

PlurAlps

Enhancing Capacities for a Pluralistic Alpine Space

Innovation Toolbox

About PlurAlps Project

The Alpine area is experiencing the combined challenges of an ageing population and new migration models. At the same time, increasing cultural diversity and pluralism are opportunities for social innovation and development. The project PlurAlps aims to develop and promote a welcoming culture, and improve knowledge and awareness regarding the integration of all types of migrants in Alpine areas.

Pluralism is strength

Pluralism is the active engagement with diversity and the seeking of understanding across lines of difference. It is based on dialogue and means not keeping our differences in isolation, but rather in relationship to one another. Pluralism is not a static result of an ideal society, rather it is a constant work in progress.

Pluralism is a defining feature of European Union Member States. The term is mentioned in Article 2 of the European Union Treaty from 2010 where it says: "The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail."

Objectives

The project PlurAlps aims to develop and promote a welcoming culture, and improve knowledge and awareness regarding the integration of all types of migrants in Alpine areas. The specific objectives of PlurAlps are:

- improving strategies and practices for social planning and the integration of new inhabitants;
- improving multilevel, multi-actor and cross-sectorial cooperation for their integration;
- increasing public awareness of positive effects of pluralism;
- generating bottom-up policy advice.

Pilot projects on social integration, economic innovation, and the management of Alpine landscapes will be implemented in municipalities and regions. PlurAlps enables transnational cooperation to exchange knowledge and to mobilise the potential for social innovation across the participating regions.

Facts

Budget: 2,7 Mio. EUR - Co-financing by ERDF 85%; Public or own contribution by partners 15%

Duration: November 2016 – October 2019

Target groups: local public authorities (municipalities), regional public authorities, SMEs and business support organisations, and interest groups including NGOs

PlurAlps is additionally co-financed by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building, Nuclear Safety of Germany, by the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) Switzerland and by the state Styria of Austria.

PlurAlps

Innovation Toolbox

Pilot Projects

Innovation Toolbox

The PlurAlps partners launched pilot projects in the fields of social integration, labour market integration and environmental and landscape conservation. Local or regional implementation partnerships were formed to involve different actors such as municipalities, SMEs, NGOs and other stakeholders. In total, more than 80 organisations and institutions in the six participating Alpine countries were involved in the implementation of the pilot projects.

The experiences from the pilot projects are summarized in this toolbox. The goal is to share what has been learned, make processes transparent and inspire further ideas and projects in other regions. The PlurAlps partners developed this toolbox as a useful resource for fostering pluralism as a key for local development in the Alpine Space.

