

POLICY PAPER

HOW WE CAN USE THE
ARTEM APPROACH
TO FOSTER THE INTEGRATION
OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS
IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES

pistes solidaires

RELAY
NETWORK

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L'Accorderie
Échanger et coopérer

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ARTEM



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1. LIMINAIRE

The European Commission has made immigration one of its priorities (Tampere European Council). In 2004, the Council of the European Union agreed on common basic principles for the integration of migrants, among them the leading role in the interaction between migrants and European citizens. Integration is based on a principle; it can only work if it is the result of a dynamic and mutual process. It implies, for newcomers, a basic knowledge of the language, the history and the functioning of the host countries but also the meeting between local communities and migrants. These principles also give a key role to employment, which is described as a driving and central factor in the integration of migrants and their contribution to host societies.

In 2011, the Commission has proposed a European agenda for the integration of migrants from outside the European Union, focusing on the economic, social, cultural and political participation of migrants in the framework of local action.

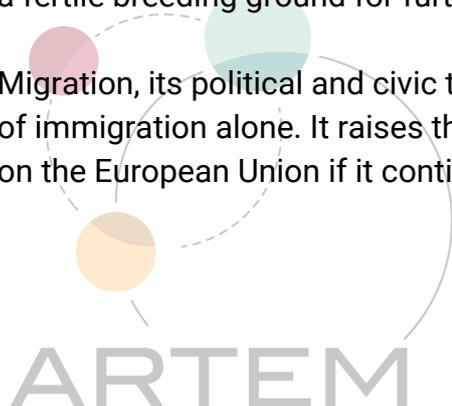
In 2014, Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, declared: "Our common European values and our historical responsibility are my starting point when I think about the future of European migration policies. My experience tells me that we will need more solidarity to prepare the future (...) and to face the challenge of migration together, without leaving few people to deal with it alone'. This dynamic and mutual process that the Council supports as well as the social and cultural participation of migrants at the local level are at the basis of **ARTEM** ambitions: bringing together locals and migrants, creating conditions for mutual learning, fostering interactions and learning to live together.

In 2018, the European Union had 22.3 million non-European citizens, 4.4% of its population. In the same year, the migratory balance was 1.5 million. This migratory balance has been the main element of European population growth since the early 1990s.

However, faced with a low birth rate and an increase in the average age in Europe from 37.7 years in 2003 to around 52.3 (projected for 2050), we can only observe that Europe will need strong forces, and therefore immigration, in the years to come.

However, this immigration worries many citizens. European societies are anxious about the arrival of these newcomers - always described as massive by populist parties, which find there a fertile breeding ground for further growth in the various elections.

Migration, its political and civic treatment, is becoming an issue that goes beyond the question of immigration alone. It raises the question of the impact that the fear of migration could have on the European Union if it continues to be perceived as dangerous for European society.



The promotion of the European way of life is central, as the title of the post of European Commissioner of Vice-President Magaritis Schinas confirms. **ARTEM** contributes to this with one ambition: to make time bank groups for migrants in many places, so that in several places in Europe migrant local communities simply interact and learn to live together and spread the mutual understanding between locals and migrants.

This is why **ARTEM** is a concept, a complete approach declined in actions in order to facilitate this meeting between migrants and locals, an approach that allows the migrants to feel comfortable to mingle with locals and not only within migrant communities, and to the locals to feel at ease to host migrants in their environment, community and house and all together to exchange non-marketable services to enhance the inclusion in the society.



2. INTRODUCTION

The integration of migrants presents a new set of challenges to local European authorities, who are often placed in a position to divert already limited resources to assisting a new target group with unique needs. The **empowerment of newly arrived migrants** to make an active contribution towards their own integration is both necessary to foster their effective integration into host society and is also seen as the best way to ensure that the existing social support infrastructure can cope with the demand. Equipping local professional and volunteers with the right skillset to facilitate the hosting of newcomers is also a vital part of the process of integration.

