

## Innovative ideas: Employment

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This briefing provides an overview of innovative approaches to employment in the field of migrant<sup>1</sup> integration. This briefing is one of four<sup>2</sup> which MigrationWork CIC has put together to inspire and inform readers about what has worked well and why in the run-up to our MiFriendly Cities social innovation<sup>3</sup> workshops that we are hosting in the West Midlands. The approaches outlined below do not represent an exhaustive list.

### Innovative approaches - introduction

Here are some examples of employment projects from across Europe which we hope will inspire you. We looked at projects in the areas of:

- **Mentoring**
- **Integrated support services**
- **Principles underlying effective multi-stakeholder approaches**
- **‘Early intervention’ and fast track approaches**
- **Coding schools**

### Mentoring

- Mentoring is nothing new, but recent mentoring initiatives, from social enterprises such as [Kodiko](#) in France, have proven effective in matching migrants with mentors who have professional experience in related fields, thus moving mentees closer to work. These mentoring programmes do this by connecting migrants to relevant professional networks, as well opportunities to practice a new language, learn about a new culture, identify goals and career plans, and learn about sectoral ‘codes’.
- Some target specific groups, such as [Laamiga](#), which supports black and minority ethnic women from refugee and migrant communities in London to access mentoring and training.
- Many of these mentoring programmes also produce benefits for ‘receiving’ communities too; by facilitating contact between established communities and newcomers, community cohesion is greatly enhanced.

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<sup>1</sup> In this context we define this as a person who was born outside of the UK.

<sup>2</sup> On the topics of housing, employment, active citizenship and healthcare.

<sup>3</sup> Innovation is broadly defined here as a new approach that the sector can learn from, or an approach which builds on previous insights to offer something new, to deliver effective results.

## **Duo for a Job:**

### **Professional mentoring which benefits both newcomers and 'host' communities**

Duo for a Job, in Belgium, bridges both cultural and intergenerational divides by matching newcomers with mentors aged 50+. To date, they have an employment rate of 53% after 12 months of participation in the mentoring programme (compared to a two-year job outcome rate of 28% on the UK's flagship employment programme, the Work Programme). However, the project has also found that mentors are able to help deconstruct myths and stereotypes of migrants back in their 'host' communities after their positive contact with the project and mentees. Around 25 volunteer mentors join the project every month (they have a total of around 1,400 mentoring 'duos') and the project has a 94% re-enrolment rate among its mentors, confirming that the benefits of the project go well beyond just helping migrants to find work.

## **Integrated support services**

For those individuals who face multiple and complex barriers to employment, integrated support services have the potential to offer the most [effective results](#) in terms of delivering holistic, joined up and properly sequenced interventions. Yet public services have historically struggled to support the most socially excluded and disadvantaged migrant communities.

**'One stop shops':** There has been much talk of 'one stop shop' models, such as one in [Portugal](#), where a number of Government and support services for migrants are provided together under one roof.

**Co-location:** The most successful integrated services have been where co-location has been the start of the process and not the end.

Other successful models of integrated services, such as [Ohjaamo](#) in Finland, have required a deep understanding of how to embed collaborative working across different organisational cultures to make joined-up services a reality.

**Different models:** Models of integrated services can vary. Recent examples range from traditional face-to-face models, which focus on an informal look to help build trust with marginalised clients, to models which use Information Technology (IT) to support collaborative service platforms. In some cases, the integrated service model has brought together a number of different public services in a local authority/municipality<sup>4</sup>; in others, integrated services have been introduced in a single institution or information point<sup>5</sup>. At the centre of them all, however, is a deep focus on, and commitment to delivering **client-centred support**.

