, located in the countryside of San Severo (the housing premises and the surrounding land were granted by the Puglia regional government), where hundreds of migrants have been welcomed over the years. In 2018, the group renamed the project “Casa Sankara - Centro Stefano Fumaruolo”. Today the project has a guesthouse, completed in 2019, which houses more than 500 people.

### Objectives and rationale

The main problem tackled is the exploitation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the agricultural sector, concerning how they are



hired and their inhumane housing conditions. The goal was to set up a second reception project which could not only provide housing services but also produce job opportunities for migrants and refugees in cultivating the land.

The project also provides free services for migrants, such as literacy programmes, legal aid, reception facilities, transport and a canteen.

### **Results achieved / impact**

The project provides guesthouse accommodation, not only to the 400 refugees and asylum seekers in the reception centre, but also to 100 migrant workers from the neighbouring countryside. It has also led to the employment of 45 people, only ten of whom are Italian. Furthermore, sales of the tomato sauce produced have resulted in profits used for the subsistence of ten people.

### **Transferability potential**

The use of underutilized assets for the creation of a reception service alongside a social agricultural enterprise that generates new resources is a mix of strategies that can be transferred to a regional, national or international level. The resources required consist of possible openings in the agricultural production sector where motivated individuals and institutions can come together to face the rather common issue of socially excluded migrants and refugees. Furthermore, a similar project can be secured through initial access to funding and a legal context with a positive orientation towards this type of enterprise.

CIME DI RAPA  
Lecce, Italy  
[www.cimedirapa.eu](http://www.cimedirapa.eu)



Promoted by a tourist accommodation company, a professional training institution and a regional immigration initiative, the Cime di Rapa food truck project offers cooking courses aimed at the work placement of people in situations of fragility, such as women victims of violence and unemployed youth. However, the main target is foreigners (migrants/refugees/asylum seekers). The project addresses the difficulties faced in particular by young migrants and refugees in terms of participation in formal training courses, due to their dispersal around Italy for reasons related to the reception system.

Street food is now a major player in contemporary catering and production companies are increasingly offering traditional foods, redesigned in a contemporary way and with ethnic overtones, to eat on the streets or as a quality takeaway. Moreover, street food can also become a means of promoting social integration and generating work. The project fosters a holistic integration model for young people from different parts of the world. The goal is to integrate them into Italian

society by offering them an all-inclusive training course, leading to qualifications in the catering field. The courses include general cooking classes and specific classes on street food, as well as skills relating to the food trade, the administration of food and drinks and participation in and the running of a social cooperative.

Furthermore, the initiative aims to create an ethical and sustainable food supply chain specialized in street food and managed by the Cime di Rapa cooperative. The use of two food trucks allows trainees to distribute the products prepared at fairs, events and shows. Particular attention is paid to the creation of menus that are based on local products while also recreating the 'flavours' of the immigrants' countries of origin.

Additionally, the preservation and promotion of environmental sustainability are secured through the seed bank, the introduction of biodynamic cultivations and the elimination of single-use plastic items which are replaced by items made of compostable material.

### **Results achieved / impact**

So far the project has consisted of two phases. In the first phase, 18 adult refugees and asylum seekers were selected to take part in the training from among the approximately 300 guests in the reception facilities managed by the local partnership in the province of Lecce. Of these, six were selected to be involved in the Cime di Rapa social cooperative and were eventually hired by it, while 12 found employment in other partner restaurants. In the second round of training, another eight refugees and asylum seekers were trained, three of whom were hired by Cime di Rapa. Over 20 people in job placements and the involvement of refugees in the social cooperative are good indicators of the project's impact.

Another important aspect is the development of an ethical agricultural brand, using the products of three local farms.

### **Transferability potential**

Thanks to collaboration between entities in different areas of activity (such as training agencies, immigration authorities and tourist companies), it is possible to offer top-quality training and implement viable business activities, while also facilitating the integration of migrants/refugees and other vulnerable groups.

### 3.2.5 Serbia

#### Sremska Mitrovica - Serbia



#### Short Description

The Creating Opportunities for Tailoring New Life project is located in Sremska Mitrovica and is based on the principle of equipping Roma people and other vulnerable groups with job skills and competences in order to facilitate their employment and self-employment in the area of textile recycling as part of a social circular economy.

#### Objectives and rationale

The project aims to support the green employment and self-employment of Roma people, returnees and other vulnerable groups through the application of innovative sustainable social entrepreneurship and circular economy models in the city of Sremska Mitrovica.

