



INTEGRATING REFUGEES IN SOCIETY AND THE LABOUR MARKET THROUGH SOCIAL INNOVATION



TIME TO HARVEST

It is time to reap the fruits of our previous activities. We have reviewed national and local policies that condition refugee integration in our cities. We have tested co-creation methods engaging a variety of stakeholders. We have selected Best Practices. This process provides the basis for designing guidelines that lead to criteria and indicators upon which to measure the social innovative capacity for the implementation of policies and practices for refugee inclusion and integration. Now it's time to harvest: to focus on our pilots with the aid of the above tools and finally to reach a sustainable MoU among key partners.

In this issue we will mainly look at the transnational study visits that took place online in the beginning of 2021. Vienna, Ljubljana, Bologna & Parma and Berlin showed us around virtually. They shared their local approaches and we reflected on insights gained and transferability.

IN THIS ISSUE

STORIES OF INSPIRATION

TRANSNATIONAL STUDY VISITS

BEST PRACTICES

LOCAL PROJECT NEWS

RESEARCH RESULTS & RELEVANT LITERATURE

ON THE EUROPEAN HORIZON

WHAT'S NEXT

STORIES OF INSPIRATION

This page is dedicated to inspiring success stories and stories of resilience. We will introduce people here who "made it". People who have been through the process of escaping or migrating and who now

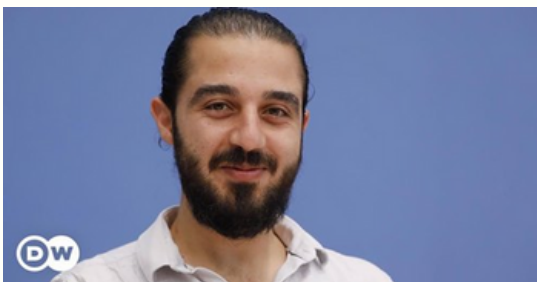
act as role models in their new society in different ways. Let's turn our focus away from the often depressing side of flight and migration for a minute and look at these highlights.



BJEEN ALHASSAN

"I don't want it to be as difficult for them as it was for me. I've been through it all and I can explain it in an hour. It makes life easier for them" In her Facebook group "Learning with Bijin," Bjeen Alhassan from Hamburg helps women in Arabic and Kurdish with all aspects of everyday life in Germany. For this, the young woman, who fled to Germany from Syria six years ago, received the National Integration Award 2020. www.bjeenalhassan.com

TAREQ ALAOWS



Tareq Alaows fled from Syria via the Balkan route in 2015. Now the graduated lawyer wanted to enter German parliament, the Bundestag, for the Green Party. Many debates in Germany concern refugees, but are not conducted with them, he said in Deutschlandfunk. According to him people with a migration background are not sufficiently represented in politics. In the end he had to withdraw his candidacy, citing a high level of threat for people close to him and himself. www.facebook.com/tareqalaows

RAISAN HAMEED

From the boat to the Bundeskunsthalle. The photographer Raisan Hameed came to Germany from Iraq in 2015. A central motif in his work is his traumatic experience of flight: "I'm trying to process my experiences to get rid of them so that they don't weigh me down anymore." In doing so, the Iraqi refugee also wants to fight racism and "open people's eyes to something they've never seen with their own eyes."

raisanhameed.com



AN AWARD FOR AIGUL HAKIMOVA

Our SiforREF colleague in Ljubljana was awarded WOW (Women on Women award) this year. **Congratulations** from all of us at SiforREF.



