

Strengthening **Communities** | Welcoming **Migration** | Leading **Innovation**



MiFriendly Cities

Creating innovative
Migration Friendly cities
in the West Midlands

Jobs

Skills

Citizens & Voices

Start-ups & Ideas

Futures

www.MiFriendlyCities.co.uk



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund



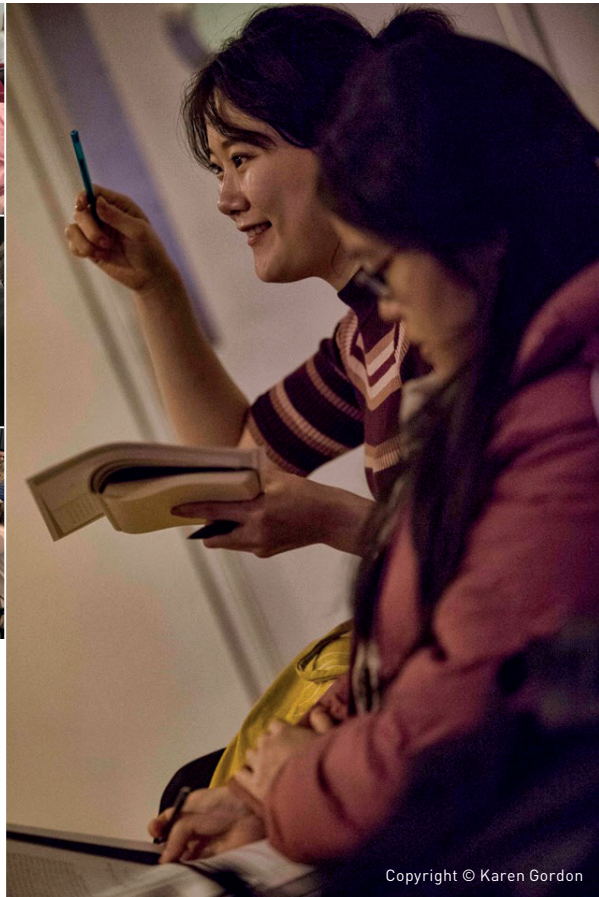
This project is co-financed by the
European Regional Development
Fund through the Urban Innovative
Actions Initiative



The MiFriendly Cities Project

“To answer the increasingly complex challenges they face, urban authorities need to go beyond traditional policies and services - they need to be bold and innovative”

URBAN INNOVATIVE ACTIONS



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What is it that makes a place 'Migration Friendly'?

For newcomers to any city, it means to be welcomed into new surroundings and given the opportunity to make a meaningful and positive contribution to the community.

In October 2017 the EU's Urban Innovative Actions fund awarded more than £4m to Coventry, Birmingham and Wolverhampton for the MiFriendly Cities project, a 3-year initiative that will look to develop innovative, community-led and sustainable approaches to enhancing the contribution of refugees and migrants across the region.

By bringing together 11 partner organisations – including the local authorities from each city – the project will deliver an exciting programme of activities designed to create opportunities and to push the boundaries of what has been previously attempted in the EU.

Refugees and migrants have been involved at every step of project development, and with this grassroots approach we hope to see citizens across the community working with local businesses, government, and voluntary organisations to build a MiFriendly region together.

MiFriendly Cities builds on the region's many recent successes. With Coventry set to become City of Culture in 2021 and Birmingham's successful bid to host the next Commonwealth Games, the West Midlands has a unique opportunity to become a hub for cultural and economic innovation in Europe.

We aim to...

Develop an innovative approach to migration that can be adopted cities across Europe

Build partnerships between local citizens, civil society, industry and government

Strengthen the social and economic fabric of the West Midlands

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The MiFriendly Approach

“ A MiFriendly City should be underpinned by the voices, skills and passion of refugees and migrants, so that all branches of the community are fully invested in its future, and the social and economic fabric of the region is strengthened. ”



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With over 100 languages spoken daily within its borders, the West Midlands is the most diverse region in the UK outside of London – and the 2nd most diverse region in Europe – and this diversity brings with it an untapped resource of skills and ideas.

Refugees and migrants have been integral partners in developing this project, helping to decide what it is that makes a 'Migration Friendly' city. By taking this bottom-up approach we have been able to build a programme of activities which considers what each city must do in order to achieve MiFriendly status.

The foundations of the project will focus on jobs, skills, citizenship, start-ups, and long-term community investment. We hope that by working in these areas we can empower our communities to come together and drive change at both city and regional levels.

In a MiFriendly City, everyone is encouraged to become an active citizen, training and employment opportunities are created, and the contribution of refugees and migrants is supported, enhanced and recognised.

The 3-year project will be shaped and developed as it progresses by the communities involved, and we hope that this will create a culture of inclusion and friendliness, with the West Midlands becoming a region in which all of its citizens feel a true sense of belonging.

We want to...

Create a region built upon a spirit of solidarity.