Its specific objectives are:

- to increase the capacity of Roma people, returnees and other vulnerable groups to work in the area of textile waste recycling;
- to create innovative sustainable models for working and improving business in the area of textile waste recycling;
- to raise awareness among citizens and other interested parties about involving Roma people, returnees and other vulnerable groups in socially innovative and circular economy employment models.

#### Results achieved / impact

- In a two-month period, 40 people, including 20% returnees, trained to become skilled workers in the area of textile recycling and processing;
- in a two-month period, 20 people belonging to vulnerable groups trained to set up and plan enterprises in the social

circular economy;

- out of the 40 people trained in the area of textile recycling and processing, 15 Roma (including 20% returnees) and people from other vulnerable groups were employed for a two-month period in the Sremska Mitrovica area;
- twenty local self-government officials were trained in social inclusion and on the introduction of social economy measures to local documents;
- ten people (out of the 40 trained) were provided with mini sewing plants and generated income by selling recycled products;
- financial support was given to the five best ideas for setting up and planning enterprises in the social circular economy offered by Roma participants and other vulnerable groups;
- one enterprise working by social circular economy principles improved its business activities by obtaining specific machines and employing 15 members of vulnerable groups;
- a three-way contract was signed to ensure the project's sustainability and follow-up;
- a social cooperative with a business and marketing plan was set up by the project participants;
- a Local Action Plan for Employment was adopted which incorporated findings and recommendations from the project;
- focus groups provided information to at least 1,000 Roma and a public outreach campaign including a press conference, closing conference and Zoom meetings reached 100,000 members of the general public from Srem;
- a game - Employ4All - was developed to promote the social economy and the employment of people from vulnerable groups.

### Transferability potential

The issues of recycling and reusing textiles in order to cut down on landfill can be said to be universal to every local community. Each day, local households, factories, etc. generate tons of textile waste which can be used for other purposes as part of social and circular economy actions. In addition, textiles can be collected, sorted and recycled, with proper equipment and trained participants, in any community. For this reason, we believe this project can be easily replicated in other contexts, with the involvement of a variety of vulnerable groups.

### 3.2.6 Slovenia

Skuhna  
Ljubljana, Slovenia  
[www.skuhna.si](http://www.skuhna.si)



“With no proper experience in marketing or culinary skill building, Skuhna's portfolio required lots of hard work, mutual support and mentoring from experts; another major challenge was the lack of a well-developed social entrepreneurship ecosystem.”

#### Short description

Skuhna was developed by the Zavod Global NGO as part of its social entrepreneurial activities. In 2012, Skuhna obtained a subsidy from the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs in order to promote the development of social entrepreneurship in Slovenia. With the obtained funds, it was first able to launch a catering service and then in 2014 open the Skuhna restaurant.

#### Objectives and rationale

With the participation of migrants from Africa, Asia and South America, the idea for the project came about from observing the entrepreneurial potential of the curiosity to get to know and taste the dishes of other cultures, and the boost that it can give to intercultural understanding. Skuhna's principle, which permeates the whole concept, is that diversity enriches us, and mutual cooperation brings about empowerment.

The main goals of the project are to increase migrants' employability through culinary work and to bridge the gap of understanding between migrants and the local people who live in Slovenia.

Besides the restaurant, Skuhna also offers cultural programmes, such as: conversation evenings through the perspective of migrants (Skuhna Talk!); cooking at the *odprta kuhna* culinary markets organized in different cities in Slovenia; dinners where many hidden cultural layers

are revealed through music, dance and storytelling; movie evenings presenting highlights from the African, Asian, South American film industries (SkuhnaWOOD) and children's creative intercultural workshops.

### **Results achieved / impact**

The Skuhna restaurant has become widely known in Slovenia. For migrants, Skuhna is a safe place where they can get back on their feet and where they can always return if they fail elsewhere.

So far more than 40 refugees and migrants and 20 volunteers have been engaged in one form or another in activities connected to Skuhna (e.g., employment in the restaurant, workshops, training, etc.). Skuhna has organized 350 different events, such as cooking workshops, movie evenings, talks, cultural events, children's workshops, etc., attracting a total of 4,000 people.

### **Transferability potential**

The idea that food provides a common space that can help eliminate social exclusion against migrants and refugees can be transferred to urban settings with a developed culinary culture where such an enterprise can thrive. A positive legal framework and access to funding can accelerate similar projects.



Migrantour

Ljubljana, Slovenia

[www.terra-vera.org](http://www.terra-vera.org) | [www.migrantour.eu](http://www.migrantour.eu)

“When applying a best practice in a local environment you must be innovative; when the practice gets transferred to a new context, you have to change some things, adapt them to the local context. Just before the pandemic we offered three tours: a) the Ljubljana, reka kultur (Ljubljana, the River of Cultures) tour, b) the Arabic tour of Ljubljana and c) the sensorial Migrantour.”