WOMEN ON WOMEN

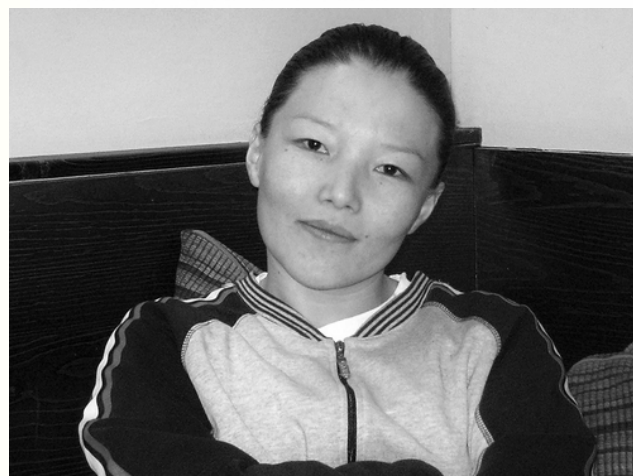
MIGRATION IS A STEP TOWARDS CRITICISM AND THE DESTRUCTION OF PATRIARCHAL FORMS

Extracts from an interview in Vox Feminae, translated into English

You have been an activist in Slovenia for 20 years. Can you describe how the situation has changed and evolved in terms of migration problems in that period?

The situation has definitely deteriorated. People in need, emigrants and migrants, have to live nine cat's lives to be able to come to the territory of Slovenia, even if they manage to come, there is no guarantee that their basic rights under international or European Union law will be respected. Borders kill, and that is why the state does not care. They allow people to die. (...)

While you are working on the struggle for the rights of the people outside the country, you are also studying the situation at the borders and you are making statements about it. In recent years, non-governmental organisations across Europe have been focusing on violence at borders and the violent displacement of people. What are your views in this context when it comes to Slovenia?



I am also part of the Infokolpa collective, which made a great report on what is the state doing since 2018. It recorded and proved the actions of collective push-backs from Slovenia to Croatia.

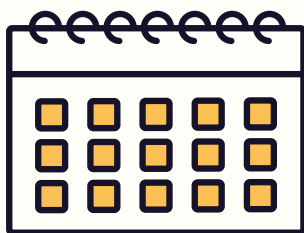
Bilateral and chain push-backs are actually actions taken by the EU member states to fortify the fortress Europe, to externalize its migration policy to the third countries, i.e. it is a defence mechanism when you outsource your problems to others and then even blame them, or play a game of carrot and stick, soft and hard power to control not only migrations but the world development. To maintain the gap between the global south and global north, to sustain the privilege of the selected (chosen).

[Click here to read more \(original source in Croatian language\)](#)

TRANSNATIONAL STUDY VISITS

Transnational study visits between our five partner cities are an important aspect of SiforREF. The objectives of these transnational exchanges are to exchange knowledge and experiences,

discuss the selected Best Practices, and get to know stakeholders from other countries. Due to the pandemic we could not travel and all study visits had to be conducted online.



- **Vienna** on 19-20 November 2020
- **Ljubljana** on 12-13 January 2021
- **Bologna & Parma** on 8-9 February 2021
- **Berlin** on 3-4 March 2021

VIENNA

Our project partners in Vienna already shared their best practices on labour market integration of refugees with us last November and we have reported in the last issue of this newsletter.

Video clips on their two best practices "**magdas Hotel**" and **WerkSTART**" can now be (re-)watched on [SiforREFs youtube channel](#).

<p>WerkSTART 9 Aufrufe • vor 5 Monaten</p>	<p>magdas Hotel stay open minded 17 Aufrufe • vor 5 Monaten</p>	<p>magdas Hotel BR 11 Aufrufe • vor 5 Monaten</p>

LJUBLJANA

Integration of refugees in Slovenia in the context of the Balkan route.

Advocacy work, listening to the voices of refugees and co-creating solutions to address the many challenges faced by this group, was at the centre of the various discussions during the transnational study in Ljubljana.

On day one of the study visit we learned about the local context of migration in Slovenia, which are push-backs and border violence along the Balkan route. **Push-backs** are state measures which force people on the move back over a border without considering their individual circumstances and without any possibility to apply for asylum or to put forward arguments against the measures taken.

In less than three years (spring 2018 to winter 2021) Slovenian police has pushed back more than 25,000 people to Croatia. The number of push-backs from Italy and Austria is growing as well. A **barbed wire fence** is currently erected on the border



with Croatia. Asylum procedures last from a few months to a few years (sometimes 3 or 4 years), ranking Slovenia as one of the strictest and time-consuming decision making entities.

Ljubljana NGOs and members from all project partner cities discussed already existent structures that support the inclusion of individuals who have had to deal with forced displacement and the necessary strength and energy that it takes to build a new life elsewhere.

