

FAB

Fast-track Action Boost

Co-funded by



Newsletter n°2

FAB project's aims to build a multi-level partnerships model for efficient integration actions dedicated to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in general, with special attention dedicated to women.

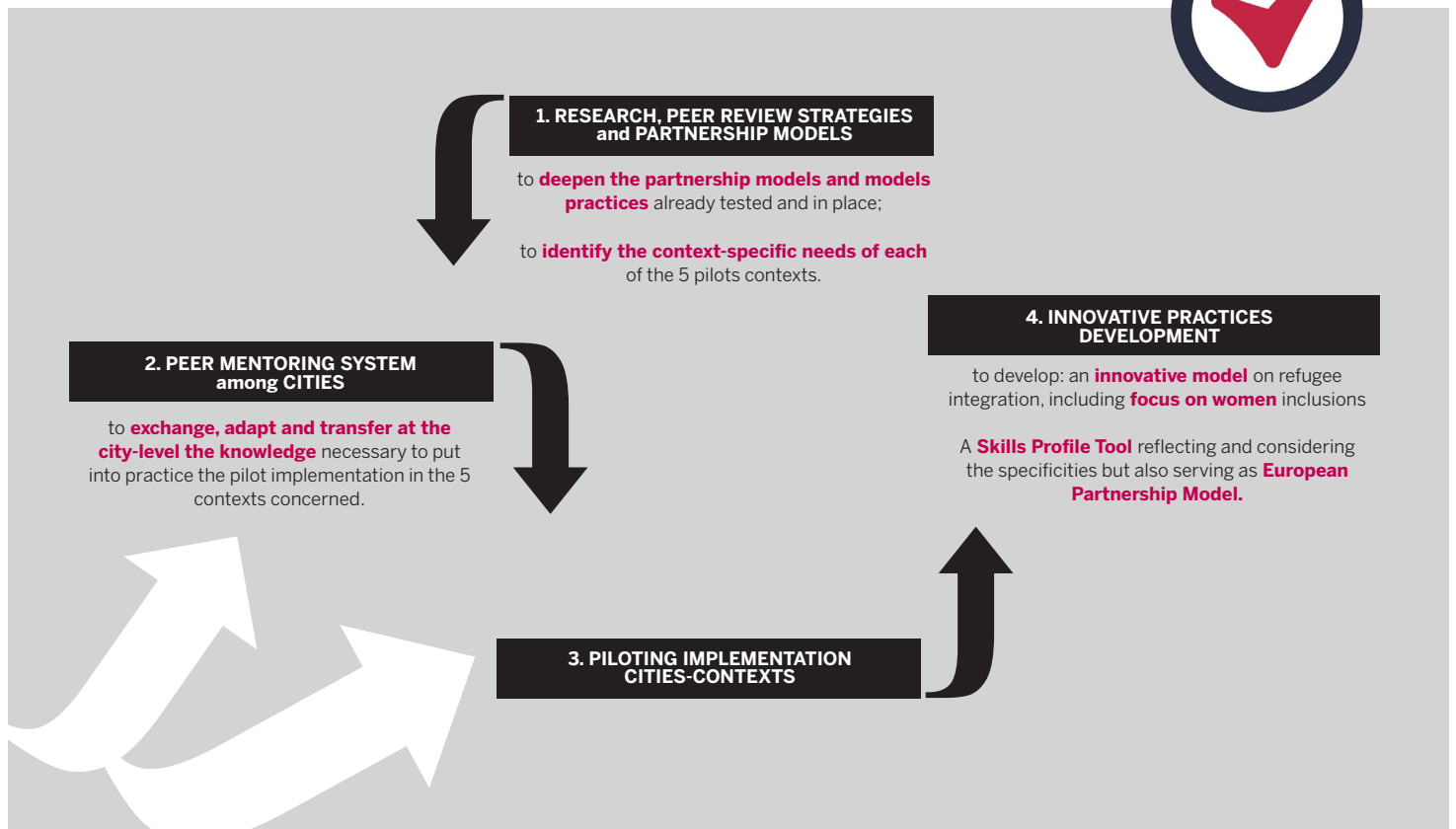
O.2 of the Project focuses on a specific Transfer & Adaptation Plan that allows the cities to

- ▶ Identify some general information about the transfer
- ▶ Identify Staff / stakeholders to involve (host and mentor city)
- ▶ Define 2 LEWs: dates, contents, topics, participants and results
- ▶ Define of Mentoring visits

Some Local Empowerment Workshops (LEWs) took place during 2019 with the involvement of Milan, Berlin, Stockholm, Wien and Belgrade.

FAB PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

Fab project aims to identify an innovative model on refugee integration, including focus on women inclusions



Third management meeting and Steering Committee in Berlin – Pilot Project Job Boost and transfers between Stockholm and Berlin



The picture above refers to the Third Management and Steering Committee Meeting of the project, in Berlin.

On 21 and 22 October 2019, the Third Management and Steering Committee Meeting of the project “FAB – Fast Track Action Boost” took place in Berlin. The FAB project aims at developing a European transferable Partnership and Intervention Model for fast integration of refugees, in particular female refugees, into the labour market by exchanging urban refugee policies and good practice between the participating cities and by study and mentoring visits, pilot projects and other actions.

► During the third Management Meeting, the Goldnetz gGmbH has been introduced as a new partner of the project. Goldnetz is responsible for implementing the Pilot Project “Job Boost” in Berlin, that aims at integrating 70 refugees, most of them female, into the Labour Market.