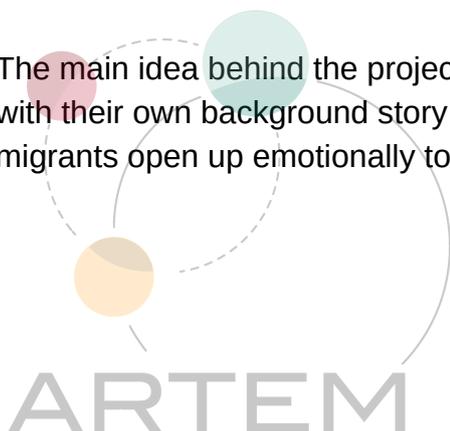
To that end, most countries in the EU have a set of priorities and procedures which they use for their work with migrants, including **language programmes** and **labour market initiatives** to encourage smooth transitioning into the labour market. Despite this, developing **intercultural competences** such as establishing better communication skills, gaining knowledge of the local context, learning how to become self-aware of one's own actions, and working on mutual understanding, are often missing. A migrant cannot be fully integrated into the cultural community of the host country without the development of intercultural competences, as cultural interactions occurring in everyday life regularly lead to miscommunications resulting from lack of knowledge or prejudice. Local citizens' ability to host newcomers could also benefit greatly from enhancing their understanding of different cultures.

The results of the research phase of the **ARTEM** project confirm this need. Professionals and migrants were asked to identify how they would change existing integration practices, if at all. Both groups emphasised the need for learning how to patiently communicate about sensitive topics, discuss cultural attitudes, or become more adaptable to non-verbal communication and cross-cultural barriers.

The **ARTEM** project has three main goals:

- to develop intercultural competences amongst both migrants and professionals alike in host countries,
- to encourage greater discovery and use of migrants' skills,
- and to promote intercultural relations between migrants and professionals in a way that leads to greater integration of migrants in the host country.

The main idea behind the project is that migrants are more than just a statistic – they each come with their own background story which may be expressed via **storytelling**. In telling their stories, migrants open up emotionally to those who work with them, and that in turn encourages empathy



in the listeners and forces them to face their own prejudices. These are important steps of incorporating migrants into a host community that recognises their struggle and respects their story. Enabling productive communication between migrants and locals/professionals leads to a more permanent cultural integration of migrants.

Another important aspect touched upon in the project is the recognition that migrants have a considerable **skill potential** to build upon in a host country in the midst of language attainment and cultural integration. The **ARTEM Access** platform was designed as an online tool to help migrants discover and then go on to offer their skills across the local community on a voluntary basis. In this way, they not only learn more about the local culture and language as they work on different projects, but they also are able to communicate with the wider community in the area which may provide them recommendations on how to navigate the context of the host country.

By empowering migrants to engage with the local community directly through sharing skills, the **ARTEM** project fosters their self-confidence along their path towards integration. Self-confidence is the key to fuelling self-motivation which can unlock many doors, including an increased desire to learn the local language and local customs, as well as a more active engagement with locals and building a network of contacts. The end results include greater chances of being more integrated within the economy of the host country.

Based upon the testing of the **ARTEM Approach**, the project partners would like to present certain lessons learned and suggest a number of courses of action with limited costs but significant impact upon migrant integration. These suggestions will be most useful for **actors of a local level** such as municipalities, social services, job boards, language schools, regional representatives of national authorities responsible for the integration of migrants, and partners from the non-governmental sector and civil society.



3. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE ARTEM PROJECT

3.1. STUDYING THE NEEDS OF THE TARGET GROUP

Overall, finding local participants who were interested in participating in the **ARTEM** project was not difficult for partner organizations to do, as they mostly contacted existing **personal networks** that have been established via previous work. In some cases, **local adult education centres** and **language schools** dealing with teaching migrants/refugees the local language were also contacted. Migrants were found in much the same way, either as students at the language schools or as those participating in events held by organizations in the professional network of each partner.

The needs of both target groups varied in terms of what they would like to come out of the intercultural competences training. The locals put greater emphasis on learning how to be more non-judgemental of the migrant's culture, how to increase their communication skills so as to show patience and empathy, and how to be more tolerant of cultural differences. The migrants, on the other hand, showed a greater interest in more practical problems associated with integration: language acquisition, finding a job, and respecting the cultural codes of a host country.

CONCLUSIONS: Authorities working with migrants oftentimes lack training that develops intercultural competences, such as ways to empathise with a migrant's background and understand their context, ways to practise patience and hold an open attitude towards migrants, etc. Despite the time that it would take to create a training programme for local officials working with migrants, the research indicates that it would be highly beneficial to host **training sessions for developing intercultural competences** amongst local officials, professional and volunteers in order to ensure a more smooth transition and comfortable atmosphere for the migrants arriving into the host country. These sessions **do not have to happen often, but should be continuous** - for example, once a month or once every few months for a day or two. In order to make this idea come to fruition, working with a local NGO that works with migrants is a realistic option for municipalities. Contacting NGOs for partnership in this project would not require more than a few administrative emails. Furthermore, the chances of NGOs having trained professionals who have worked with migrants before is higher.