PlurAlps Pilot Projects

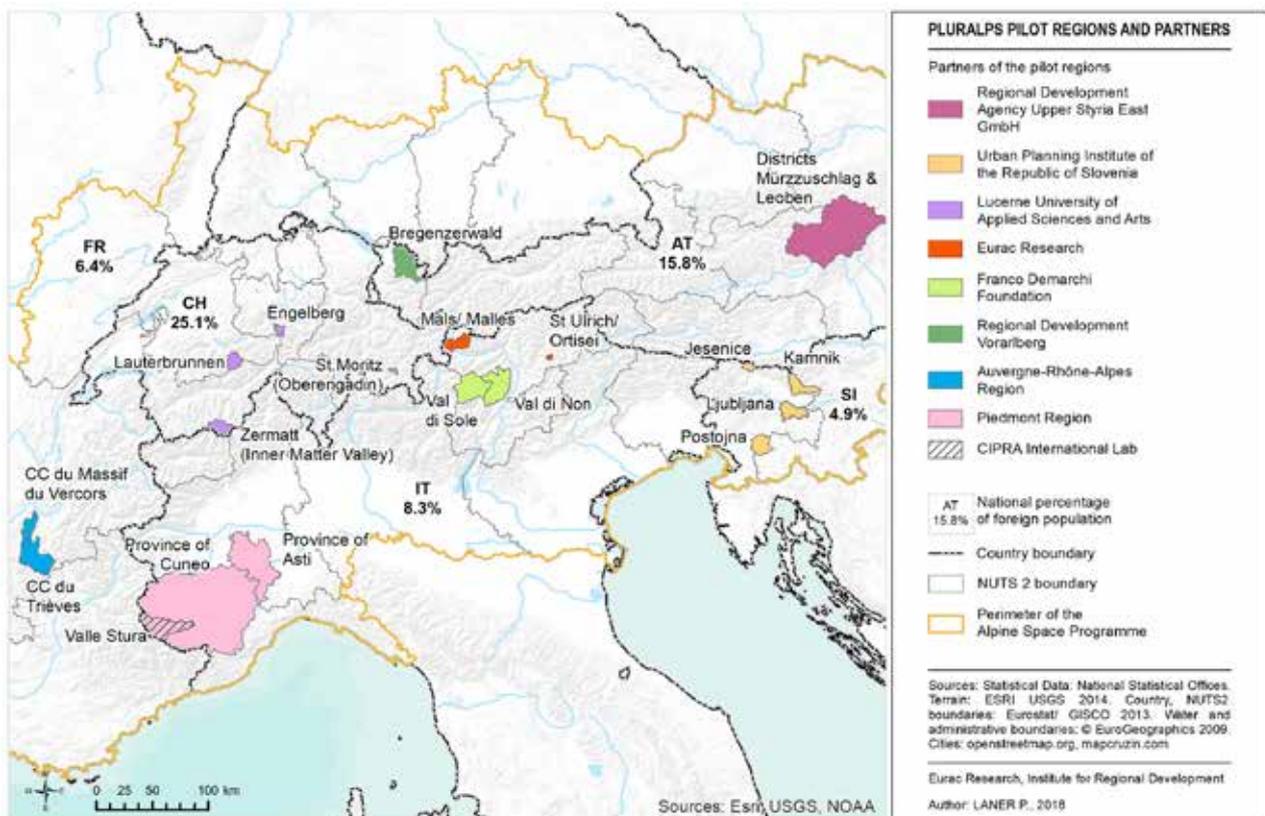




Photo: Marktgemeinschaft

Active for a better quality of life in the Alpine communities!

The social planning instrument

The social planning instrument SPI has been developed to evaluate and improve the quality of life in communities. It encompasses a process within the municipality, a questionnaire in the form of a user-friendly online tool, and a handbook. The prime focus lies on the following main questions: What is the quality of life of immigrants and non-natives? Which services and provisions in the municipality foster a quick integration for all types of immigration?

Challenges in the region

Municipalities offer a wide range of services and provisions. Furthermore, many institutions and facilities, clubs and associations or individuals provide services as well, but they are not well connected to each other. Long-term and interdisciplinary planning is only seldom carried out.

Peter Solnar, mayor *

“ With this instrument we can evaluate our work in the municipality more easily. The interaction of the different areas becomes clearly visible. We want to repeat this process in 2-3 years. ”



* of the pilot community Aschau/D

This tool was developed with the support of Community Network Alliance in the Alps: www.alpenallianz.org

Benefit of the pilot project

In 10 pilot municipalities throughout the Alpine region, the quality of life was evaluated and assessed and action plans with measures for improvement were developed. The SPI was further developed and is also available after the end of the project.

Lessons learned

1. Support of an external consultant

In particular, the training for the use of the online tool, the structure of the working groups and the moderation of workshops require external support.

2. Interlinked of the process with currently running processes in the municipality

This avoids overstraining those involved by exploiting synergies between the processes.

3. Quality of life for everyone

This must be considered in the context of the whole population. Improvement measures that only benefit individual groups are a potential source of conflict.

4. Participation is essentially

There is usually too little knowledge in the administration of a municipality for a comprehensive picture of the whole community.



Revitalising the landscape as perspectives for young migrants

L'Arbu, the Crafts of the Mountain

Revitalize unused land, produce regional food, integrate people into the local community: the association “Germinale Cooperativa Agricola di Comunità”, based in Piedmont, combines agriculture and landscape conservation with social commitment. In the pilot project “L'Arbu”, a young migrant is trained to build a mountain farm. In this way he gets to know and understand the landscape better, attends a vocational training and improves his working skills.

