DIFE: Digital Integration for Equality

PR: National Report

PR: IDENTIFICATION OF BARRIERS FACED BY ROMA AND MIGRANTS IN THE FIELD OF ADULT EDUCATION

Responsible Partner: Welcome Home Brussels, Belgium

October 2023

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Notes for partners[1]

Please, draft this National report (EN) based on references, evidence and activity reports provided through the National Reporting and specific Templates

This report should count a minimum of 15 pages, not exceeding the lengths of 30 pages.

Interviews and Focus Groups' reports shall besubmitted as part of the national fieldwork reports, as annexes. Consent forms shall be kept separate from interview recordings, reports. The electronic or hard copies of **consent forms** should be kept with the partner organisations, and **NOT shared with the IO1 coordinator**.

The **file name** of qualitative data is required to be saved in the following way:

A. **Interview code** = Fieldwork country_I_No. of interview [*Example: IT_I_2*]
B. **Focus group code** = Fieldwork country_FG_No. of FG [*Example: CY_FG_1*]

All partners will deliver national context information collected during desk research and fieldwork:

[1] This section is for internaluse: to be deleted

1. General data on the population of the Roma and Migrants in Belgium

- **1.1 Roma and Migrant population in Belgium country (number, age, gender balance, country of origin)**

According to the Council of Europe, there are approximately 30,000 Roma living in Belgium, which is 0.29% of the population
. The exact number of French-speaking migrants is not available due to strict interpretation in Belgium of the EU Data Protection Directive.
However, in 2007, there were 1.38 million foreign-born residents in Belgium, corresponding to 12.9% of the total population. Of these, 685,000 (6.4%) were born outside the EU and 695,000 (6.5%) were born in another EU Member State
. The largest group of immigrants and their descendants in Belgium are Italian Belgians, with more than 450,000 people, which is well over 4% of Belgium's total population. The Moroccan Belgians are the third-largest group, and the largest Muslim ethnic group, numbering 340,359
.Refugees in Belgium are individuals who have fled their home countries due to persecution, war, or violence and have sought asylum in Belgium. In 2021, Belgium received 25,971 asylum applications, with most of them submitted by people from Afghanistan, Syria, and Palestine. Out of these, 10,093 people were recognized as refugees or received subsidiary protection
. The number of refugees granted asylum in Belgium has been increasing over the years. In 2021, Belgium granted asylum to 74,063 refugees, which was a 13.99% increase from the previous year. In 2020, the number was 64,973, and in 2019, it was 61,662
.The authorities in Belgium are responsible for processing applications for asylum and deciding whether somebody can be granted protection. The Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) is the Belgian first instance international protection body that examines applications for asylum, interviews applicants, and takes a decision to grant protection
.In recent years, Belgium has also faced challenges in providing adequate housing for migrants and refugees. A video report by Deutsche Welle shows that refugees are forced to sleep on the streets in Belgium due to a lack of housing

2. Key findings and barriers regarding Roma and Migrants education and training that raise their integration

- **2.1 Current situation: living conditions, employment, health, involvement of in public life, as well as in education and training opportunities**

The living conditions of refugees, migrants, and Roma in Belgium encompass various aspects such as employment, health, involvement in public life, as well as education and training opportunities. These conditions are influenced by a multitude of factors, including policy, social determinants of health, and access to basic services.

Health Challenges and Human Rights

Refugees and migrants often face significant challenges in realizing their human rights, accessing health and other basic services, and being relegated to low living and working conditions. The experience of migration is a key determinant of health and well-being, with refugees and migrants remaining among the most vulnerable members of society, often faced with xenophobia, discrimination, and inadequate access to health services. The situation is compounded by the problems migrants face in realizing their human rights and accessing health services, which underscores the critical importance of developing cultural/transnational competence in health professionals and institutions working with migrants and refugees.

Roma Refugees from Ukraine in Poland

The situation of Roma refugees from Ukraine in Poland presents a complex set of challenges. Their harsh travel conditions mean some Roma refugees have arrived in a state of exhaustion and in need of medical care. Faced with antigypsyism and discriminatory behavior both in Ukraine and Poland while in a state of trauma as refugees from war, Roma refugees tend to gather in larger groups to increase their sense of security, hindering the voluntary activities of Polish society towards them. The Roma refugees currently residing in Poland are under the care of various assistance structures organized by the authorities, either central or local, or by Roma NGOs.

Education Opportunities

Access to education is a critical aspect of the living conditions of refugees. UNHCR and its partners are committed to achieving the enrollment of 15% of young refugee women and men in higher education by the year 2030 through initiatives such as the DAFI program, scholarships, and Connected Learning. Education enlightens refugees, enabling them to learn about themselves and the world around them while striving to rebuild their lives and communities. However, the access to education for refugee children is limited, with almost half of them unable to attend school at all[5]

.The living conditions of refugees, migrants, and Roma in Belgium are multifaceted and require comprehensive approaches to address the challenges they face in employment, health, public life involvement, and education and training opportunities.