The **Infokolpa collective** collects data, monitors borders, does media work and provides humanitarian aid and legal assistance. **Slovenska filantropija (SF)** was introduced and evaluated as best practice. They provide daily centers for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, an orientation programme and the project "jobs to stay".

Here is the general list of services carried out by SF for refugees and asylum seekers:

- ① assistance with getting to know everyday life in Slovenia, seeking and co-creating possibilities for managing specific life situations,
- ② presentation of how different Slovenian organizations and institutions operate,
- ③ assistance with arranging documentation and recognising rights to social benefits,
- ④ psychosocial assistance,
- ⑤ assistance with accompanying and access to health services and specialist clinics,
- ⑥ assistance with enrolment in kindergartens, schools and universities,
- ⑦ assistance with finding accommodation,
- ⑧ assistance with finding employment, writing applications and resumes, joining different trainings,
- ⑨ assistance with joining sports activities,
- ⑩ collecting material donations (clothes, footwear, school requisites, household accessories, furniture, ...)

BOLOGNA & PARMA

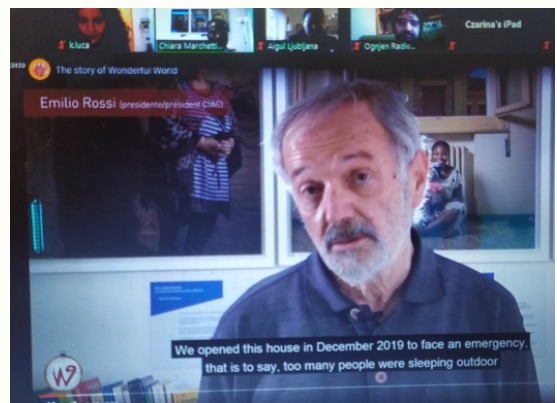
The Social inclusion of Refugees in the local context through community-based protection.

Our project partners in the cities of Bologna and Parma were hosting the third transnational study visit together.

Their focus was on **housing** in the integration path and community development as a methodology. The latter means working with communities and not for communities in order to create a formal and non-formal network. The network reduces the perception of loneliness, increases the chances of finding a home and work and helps to feel an active part of a community.

For the 30 participating partners and stakeholders (NGOs, refugees, social workers, companies, local politicians) it was a very stimulating opportunity to discuss issues related to the integration and inclusion of refugees, and the role that the **community** plays in favoring it, especially in the absence of laws that support inclusion and integration.

It was through the voice of experts, refugees, social workers and citizens that we had an overview of the best practices for integration that characterize the reception system in Parma. It was an interesting discussion that highlighted the positive aspects and critical points that intervene in the processes of **social cohesion**.



Four best practices were introduced to us: **Salus Space** (collaborative space for social inclusion) and **Vesta** (local families hosting refugees) in Bologna. **Wonderful World House** (house to give protection to the excluded) and **Local Integration Mentor** (territorial tutors) in Parma.

BERLIN

Access to the Berlin Labour Market - Focus on vulnerable groups.

During the Berlin study tour we listened to four perspectives of **migrant organisations**. Among these was a video interview with Hamid Nowzari, Verein iranischer Flüchtlinge, one of the oldest migrant organisations in Berlin which is still available on the [SiforREF Youtube channel](#).

We learned that labour market developments in Germany are positive as it relates to refugees. But Covid-19 challenges this trend. Also **female** identified refugees find themselves confronting challenges that are often overlooked and or not taken into consideration in regard to labour market inclusion.

Frauenloop and Everest were presented as best practices in Berlin. **Everest** integrates refugees into companies such as BSR, Rewe, Charité or Vivantes after successful training, including language classes and an internship. **FrauenLoop** focusses on computer programming skills for females and thus prepares them for the Berlin IT job market. One key feature is role models: They recruit female mentors with immigrant background who already work as IT programmers.

Both presentations inspired important discussions and answered many questions regarding how to improve the inclusion of refugees within the Berlin vocational training system and the labour market.