Challenges in the region

Uncultivated fields and labor shortages were the challenges of Valle Stura. At the same time, young migrants were waiting for a response to their asylum application, had no job and were willing to work.

Giulia Jannelli, project manager

“ We want to create jobs, preserve the landscape and promote exchange among people. Diversity is not an obstacle, but an enrichment! ”

Association Germinale
Cooperativa Agricola di
Comunità | Piedmont, Italy



Benefit of the pilot project

“L'Arbu” provides a migrant with better knowledge of the territory and its traditions, raises awareness on pluralism in the local population, creates job opportunities for other newcomers and revitalises the landscape.

Lessons learned

1. Exploiting unused potential

Understaffed agriculture on the one hand, job-seeking migrants on the other: explore the potential that is slumbering in your region.

2. Start a dialogue with the institutions

Obtain an explicit agreement with the public authorities. It gives more credibility to the project and creates trust in the population.

3. Involve target groups

Involve the public and the private sector as well as the citizens and give each a clear role.

4. Communication is the key

Good communication is necessary, as is the involvement of a third party association as mediator.



Photo: Stefania Ferrero - YummyMEDIA

Cantiere Cinema, a video-making workshop: the power of imagination for integration

Video making workshop for youth

Two famous directors, with a strong migration background, held this workshop providing youth with cinema related skills. The cinema lenses increase participants' awareness about the context they live in. Video making applied to migration topics promotes pluralism, developing a more inclusive and welcoming culture in internal areas, which are distant from services clusters and, nevertheless, characterised by environmental and cultural resources.

Challenges in the region

Migration flows have also involved Trentino and its most isolated valleys, triggering a silent integration process. Second generations, living in this fragmented outskirts, are unaware of their multiple identities and belongings.

Benefit of the pilot project

"Cantiere Cinema" helps young people in decoding the territory, recognising themselves as protagonists of their social context. Video language is the most democratic and immediate one. It produces effective and widely sharable contents.

Razi Mohebi, Awarded Afghan film director

“ Cantiere Cinema is a place for desire, where imagination can be conveyed to create something, to act! ”



Lessons learned

1. Introduction to video making

Through the vision of selected movies, educators present cinema elements such as: story, image, sound, editing, style, production and distribution.

2. Focus group

Participants share and debate migration experiences.

3. Short movie production

Educators support and monitor attendees in the definition of the subject, direction, shooting and editing of the video.

4. Competition in a contest

Experts select and award the best short-movies; the selected movies are then screened in public to stimulate debate and reflection on migration related topics.



Photo: Origami Videography

Living in Val Gardena: Intercultural hiking (experience) in the mountains

Informal integration

Mountain hiking is a very common activity that the inhabitants of Val Gardena do in their leisure time. As a social practice, it helps integrating in the community in an informal context. Organizing mountain excursions for new inhabitants – together with locals – has been a useful measure to make them familiar with this opportunity. The video shows the experiences gained and explains what is needed to go mountain hiking.

Challenges in the region

New inhabitants with different cultural backgrounds or that come from non-mountain countries do not know about the opportunity to go mountain hiking and therefore remain excluded from this socializing practice.

Martina Comploi, council member *

“ Families from Senegal, Iraq, Pakistan, and Albania have taken part in the excursion. Many of them have never been to the mountains or taken a cableway before. It has been a beautiful experience for them. ”



* for social sector of Ortisei and responsible for social services in the district of Val Gardena, Italy

Benefit of the pilot project

The excursion has given new inhabitants the opportunity to view the mountains from a new perspective, meet new people and share together a break at the side of the Lech Sant.

Lessons learned

- 1. Choose a panoramic location** for an excursion and communicate it well
- 2. Cooperate with local stakeholders** to bring together different skills, resources
- 3. Decide on an appropriate date** when most people are available
- 4. Select a video-maker** with intercultural skills



Photo: Eurac Research/Miriam Weiß

Living in Val Gardena: a welcome event for new inhabitants

Get to know each other

A welcome event opens the gate between new inhabitants and the local community. As important moment for delivering useful information on customs, habits, and tacit rules, it enhances integration and understanding among cultures. During the event, personal success stories of integration were shared and local associations presented themselves to introduce new inhabitants to volunteer work.

