



Europe as an Inclusive Workplace – Memos from Fast-Track Action Boost

Final Conference

Documentation

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Introduction and Welcome

Matteo Matteini, Project Coordinator, City of Milan

FAB is one of the five projects co-funded by the European Union through the programme EaSi / Progress Axis – under the 015/2016 Call for proposals. This final event closes a 39-month journey, which was bumpy at times, with a sharp learning curve at the end.

FAB dealt with the integration into the labour market for third country nationals, targeting asylum seekers, refugees and their family members, with particular attention to women.

For all the work and contributions during the project lifetime I would like to thank:

- the European Commission that co-funded the project.
- the six cities that took on the challenge to experiment new approaches to such an important matter.
- the transnational team of more than 70 committed people who made it possible.
- our project officer in Brussels Miriam Toplanska that supported us in so many ways.
- But my warmest thanks go to the nearly 300 refugee men and women who took part in our City programmes. I wish you all the best in finding the life you were looking for when you had to leave your countries.

Welcome Speech European Commission (DG Empl)

Katarina Ivanković Knežević, DG Employment

Additional challenges brought by the pandemic required many increased efforts and innovative ideas to ensure a smooth continuation of the project's activities. These efforts first and foremost have been in the benefit of the target groups of the project.

Many vulnerable groups, including migrants and refugees, have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. This has slowed the closing of the social gaps in Europe, which were making some strides before the pandemic hit. Migrants still have fewer qualifications, suffer from prejudices and unequal access to housing and job opportunities, particularly women and children. They are over-represented among those affected by Covid - in all aspects of life. They face additional challenges in precarious and low wage jobs, which means the lessons learned in this project are all the more important and will form an important part of the social innovation good practices shared in Europe.

Within this context, the European Commission plays a crucial role in the development and dissemination of social policy innovations and good practices.

Overview of the different initiatives by the EC to address these themes:

- EASI, supporting social innovation since 2014, with a budget of around 10 million euro per year. Most recent calls focus on active inclusion.
- ESF plus and AMF, support the integration of TCNs.
- EAP Social action plan – an instrument to fight long-lasting inequalities, a new European answer to the current challenges.
- New skills agenda
- Pact on Migration and Asylum, and the recently adopted Action plan on Integration and Inclusion: pact introduced in November, concrete actions for member states to foster inclusion of migrants.
- Reinforced Youth Guarantee

Welcome Speech Comune di Milano (Lead Partner)

Roberto Munarin, Director of Employment and Training Department, City of Milan

It is a pleasure and a great honour for me to open the proceedings of this conference. My warmest greetings and welcome to everyone who has worked on the FAB project over the past three years and to all of you who are new to the FAB project.

Today's theme "Europe as an Inclusive Workplace" leads us to a series of reflections on activities aimed at rapid integration into the labour market of refugees, asylum seekers, their families, with a particular focus on women, activities that we have experienced with the Fast-Track Action Boost project

FAB is supported by three fundamental pillars:

- **(firstly) a multi-stakeholder partnership:**
 - at a local level, we have promoted policymakers, city governments, NGOs and the direct representatives of the refugees with new effective collaboration to facilitate the decision-making process, leading to the implementation of innovative solutions.
 - at the European level, we have collected and reflected on elements of public policy from different countries, to be shared.

- **(secondly) the transfer of knowledge.**

Five cities were able to learn about each other's socio-economic contexts and their respective good practices through targeted research and study visits.

- **(thirdly) the development of innovative measures.**

Each city has chosen, adapted and implemented one good practice from another city.

This was possible through effective methodological tools such as Local Empowerment Workshops and Mentoring visits in which managers, officials and trainers travelled between the cities involved both in person and through videoconferencing.

The FAB project is made up of a network of cities that use urban ecosystems as privileged settings for experimenting with innovative inclusion policies. In particular, bringing together important urban aggregates such as Belgrade, Berlin, Madrid, Milan, Stockholm and Vienna are in itself a value.

Cities similar in socio-economic dimension, but with differing work policies and several national migration policies

These cities, moreover, are all crucial nodes in the network of migratory flows at European level: Belgrade and Vienna on the Balkan route, Madrid and Milan on the Mediterranean route, Berlin and Stockholm as final destination cities.

The FAB project has had to face challenges of several kinds:

- challenges by **internal problems** related to the construction of best practices for a “Functional plan of transfer and adaptation”: a practice that works well in one context often does not work as well in a different context. For this reason, the cities have had to help each other understand how to transfer a successful practice without distorting it.
- Challenge by **external problems**. In some cases, changes in national governments, have also changed reception policies, forcing a partial review of local *governance*. In some cases, also changes in local government have reshuffled the cards on the table.
- **The biggest challenge**, in terms of size and impact, however, was, of course, the **pandemic** which progressively interrupted the face-to-face activities, first of all in Italy starting from March 2020 and then in all partner countries. All cities have had to reschedule training sessions and use digital resources where possible, responding with creativity, but also with the rigour of Covid 19-containment measures.

As regards the results of the project, there will be the opportunity to see and hear numbers and data, in the following city rooms. I'd like to focus here only on some aspects of FAB which have made a great impression on me:

In Belgrade, thanks to Milan's mentorship, a digital platform has been developed to provide essential information and services to all asylum seekers. The platform was born thanks to the collaboration of the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of the Interior - Commission for Refugees, UNHCR, the City of Belgrade and the Belgrade Employment Agency.

In Berlin, the local partnership, added *Goldnetz* partner at a later date, for the specific purpose of carrying out a targeted experimentation, with qualified personnel, for the implementation of Stockholm's Sfx good practice that became JobBoost in Berlin.