The Potential for Socio-economic Integration **interreg**
CENTRAL EUROPE
SiforREF

Women entering Germany as refugees

- Women are on the average as likely as the men to have received an academic secondary or university degree. At the other extreme they are more likely to have little or no schooling (15% women 11% men)
- Women interviewed for the Rep. Study (IAB 2020) desire to find a suitable job or to continue to further their education.
- Female and Male refugees have also different family structures. Women arriving in Germany were more likely than their male counterparts to have children with them. (IAB Forschungsbericht 11/2020)
- To participate in language training, further education and employment women need access to childcare facilities.

TAKING COOPERATION FORWARD 6

EVEREST
Cooperation partner
Service professional restaurant/ catering
IT management assistant
Office assistant

BSR

SOS KINDERDORF
In Deutschland und der Welt

FrauenLoop

We focus on the specific needs of our students and on their successful entry into professional roles in the IT job market

BEST PRACTICES

In each of our cities numerous initiatives work extremely well with a positive impact on refugee inclusion and integration. Their approaches add value locally and may inspire interest to be

replicated elsewhere. Through transnational exchanges of experience and peer reviews of relevant projects the SiforREF partner projects have selected Best Practices from their local urban settings.



**HOUSING
HOLISTIC MIXED**



**LABOR MARKET
INTEGRATION**



**TRAININGS
QUALIFICATIONS
APPRENTICESHIPS**



**SOCIAL AND
CULTURAL SERVICES
LEGAL COUNSELING**

BERLIN		WORK FOR REFUGEES Assessment, job-placement, job fairs. INITIATIVE FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT (I.S.I.) Entrepreneurship for migrant & refugee women. BRIDGE NETWORK General advice on labour market access EVEREST Apprenticeships for young adults.	FRAUENLOOP Training for IT specialists BRIDGE NETWORK Assistance in obtaining qualifications and finding employment. Apprenticeships for young adults & cooperation with employers. EVEREST Dual Training.	WELCOME CENTER Multilingual information and orientation center. EVEREST
BOLOGNA	CIAC Social & housing integration/ holistic, inter-cultural networks/ between refugee families and locals. S.A.L.U.S W SPACE Holistic, intercultural housing, small shops, construction, training and employment. VESTA Partnerships for unaccompanied minors/ care, housing, social integration.		SCHOOL4JOB Preparatory labour-market training for refugee/migrant youth. S.A.L.U.S W SPACE	S.A.L.U.S W SPACE
LJUBLJANA		SKUHNA Intercultural -social enterprise, restaurant/ catering, (mixed) culinary specific employment, training and storytelling.	SKUHNA	THE HUMAN LIBRARY Storytelling from the refugee/ minority population to counteract racism.
PARMA	ATLAS AT DINNER TIME Supports co-housing & culinary exchanges between Italian & refugee youth. WONDERFUL WORLD Secures housing along with services that assist in the path to integration. TANDEM A co-housing & social networking project co-operating with the project "Rifugiati in famiglia". COMMUNITY ORIENTED INITIATIVES In this project initiated by CIAC, Italian families host adult and underage refugees.			WONDERFUL WORLD ATLAS AT DINNER TIME
VIENNA	HAUS AWAT Provides labour market integration service & social support	HAUS AWAT MAGDAS HOTEL Creates apprenticeships, jobs and future prospects for refugees. WERKSTART Is an accessible gender-sensitive project for educationally disadvantaged women.	HAUS AWAT STAND 129 MAGDAS HOTEL WERKSTART	STAND 129 Caritas- social integration, events - interaction activities with locals.

The SiforREF team identified Best Practices as innovative projects or initiatives that have proven to add value, can be mainstreamed into the existing ecosystem, and may be replicated in other regions. Two were presented and evaluated in each city during the four transnational study visits.

The best practices overview for each city can be downloaded on our [SiforREF website](#).

LOCAL PROJECT NEWS

What's happening right now in Vienna, Parma, Ljubljana, Bologna and Berlin? What have the local SiforREF teams been working on or what kind of challenges do they currently face?

This part of the newsletter presents short spotlights on local activities of our project partners.

LJUBLJANA: BALKAN ROUTE SEMINAR

Balkan Route and the European Border Regime - our Slovenian partners ZRC SAZU, Infokolpa and KD Gmajna hosted an online seminar on this topic on 23 March 2021.