### Short description

In the Slovenian Migrantour, migrants guide “tourists” around Ljubljana. It is part of the European Migrantour network which offers alternative intercultural urban walks to old and new generations of European citizens, tourists, students and the plain curious. Through the eyes and the words of migrants, the participants discover the many secrets of urban spaces, some big, some small, some of them not even known by born-and-bred locals. Operating in ten cities in four different



European countries, this initiative is built on the basis of the results achieved by the Migrantour project.

### **Objectives and rationale**

Migrantour intercultural walks attempt to build bridges for the active participation of newcomers (migrants and refugees) in city life. The initiative aims to provide a new instrument for migrants' integration, creating an alternative and positive way of telling the story of migration.

### **Results achieved / impact**

Three alternative intercultural walks have already been established. Its main achievements and impact have been:

- to diffuse Migrantour as an innovative and sustainable tool for intercultural integration and education, with the purpose of turning the reception of migrants into an opportunity for future society;
- to guarantee the newcomers, refugees and asylum seekers' active participation in educational activities and in the cultural life of cities (training course on storytelling, “welcome tours”, testimonies, workshops in schools, etc.);
- to fight stereotypes at national and European level by improving the intercultural education services on offer (intercultural walks for students, youth groups, teachers, educators, parents, journalists, social workers, local administrators, etc.);
- to train up a Syrian, an Iraqi, a Jordanian/Palestinian, a Colombian and a Croatian in 2019 as thematic walking guides, who also designed three different cultural tours;
- to expand the established European network of intercultural Migrantour leaders (of which the Terra Vera association is also a member) with the Rural Migrantour Paths of Recovery project and take it to rural areas, hence creating “paths of recovery” from the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on young people in rural areas, especially those from more vulnerable groups.

### **Transferability potential**

This project has already been transferred to different contexts, proving its transferability potential at the practical level. The existence of a vibrant migrant/refugee community together with an interest in cultural heritage as part of the tourist industry can become the grounds for equivalent projects to thrive.

## 4. Conclusion

“ This handbook presents the collection of best practices gathered, analysed and evaluated in six partner states in the ADRION region. Additionally, it gives a description of the different national contexts behind the projects, based on the key findings of state-of-the-art analysis and qualitative research in every participating state. ”

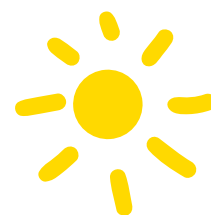
Migrants face a set of specific challenges when they try to start up and manage entrepreneurial activities in their receiving countries. These challenges are often interlinked and typically stem from factors such as a lack of knowledge about how local markets and the legal framework works, a lack of access to local entrepreneurial networking, etc. The detection of best practices at a regional and/or national level, their systematization and the evaluation of their effectiveness could offer these migrants holistic, multidimensional support. Furthermore, the lack of a theoretically viable best practice model within the domain of social entrepreneurship and the social economy, and the dearth of academic research on the subject, makes the identification and analysis of relevant best practices a critical tool for the development of a solid knowledge base. In turn, it provides a tool for practitioners on how to make their initiatives more effective and efficient.

We consider the social economy in general, and social enterprises in particular, to play an important role in developing a smart, sustainable and inclusive model of socio-economic development linking market, state, the third sector and individuals. In recent times, due to their bottom-up structure, these organizations have been able to identify refugees and migrants' emerging needs and develop appropriate responses and solutions, often without the support of the public sector. Over time, these activities might have received state support and recognition, in some cases becoming part of the national welfare system - for instance, social cooperatives in Italy or agricultural cooperatives in Greece.

Our aim in the REInSER project was to search for best practices related to migrants' integration in both social economy organizations and social enterprises. Due to their interest for users and the local context, social enterprises are ideally positioned to respond to emerging needs in society and to develop innovative responses to those needs.

The scouting for and exchange of best practices is not only aimed at the project partners but also a wide range of actors and external stakeholders who will be able to use the output after completion of the project. To ensure others can build or adapt their own activities using the same materials, approaches and methodologies, the best practices are documented in this handbook for the purpose of their reproduction, adaptation and further use. While identifying best practices is obviously important per se for each context examined, the aspect of sharing best practices will help further form and widen the REInSER transnational cooperation network and forge one of the project's main outputs: a common transnational strategy and action plan.





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## Partners



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