In Madrid, the Employment Agency participated in all the activities of the partnership and, without implementing its own local *Pilot*, traced the experience of the network and created a visual document of great impact.

In Milan, a joint intervention model was tested by three of the city's internal departments of the Municipality together with AFOL Metropolitana, as well as creating synergies with other European projects such as MILE and other local players such as the Achille Grandi Training Center.

A trainee from the Municipality of Milan, Joanna Wdowin, dedicated a master's degree thesis on evaluative research to the project at the Department of Social and Political Sciences of the Bocconi University of Milan.

In Stockholm 30 women participating in FAB, were hired by the Administration to be Neighbourhood Mothers, the peer training program first started in Berlin, which generated a leverage effect allowing thousands of other women to be involved in the life cycle of the project. Thanks to the collaboration with the municipalities, the program, Neighbourhood Mothers, has already been integrated into the service plan of the city of Stockholm.

In Vienna, the Hexagon project borrowed from Milan, has already been adopted by the local administration as an integrated program.

These are my highlights from *Fast Track Action Boost* that have helped me understand, once again, that a robust methodological framework and quality European partnership are the engines for real and lasting social innovation. My speech ends here, thank you for your kind attention and all the best for your work.

Thank you once again!

FAB a Video Story of the Project

A video summary of the project journey was shown during the conference and can be watched with the following link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYZj7P_dFIQ&t=9s

Keynote speech

Kenza Dimechkie, Programme Officer, International Labour Organization (ILO).

FAB demonstrates that integration refugees in the labour market is both necessary and possible.

Since 1919 in the aftermath of WW1, ILO was active in helping refugees' employment. It is in fact part of the ILO constitution, referring to the protection of workers while working countries other than their own.

ILO aims to promote decent work – equal income opportunity, workplace rights, equality, and social dialogue. The imperative to protect refugees in the workplace, has never been more important than it is today, as the number of people moving around the world seeking income opportunity continues to rise. According to UNHCR – 1% of the world population are forcibly displaced – highest ever recorded, as has the average duration of displacement. Search for sustainable solutions for refugees to provide for themselves in dignity is vital. 85% of refugees are hosted in developing countries, countries already struggling with their own labour market inequalities. Recent ILO research shows the pandemic has only made conditions worse, many face worsening conditions and weakened protections.

Still, more governments are seeing refugees not only as recipients of aid, but also proactive agents of development, who make autonomous decision about their livelihoods. The ability of refugees to improve their lives, is mediated by different factors such as, gender, age, government policies, and other practical issues. Discrimination hampers the ability of women to contribute fully to societies, leaving them particularly exposed in times of crisis.

Out of crisis, there are also new opportunities for women to take on new roles.

ILO has drafted hundreds of conventions and recommendations, many of them covering refugees. Lessons learned in developing decent work strategies for refugees:

1. Comprehensive strategies
2. Inclusive policies taking both local and host
3. Quality jobs

A summary of ILO activities on labour market inclusion of refugees is provided in the video: *Guiding principles: Access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omtmsvzV48c>)

Belgrade | Learnings from Asylum App / Training Courses

Danka Čančarević - The Pilot Project in Serbia

Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs

MOLEVSA was in the project from the beginning but our implementation started a bit later, so the piloting phase was quite compact and intense. In the beginning it was planned that Belgrade would develop a pilot project inspired by Vienna, but then after more reflection it was decided to take over approaches from Milan, because the context of Milan and Belgrade is more similar - mainly as Serbia and Italy are both transit countries and many refugees don't want to stay, which means the target group is constantly changing.

FAB in Serbia was mainly about building a quality labour and living environment for refugees and Asylum seekers. The concrete measure for Belgrade was developed during the two Local Empowerment Workshops: the first in Milan, getting to know in detail the good practices and the second in Belgrade with local stakeholders, where the pilot idea became more concrete.

A local partnership was built by,

- Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MoLEVSA)
- Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations (SCRM)
- National Employment Service (NES)
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MESTD)

And in additional as required:

- City of Belgrade
- Office for Asylum (Ministry of Interior)

Within this working group it was planned to develop a web application assisting migrants and refugees in Serbia to offer orientation and advice in many thematic areas such as employment and professional orientation, education, health, administration, legal advice in a very intuitive and user-friendly way. Additionally, training courses were offered in two places with large Asylum centres for Serbian language, functional ICT skills and professional orientation. The curriculum of these trainings was built on the results of a research carried out as desk research and through interviews in asylum centres to get a concrete picture of the skills and needs of the target group. 40 participants across 4 courses took part in the training, one group held the classes in person and 3 groups were organised as remote learning due to Covid safety measures. In general, Covid impeded to involve more participants also from other centres in the pilot.

In the asylum centres also Info Days were held to introduce the APP and make it more known to the target group

Dajena Ristić – The Asylum App

Commissariat for refugees and migration of the Republic of Serbia

One of the most important needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Serbia is to obtain information about finding jobs and education. And enhance this offer FAB was very significant and the value of this strong local partnership.

The app makes a difference between persons who are still in the procedure of the asylum request and of those who are already accepted. So, in the first category there are sub-sections for example 'First Steps' or 'Health', but all sub-sections have the same structure (How? Where? Contact Details) so that it is very easy to get the information needed. For accessibility the app is bilingual in English and Serbian.

But even though the information is available quite often the target group seems rather passive and in the info days and other visits people were encouraged to become more active.

The app will be continued, updated and also further developed after the end of the project by the Commissariat and the local partnership I very happy about this sustainability.