### **Start into a Job, Evonik**

Evonik, a chemicals company with its headquarters in Essen, Germany, has a programme called *Start in den Beruf* ('Start into a Job') to help prepare unemployed German young people to start a three-year vocational training programme in the company. In 2015, they expanded this programme to include refugees, training the new intake alongside young German participants so that they are trained side by side. The placements are funded by the Evonik Foundation and are a great example of an employer taking the lead in helping refugees integrate into the local labour market. The company works in partnership with a range of local and regional NGOs and training providers to ensure an 80% success rate of participants moving into vocational training. The project moves refugees closer to work not just through supporting access to vocational training, but through experience of the work environment as well as increased contact with German colleagues. In doing so, the project also improved the intercultural competencies of all participants on the training course. More information on this case study can be found [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> For example the 'integration points' in North Rhine-Westphalia which bring together case workers from the employment agencies (BA), the Jobcenters, the foreigners office, social services and other organisations. This not only increases co-operation between these agencies tasked with labour market integration, but also renders the process easier for participants.

<sup>5</sup> The Slovenian Info Point for Foreigners gave advice on access to the labour market by bringing together the

## Multi-stakeholder approaches

Public services alone, however, often cannot effectively support migrants into work without the help of other actors. For example, labour market discrimination against migrants and refugees requires the [involvement of social partners](#) in addressing 'demand-side' barriers. Civil society, including migrants themselves, is also essential to ensuring that the needs of clients are well understood and met.

Principles underlying the most successful efforts in multi-stakeholder approaches to labour market integration include:

- Ensuring mutual benefit to all stakeholders involved (so that partners commit to a collaborative way of working);
- Meaningful (as opposed to tokenistic) engagement with migrants to coproduce integration policies;
- Filling information gaps among employers to offer support and guidance around employing refugees and migrants<sup>6</sup>;
- Linking the skills profiles of migrants to labour market needs (skill or labour shortages).

## 'Early intervention' and fast track approaches

Early intervention describes providing support to migrants soon after their arrival in a community. By providing support and assessing needs early further social exclusion and economic disadvantage are prevented.

In Germany, for example, early intervention<sup>7</sup> describes support given to particular groups of asylum seekers before a decision on their application is taken. [Evidence](#) shows that using time during the often lengthy asylum procedure for language training, skills assessment and labour market preparation can help move asylum seekers closer to employment and self-sufficiency.

- In Germany, this has included access to '**Integration Courses**', which include 600 hours of language training and 100 hours of civic orientation; ensuring that people with tolerated status (*Duldung*)<sup>8</sup> also have access to integration measures; and facilitating access to preparatory vocational training and internships.
- **Fast track approaches** are similar in their intent to integrate migrants and refugees into work as soon as possible. In [Sweden](#), this is done by matching shortage occupations in the country to migrants with relevant education and experience in that area. Priority measures for both early intervention and fast track approaches centre around language training and early access to the labour market.

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expertise of various stakeholders which helped to better tailor the service to immigrant needs.

<sup>6</sup> For example, the brochure developed by Virksomhedsforum for Socialt Ansvar (VFSA), a network of Danish corporate leaders. The brochure, [Virksomheder integrerer flygtninge](#) (Companies Integrate Refugees), explains the legal frameworks and offers concrete experience from participating companies to give practical guidance to companies considering hiring refugees and asylum seekers.

<sup>7</sup> Early intervention is one of the guiding principles of the 2016 Integration Act: the first legal basis in Germany designed to facilitate the integration of refugees.

<sup>8</sup> In Germany, this term refers to (mostly) refused asylum seekers who cannot be deported due to administrative and other obstacles.

[Available data](#) from Germany suggest positive impacts of early intervention measures, as do forecasts for 2017 and beyond. The Institute for Employment Research (IAB) believes it is possible that every second refugee will have a job within five years, assuming that paid internships and low-paying part-time jobs are also included.<sup>9</sup>

## Coding schools

A number of coding schools<sup>10</sup> have recently emerged to help refugees prepare for careers in software development. These include:

- [ReDI School of Digital Integration](#), which has a high media profile and boasts over 350 graduates
- [CodeDoor](#), which focuses on self-guided learning and is expanding its focus to other disadvantaged groups
- [Devugees](#), the only coding school to have succeeded in becoming a certified provider of vocational training in Germany.