Empower citizens to take the lead in unlocking their city's assets.

Inspire people across the West Midlands – migrant or not – to want to live and belong in a MiFriendly City.



The Foundation of a MiFriendly City

Jobs

We want to create a network of 'Migration Friendly Employers' whose common goal will be to strengthen the workforce of the West Midlands, creating an infrastructure which opens up opportunities, offers ongoing support and increases contact between communities in the workplace.

We will...

- Work with local and national employers to create sustainable work placements and apprenticeships.
- Develop a mentoring programme, with existing and retired employees supporting refugees & migrants through placements and towards employment.
- Hold weekly employment sessions in the most deprived areas of each city to help citizens achieve their goals.
- Produce a digital guide and hold business forums to help West Midlands employers connect with migrant communities.

15 work placements with Interserve

100 apprenticeships, training and job opportunities

300 refugees and migrants mentored and supported by volunteers

2000 employers reached across the West Midlands



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Skills

The West Midlands aspires to become the centre for advanced manufacturing in Europe. We will nurture the skills to make this happen, and have put together an innovative training programme that will benefit all communities.

We will...

- Identify skills gaps and train refugees and migrants, strengthening the workforce of the entire region.
- Offer digital manufacturing accreditation and create two 'Mobile FabLabs' to encourage manufacturing pathways for young people.
- Run home improvement skills workshops and set up a 'Pop-Up Furniture Factory' for community home makeovers.
- Train refugees and migrants as 'Community Researchers' to evaluate and strengthen the MiFriendly Cities project.

250 migrants trained in digital manufacturing

100 migrants mentored in painting, decorating and DIY skills

3 community repair cafés set up in 3 cities

30 accredited community researchers



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The Foundation of a MiFriendly City

Citizens & Voices

Knowing about your civic, political and legal rights is a cornerstone for active citizenship, so in keeping with the MiFriendly approach, we want refugees and migrants to feel confident in accessing these rights, represent themselves and feel that they are fully-fledged citizens.

We will...

- Run a community media lab, providing the skills and platforms for refugees and migrants to use their voices and share their own positive stories.
- Develop a 'Know Your Rights' initiative to promote rights awareness, working with schools and children's centres to enable paths to citizenship for young people.
- Encourage 'Healthy Citizens' and train migrant health champions to inform communities about their local services.
- Offer free English language classes and activities with support from student and community volunteers.

100 refugees and migrants trained to tell their stories

6000 public health messages transmitted across the region

500 ESOL classes

115 schools and children's centres reached



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Start-ups & Innovative Ideas

Unlocking skills and ideas from within West Midlands' communities can benefit everyone. Supporting local and refugee and migrant entrepreneurs has the potential to expand job opportunities and strengthen the economy, and social challenges can be met by nurturing and, funding creative grassroots projects

We will...

- Fund and offer mentoring for up to 16 Social Enterprises, teaching business planning, finance, and marketing skills.
- Inspire people with examples of social innovation from around Europe and develop, fund and mentor up to 15 grassroots projects in housing, health care, employment and active citizenship.
- Create opportunities to work for one of 3 new social enterprises linked to service industries including food preparation and service, and laundry services.

80k financial investment fund for up to 16 new businesses

90k social innovation scheme to boost the 'MiFriendliness' of the West Midlands

1 refugee and migrant recruitment agency to support 3 new businesses



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The Foundation of a MiFriendly City

MiFriendly Futures

We will create a lasting infrastructure which will ultimately contribute to powering the economic success of the West Midlands and enable cultural and social change. The project will look to invest in the future of our region, and inspire cities across Europe to become the MiFriendly Cities of the future.

Community Investment

3 major investments will ensure that the MiFriendly initiative can continue for years to come.

- Renovation of the existing space at Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre to create a new community hub.
- Investment in woodworking equipment and repair tools for our Pop-up Furniture Factory to teach DIY skills and provide community homemakers.
- Two 'Mobile FabLabs' to teach digital manufacturing techniques in spaces that are accessible for all.

Sharing the MiFriendly Knowledge

Our 'Community Researchers' will be working with Coventry University to measure the success of the project and to co-produce innovative solutions to potential problems.

This research will ultimately produce a 'Guide to creating a MiFriendly City', so that we can transfer knowledge across Europe.



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The MiFriendly Partnership

11 partners, 3 cities, 1 initiative

Our innovative partnership of public, private and voluntary sector organisations will establish in the West Midlands a unique network of skills and knowledge.



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If you would like to learn more about the project or find out how you can get involved, you can visit our website at

www.MiFriendlyCities.co.uk or email
MiFriendlyCities@coventry.gov.uk

Follow our Twitter and Facebook page for updates and events

 **@MiFriendlyWM**

 **MiFriendly Cities**

Subscribe to our YouTube channel to hear from our project partners and see our MiFriendly journalists in action

 **MiFriendly Cities**

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