Ljiljana Panjković – The Training Experience

Elementary school for functional adult education “Branko Pešić”

The main aim of the trainings was to really meet the needs of our learners and offer functional education, which means their functional literacy, the Serbian language skills, ICT skills for everyday use and professional orientation.

There was only a short period of implementation of the pilot before the outbreak of the pandemic which complicated things a lot. Originally students were offered snacks and drinks during the courses, which was not possible when everything changed to remote learning. 10 students continued in the school, but the majority switched to online learning, for some of them the project needed to finance the internet connection as they could not afford it themselves.

The evaluation by the participants showed that they were overall satisfied and that it was a positive experience for them. The self-evaluation of the teachers was also positive but as a challenge it was mentioned that the knowledge of the Serbian language turned out much lower for many participants during the course, than it was first thought.

In general, the local partnership was satisfied with the project outcomes and to promote with it the EU objective of Lifelong Learning. Another good feedback was that some course participants went to the local employment services and said they found out about it in the app.

Berlin | Learnings from JobBoost

Dr. Barbara Philippi, from the Senate Department for Labour, Integration and Social Services led through the Berlin City Room as moderator and warmly welcomed the participants.

The first speaker was **Ms Margrit Zauner**, from the Senate Department for Labour, Integration and Social Services and head of the Department of Labour and Vocational Training who gave a detailed overview of the activities of the Land Berlin related to the labour market integration of migrants and refugees in Berlin since 2015, and the role of FAB within these.

Since the "Summer of Migration" in 2015, approximately 100,000 refugees have come to Berlin, which in some periods was a major challenge for the state of Berlin in all policy areas. The challenge is that when they arrive, refugees are often confronted with a multitude of different challenges, in particular: Language, recognition of qualifications and skills, bureaucratic hurdles, health, housing. The opportunities and chances that were created in Berlin were related a lot to a positive environment with a committed civil society and a lot of support from institutional actors such as social partners (trade unions, employers' associations), economic partners (chambers) and a sufficient number of companies that have also recognised the opportunities (securing skilled labour, trainees) as well as the employment agencies and job centres.

In FAB we had the focus on refugee women, which is a heterogeneous group with different levels of education and qualification, but in many cases traditional gender roles and family childcare obligations are in their responsibility.

Land Berlin and also, the Department of Labour and Vocational Training, also had to rethink our support services in many respects and design new approaches for the target group in order to meet the specific needs of refugees, e.g. by combining support services with language support, outreach counselling, holistic counselling, language assistance.

Successes that we have seen recently are, that between January 2015 and December 2020, the number of refugees in employment subject to compulsory social security contributions rose from 2,600 to 18,200; approx. 1/5 of all refugees in Berlin in employment (predominantly in qualified jobs as skilled workers/specialists); Trainees with a refugee background between December 2015 and December 2019 increased from 141 to 1,779 more than tenfold.

But there are still things to be done! The integration of refugees into the labour market remains an important task in Berlin. In December 2020, 29,000 job-seeking refugees in Berlin (16,000 unemployed) were registered.

And there remain also more specific challenges:

- 83% of refugees are currently without vocational qualification.
- Despite high employment orientation of female refugees, they show a lower participation in employment and training than refugee men.

- The Recognition of vocational qualifications is still a very long process

The SenIAS is glad to have had the opportunity to reflect on own practice in the light of the experiences of other cities within the framework of the Fast-Track Action Boost project.

In the following **Ms Angela Dovifat**, (Goldrausch e.V. KONTOUR) who was part of the design and initial implementation of the Berlin pilot measure by Goldnetz, presented the JobBoost concept and the results.

The Job Boost objective was to be a guidance system for accelerated, qualification-adequate labour market integration of 70 refugee women. Concretely this happened in three phases:

- The preparation phase: introduction to the project, preparatory coaching, (appointments on demand)
- Language training with Team-teaching approach and accompanied by regular coaching sessions (16 appointments)
- Job entry phase accompanied by coaching (appointments on demand)

In the end JobBoost had 74 participants of whom 87% were women and as of October 2020 about 30% of the participants took up an employment with to social security contributions or a dual vocational training course. Another 30% started a vocational qualification that ends with a certification. About 20% found themselves in a transition period, waiting for an employment or course to start or writings applications. 13,5% were in a period where they needed again orientation or stabilization, because external circumstances changed.

Learnings from the implementation of JobBoost were diverse. It became again clear that a holistic and individual support works well and that also the format of blended counselling (having some sessions face-to-face but offer as well online support or quick support through messenger or phone calls) that was also enforced through the pandemic corresponded well to the needs of the participants. Team-teaching, which was the first time tried at Goldnetz showed also to be a good practice and the teaching of meta competences to enhance employability was positive.

Some things that should be reconsidered for the design of further measures. The approach to define phases of integration can't be taken for granted because persons develop in a different pace. Additionally, the participation in the language course was lower than expected and this was also because there was no official certificate for it.

To conclude, the success factors for labour market integration of refugee women depend on good external conditions and the personal disposition. Being aware that there is always a language gap, but even with good professional qualification there is a gap to be filled, so low-level work experiences like internship or volunteering are a good option in the beginning to get to know the context without much pressure. Professional and reliable contacts reduce the risk of 'Integration by Coincidence'.

Exchange with employers can be useful, to reduce the complexity of their application and hiring processes.

As third contribution **Dr Reiner Aster from MetropolisNet EWIV** summarised the results for the Policy Practice Work Groups (PPWG) sessions held in Berlin in March with various stakeholder from administration and civil society.