After the closure of the so-called Balkan Corridor in spring 2016, which allowed the transfer of around one million people from the periphery to the core of Europe, the discourse and practice of the affected states and European institutions changed dramatically. Closing borders and externalizing EU migration and asylum policies became the official EU agenda. The result is an explosion of nationalism, populism and fragmentation of the EU.

Especially along the Balkan route borders are militarized, new restrictive laws and measures are applied and violent and brutal push-backs are normalized. Thousands of people are stranded without basic infrastructure, basic services and legal procedures. The humanitarian approach is reduced to a minimum or eradicated altogether, NGOs and solidarity activities are criminalized.

Moreover, the ongoing Corona crisis seems to generalize the state of exception: the measures that previously mainly affected migrants and refugees now encompass entire populations. There are closures of national borders and general restrictions on freedom of movement. The states of emergency declared allow governments to rule by decree and severely restrict the right to social, political and economic participation.

TU BERLIN WAS HACKED

TU Berlin's IT system was attacked on the morning of 30 April 2021. The entire system of the university has been shut down since then. Currently, there is no access to either the TUB mailserver or most of the files or databases. The administration of the TUB apologizes for all delays and troubles that might have caused for the SiforREF project as a result.



BOLOGNA: LET'S CONNECT

In Bologna the communication campaign for Connettiamoci! - Let's connect - Growing Community - has started in April. The initiative, promoted by ASP Città di Bologna with the support of Baumhaus Bologna, wants to contribute to the development of a culture of relationship and participation among citizens, asylum seekers and refugees through CommunityLabs - workshops of social inclusion for various communities of the metropolitan city of Bologna.

The first communitylab was on job stories. They took time to reflect on the paths that lead to achieving one's professional goals with guests of different professions and life stories.



BERLIN: SELF-EMPLOYMENT & ME

Respect, for ourselves, for others and for nature

Trust, we create a supportive space to share our stories, our beliefs and ideas while understanding that they remain our own

Growth, our self-belief, our minds, our skills, and our networks

Joy, because laughter heals and joins us together

In Berlin ISI e.V. is piloting its new self-employment programme for Arabic speaking women. In the first two of ten workshops 12 women join to explore their strengths and resilience, and orient themselves to the conditions and opportunities for self-employment in Berlin. This 10 week program in Arabic will be followed by 10 workshops in Farsi. Self-employment is highly practiced in the countries of origin of these women. It can be a viable step to empowerment and self-sufficiency. Respect, Trust, Growth and Joy were defined to be the common values for everyone involved in this programme.

LET IMAGES SPEAK

What's going on in this picture? Sorry, but we won't tell you. On this page we'll give space for images from the project and we'll do away with lengthy descriptions or comments. We'll give you

just one information: These pictures were taken during some of the best practice initiatives in Parma. If you're curious to look behind the scenes, go ahead and contact them directly.



RESEARCH RESULTS & RELEVANT LITERATURE

In our SiforREF project we produce articles and reports with our findings and results. At the same time we study and share the results of other

scientists in our respective regions and on EU level on the topic of integrating refugees. This is a selected overview of what's new.

INTERREG RESPONSE TO MIGRATION CHALLENGES



Together with 17 other projects financed by Interreg our SiforREF project is featured in this [brochure](#) on page 30-31.

Based on this, SiforREF was selected by Panorama Magazin for an article with the title [A sustainable welcome for migrants and refugees](#). Khalid Ali and Katja Utrosa from Ljubljana, whom we met during the study visit, were interviewed for it.

BOOK REVIEW: ADVANCED INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL INNOVATION

Yvonne Franz and Judith Schnelzer, our SiforREF colleagues from Vienna, published a review on the book [Advanced Introduction to Social Innovation](#) by Frank Moulaert and Diana MacCallum.

MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS' INTEGRATION IN EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKETS

This [open access book](#) discusses how the legal and institutional regimes and the socio-cultural environments of a range of European countries, in the framework of EU laws and policies, have a beneficial or negative impact on the effective capacity of these countries to integrate migrants, refugees and asylum seekers into their labour markets. The analysis builds on elements that may facilitate or obstruct the integration processes.

