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Raising Capacity for
Inclusive People engaged
in private sponsorship

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PRESS RELEASE

July 2023

ONGOING ACTIVITIES: WORK PACKAGE 6 - THE PILOT SCHEMES COME TO AN END!

In the framework of the RaCIP project funded by European funds of the AMIF programme in 2019, the RaCIP consortium, at this stage of the project, is implementing pilot schemes to put community and private sponsorship into practice and foster pathways to inclusion for beneficiaries.

Each partner, depending on their specific skills and preparation, supports individuals and families in the search for housing solutions, employment, and autonomy, always ensuring relational support, which, CVI increasingly notes, is what really makes the difference in integration pathways. Building a community around the migrant and refugee person or nucleus is crucial because it ensures the motivational input that drives true integration through the exchange of interests, ideas, approaches.

This press release will cover the areas of integration, the different partners in our consortium have been focussing on and the successes and difficulties faced thus far.

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SECOND TREE
Planting Second Chances



SERVIÇO RESGATA AOS REFUGIADOS
PORTUGAL



SYNTHESIS
CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

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What have our activities aimed to achieve?

CVI: Economic Integration

Within the RaCIP Project, pursuing the general goal of facilitating and supporting the integration of asylum seekers and refugees, in the last year, CVI has carried out activities aimed, in particular, at the economic integration of the beneficiaries and the empowerment of their path towards autonomy.

To a certain extent, the accompanying pathways achieved so far have revealed, firstly, the difficulties migrants have to face to get a job and to adapt to the work system and local market rules.

Secondly and consequently, the importance - for private stakeholders - of enhancing tools and resources to support migrants in their job research activities (mentoring to work) and, once hired, to comprehend their work environment and operating methods (mentoring at work).

SECOND TREE: Social Integration

At Second Tree, the RACIP programme brings together people of all ages and nationalities – locals, refugees, international volunteers – to participate in activities that create a shared community. These activities – weekly sports matches, picnics, cooking competitions, or language cafes – facilitate integration, the creation of friendships, culture sharing, and language learning. In addition to these weekly events, Second Tree has hosted several, large theme specific gatherings throughout the project. For instance, in collaboration with Fine Arts students from the local university, Second Tree hosted an arts and crafts event in



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the city centre for locals and refugees. Additionally, Second Tree has held large parties which explore food and dance from different cultures.

The RaCIP project has been successful in bridging the gap amongst locals and refugees. As approximately 95% of the refugee population of Ioannina live in isolated refugee camps, there is little opportunity for locals and refugees to meet. This initiative has allowed people in these two groups to meet, learn about each other, and form lasting relationships that extend beyond the context of the activities organised by Second Tree. Second Tree has also faced some challenges relating to the changing newcomer population, the isolation of people living in refugee camps, difficulties with transportation, and the restricted availability of students during exam and holiday periods. Despite these obstacles, the project has been successful in fostering integration, building community, and forming lasting friendships.

GLOCAL FACTORY: Building Relationships and Volunteering

Currently, the vibrant Paratod@s Festival is in full swing, celebrating and honoring the multitude of projects Glocal Factory has undertaken throughout the year. Among them, RaCIP shines brightly. Our dedicated mentors and mentees are actively involved in shaping these eventful days. They volunteer in the bustling kitchen and bar, lend a hand with cleanliness, take shifts during the night, and contribute to stimulating discussions while crafting event posters.

The atmosphere is filled with jubilation and collaboration. Despite the inevitable fatigue and sweltering heat, our collective determination propels us forward, united by a shared purpose. This, I believe, is a testament to the fruits of our labor—a year spent working on various initiatives such as the Italian school, grocery distribution, and document support. Yet, the true beauty lies in witnessing how, from addressing tangible needs, Glocal Factory

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has cultivated meaningful connections that now flourish in this cooperation, breathing life into the festival itself.

SYNTHESIS: Integration of Daily Requirements and Everyday Needs

SYNTHESIS has assisted many refugee families by supplying most of their daily requirements, monthly bus cards, and connecting them with government offices in times of welfare issues. Synthesis worked with a few organizations to help one refugee family have her son’s surgery performed abroad. Synthesis was successful in matching mentees with local mentors. The mentors and mentees participated in several game activities and a lunch and dinner outing as part of the mentoring program.

What successes has RaCIP achieved in the mentoring scheme?

After a few months of mentoring activities, as part of Work Package 6, it has been found to be successful to involve mentor pairs and mentees in activities that are not about each other, but are directed to society, or at any rate to a third entity, to a common interest. In this way, the mutually supportive relationship is broken down, both feel equally involved, each with their own resources and abilities, to contribute to the achievement of a goal, and neither side feels in a position to receive and thus owe gratitude to anyone.

At **THE MUNICIPALITY OF IOANNINA**, there has been success in terms of numbers of those involved and hours dedicated to training.

“The Municipality of Ioannina implementing the knowledge developed during the training phase has carried out its Pilot Scheme organising a tailored integration programme in order to support 20 stakeholders acting as mentors to one or more mentees in the local area.

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The individual consulting sessions - a total of 200 hours training - aimed to map out the specific needs of each participant involved in a sponsoring scheme, and acquire the knowledge and expertise to tackle facing challenges when formulating a mentoring relationship on an everyday basis.”

At **SYNTHESIS** the success has been more evident in terms of the feedback received. Three of the participants called to say they got jobs thanks to our assistance with their job search and CV development. It was also noted that many new friendships have been formed as a result of the program, not only the mentee/mentor relationship. Participants who had children, met other moms, and formed friendships through lunch dates. The woman who went abroad for her son's surgery returned with a big smile on her face because the surgery went well.

At **Refugees Welcome Italia**, the success of RaCIP has been to be able to include migrants with more kinds of residence permits than previous programmes.

What difficulties has RaCIP faced in the mentoring scheme?

Despite the positive outcomes of our mentoring program, there were numerous challenges, particularly when connecting participants with local families, organising workshops, and in getting them to come on time.

Among the most frequently noted difficulties is the high turnover of mentor-mentee pairs, due to both the high mobility rate of migrant people, who often change cities or countries on their path to integration, and the demotivation of mentors.

Another difficulty concerns the awareness of the role of mentors and the limits of their supportive action.

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On this point, organizations are engaged in a constant negotiation of the role, which cannot always be completely defined in advance, but varies depending on the people involved. the situation they are experiencing, specific skills.

Community Support

As noted by Consorzio Veneto Insieme there are many difficulties that come with being a host community in an otherwise hostile landscape for migrants. Particularly, job placement and housing are major difficulties as well as mental health support and the removal of xenophobic barriers. A collaborative community, which supports the 1-on-1 relationships between the mentor and mentee, is necessary to help prevent xenophobic attacks and barriers and their mental health consequences. Encouragement to participate in social processes can be quickly extinguished by negative experiences. In response, RaCIP has hopefully contributed to more awareness of migrant experience in the hosting communities.

Single Parents and those with disabilities

Furthermore, as the experience suggests, special attention should be given to single parents and people with disabilities, for whom not only is it harder to find a job that fits their needs, but it is also more complex to maintain such a job. In this scenario, mentors might provide a supportive network they could be lacking.

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