From the first PPWG which focused on several good practice examples of labour market interventions aiming at integration of refugees in Vienna and Berlin a list of important factors of influence and success was developed:

- Combining individual coaching with group coaching;
- holistic support with contact persons who are as stable as possible;
- creating motivation, especially by addressing the current life situation (e.g. caring responsibilities);
- knowing the system, i.e. basic knowledge about social benefits, the labour market or the education system, at an early stage, also in the language of origin;
- integrated language support and team teaching: combining language acquisition with vocational training through joint teaching by language and subject teachers;
- low-threshold work experience (e.g. voluntary service, internships);
- strengthen the welcoming culture in the companies: e.g. through cultural sensitisation, tandems between refugees and experienced colleagues, simple language;
- "docking" with the original profession (in the home country), training or qualification active support in the recognition of formal qualifications;
- take into account differences between women and men (see also PPWG 2). Especially at the beginning of integration, it is important to accompany women separately and to provide role models;
- educational counselling in the sense of career path planning and specialised, career-oriented educational programmes;
- good cooperation between the various actors involved in the integration process, e.g. by using a coordination office or documenting the offers attended (Vienna Education Passport).

The second PPWG which had the title 'Labour Market Integration of Refugees in Berlin – What has been achieved, what are the Success Factors?' focused on the actions of the Berlin Senate Administration and the Agency of Labour and the Jobcenters. Dr Aster summarised the important findings and conclusions from the perspective of the Federal Employment Agency, a job centre and the Senate Administration for Integration Labour and Social Services. Looking at numbers there is 46% unemployment among refugees but about 50% have been integrated into work in the last five years. There are over 18,000 refugees in Berlin who are subject to social security contributions.

It is also important to create more cooperation with companies, especially opportunities especially for well-qualified people, so they don't end up in helper jobs, this is related to the recognition of qualifications from the country of origin which is a high hurdle, and must be worked on intensively to prevent someone from getting stuck in the helping profession.

In general, the pandemic led to a setback of about 1-2 years for the integration in general which have to be made up for from now on.

Factors that have proven to be beneficial are on the one hand the "Refugee and asylum" competence teams at the job centres and a good network and cooperation between different institutions and with the providers is important.

It is good to see that the dual system of vocational training is increasingly well accepted, despite barriers as relatively low earnings and a long way to training completion.

A special need was described for action on the situation of refugee women, based on the following observations:

- Only about ¼ of employees are women, but according to a study by the IAB (Institute for Employment Research of the Federal Employment Agency) 86% want to work!
- Increasing number of those who qualify via dual vocational training (see above), but among them only 1/5 female refugees.
- There are still considerable problems with the provision of childcare: childcare must therefore be expanded without fail, especially for women with several children.
- Due to the "reunification policy" (of families), the proportion of women has increased significantly.
- High proportion of highly qualified clients (also women), also with good language skills.
- Job-oriented language courses and integration courses are very important. Combine activation with vocational entry.
- Land Berlin - Good cooperation with social partners and civil society on refugee policy and practice.

To sum up the Success factors for women rely a lot on holistic guidance with orientation towards the labour market, but also to raise self-esteem and acceptance of the local system.

Madrid | Learnings from FAB

The event begins with the intervention of the General Manager of the Madrid Employment Agency, Belén García Díaz, with the appropriate thanks to the Milan City Council and the Migration Area of the Madrid City Council, for working collaboratively to promote the implementation of the FAB model in the city of Madrid.

Next, the video on the Offices of Attention to Migrants in the City of Madrid is displayed, where the activity and lines of work are shown to promote the social and labour integration of the migrant population.

Purificación de Castro, head of the Department of the Migration Area of the Madrid City Council, makes an intervention explaining in detail the lines of work followed by the two offices located in Madrid, and describes the services provided here in order to Foster the social integration of foreigners.

At the end of the presentation, the video ***You know us*** is viewed to introduce the Employment Agency, regarding the areas of intervention of this employment agency that manages public policies in the city of Madrid.

Afterwards, we proceed to question time among the attendees, opening the debate on the importance of introducing new methodologies or work in the public services that support the migrant population helping with housing, legal advice, employment and training, education, etc.

Milan | Learnings from IFX

The interventions in the room were opened by **Giuseppina Corvino** – who also has the role of moderator – with a resumption and a brief summary of the characteristics of the FAB project, its objectives, and the activities carried out.

As a first point of interest, we noticed that all the partners managed to capitalize on something innovative. The FAB project generated a favourable flow concerning 3 elements:

- Reduce system rigidities for the services involved
- Increase migrants' knowledge and skills
- Enhance the migrants' culture of origin

The involvement of the municipality of Milan was massive working on:

- Integration of the services
- Increasing the operators' knowledge
- Digitization of the services
-

The keywords of this path are dialogue, network and knowledge.

Alda Fiordelli – who is a consultant for AFOL Metropolitana – continues with a description of the main activities of the Agency and an essential premise: since public services are provided, the logic of non-selecting the users has always been followed. Everyone can access the services network offered by AFOL Metropolitana.

In pre-pandemic times, for example, the Employment Centres reached an average of 200,000 units: these conditions inevitably led to a standardization of services, which on the one hand, guarantees a non-discriminatory approach towards people.

The experience lived with FAB has focused attention on the targeting attempt.

The keywords of the project are:

- **Method** (seen/adapted/tested)
- **Inter-sectoral interaction** between training, work and guidance
- **Stakeholders**, for the strengthening of collaboration logics
- **Where**, intended as the optimal places for experimentation (in this case, the CFP Grandi is a centre more used to working with delicate situations and "weak" targets).