JOURNAL OF MIGRATION STUDIES

The second issue of [Journal of Migration Studies](#) published by the University of Osnabrück features the topic of Migration Studies and Politics. Some of the articles are written in English language.

ON THE EUROPEAN HORIZON

Learning from one another - social innovative Best Practices within the EU: FAB - Fast Action Boost. FAB also primarily focussed on the integration of women refugees into the labour

market. FAB was implemented by a consortium of 10 partners in 6 countries and they adapted good practices for job inclusion among European cities.

Each FAB partner adapted and developed an effective refugee integration pilot scheme previously in place in a different partner city. The transfer and adaptation plan included:

Belgrade implemented policies for employment services, inspired by Milan's good practice CELAV. The multi-stakeholder programme aimed to enable job centres in supporting the inclusion of refugees in the job market.

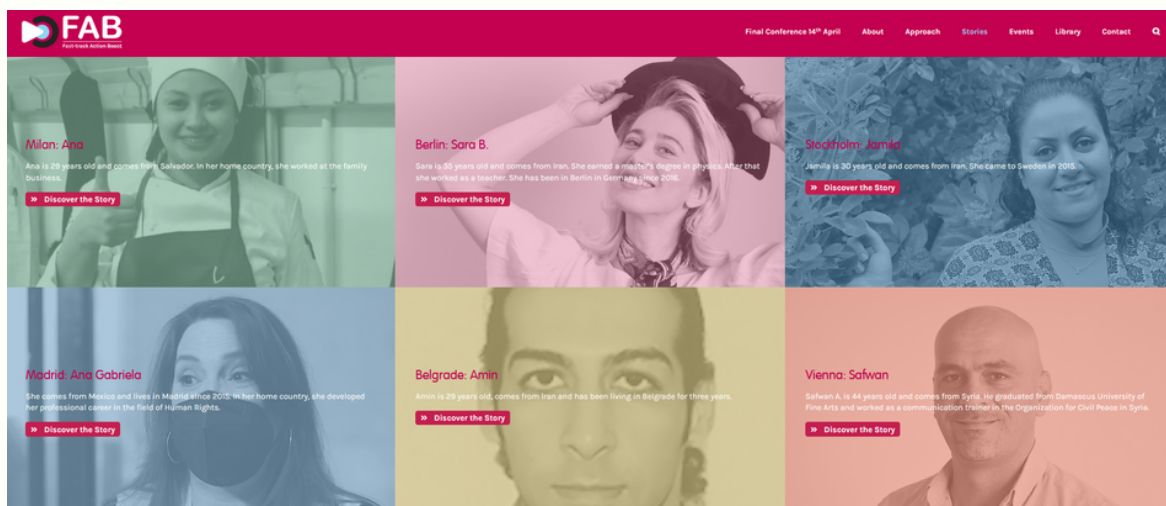
Berlin implemented "Job Boost", inspired by Stockholm's good practice SFX – Swedish for Professionals and YFI, an innovative team teaching approach combining professional language teaching and job training. Job Boost aimed at filling participants' language gaps to increase women's integration in the labour market and supported it with individual and group coaching sessions.

Stockholm implemented Stadtteilmütter, inspired by Berlin's good practice of the same name. The programme aimed to engage newly arrived women with the help of longer established women with similar cultural background.

Milan implemented IFX – Italian for Professionals, inspired by Stockholm's good practice SFX – Cucina / Swedish for Professionals. The programme aimed to provide profession-specific language skills to increase participants chances to enter the job market.