The Job Boost Project has been designed and developed during an in-depth exchange between the two cities of Stockholm and Berlin. In 2019, in the frame of the Outcome 2 of the FAB-Project, so-called bilateral “Local Empowerment Workshops” (LEW) with the participating cities Milan, Stockholm, Berlin, Belgrade and Vienna have been carried out.

One couple of this bilateral exchange have been the cities of Stockholm and Berlin. On the one hand, the city of Stockholm presented its ongoing refugee and migrant projects “SFX – Swedish for Immigrants with previous professional or vocational training”, “YFI – Vocational Training with integrated language learning for immigrants” and “EFAS – Unit for Business Collaboration at the Labour Market Administration of Stockholm” to the Berlin partners. Elements of these projects, like systematic engagement of employers, taking in account former professional experiences in the home country and combining language and professional learning have been included in the Berlin approach of “Job Boost”. On the other hand, vice versa, the Swedish Partner overtook elements of the Berlin-Neukölln good practice of the “Neighbourhood Mums” (Stadtteilmütter) in their approach of the “Stadsdelsmammor” (Neighbourhood mums) in Stockholm. The Berlin-Neukölln actors presented their approach in Stockholm and later on the Stockholmers visited Berlin.

As a result, already 23 Neighbourhood Mums are currently working in several districts in Stockholm! So the mutual exchange via the “Local Empowerment Workshops” between both cities, led not only to a deeper understanding of the refugee policies in each city and a good practice exchange, but moreover to a real transfer, contributing sustainably to the refugee policies and measures in both cities.

Is language the key to integration: true or false?

“Learning the language allowed me to feel part of Italian society and it is surely the first step that all migrants should undertake in their own country.”

Sofia, Yemenese refugee

► One of the major difficulties faced by migrants is learning a new language, which is why the FAB project aims to share and implement appropriate and effective measures, services delivery mechanisms and practices as a response to the many challenges which emerge from differing conditions.

Of late some interesting articles have returned to the issue of whether making the language of the host country “mandatory” is a way to achieve an efficient integration process for migrants. The benefits acquired learning the language of the host community are many, and the two that stand out are: access to the labour market and a recognition of belonging by the rest of the community. Given a greater perspective, there are some even larger benefits: national economic growth, as newcomers are able to contribute according to their potential and better integration of newcomers thanks to a stronger sense of community.

In some countries there are still some challenges regarding language learning for migrants. Volunteers often offer language courses for migrants and refugees, which is positive as they offer at least some kind of training, but the quality of teaching may not always be up to standard and not that easy to monitor, while in other countries, migrants need to pay for the courses in advance and they receive a reimbursement if they pass the final exams, opening up the issue of finding money.

Finally, very often the timetable and type of language course make it difficult for women in charge of childcare to access the classes.

During some Local Empowerment Workshops, which took place within the FAB framework, the language issue took up a huge part of the discussion, debating (what does this evaluate this?) whether, in some cases or specific situations, learning and speaking English provides a better chance for the integration of migrants.

Look at the Swedish experience could prove interesting. Here it's not uncommon to hear of foreigners who have been living there for many years without learning Swedish. “You can get by without speaking Swedish because most Swedish people speak English,” says Blomström, who teaches Swedish to international students. “But I think it's necessary to learn Swedish to really get to know the Swedish people, to learn about the culture and to understand what's happening around you.” – From our perspective, we just want to add that this mainly is the experience for working migrants, like people working in the IT sector. Less regarding refugees or people who do not speak English.

So, let's get back to the issue: is language the key of integration? The answer might differ for those who foresee a “migration plan”, where they will stay for only a short period in one country and therefore seek less challenging jobs before moving on to another country. Notwithstanding this, the following hypothesis could be relevant: The reason people learn local languages is to be able to deal with all aspects of life, to be able to participate in society.

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The EU institutions have been involved with this issue for a long time providing specific funding and tools such as the European Web Site on Integration, which is a great repository of information. In 2004, the EU defined the Common Basic Principles on Integration; later in 2011 came the European Agenda on Third Country Nationals and in 2016 the Action Plan on Integration of Third Country Nationals.

The EU finances the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), of which 20% is earmarked for integration activities; and other tools such as the European Social Fund and Horizon 2020, which are funding research in this area or that are funding projects directly related to creating welcoming societies and integration. In 2015, in the wake of the so-called migration crisis, the Skills Profile Tool was created to help employers integrate newcomers into the labour market.

Nowadays migrant integration and the development of welcoming societies is increasingly becoming a competency of the Member States. That is why mutual learning experiences from different countries and the development of integrated solutions, like the ones developed in the FAB project, can provide efficient tools and solutions for the real democratic participation of migrants in each EU country. Where language is one key factor.

Sources:

<https://www.thelocal.se> "Do you really need to learn Swedish in Sweden?" by Sophie Miskiw, 25/09/2019

<https://www.caritas.eu> "Language is the key of integration" by Leticia Lozaro, 18/07/2019

<https://www.coe.int> Council of Europe, Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LIAM)

<https://www.infomigrants.net> "German is the most spoken language in immigrant households" by DW News rs /cw, 10/09/2019



WHAT'S NEXT?

See what happened during the Local Empowerment Workshops:

- ▶ Berlin to Stockholm
- ▶ Milan to Wien
- ▶ Milan to Belgrade
- ▶ Stockholm to Berlin
- ▶ Stockholm to Milan

The FAB project is led by



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