Challenges in the region

A moment to welcome new inhabitants in Val Gardena was missing. Often new inhabitants do not have the opportunity to get acquainted with locals, customs and habits and as a consequence misunderstandings emerge.

Benefit of the pilot project

The welcome event has provided the opportunity for new inhabitants to meet the local community, to exchange and share a friendly and convivial moment.

Romina Glira, event manager *

“ We tried to mix convivial with informative moments, with storytelling about successful integration experiences, presentations of leisure and volunteering possibilities in the Valley. I think participants felt welcome. ”



* member of the Council for integration of Val Gardena

Lessons learned

- 1. Bring together different knowledge and skills**
organizational, networks, success stories, materials produced
- 2. Engage the new inhabitants**
in preparing something to eat for the event to valorize their food culture
- 3. Create a nice and convivial environment**
and arrange the space with multicultural objects, music, colours, so that participants feel comfortable
- 4. Prepare a well thought program**
and event format, mixing formal with more interactive and informal moments



Photo: Magdalena Gschmitzer

Facilitating access to the labour market and housing

Support newcomers' self-sustainability

Having a job and place to stay are of utmost importance to newcomers for settling in. To facilitate access to the labour and housing market, a coach mediates procedures and guidelines to newcomers individually and in group-settings. At the same time, sensitizing local employers and property owners to open up their companies and rental flats to refugees and persons entitled to asylum is crucial.

Challenges in the region

Once asylum seekers are entitled to stay, they need to leave the publicly supported reception facilities but without a place to stay and often in a volatile occupational situation. This is combined with high rents and reservations towards refugees as reliable tenants.

Manuel Ramlmair, coach

“ We want to support our clients so that they can stay in the area and become part of our community – both at the workplace and in our neighbourhoods. ”



Benefit of the pilot project

The coach was well received and several people were placed with a company in the medium-term in the region. Regarding accommodation, a network of relevant actors formed to develop a brochure on housing for both tenants and property owners.

Lessons learned

- 1. Consider both refugees and asylum seekers**
Analyse existing and emerging needs independent of their time of arrival, their perspective to stay or their state of employment.
- 2. Empower refugees and asylum seekers**
Be a coach in the job/housing process and strengthen their capacities to act on their own behalf
- 3. Network with all public and private actors**
playing a role in the housing market on local and regional level.
- 4. Carefully consider the role of volunteers**
in facilitating access to the housing market respecting that they may not want to act as guarantors.



Photo: Getty Images / Maskot

Company Coaches for new Employees

Employees support Employees in Zermatt

Long-time employees with a migration background work as coaches for new arrived employees within a company. In personal and informal meetings, they provide information about working and living in the community.

The coaches are in contact with the regional integration Office to provide up-to-date information and to establish contact to the Integration Office or other organizations if needed.

Challenges in the region

For many of the Portuguese migrants that come to work in the tourism industry in Zermatt, receiving the right information about living and working in Zermatt is a challenge due to language and cultural barriers. The lack of information or incorrect information leads to difficulties and missed chances.

Sybille Oswald, Human Resources Manager

“ The coach can address many questions and uncertainties among our staff. He also encourages employees to come to my office and resolve issues. ”



Parkhotel BeauSite | Zermatt, Switzerland

This tool was developed with the support of Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, www.hslu.ch

Benefit of the pilot project

Coaches at work are easy to access and once a trustful relationship is established, they become an important source of information for newcomers. Since they are in contact with the local integration office, they can provide first-hand information or establish contact to professional support if needed.

Lessons learned

1. Sensitizing the employers

A first and important step is sensitizing the employers. Coaching should be part of working time and not an additional burden.

2. The role of the coaches has to be clear

They deliver information or contact, but are not social workers or lawyers.

3. Trust between the employer, coach and the employees, is crucial for a successful implementation.

4. The company should consider gender in selecting the coaches

The company should consider gender in selecting the coaches. If possible, both genders should be accessible as coaches.