This is an effective way of contacting participants for the professionals and migrant trainings. The training for migrants can also be done in coordination with one or more local NGOs. Perhaps physical space could be provided by the NGO itself or its partners. Finding migrants may also



occur via the expansive network of local partners with which the NGO may work. Even if just two days a month or every few months are dedicated to training sessions - one day for professionals, one day for migrants, in the end the professionals and migrants could get together to discuss the things that were learned. In this way constructive feedback for future sessions can be gathered and migrants will be able to put the potential skills on which they worked to use and vice versa.

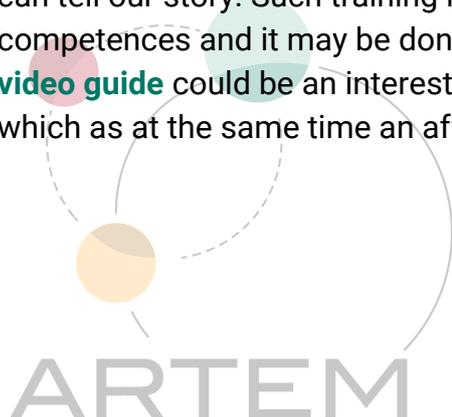
3.2. THE COV'ON STORYTELLING PLATFORM

The **ARTEM** project believes that emotions are a key factor in understanding individual journeys. The use of digital story-mapping creates a sense of intimacy between migrants and those working with them. It also encourages empowerment and increases the self-confidence of migrants through the ability to share their own background experiences. This is especially the case when the migrant cannot speak the local language very well, but desires to describe their story nevertheless, as they may use music, pictures, videos and digital environment in order to elaborate on their background. During the process of storytelling, the migrant is recognised as someone with lived experiences and a valid background that carries emotions deep within them. Storytelling helps both migrants and locals learn to confront their prejudices about a given set of people.

Cov'on is an application that allows to make a playful and interactive cartography that permits to design a life course. It allows a wide choice of symbols and pictograms to tell a story, the identification of similarities and points of convergence between different life trajectories, the recognition of differences and the enhancement of singular identities.

The use of storytelling in training events was conducted in various settings throughout each of the partner countries. Regardless of whether the digital story-mapping training via the Cov'on platform occurred online or in person, the overall consensus seemed to be the same: the experience of sharing stories together gave both migrants and professionals the opportunity to overcome their prejudices towards those from other countries and contributed to creating a more trustworthy and safe exchange environment which set the foundations for future encounters.

CONCLUSIONS: The Cov'on platform is simple and user-friendly as long as the guide is read and/or there is an additional training beforehand to explain how the platform works and how we can tell our story. Such training may be added to the training of professionals on intercultural competences and it may be done by the same dedicated personnel each time. The **creation of a video guide** could be an interesting choice as well to support the use of Cov'on storymapping tool, which as at the same time an affordable and long-lasting option. The guide could be shown to



professionals and migrants not only in person, but online as well via a link that people may get to in their own time within a given period. Having a video guide is especially a relevant option for those who have low levels of language acquisition in the host country, as the use of visual aid does not necessarily require written/read text.

Furthermore, the Cov'on platform itself may be used with those with low levels of language acquisition, as it is more-so based on digital literacy. In some cases, it may even be used to learn some phrases in the target language, such as colours, photographs, and location names. The capacity of using story-telling to encourage empathy, self-confidence, motivation and the breaking of stereotypes may be maximised by the **hosting of events** perhaps once a month by the municipality that encourages migrants to share their own stories to a local audience – with an open or restricted access depending on circumstances. In this way, migrants can directly intermingle with the local community and help break down their prejudices one story at a time. At the same time, some of the locals may also choose to make story maps and connect their stories in one way or another with the migrants' in order to recognise that this is a case of human to human, rather than 'us' versus 'them'.

It is vital for the delivery of the training to create a safe space where participants can share their personal life stories. An atmosphere of trust needs to be built through different activities before participants are willing to share their personal stories. In terms of trauma, it must be noted that in given situations it is possible that some of the material in the stories may trigger trauma in the storyteller or the audience. In this case, it is important to **have a specialist trained in psychology** there in order to ensure the mental well-being of everyone in the room.