Another strategic element is the synergy with the other projects (MILE project), which amplified the keywords indicated. In order to have an actual transferability of the projects, it is necessary to envisage the further steps: in the case of FAB, AFOL Metropolitana is including a similar experiment in another project.

Mariaelena Vittori – who is from AFOL Metropolitana – then presented the path leading to the experimentation within the FAB project. An interest emerged from the Study visit – promoter of the SFX program – in approaching this effective methodology for learning the Italian language, which has always been one of the major obstacles of the refugees and asylum seekers, to approach the labour market and therefore undertake one of the steps leading to integration.

Adapting a practice of this kind (which aims to obtain/consolidate higher education qualifications for all those who acquired them outside the Swedish context) means going to the "heart of the matter": focusing on language learning within a profession, means accelerating its learning process. In both situations, the basic condition is a sufficient mastery of the host country's language to allow social interactions and active participation in training.

AFOL Metropolitana has always believed in learning by doing; consequently, it chose catering as training and professional context, which, by its nature, stimulates the social dimension and, therefore, integration. Three training courses were provided (bread and pizza, first courses, pastry), focusing the language training on the contents of the profession, adding safety at work, HACCP and a transversal path on softs skills and active job search. In this context, the Italian language learning for this profession was inserted simultaneously and deferred with a double reinforcement: a cultural mediator was added in the classroom who - even better than a "simple" tutor - worked as a learning facilitator.

Antonella Corazza of CFP Grandi - AFOL Metropolitana, presents the data of the experimentation (see slides).

In the end, **Cosimo Palazzo** participates as Director of the Social Services Department of the Municipality of Milan: the panorama of Milan is that of a large city, characterized by diversification. It is important to link all these paths created by the various projects to the local network.

When it comes to international protection, it is necessary to remember the changes taking place concerning the reception and take-over system: we are moving towards a case management approach, which places the individual at the centre of services and starts from a significant assessment phase to understand the needs.

The One Stop Shop is now in place, as a multifunctional area, dedicated to asylum seekers and refugees. It will be possible in this space to have information and link to specific services for language training courses, legal advice, family support, guidance, family reunification procedures, etc. All this in the logic of creating a concrete welfare system.

Stockholm | Learnings from The Neighbourhood Mothers

Neighbourhood mothers: exchanged and inspired from Berlin, the pilot is based on experiences of mothers who recently arrived in the city and are employed by the city in their local neighbourhoods. The exchange has included both study visits and continuous communication with Berlin, resulting in an extremely fruitful exchange.

Presentation of the structure and specifics of the program, including objectives and goals. Presenter emphasizes the important goal of the project to enhance trust in oneself and in society and encourages women to move more in the public space.

Discussion of differences between original format, and local implementation, presenter emphasizes that the method can never be fully copy pasted, it must be adapted for the city needs.

Discussion of the training process, and that the training also includes social topics like equality, democracy, health, gender-based violence, conversational technique, child development and parental training, and more.

Discussion of the pilot program's value: The Neighbourhood Mothers program compliments other forms of outreach work towards newcomers. By shared experience the Neighbourhood Mothers gain trust and can therefore reach out to the target group. Language competences enable access to correct information. Time for the women they meet, allowing them to address their different needs.

In numbers: 24 neighbourhood mothers in total in 2020, reaching out to more than 6000 women (and some men), offering info mostly on school, social services, job centre and labour market, and support contact with authorities.

The presenter finally indicated the key success factors contributing to the implementation:

- Clear vision from start
- Tangible method
- Study visits! Both, on site and involving stakeholders.
- Develop methods according to local needs

Discussion:

An active discussion developed between a participant who is a member of the Vienna Board of Education, and the Stockholm representatives. The Vienna participant was very excited about the program and is already considering implementing such a program in Vienna.

She was interested in how many hours per week do the mothers work, the recruitment process, the ongoing coaching, cases where mothers may have been mismatched with clients, and more. She indicated that she would really like to begin this program soon, as they have a budget allocated for working with parents.

Vienna | Learnings from ComPare

The guiding question of the Vienna Room, facilitated by Annemarie Pervan (Board of Education for Vienna) is about how to deal with knowledge gained through immigration and how to embrace this knowledge. Following Immanuel Kant's quote as a motto: "What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope?" But above all, "What is the human being?"

According to this, every human being is special and has special abilities, so he or she also brings these into society. This can be approached in two ways: one is passive, the other active. The active approach means that we regard the strengths and abilities of new immigrants as knowledge and develop them socially.

After a presentation of the speakers a short video is showed that gives an introduction to the ComPare pilot project in the context of FAB. In the following **Ms Elisabeth Fröhlich, coordinator of ComPare** (Parents' Association Vienna) gave more details about the ComPare programme and the participants and the knowledge they brought to the project and their attitude towards learning. She points out that the circumstances under Covid 19 were a major challenge for this learning. She underlines her deep respect for the participants of ComPare. As the course programme fell in the middle of the Corona lockdown, they had to continue the courses online after a waiting period. Despite this, the motivation and engagement for learning was unbroken.