Photo: Schule Engelberg, Obwalden

Family Tandems

Low threshold intercultural contacts

Tandems are created by connecting a foreign and a local family whose children attend the same class. The concept has been developed and organized by specialized staff at primary school level. Teachers find children from both backgrounds who are bonding and propose to introduce the families to each other. Both families agree with the rules and make contact for a first meeting. They organize subsequent meetings according to their needs.

Challenges in the region

Migrant families often do not know how the kindergarten or school life and the educational system in general function in Switzerland. This is a challenge not only for the children and their parents, but for the teachers as well.

Benefit of the pilot project

The exchange enables the foreign families to get tips, which will help them to become familiar with life at school, leisure, etc. Local and migrant families connect with each other, expand their network and discover one another's culture.

School social worker

“ Intercultural family networks help the children to feel safer. Furthermore, the children benefit from new meetings / contacts and experiences. ”

Gemeindeschule Engelberg |
Engelberg, Switzerland



Lessons learned

- 1. The school is of high importance**
in the field integration of migrant families. Teachers normally are in contact with all parents.
- 2. A great need for integration measures**
Municipality authorities often consider the issue of integration as something that does not concern them directly.
- 3. Some key persons are committed**
to tackle integration issues at school in a first stage. Other teachers often need to be motivated.
- 4. Parents appreciate the family tandem**
Parents who participate in the project appreciate the family tandem very much, and both sides profit from the contacts. the coaches. If possible, both genders should be accessible as coaches.

This tool was developed with the support of
Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts,
www.hslu.ch



Photo: Schule Engelberg, Obwalden

A new approach to integrate families

An Intercultural Mediator in St. Moritz

The creation of the new job of intercultural mediator in cooperation with the school and the municipality focuses on families with preschool children (0-4 years). The mediator creates easily accessible contact with parents and facilitates communication between parents, important institutions and the school. The creation of this new job is expected to have a positive impact on the integration of migrant parents and equal educational opportunities for their children.

Challenges in the region

More than 700 Portuguese people live in St. Moritz. A situation analysis showed that some of the Portuguese families have little contact with Swiss families. Furthermore, their children do not receive child-friendly daycare; therefore they are less well prepared for school.

Benefit of the pilot project

In the long run the project is expected to result in better integration and equal opportunities for migrant children and their parents as well as cost savings in the communities for support services such as speech and psychomotoric therapy.

Head of primary school St. Moritz

“ The sooner early education happens while parents are involved, the more the children will benefit. ”

Primary School St. Moritz |
St. Moritz, Switzerland



This tool was developed with the support of
Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts,
www.hslu.ch

Lessons learned

1. Involve stakeholders

In the integration process of families and children, different stakeholders (employers, schools and those affected themselves) should participate

2. Lack of cooperation

Even in small and medium-sized communities, institutions and administrations do not work together across departments.

3. Connectors and mediators

Persons who “open the doors” and facilitate the flow of communication are needed.

4. Awareness

It is essential to increase awareness of the topic among members of authorities and administration.



Photo: 87's

Video project to fight stereotypes

Encouraging medical students

Many Auvergne Rhône-Alpes territories face a double challenge: the demographic transition on the one hand, marked by an aging of the population especially in rural areas, and the phenomena of medical desertification, particularly in rural areas and urban areas. Region wishes to pursue the objective to encourage medical students to practice in fragile areas (rural or urban).

Challenges in the region

The fight against medical deserts and difficulties of access to first-line care go through the necessary installation of general practitioners in rural territories. Therefore it is essential to pay attention to the medical students who will be the professionals of tomorrow.

A medical graduate student

“ Students are looking for three priorities: job opportunity for the spouse living environment (nature, calm), proximity to public services and facilities. ”



Benefit of the pilot project

Encourage medical students to practice in fragile areas (rural or urban) and meet the health needs of the population. The video project dismantles prejudices about the practice of medicine in rural areas in order to encourage young graduates to migrate there.