3.3. INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES TRAINING

The **ARTEM** project offered a selection of training sessions that encouraged the improved understanding, analysis and acquisition of intercultural competences via a variety of activities. The training sessions for migrants and professionals were performed both separately and together as a way to encourage intercultural dialogues based on what was learnt in the previous sessions. The idea is that through such intercultural dialogues, migrants are already integrating within a sample of the local community. Across the board, the main professionals involved were either teachers from language schools for migrants, volunteers working with migrants in the third sector, and people working in civil society. The most difficult aspect of the organisation was timing, as not everybody was available at the same time. The partners contacted strategic stakeholders of their local networks, inviting professionals and volunteers to participate to the training course.

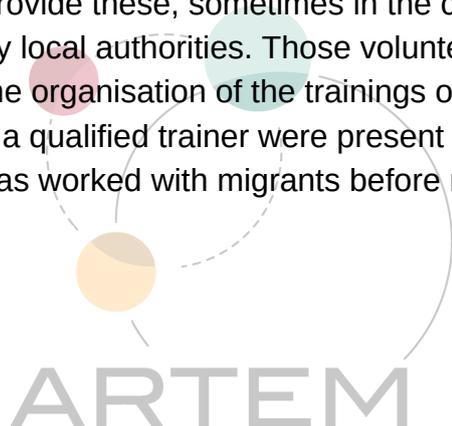


CONCLUSIONS: Given the success of the dialogues held between locals and migrants, it may be concluded that it would be beneficial for local authorities to **support the organisation of training events** focused on developing the intercultural competences of both members who work with migrants, as well as the migrants themselves. Participation in such trainings, which may be included in addition to a storytelling training, would provide those working with migrants the tools to empower migrants on their journey towards understanding the local culture, which may lead to a greater desire on the migrant's behalf to integrate more fully into the host community via language and learning cultural behaviours.

The best idea is for this training to be **in-person** with a **concrete output** resulting from it - for example, flyers with key components written on them to facilitate the implementation of the training activities. Visual aids stimulate the overall learning experience and help arouse the attention of participants in a way that will help them remember the material that has been covered for a more long-lasting impact. It is worth investing in this programme to be continuous, such as once a month or every few months, so that new workers may also be trained in intercultural competences. Once again, this may happen in coordination with NGOs willing to work with the local municipalities to implement such a project in order to enhance a more holistic integration of migrants into the local community.

In order to aid the training, the materials developed in the **ARTEM** project are highly recommended as they are adaptable to each given context. The topics found to be the most relevant for both migrants and professionals were discussing cultural differences and issues such as stereotypes, biases, and prejudices, understanding how one's culture affects the ways in which one sees their own lives and things happening around them, The most useful activities adapted from the **ARTEM** materials included the activities such as Four Quadrants, World Café, and Culinary Methods on Stereotypes. These activities and many more can be found at the [ARTEM webpage](#).

In terms of modes of deliverability, the most effective seem to be in-person with constant engagement via activities in order to keep physical and mental alertness at a high. This means that the activities should engage the participants **kinaesthetically** (i.e. asking them to move, stand up), as well as, **mentally** (i.e. discussing what exactly prejudice and stereotypes mean and how they affect what we perceive). A minimum of one day per group seems to be an efficient amount of time, especially given that finding more than one day and a time that might work for everybody often proves to be unrealistic. A training facilitator is necessary - NGO working with migrants can often provide these, sometimes in the capacity of volunteers. If not, a call for volunteers could be put up by local authorities. Those volunteers would familiarise themselves with the activities and facilitate the organisation of the trainings of migrants. In the case of professionals, however, it would be best if a qualified trainer were present to facilitate, as they would take the background of a trainer who has worked with migrants before more seriously.



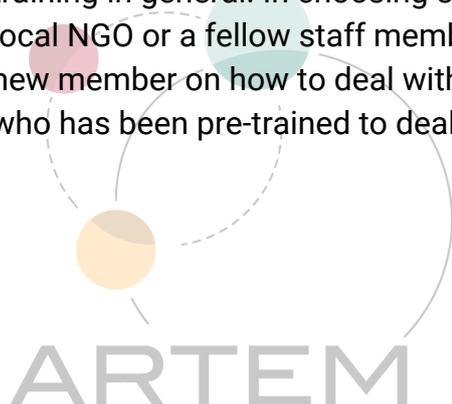
3.4. VOLUNTEER-BASE SERVICE EXCHANGE

ARTEM ACCESS is an online platform, based on exchanges, that promotes and facilitates the encounter between newly arrived migrants and the hosting community. The exchanges of services are based on the amount of time one is prepared to dedicate to others. The platform allows people to get know each other and to value one another through their competences and the learning they can share.