Many of these schools started off with a few volunteers sharing their coding and programming expertise with refugees. They have since grown into bigger social enterprises to meet demand.

**Advantages:** Recent [analysis](#) has found that these tech jobs are well-suited to the situation, skills and needs of refugees. University degrees are not the only path to IT careers, as employers value demonstrated skills. So, coding schools offer great potential for refugees who have fled their home countries without completing their education or being able to prove their foreign qualifications and experience. They can provide soft skills too, such as self-directed learning and understanding of workplace culture. Finally, this analysis concluded that, while the IT path may not be a suitable fit for all refugees, the positive spillover effects of helping even a few refugees into tech jobs are considerable because of the higher incomes for their families and expanded professional connections for the wider community.

## Summary

**Challenges:** Some of the examples cited in this paper have limitations in terms of their transferability to smaller, more local projects. For example, some programmes have benefited from substantial national or EU budgets; other projects, such as early intervention in Germany, have also been helped by strong national economies as well as strong political leadership on immigration in response to the influx of refugees in 2015.

## Elements of good practice

- **Volunteers are a valuable resource:** many of the examples given rely heavily on volunteers, and volunteers quickly recognise the ways in which they themselves benefit from the experience, thus sustaining the model.

<sup>9</sup> This is based on a representative survey among 4,800 refugees found that 22 percent of those who came in 2014 are employed as are 31 percent of 2013 arrivals. IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees.

<sup>10</sup> Five in Germany alone and at least 11 in other countries, including [Code Your Future](#) in the UK. Nearly all are non-profit organisations or social enterprises.

- **Work-focused training:** combine practical training with workplace experience. Workplace-based vocational training, work-focused language training and other forms of workplace instruction, such as internships, tend to be more effective than single interventions that are isolated from actual workplaces, company environments and professional networks.
- **Involving migrants themselves** in a project is the best way to understand their community's needs. The one-stop-shop model in Portugal and the municipality of Arnsberg, for example, work with immigrants to improve access to, and the quality of, their integration services.
- **Connecting migrants with relevant employment opportunities** is another effective approach which is not just apparent in professional mentoring schemes but also in citizen-led initiatives such as Singa and the Refugee Food Festival. Coding schools demonstrate how a modest amount of technology can also be utilised to this end, and a number of online platforms, such as Action Emploi Refugies, Refugee Talent and Chatterbox, also use IT to connect newcomers to employment opportunities.
- Finally, almost all of the good practice cited here started with **small-scale pilots and evidence gathering** to inform their development and growth. If there are key information gaps in a local area, which are preventing migrants from getting work, then these may have to be addressed first, through exercises such as mapping client needs, key demographics or the provision of existing support.

More generally, **transferable principles** underly all the good practice cited in this paper which can guide the design of any small-scale, local integration project aimed at helping migrants into work.

- Take a '**whole of society**' approach to labour market integration: recognise that the most excluded groups in society, including migrants and refugees, will often present multiple and complex barriers to employment that require coordinated and properly sequenced responses across a number of stakeholders and public services. These approaches deliver holistic responses to migrants' needs, often impacting various groups and issues (community cohesion, social exclusion, health and wellbeing etc). Examples include Neue Nachbarn Arnsberg and Duo for a Job.
- **Demonstrate added value** to relevant stakeholders, such as local employers who may be grappling with skill or labour shortages.<sup>11</sup>
- Focus on **client needs** throughout the design, implementation and delivery phases. Example: models of integrated support services.
- **Engage newcomers in work-focused activities soon after arrival.** Early intervention and fast track models prevent social exclusion, build confidence and motivation and promote general health and wellbeing. At a local level, they could include opportunities to volunteer, take up an internship or work placement or improve language skills.

<sup>11</sup> To see how one employer sought to fill a shortage of health and social care workers through training and recruiting refugees, see the example of University Teaching Hospital in Essen.