Lessons learned

- 1. Target group**
Targeting actions at the undergraduate level
- 2. Prospects for the future**
The expectations of the students turn first and foremost on the possibility of develop a family life (spousal employment, living environment, presence of schools, working time).
- 3. Provide information**
It is possible to change the representations that students make of territories through adapted information
- 4. Specify**
Advantages and disadvantages specific to each territory



top job top life



Photo: shutterstock.com (left), Tamm Lamm (right)

TOP JOB – TOP LIFE

Welcome to Upper Styria

The Regional Development Agency Upper Styria East establishes a uniform arrival management as part of the strategy to implement a welcome culture towards newly arrived workers. Important information and regional offers are summarized in the folder TOP JOB–TOP LIFE, which is distributed by municipalities, institutions and companies. The welcome package is completed by infocards and an online-platform.

Challenges in the region

Upper Styria East has Austria*s highest concentration of global leaders in material technology companies. To guarantee the competitiveness of the region, it is indispensable to “actively” counteract the trend of an increasing lack of skilled workers.

Benefit of the pilot project

The results of this project provide the region with a greater external coherence and a uniform promotion of the welcome culture to make the region more attractive for foreign professionals.

Victoria Menapace, Arrival Manager

“ We provide a „Welcome Service“ for new arrivals to support them in every aspect of their new life and new home and to promote the beautiful region with top life conditions and opportunities for everyone in terms of work and education. ”



City of Kapfenberg | Kapfenberg, Austria

Lessons learned

- 1. Try to involve all relevant stakeholders** from the beginning of the project to get a firm commitment
- 2. First define the target group** and then work on the relevant information for your target group
- 3. Use a simple language and short sentences** for the information provided in the folder – this also makes it easier to translate it into foreign languages

This tool was developed with the support of Partner Regional Development Agency Upper Styria East GmbH, www.obersteiermark.at



Photo: In Rete per Accogliere

“In Rete per Accogliere”, the road for inclusion

Exploit synergies

Two agricultural organizations of the Region, Confcooperative and Coldiretti, working on behalf of Regione Piemonte and together with the network of social enterprises “Rifugiati in Rete”, aim to improve social and working inclusion of young migrants by fostering stakeholders’ synergies, strengthening local tools and opportunities and improving skills and competences of the beneficiaries.

Challenges in the region

Lack of institutional response to migrants’ issues in rural Piedmont. Absence of stakeholders’ networking and organized systems able to match local farmers’ demand of workers during peak season with the growing number of incoming migrants looking for working opportunities and social inclusion.

Fabio Chiappello, local operator

“ The young migrants we are meeting share different life stories, experiences and express complex needs. A good inclusion process needs integrated answers that should be provided by different territorial actors. ”



Cooperativa Armonia
Social Enterprise – “Rifugiati in Rete
Network” | Piedmont, Italy

This tool was developed with the support of
Regione Piemonte, www.regione.piemonte.it

Benefit of the pilot project

“In Rete per Accogliere” creates – together with other local stakeholders – synergies among public institutions, local farms and private associations to answer migrants’ issues related to work, language, housing and health (at present, around 158 migrants are involved in the project).

Lessons learned

1. Involve local associations

Know who is working with migrants and build relations among all local stakeholders and communities.

2. Create mutual trust (and formalize it!)

Propose a protocol to formally connect and commit institutions, associations and communities to social planning.

3. Listen to the stories of local enterprises

Build a relation with local enterprises and help them identify their needs in terms of vocational training.

4. Listen to the stories of migrants

Define informal, suitable modalities to let those stories emerge, together with skills and labour market needs.



Strengthening welcoming services in municipalities

Online information platform for migrants

The Regional Development Bregenzerwald and the Association of Municipalities in Vorarlberg have developed an online information platform (www.vorarlberg-finder.at) which is directed towards all newly arrived persons, including refugees. The multi-lingual platform provides information on all available offers and services relevant for newcomers. The information is collected on the municipal level and is updated regularly by the municipal employees responsible for data management.