In the following questions with **Mr Wilfried Swoboda** (Board of Education for Vienna) who also is artist and scientific researcher go more in depth on additional success factors that were mentioned in accompanying scientific research and own research, for ComPare and similar projects: They can be summarised in the three following aspects:

- Distinction between knowledge pool as a manageable knowledge resource and knowledge reservoir as tacit knowledge that is shared.
- Methodological arrangements: Parents Involvement, participation and activation through peer engagement (example: Compare: Talks as Knowledge multiplication in own environment)

- Attitude: acting at eye level: implementation of courses by parents' association multiplication in own circle of acquaintances

The next interviewee is Mr Alshoufi, who made the experience to arrive as refugee in Vienna himself. Since then, he works in schools as mediator and parent counsellor in Vienna. The first question to him is about his experience and in how far he could bring his knowledge and experience to the society after arriving in Vienna. He highlights that it was his luck and his gift to be able to learn new languages very easily. This made it easier for him to integrate into the existing society compared to others.

He also sees this in his observations with the participants in ComPare, but they have the opportunity to share their knowledge and that it gets valued. This opens up new opportunities and social participation is not only dependent on language skills. As a mediator, he accompanies young people on a daily basis in their questions about education and vocational guidance. In doing so, he personally places great emphasis on artistic-cultural education. This enables younger people in particular to express themselves and gives them self-confidence.

At the beginning of every campaign, there is always a status quo survey, so that you know how to create the next steps. Mr. van Gessel from the European Commission, DG EMPL, is an expert concerning the EU Skills Profil Tool – For Third Country Nationals, which was tested in the FAB project in the pilot measures. The question is how to identify the knowledge that people bring with them and in how far standardised tools can help herewith.

The EU Skills Profile Tool – For Third country Nationals can be used by national authorities and other services in dialogue between migrant and adviser. It functions as a data editor and is not storing any data. So, it can be used as a basis for advice and referrals to other services and the documenting or mapping of skills. It is not intended as an assessment or recognition itself. Recent improvements that were made based on feedback: it got more flexible because questions and sections can be hidden from the screen and the tool becomes shorter if desired. Also, there are more pictures in the questionnaire.

Further improvements will include, adding new questions to the Tool and the Integration into the new Europass portal (2021). Enabling further connections with e.g., the Eures portal and other services for third country nationals.

Round table Rapporteurs from each City Room

Moderator: Silke Kriwoluzky

After a short break the rapporteurs from the City Rooms come together at the 'round table' and discussed with the moderator Silke Kriwoluzky the following questions:

- 1: What was your pilot project about?
- 2: In what way it speeds up integration?

3: Any interesting points from your discussion in the city room?

City Room Belgrade, Danka Čančarević

The pilot practice consisted of 2 parts.

Firstly, to share equal information to asylum seekers; for example, about legal rights, education and second employment advice, training for integration to the labour market, Serbian language courses and ICT skills

As part of the activity organised info days about rules and procedures about education and employment

In what ways did the project speed up integration?

- better institutional coordination and planning of activities
- avoidance of duplications
- asylum seekers expressed their preferences and targeted trainings.
- collection of relevant data and service information in one place
- higher motivation of target group to stay in Serbia.

Conclusions on the web applications: although it was initially designed for asylum seekers the application became a model for other projects in Serbia. They plan to add Covid-19 measures into the application.

City room Berlin, Dr. Barbara Philippi:

- The aim of the pilot project JobBoost was to accelerate refugees' integration into the German labour market or a training.
- 87% of the participants were women. Most participants already had advanced language skills and professional qualifications.
- The project offered individual coaching on all aspects of individual lives, with a focus on professional development and a training course on employability and language skills based on a team-teaching approach – facilitated together by a Jobcoach and a language teacher.
- The fast-track approach in JobBoost can be seen in the special target group of persons possessing rather high qualifications already and its aim to support them finding an entry point to labour market that matches the branch and their qualification they have been working in before (only if wanted of course) and avoiding for them to start in unskilled jobs.
- Good results of integration were reached although the project only lasted less than 1,5 years.

City room Milan, Mariaelena Vittori:

- The project focused on the vocational education training path in the catering sector and worked in parallel with the Italian language. It was a mix of

professional training, language training and cultural training (merging all three) to achieve new competencies.

- IFX sped up integration because having a job is crucial to achieve social inclusion, it also gives you the opportunity to rent a flat and to send money back to the original country. Participants become more active citizens, and speaking good (professional) Italian language is important for the professional and personal development.
- Our discussion in the room was around the following key words: dialogue, network and knowledge. These words also describe the essence of our project. In FAB we invested a lot in the methodology, which was acknowledged. Also, the interaction within the European and local partnership was discussed and that there was really built something new. Finally, the importance of the case management approach and an individual offer for each asylum seeker's situation and needs was stressed.

City room Stockholm, Annika Rosbring:

- The project “Neighbourhood mothers” was developed from the exchange with Berlin. Neighbourhood mothers are women who migrated to Sweden some time ago. In the project they were employed by the city to reach out to other recently immigrated mothers; they received a training got a good knowledge of the general society in Sweden and share it with the other women. As a result 24 neighbourhood mothers reached out to 6000 women last year.
- The project sped up integration for the participating women by gaining information and finding out about their responsibilities. By support and guidance which means practical support on many levels. The Neighbourhood mothers act as role models for newly arrived women. They share their knowledge with other women.
- During the discussion we were very happy to have representative from Vienna and Madrid in the city room, who are interested in this project. Hopefully, they will do similar projects in their countries.

City room Vienna, Annemarie Pervan:

- The project ComPare took place from autumn 2019 until autumn 2020 and was inspired from the Milan project Esagono. Parents and legal guardians with an immigration background who want to learn about the Austrian Education System, were the target group of the Viennese pilot project.
- Although ComPare addressed the newly arrived immigrants as parents and not as professionals it sped up their integration path, because they get a deep understanding of the Austrian education system education, they receive a certificate of proficiency for the course, and within a peer-to-peer approach the parents disseminate the information in the local community which can empowers them.

