



Creating innovative  
**Migration Friendly** cities  
in the West Midlands

Strengthening **Communities**

Welcoming **Migration**

Leading **Innovation**



**Jobs**

**Skills**

**Citizens &  
Voices**

**Start-ups &  
Ideas**

**Futures**



@MiFriendlyWM



MiFriendly Cities



MiFriendly Cities



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[www.MiFriendlyCities.co.uk](http://www.MiFriendlyCities.co.uk)



**EUROPEAN UNION**  
European Regional Development Fund



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# 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





## 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

# 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

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## 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 have...

- initiated contact with over 300 companies
- created over 50 employment related opportunities for refugees and migrants
- organised two employer round table events to get feedback on employers needs and outlook

### We will...

- continue to link clients and employers to support them in their journey to better employment
- work with employers to undertake a skills audit of the their current workforce to uncover the hidden skills of their existing employees

### We need...

- employers to sign up to our project and help to offer opportunities to refugees and migrants
- employers to participate in employment roundtables to help us steer our project
- employers to invite us to meet their diverse workforce in order for us to help them identify their hidden talents



# 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 have...

- trained 45 Health Champions across the 3 cities
- trained 5 Citizen Social Scientists with the skills to conduct community research
- trained around 90 individuals in Digital Fabrication

## We will...

- continue to deliver employability sessions in the community and OCN accredited training courses
- continue to train Citizen Social Scientists to help support our project evaluation
- continue to work with our Health Champions to deliver public health messages across the 3 cities and to inform and influence public health agencies about key concerns in the community

## We need...

- new apprenticeships and work placements for our clients so that they can put their skills into practice
- employers to work in partnership with us to develop better opportunities for our clients
- new training opportunities for individuals with limited English skills



# 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 have...

- trained over 100 migrant and refugee Citizen Journalists from migrant and refugee backgrounds who are now able to tell their own stories using media tools and platforms to inspire others
- developed 'Know Your Rights' information packs in 10 languages that are FREE to download from our website
- created a 'Share My Language' network that brings communities together and add value to current ESOL provisions

### We will...

- continue to deliver Media Labs across the 3 cities
- create a MiFriendly Cities exhibition which will travel across the West Midlands to inspire minds and challenge perceptions of migration and integration
- continue to engage with schools and individuals in need of rights based support and sound legal advice

### We need...

- experts in journalism, media, writing and social media to join hands with us to supporting our clients
- media outlets and personals to help promote stories from our project
- more organisations that work with children and young people to seek our free legal services





# 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 have...

- trained 43 budding Social Entrepreneurs from refugee and migrant backgrounds on all aspects of starting-up and running a business
- funded 16 Social Enterprises from across the 3 cities
- published FREE briefings on how to start a social project in the areas of Housing, Healthcare, Employment and Active Citizenship
- funded 16 grassroots Social Projects in Coventry, Birmingham and Wolverhampton

## We will...

- continue to mentor and support those who we've funded so far
- organise activities for our participants to learn, network and promote their products
- launch further 3 Social Enterprises in partnership with CRMC to improve employability prospects for Refugees and Migrants

## We need...

- additional funding for our enterprises and projects for them to further develop and expand
- exciting training, networking and promotional opportunities for our participants
- you to tell us if our briefings inspired you to start your own Social Projects



# 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.**

### Current Community Investment

- Establishing of 2 collaborative initiatives on woodworking, upcycling and DIY in Coventry and Wolverhampton
- Renovation of the existing space at the CRMC in Coventry to create a new Community Hub
- A Share My Language Champions scheme that capitalises on language learning outside of traditional ESOL
- A mobile FabLab that will offer flexible training

### Future Community Investment

- The new community space will be used to create social capital and thought provoking events and exhibitions
- Creating a pool of refugees and migrants trained in practical skills
- Renovate 100 homes belonging to vulnerable individuals

### Sharing the MiFriendly Knowledge

- We have created an Employer's Guide that is FREE to download from our website
- Our sounding boards are bringing together professionals from cities across Europe to exchange ideas, challenge assumptions and learn from each other
- We will produce a 'Guide to Creating a MiFriendly City' so that we can share our learnings across Europe

# The MiFriendly Partnership

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## 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.



#MiFriendly



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To find out more, visit

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