Challenges in the region

Who helps me to learn the German language?
Where can I find a kindergarten for my child?
Many immigrants are facing these and many other questions about available offers and services in the region they recently moved to. In addition the relevant information often is only available in German.

Martina Rüscher, Vice President *

“ The online information platform Vorarlberg-Finder is an ideal instrument for all who live in the region, but especially for newcomers. It makes the manifold offers and services in the region visible. ”

* of the Parliament of Vorarlberg Region (Austria) and Board Member Regional Development Bregenzerwald.



This tool was developed with the support of Regional Development Vorarlberg, www.regio-v.at

Benefit of the pilot project

The information platform provides easy access to geo-referenced and multi-lingual information on relevant services and offers. The platform constitutes an important building block to develop a professional arrival management for newcomers and is developed in such a way that it can be used by all 96 municipalities in Vorarlberg.

Lessons learned

1. Avoid data cemetery

An agreed upon mechanism with municipalities and stakeholders to keep data updated is necessary.

2. Forward looking technology

The platform is programmed in such a way, that it can be easily connected to existing municipal and regional databases of all 96 municipalities in Vorarlberg.

3. Information for all

The tool was especially developed for newcomers, but it is equally helpful for long-term residents.

4. Communication and promotion

The online tool also needs to be promoted offline for example through leaflets available in municipal offices.



Photo: Jasna Paladin

Let's make it easier! Tools for better integration of newcomers

Training for community mediators

Training for community mediators was organized in municipalities Jesenice, Kamnik and Postojna with the aim to endorse migrants from different cultural backgrounds living in the community for a longer time with the necessary knowledge and skills needed for a successful intercultural mediation to help newcomers in communication with the providers of social, health, education and other services.

Challenges in the region

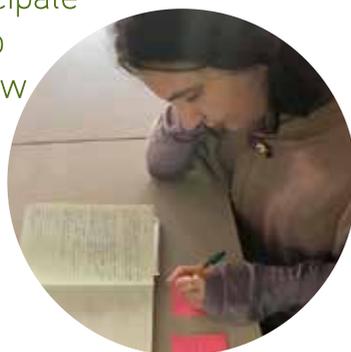
New cultural environment, lack of language skills and insufficient information about services offered, often hinders newcomers from using those services and/or disable their integration in local community.

Benefit of the pilot project

Community mediators hold a central role in addressing the needs of migrants, as they facilitate the relations between newcomers and the host environment. Trainees, migrants themselves, will help to establish positive relations between individuals of different backgrounds and origins.

A participant at the training in Postojna

“ I was interested in this topic before, that's why I decided to participate at the training. I would like to contribute to the change. Now after the lectures I know even more, and I want to help even more and be a part of the change that is needed. ”



This tool was developed with the support of the Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, www.uirs.si

Lessons learned

1. Peer support is important

Trainees with migration background turned out to be the optimal choice for helping newcomers to integrate.

2. Volunteers' work is priceless

Volunteers' work should be valued higher and better supported by local communities.

3. Giving is receiving

Migrants should also deliver, not just receive, volunteer services. This would increase their self-esteem, improve their image and strengthen ties with the local community.

4. Holistic approach is needed

Community training programs should be upgraded with a more comprehensive and inter-disciplinary approach.

Partners

Lead partner: Regional Development Vorarlberg (AT)
www.regio-v.at



Auvergne Rhône Alpes Region (FR)
www.auvergnerhonealpes.fr



CIPRA International Lab (AT)
www.cipra.org



Community Network Alliance in the Alps (DE)
www.alpenallianz.org



Eurac research (IT)
www.eurac.edu



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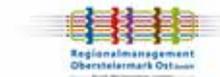
Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (CH)
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Piedmont Region (IT)
www.regione.piemonte.it



Regional Development Agency Upper Styria East GmbH (AT) www.obersteiermark.at



Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (SI)
www.uirs.si



Contact

Robert Moosbrugger
office@regio-v.at
0043 5579 4444 2

CIPRA International Lab GmbH
International@cipra.org
00423 237 53 53

www.alpine-space.eu/pluralps



Impressum

Editing: CIPRA International Lab
Design: www.fraeuleincicibe.com