- The main topics of the discussion were: importance of bringing in the knowledge from the newly arrived, peer engagement is important, meet on eye level with other parents, they can disseminate the information in their community. It was also discussed that the participation in ComPare helped parents to better understand the reality of their children and become a more active part in their lives.

City room Madrid, Carmen Gutierrez:

- Although Madrid did not implement a pilot project, the Employment service has participated from the beginning in FAB, contributed to the analysis of the situation of the migrant population and of good practices and is working now on the cooperation between different authorities and analysing the applicability of the FAB model in the future implementation.
- One of the Madrid good practices: Collaboration agreement during recent years with the foundation 'Quiero trabajo' (I want a job). This is a model based on selection, job-orientation, mentoring and empowerment of 75 unemployed women, at risk of exclusion to successfully pass a job interview. 85% of these women come from non-EU countries. Job advisers carry out a selection process for a real job and assess each candidate for a referral to the 'Quiero trabajo' foundation and a job interview in a company is arranged. The foundation mentors and prepares the women (including provision of clothes) so they feel comfortable to go in the job interview.
- In the discussion, it was pointed out the need to join forces and strengthen collaboration between the different departments of the City Council for example with the Madrid migrant Advice and Information Office who were represented in the session. Strengthened cooperation is especially important for the work with women and migrant population and their integration into the labour market.

Summary of the Evaluation Results

As we have seen in the statements from the city rooms, the variety in FAB was huge: in terms of settings, in terms of challenges, and in terms of approaches that have been implemented. Still, what we could see in the project is that the steps that need to be taken on the path to labour market integration of refugees and third-country nationals are the same:

First, it is about meeting their basic needs, provide housing and health care. Then, newly arrived people need to understand the system in which they are living now: What kind of support can I get where? What are the written and unwritten rules of society? Then they need to learn the language; and often, they need to improve their skills or adopt new ones in order to fit the demand on the labour market. And then, finally, it is

about finding a job – and keeping it, that is, operating in the working environment on a daily basis.

What can be done to speed up this process? Basically, there are two ways: Speeding up the individual steps or combining them so that two steps can be taken at once. Both approaches have been implemented and tested successfully within FAB: Take, for example, the new app developed in Serbia, which assembles all necessary information for refugees and third-country nationals in one spot. Or take Stockholm or Vienna, where systems of peer counselling have been set up. These are approaches which help to speed up the process of learning about institutions and support systems in the host country. As for the combination of integrations steps, look at JobBoost in Berlin or Italian for Professionals in Milan: Here, professional trainings were combined with language training, thus tackling two steps on the integration path at once.

But even if we manage to speed up this process, we need to keep in mind that it often takes a lot of time. And this is also due to the fact that it is non-linear, especially when it comes to learning about the system and to language acquisition: These are issues that keep coming up again and again over the course of several years. For example, a basic command of the language of the host country might be sufficient for everyday live, but not for a job. Or take a person who is about to enter the labour market: All of a sudden, she needs to learn about all those unwritten rules of working in the host country – something that had not been relevant before.

Thus, this process can be really frustrating, and it requires a lot of energy to stay on track. And this is why an important way – maybe the most important way – to speed it up is to empower people to take the necessary steps themselves. Empowerment has played a major role in almost all pilot projects within FAB: Neighbourhood moms in Stockholm or Community Parents in Vienna acquired the knowledge and competences to support their peers. Participants in Milan saw that their cooking skills from their home countries were valuable and interesting even for the Italian chefs who trained them. And participants in Berlin were guided through the difficult transition into the first job in the host country, providing a valuable experience of success in an unknown environment.

In FAB, we have seen five successful approaches how to support specific steps on the path to labour market integration. But in the end, what is just as important is making sure that the person we want to support is willing and able to take these steps.

What did your organisation learn from FAB ? Final Remarks from each partner organisation.

Alda Fiordelli, Afol Metropolitana: One size does not fit all! The more we can move from standardised services to services tailored to a specific target group, the more we can respond to the needs and achieve real results.

Carmen Gutierrez, City of Madrid: We have learnt that union is strength. Coordination between administrations is important for inclusion. Employment is very important to get included not only in the labour market but in the whole city. And we have learnt a lot during the exchange of good practices with the other cities.

Åsa Enrot, City of Stockholm: What we have learnt was summarised by one of our Neighbourhood Mothers: It is universal for women to support other women! With relatively little effort by the authorities this method leads to more equality for women on the labour market. Neighbourhood Mothers create trust and become role models. Through the FAB project we got the possibility to gain inside information from the Berlin project and then developed a method adapted to the local needs that will now live on in Stockholm.

Giuseppina Corvino, City of Milan: We have learnt that for implement an effective multi stakeholder approach the City Administration has to create a sound environment, in which all actors can bring in their competences and capacities which will lead in the end to better results in the process for all.

Wilfried Swoboda, Education Board Vienna: we learnt that a successful transition process always needs dialogue, exchange and mutual respect.

Elena Grilli, MetropolisNet EEIG: We learned many things, but one was that mentoring between cities is method full of value, sense and life on the local and the translational level. And as well that the European Partnership and Intervention model and be a concrete method of work and hopefully a model to be adapted.

Margrit Zauner, Berlin Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Services: Once more we learned that it is good to have Europe and to have friends in Europe, to visit each other and see how things work in other cities. So we can learn from other cities and adapt to our local context

Silke Kriwoluzky, Soestra Institute: There are many ways to deal with similar challenges and there is not one perfect solution to tackle a problem, let's try to keep this mental openness to find solutions to problems for our future work.