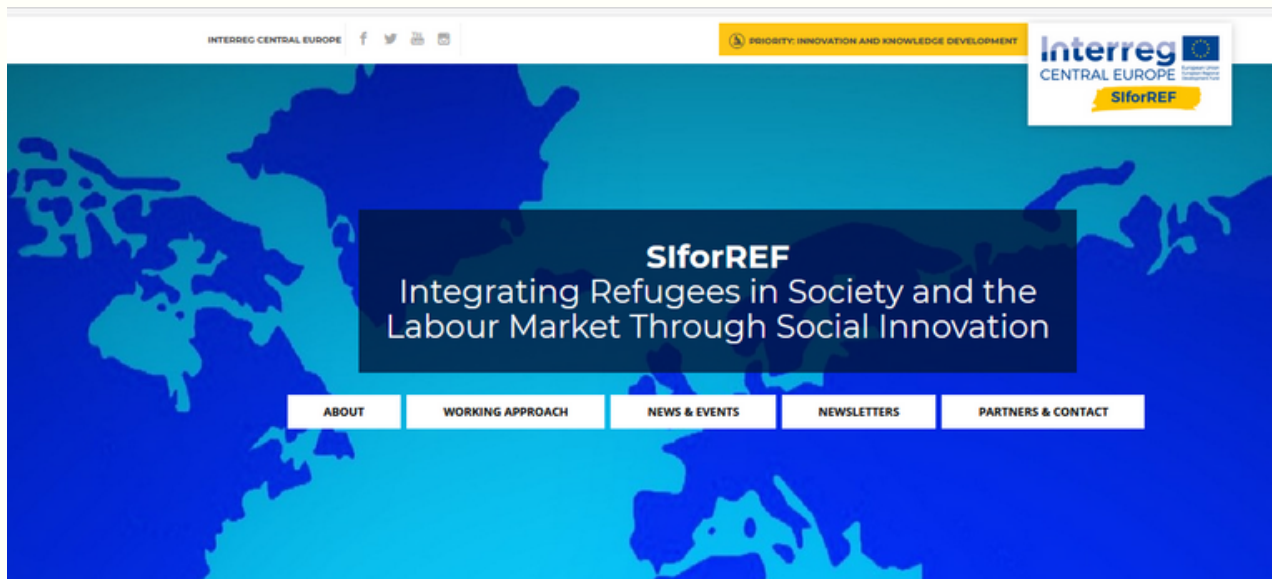
Vienna implemented Guidance services for parents and young people, inspired by Milan's good practice Esagono. The programme aimed to tackle early school drop outs by providing families with counselling guidance.

Project video: https://youtu.be/ZYzj7P_dFIQ



SIFORREF WEBSITE UPDATE

The SiforREF website has been recently updated and re-structured. Our aim was to give it a slimer and more modern appearance. We plan to introduce a new section on research results soon, where all the findings of SiforREF will be presented in a more accessible way. The good news is that the short link should work again. The bad news is that, obviously, it is still difficult to access the page in the first place, it needs quite some patience until it is loaded in the browser. Nevertheless, we have had about 1,450 page visits and about 800 users since the beginning of this year, most of them coming from Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Austria.



HAVE WE THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING?

What is exciting, interesting or newsworthy in the area of integration of refugees at your locations? Can you share a story of inspiration with us? Do you have other experiences and successes from the project that we can report on in the newsletter? Send us your contribution and we will make sure it is delivered to our subscribers.

Write to zillmer-tantan@tu-berlin.de

WHAT'S NEXT

Next up we are looking forward to more news from our seven pilots. Besides, the event season is ahead of us. Given the positive trends in vaccination and lower infection rates we are quite optimistic that

we will be able to also have some in-person events among those again. And our awareness campaign is about to start. We will update you in the next issue.



KEEP IN TOUCH

Find us on

- **Website:** www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/SiforREF.html
- **Facebook:** SiforREF
- **Instagram:** Social Innovation 4 Refugees
- **Twitter:** RefugeesSocial
- **Youtube:** Project SiforREF

OUR PARTNERS



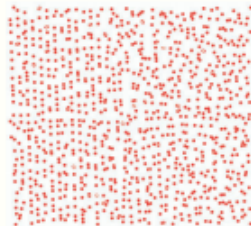
ASP CITTÀ DI BOLOGNA
Azienda pubblica di servizi alla persona



Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice



**Caritas
&Du**



GMAJNA



Comune di Parma



ISI Initiative Selbständiger
Immigrantinnen e.V.



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ADVOCATE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY



universität
wien



Die Beauftragte des Senats
für Integration und Migration

Senatsverwaltung
für Integration, Arbeit
und Soziales

berlin Berlin