

# Empowering Youth Workers to Reach Out Young Migrants and Refugees

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# REACH OUT



## NEED ANALYSIS REPORT

### Executive Summary

2017



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## INTRODUCTION

Migration is a growing and permanent part of Europe's today and future. There is a need for more effective strategies at EU level and national levels to promote the economic, social, cultural, and political integration of migrants and the next generation. <sup>1</sup>

Youth workers and social workers play a key role in helping migrants overcoming problems they encounter in a new society and integration. Youth work has much to offer in services for migrants and refugees. Youth work is of great social value as well. It connects with young people's leisure and recreational interests, complements formal educational processes, addresses contemporary social issues such as unemployment, and reflects the particular needs and tasks of young people as they move through the transitions of adolescence and young adulthood.

However, youth workers need to understand their client's status related with their migration background so they can better analyse and respond to their needs and anxieties. Most migrants and refugees will have concerns about finding employment, finding secure accommodation, education, learning language, maintaining their cultural practices, and understanding the local culture, developing a social network, experiencing discrimination and racism, etc. That's why it is important developing youth workers' knowledge, skills and competences in helping refugees and migrants.

Based on the background and needs explained above, **the aim of the REACH-OUT project is** to develop and test an innovative training curriculum for youth workers to support them in reaching out to young migrants and refugees, and increase youth workers' competences and foster their professional development.

In order to understand existing situation in partner countries in terms of youth work and migrants and refugees REACH-OUT partners undertook an in-depth desktop research. In this research, partners reviewed the existing literature on youth work, training offers for youth workers related with the migrants and refugees, youth work initiatives targeted to migrants and refugees as well as common problems faced by migrants and refugees.

However, as desktop research would not be sufficient to understand training needs of the youth workers a further need analysis survey is conducted with youth workers via face to face questionnaires.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/challenges-integration-eu>



The results of the desktop research and need analysis survey are collected in a **Need Analysis Report** which is the first intellectual output of the REACH OUT project. The full version of the Need Analysis Report will be available in English, Turkish, German, Italian and Greek at REACH OUT project website: <http://reachout.yasar.edu.tr>

The following is a short summary of the research findings in partner countries:

## DESKTOP RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order to understand existing situation in partner countries in terms of youth work and migration issues, partners undertook an in-depth desktop research. In this research partners reviewed the existing literature on youth work, training offers for youth workers related with the migrants and refugees, youth work initiatives targeted to migrants and refugees as well as common problems faced by migrants and refugees. The following is a short summary of the desktop research findings in partner countries:

Following the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, **Turkey** embraced an open-door migration policy towards asylum seekers from Syria as a neighbouring country. By 2017, Turkey became a country hosting around 3,2 million Syrians, which makes the country the leading host country for the refugees. The refugee crisis is considered a burning issue also for **Greece**, especially after the beginning of the civil war in Syria in May 2011. Over one million people crossed the Greek territory hoping for a better future, away from wars and hardships. The Aegean passage is the most important passage to Europe. In terms of the population (applications per capita), **Austria** was ranked third in the number of asylum seekers in 2015. On the other hand, according to UNHCR reports, **Italy** is hosting the largest number of refugees among the European countries: (118,000 in 2015). The number of new individual asylum applications (83,200) registered in Italy in 2015 was the highest such number ever recorded. This short summary of statistics regarding migrants and refugees in partner countries show that migration is an important and ongoing issue for all of the REACH OUT partner countries.

The REACH OUT partners also reviewed the existing situation of the youth work in partner countries. It is found that in general, there is no uniform conceptual definition for 'young people' in any of the partner countries, which is why the concept of youth is taken according to its use. All the laws dealing



with this issue, both at international and regional level have different concepts of who “young people” are.

Furthermore there are **no uniform national law** regarding the definition of youth work and standards for youth worker and consequently there is no common agreed definition of the term ‘youth work’ used by public authorities and NGOs.

Even for the ‘youth worker’ there is **no legal definition**, it is very common that they are employed by the third sector (cooperatives, associations and NGOs) for working in residential (Residential Youth Care Homes, Emergency Shelter, etc.) or semi residential services and programs (youth centres, after school activities, info point for young people) addressed to young people.

The desktop research showed us that in general, there is **no specific qualification requirements** or restrictions to be a youth worker in partner countries. Youth workers come from diverse backgrounds. The majority of youth workers with a bachelor or master degree has the same academic background in Pedagogy, Educational Science, Psychology or Sociology.

Partners also look for the existing youth work targeted to migrants and refugees. The research showed that the youth work for migrants and refugees in partner countries are clustered in two different groups:

- The first group of supports include actions towards providing basic needs of the refugees such as food and housing.
- The second group of initiatives include support mechanisms for the integration of refugees by providing consultancy, education and training.