Uroš Živković, MOLEVSA; The FAB project mainly contributed to the horizontal cooperation and coordination relevant national and international stakeholders. We've seen a rise of institutional capacity of all organisations involved, which lead finally to better services.

Karin Pfluger, Goldnetz gGmbH: This project was especially enriching through the international exchange with the European partners and especially productive through the good cooperation in this network. It was inspiring through the testing of team teaching, which was a first for us! And it was successful, we were able to integrate 60% of our participants into work or training.

Recommendations

Reiner Aster, *MetropolisNet*

I. Recommendations concerning the Partnerships

1. **Ensure a clear distribution of responsibilities, competences, and tasks between the different levels of government** (national, regional, local or municipality level) and ensure a fluid and direct communication between these levels.
 - Some of our cities, recommend a more decentralised system and call for more autonomy on the regional or city level, others emphasize the aspect, that federal or national regulations are important to guarantee standards all over the country and lead to more effectivity and efficiency.
2. **Organise a dynamic and coordinated model between the different partners on a horizontal level**, combine efforts and resources.
3. **Create a cohesive chain of information and activities** for the newcomers by successful cooperation of the involved authorities on the city level.
4. **Make the Reception of newcomers more equal and spread out through the country.**
5. **Strengthen in particular the cooperation between the Public Employment Service and the relevant city departments**, through coordinated, complementary active labour market programmes (for those who are already recognised, but also for those, who are rejected or only tolerated in the recognition process).
6. **Involve from the beginning the businesses - a key factor for success** and for fast labour market integration.
 - Unlock the companies! Not only refugees, but also the companies need support!
 - Our experience is: in the last five years many companies have positioned themselves, being either open or closed to the refugees.
 - But companies that have hired refugees are usually very satisfied with their decision. They benefit from the often high motivation of refugees.
 - Refugees contribute to diverse teams that are often more efficient.
 - And once a refugee gets into work or training, he or she learns very quickly!
7. **Cooperate with the different municipal stakeholders**, like chambers, social partners, the third sector and welfare organisations, NGO`s and -_last but not least - the **civil society**, all the initiatives on the ground, including volunteers, and refugees` communities play a crucial role.

8. **Develop local action plans** (in particular, for those refugees who cannot be reached from the mainstream structures and institutions)

II. Recommendations concerning the Interventions

1. **Establish a ‘Welcome centre’ as a one stop-shop with initial services for all newcomers, including refugees, following the principle ‘accompaniment or integration from DAY 1’**
 - offer first aid services like registration, recognition pathways, accommodation, information about legal rights and duties, about culture of the host country, first steps to orientation and language courses, education and work.
 - function as “service-hub” with a network of all institutions, organisations and initiatives involved in refugee policies.
 - provide services in several languages (among them languages of the origin countries where the most refugees come from).
 - implement a permanent (or repetitive) information campaign.
2. **Make a competence check (not only) at the beginning using a professional profiling tool**
 - By the way we checked the “European Skills Profiling Tool”, but applied also other profiling tools (no place to elaborate here, see final report, FAB project)
 - Recording knowledge and training is not only important at the beginning but should be incorporated also in training and further education.
 - Good practice example: Vienna Education Passport - recording and documenting completed courses and certifications.
3. **Support self-assurance and system learning**
 - that means, to foster the capacity of refugees to navigate in the legal, social, cultural and working context of the receiving or host country.
4. **Implement information and counselling services with good equipped and qualified counsellors or coaches .**
 - following an empowerment approach
 - individual and group coaching
 - ideally with stable, long-lasting relationships, build on trust.
 - integrating digital services and devices
 - low threshold!
5. **Organise outreach actions - go where the refugees are.**
6. **Combine language and vocational training courses for faster integration.**
 - The fast tracks aim to offer internship, language training and education in a coherent process and the goal is to shorten the time from arrival to work (making

sure that the newcomers are matched to the right jobs and ensure the provision of skills to the industries in which there is labour shortage).

7. **Offer Team - Teaching and part-time courses.**
8. **Provide work - places and work experience, internships by companies, municipalities and NGO`s.**
 - Sensitize refugees also for non-academic professions, for trained jobs, so that they do not get stuck in unskilled or/ and badly paid jobs.
 - Contacting and networking with companies is crucial!
 - create job offers and work experience also by the municipalities themselves, by cooperatives, Charities or NGO`s.
9. **Launch programmes that support the entrepreneurial spirit and self-employment of refugees.**

III. Special recommendations concerning female refugees

Note: This target group is in the core of the FAB project. From 294 participants in our FAB Pilot projects in the five cities 231 (78,5%) were female. However, the reality is different: when it comes to real jobs in companies, in the labour market, the proportion of women among refugees is much lower than among men. This has been exacerbated by the Corona pandemic. But at the same time the vast majority of women would like to work! That shows, there is a great need for action in this field!

1. **Be aware of the personal and professional experiences of women gained in their home countries (including the flight experiences)** that are different from those of men.
2. **Offer special settings of counselling,**
3. **Provide extra language classes and vocational training towards special professions** (including those which are traditionally occupied by their male counterparts). → Especially at the beginning of the integration process, it is important to accompany women separately and to provide role models.
4. **Provide child - care support.**
5. **Make also use of blended learning** - this has a (positive) impact on the participation of women.

6. Digital guidance is particularly important.

7. Include information and learning about equality and the expectations of the hosting society - the task is here to break up traditional role models, raising self-esteem and achieving acceptance of the system of the host country, but at the same time we should also have respect to the culture of the home country and the individual background of refugees.