The platform is designed to ensure the sustainability of the **ARTEM** project after its finalisation and an opportunity for local authorities to use a tool which will allow them to aid migrants in the development of their skills. The development of these would also contribute, when combined with storytelling, to greater confidence within the migrants towards their ability to become a part of the local community despite separate cultural backgrounds.

The overall consensus regarding the platform is that it is very helpful as long as there is 1:1 assistance available to explain how it works. Common issues that came up are the same as would be expected in any general work with migrants, including language barriers, low IT skills and a lack of computers available at the training locations. Thus, this platform may most realistically be used only in areas where internet and computers are both easily accessible. At the same time, the **ARTEM Access** Platform may help develop language skills and cultural understanding of the host country by encouraging communication and teamwork between locals and migrants in understanding how the programme works and the various ways that their skills may be presented on the platform.

CONCLUSIONS: It is recommended that the **ARTEM Access** Platform be used by local authorities as a way to encourage greater, **more holistic integration of the migrants** into the local community in a way that is cost-effective and generally low-risk. The programme has already been adapted, tested and approved by the host countries working on the migrant projects; the only recommendation is that a **Regional Contact Point Manager (RCPM) post is created**. The RCPM is an irreplaceable part of the trainings for learning how to use the ARTEM platform, as they do not only help with the technical issues that are encountered with the programme – how to use it, but also with the language barriers that may arise in trying to learn about the goals of the ARTEM platform and how they can contribute to the local community via the non-commercial use of their skills. In addition to this, the RCPM provides additional security for the migrants during the training in general. In choosing someone who has worked with migrants before (somebody from a local NGO or a fellow staff member), the municipalities are not only saving money on training a new member on how to deal with migrants, but are also ensuring that they are choosing someone who has been pre-trained to deal with potential barriers that may arise from migrants, including



unwillingness to engage because of language barriers, misunderstanding/not understanding what qualifies as a skill that is not meant to be employed professionally, and not having enough self-confidence to feel needed.

The **ARTEM Platform** is the most pertinent in expressing the needs of the local community with the needs of the migrant population and the ways both of them may **help each other**. The **ARTEM** platform gives the local community a chance to expand on their needs, such as the need for greater cultural integration between migrants and locals through the organisation of parades, dance classes, gardening etc. Furthermore, although some effort and time must be put into training a RCPM on the platform and how to ensure that **respect and a safe environment** are created during the trainings and after (i.e. how to assure the code of conduct is being followed during a potential **ARTEM Access** exchange; how to handle situation of abuses or wrong use of the platform) and training migrants afterwards **how to use the programmes** themselves, the payback of the system is greater. With greater encouragement and engagement by a large number of migrants and locals, the municipality might not need to facilitate events thereafter, as it is hoped that both groups will organise some events themselves via their own creative output through the platform.

The RCPM may also encourage some events that would involve the local community as well, such as cultural exchange evenings with recipe exchanges and cooked food. In the end, it is hoped that all of the migrants and local professionals and volunteers involved would have gone through the various trainings on storytelling and intercultural competences before they reach the level of the **ARTEM Access** platform so that they may try to focus on offering more events that continue to encourage the creation of intercultural events. If a worst-case scenario happens and funding cannot be secured towards establishing an RCPM, the project may still be self-sustainable through the migrants themselves, who may host workshops teaching newly arrived migrants how to use the platform (as long as a meeting place is provided, which once again may be done with the help of a local NGO).



4. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

| RECOMMENDED MEASURE | ADRESSED AT | DURATION | RESOURCES REQUIRED |
|---|--|---|--|
| Organising storytelling events | Migrants Local citizens | 1 day every month Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storytelling platform – Cov'on: already available A guide for using the platform: already available Facility (room) with computers provided Support for creation of story maps Communication of the events to wider society Security Psychological support if needed |
| Organising training sessions for developing intercultural competences | Municipal staff and social workers Local volunteers | 1-2 days every 2-3 months for at least one year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A training programme - already available Compensation for the trainers Training facility (room) Training leave for municipal staff |
| Organising training sessions for developing intercultural competences (in cooperation with local NGOs) | Migrants | 1-2 days every 2-3 months Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A training programme - already available Compensation for the trainers Training facility (room) |
| Maintaining the ARTEM Access service exchange platform | Migrants Local citizens | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding towards establishing a Regional Contact Point Manager to provide training and keep ethical standards Providing Internet and computer access for migrants Training facility (room) |