Another issue inquired via desktop research was the common problems faced by migrants and refugees in partner countries. The research showed us that even if the number and nationality of migrants and refugees differ in partner countries problems faced by young migrants and refugees are mostly in common nature. In general, it can be concluded that the following are the main problems faced by young migrants and refugees in partner countries:

- Problems in the field of education and employment (language problems, skills recognition and undeclared work)
- Problems with mutual integration (cultural differences, discrimination and social problems)
- Problems in the field of administration and basic care (access to the services and rights)



## NEED ANALYSIS SURVEY RESULTS

The survey research process within the REACH OUT project took place between January and March 2017. In all partner countries, a total of 130 people agreed to participate in the process and were surveyed during this period. The survey process was realized in Greece (Thessaloniki), Austria (Graz), Italy (Florence) and Turkey (by three Turkish partners in Izmir and Istanbul). The summary results reflect the individual results from the countries. However, the sampling of the survey participants does not represent the whole of the partner countries.

Mainly closed questions were used to achieve a more concrete evaluation result. However, in order to gain more in-depth information on certain issues, open questions were also used.

The aim of the survey was to collect data for the development of a training curriculum that can help youth workers gain necessary knowledge and skills specifically related to the unique needs, challenges and strengths of immigrant youth.

The following sections summarize the findings of the need analysis survey conducted in partner countries and offer a snapshot of the training needs of the youth workers in terms of reaching out to young migrants and refugees.

- **GENDER and AGE:** More than half of the survey participants were female (57%) while 43% of the participants were male and 51% were in age range of 25-34 years, followed by participants between 35-44 years (24%).
- **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:** The majority of survey participants (40%) have a bachelor degree and many of them (19%) have a Master's degree. Other 13% have a university degree.
- **WORKING STATUS:** The majority of the survey participants (57%) work in full-time (paid) status and 22% has a part-time (paid) status. Moreover, 11% of the participants work as (unpaid) volunteers.
- **ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION:** 27% of participants have affiliation with a social enterprise [especially in Austria (69%) and Italy (67%)], 21% of participants have affiliation with an NGO and 14% of participants have affiliation with a governmental organization.
- **YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN YOUTH WORK:** All of the respondents have some experience in youth work, however the majority (42%) has not been active in this area for a long time (1-2 years).
- **YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN WORKING WITH MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES:** Results of the survey shows that while 36% of the participants have no experience in working with migrants and refugees



only 7% have more than 5 years of experience in working with migrants and refugees. 59 Participants (45%) said they have 1-2 years of experience in working with migrants and refugees.

- **TYPES OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE PARTICIPANTS:** The majority of participants indicated to work as counsellors and/or volunteers. But many of them also work as mentors and/or as trainers and coaches and/or tutors.
- **HAVING A SPECIAL SPECIFIC TRAINING RELATED WITH REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS:** The big majority of participants (79%) have no specific training related to the target group of refugees and migrants, only 21% have participated in a special training.
- **HAVING WORKED WITH/AND FOR YOUNG MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES:** Compared to the fact that most of the respondents do not have special training in dealing with young refugees, the number of people who have worked with refugees and migrants is high: 64% of the participants. However, 36% stated to have no work experience within the target group of migrants and refugees.

## EMERGING TRAINING NEEDS OF YOUTH WORKERS

In order to understand youth workers training needs REACH OUT need analysis questionnaire included both closed and open- ended questions. Based on the analysis of the 130 survey participants' answers training needs regarding the following subjects have emerged.

### *Understanding Migration*

The survey results showed that while the majority of participants stated to have a quite well (51%) knowledge about the basic terminology related with the migration, refugees and youth work, total 37% of participants either undecided or just have little or no knowledge about the basic terminology related with the migration, refugees and youth work. Furthermore half of the participants (59%) either just a little knowledge, undecided or have no knowledge about the legal status and rights of migrants and refugees. When asked about their knowledge about the available services for young migrants and refugees more than half of the survey participants (51%) stated that they have either have only basic knowledge, undecided or have no knowledge at all. Furthermore the majority of the participants (51%) do not have enough knowledge regarding the related actors and stakeholders in the field.

Furthermore, in open-ended questions participants asked about the most important skills and competences important for youth workers when reaching out young migrants and refugees and participants indicated that 'basic knowledge regarding national and international legislation', 'legal



procedures and other administrative issues', actual and efficient supply of information to the migrants regarding all available services are important for them.

These results led us to develop a training module covering all these issues. The first module of the Training Curriculum will be '**Understanding Migration**' which will include the following subjects: A Short History of Migration, Terminology of Migration, Actors and Stakeholders, Legal Rights and Services and EU Migration Policy.

### **Understanding Target Group**

Reaching out to young migrants and refugees requires understanding these target groups. This requires building empathy and acceptance, providing emotional support and supporting their self-development. However, the question related with the dealing with young migrants and refugees with trauma revealed that more than half of the participants (55%) either not so sure about it or have just a little knowledge or have no knowledge regarding how to deal with young migrants and refugees with trauma. Furthermore, total 40% of the survey participants has little or no knowledge or is undecided about how to distinguish the characteristics of the different groups and a high number of participants (35%) stated to have not enough knowledge about how to communicate with people without using their languages. Additionally, the majority of participants (51%) stated not to have the necessary knowledge about how to assess the needs of young migrants and refugees and again a large majority of the survey participants (60%) has no knowledge or little about how to help young migrants and refugees to integrate into society.

Furthermore, when youth workers are asked about the main challenges they face while working with young migrants and refugees many of them stated that being able to foster the autonomy of the young migrants and refugees concerning all the aspects of everyday life, and being able to build a relationship of trust that is based on a mutual respect are the main issues.

In this respect, the second emerging training needs of the youth workers was '**Understanding Target Group**' which will include such subjects 'Building-up Trust', 'Empathy and Acceptance', 'Providing Emotional Support', 'Working with Different Groups', 'How to Foster Autonomy in Target Group' and 'How to Work with Traumatized People'.



## ***Communication and Conflict Management***

Survey results also showed that another important issue to work with young migrants and refugees is communication and conflict management. The survey showed that 15% of the participants are not sure if they can communicate without talking in their language and further 18% were the opinion to know just a little about it. 2% have no experience in this matter.

In addition, the refugees in general, a proportionate number is not literate. In order to build up a relationship with the refugees it is therefore necessary to have holistic communication skills, like active listening skills, mediation skills and competences in conflict management.

The majority of the respondents in survey also stated that a big challenge to reach out young migrants and refugees is the language barrier. Although “Language” was articulated as a crucial need by the participants as to provide communication with refugees, at the same time, participants indicate here “intercultural” and “physiological” aspect of communication rather than simply underlining oral communication and language ability. Even if the youth worker don’t understand the mother tongue of the refugees, it is necessary to overcome the language barrier and being able to inform the migrants and refugees in an adequate way. This requires the ability to cope with misunderstandings and ambiguities in communication. Additionally, the majority of participants don’t have the necessary knowledge about how to manage conflict while working with young migrants and refugees (56%). The research results indicated a need for ***‘Communication and Conflict Management’*** training that includes subjects such as active listening and on-verbal communication as well as conflict management and overcoming language barriers.

## ***Intercultural Skills***

Cultural differences revealed as another crucial challenge for many of the survey participants. Most of the youth workers deal with youth from different culture and expertise on individual cultures is missing; knowledge about different cultures is insufficient, as well as the interactions between the young people from different cultures among themselves. Most of the youth workers reported the importance of accepting of the different cultural backgrounds and patience when it comes in dealing with psychological traumas.

Therefore, being able to manage the various needs of a community that made up of different ethnic groups is very important competence for youth worker and emphasizes the importance of awareness about cultural differences. This means that intercultural communication and the general acceptance



of diversity are the most important competences in working with migrants and refugees. These results indicate a need for ***'Intercultural Skills'*** and cultural diversity training for youth workers.

### ***Developing and Implementing Initiatives***

Being able to analyse the problems, needs and expectations of the young migrants and refugees and being able to plan and develop programs and initiatives to address these needs is an important skill for youth workers.

REACH OUT need analysis research showed us that the majority of the survey participants do not have the necessary knowledge about how to assess the needs of young migrants and refugees (51%). Furthermore, the study shows that many of participants do not have the adequate knowledge about how to support the learning process for young migrants and refugees, either (61%).

Additionally, a large majority (61%) of the youth workers either undecided or know nothing at all or has a little knowledge regarding how to develop a plan/ process/ program/ initiative to address the problems of the young migrants and refugees.

Regarding the question if they know how to involve young migrants and refugees in planning, delivery and evaluation of the activities, the research results show that the majority of participants (61%) doesn't have the necessary knowledge on this topic.

Youth workers offer support measures for refugees by supporting them in their personal development. With regard to these results, need analysis research showed us that there is a high need for training of youth workers on ***'Developing and Implementing Initiatives'*** which include need assessment, developing different types of initiatives, involving target groups into the process and supporting learning process of young migrants and refugees.

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