- **2.2 Drop-out of Roma and Migrants learners (rate, reasons)**

The drop-out rates of Roma and refugee learners in Belgium are influenced by various factors, including migration patterns, educational challenges, and social integration. The National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) progress report highlights the increased immigration flows from Central and Eastern Europe, leading to a higher number of Roma migrants in Belgium. Concrete policy developments related to the inclusion of

Roma are relatively new, and there are no official statistics on the various ethnic groups living in Belgium due to strict interpretation of the EU Data Protection Directive.

Research has shown that early dropouts and low educational attainment are the result of complex issues, which are already observed in secondary school where the phenomenon of dropouts is prevalent. Member States could consider making education more relevant to the labor market, which can reduce dropout rates, as students learn that knowledge gained in school is converted into marketable skills. A study conducted among Roma mothers and fathers in Belgium aimed to better understand the Roma's relationship with schooling. The study found that Roma children face regular absenteeism at primary school and prematurely dropping out of school at the start of secondary school. The study also highlighted the need for appropriate means and strategies to address these issues.

The European Commission estimates that there are approximately 30,000 Roma living in Belgium, constituting 0.29% of the population. The main objectives of Belgium's national strategy are to set up a Council for the Roma and Travellers and a Roma helpdesk in the federal ministry for social inclusion. The assessment of Belgium's strategy implementation includes key areas such as education, employment, healthcare, housing, and the fight against discrimination.

In conclusion, the drop-out rates of Roma and refugee learners in Belgium are influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including migration patterns, educational challenges, and social integration. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that considers the unique needs and circumstances of these communities.

- **2.3 Most frequent Adult qualifications and courses acquired**

Based on the search results, specific information on the most frequent adult qualifications and courses acquired by refugees and Roma in Belgium is not explicitly outlined. However, the sources provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by refugees and Roma in Belgium, including education, employment, housing, and health. The sources highlight the need for comprehensive approaches to address the challenges faced by migrants, refugees, and Roma in Belgium.The sources emphasise the importance of education for the inclusion of Roma and other marginalised groups in Belgium. The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies identifies a clear goal for Roma education that each EU Member State should achieve and develop in its own national integration strategies. The Framework recommends that EU Member States ensure that all Roma pupils complete at least compulsory education. The sources also highlight the low completion rates of secondary education among Roma adults in Belgium.While the sources provide valuable context on the situation of refugees and Roma in Belgium, specific information on the most frequent adult qualifications and courses acquired by refugees and Roma is not explicitly outlined.

3. Adult system and programmes in Belgium

- **3.1 Characteristics of the Adult system and context (length, professions, subjects, qualifications)**

The adult education system in Belgium is characterised by a diverse range of programs and opportunities, with specific features varying between the different regions of Belgium. Here are some key characteristics of the adult education system in Belgium, including Flanders, Wallonia, and the German-speaking Community.

Educational Competence and Structure: The educational competence in Belgium is primarily the responsibility of the Communities, with the exception of three competences that remain a federal matter. The Ministry of Education and Training in Flanders is responsible for all stages of education and training, starting from pre-primary education. The French Community of Belgium has specific competences related to cultural affairs, language use, education, childhood, youth, and research. In the German-speaking Community of Belgium, only non-university higher education is available. Adult education programs are organised as a coherent modular system of course units that students can capitalize on. These programs lead to an Associate Degree at qualification level 5 and last for six semesters**.**

Programs and Subjects: Adult education in Belgium covers a wide range of programs, including adult basic education, secondary adult education, and higher vocational education. The programs offered by the Adult Education Centres and the Adult Basic Education Centres provide various adult education programs. Additionally, adult training in Flanders encompasses all forms of non-formal and informal learning by adults, including those organized by the Flemish Employment Services and Vocational Training Agency, the Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training, and other institutions.
Qualifications and Access: Adult learners of at least 18 years old and those who have completed compulsory education may enroll in adult education. The qualifications obtained through adult education are recognized within the Belgian qualification framework. Access to higher vocational education in Flanders is open to individuals with various qualifications, including certificates of the 2nd grade of the 3rd stage of secondary education, diplomas of secondary education, and certificates of a program of secondary adult education of at least 900 teaching periods.

- **3.2 Continuing professional development system of Adult trainers, educators**

Belgium has a continuing professional development (CPD) system for teachers and trainers working in adult education and training.
Continuing Professional Development: In the French Community of Belgium, each network provides continuing training in various training fields for teachers and trainers working in adult education and training. The training course catalogues are available on the website of the Ministry of Education and Training
Teacher Professional Continuum: In Flanders, the teacher professional continuum starts with teacher training and induction and further entails continuous professional learning. The basic principles of the teacher professional continuum are set out in the Decree on the Qualification Requirements for Teachers and School Leaders. The Flemish government provides support to adult education centers that want to start a program with a substantial share of distance learning.
Adult Education and Training: Adult education and training in Belgium comprises all programs of adult basic education, secondary adult education, and (adult) higher vocational education. In Flanders, the Adult Education Centers and the Adult Basic Education Centers provide adult education programs. Adult training is a broader concept than adult education and provides all forms of non-formal and informal learning by adults. It comprises the programs offered by the sector of adult education as well as those organized by the Flemish Employment Services and Vocational Training Agency, the Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training, the employment sectors, socio-cultural organizations, private institutions, etc.

4. Policies targeting Roma and Migrants in Belgium

- 4.1 National and European Policies

The policies targeting Roma and migrants in Belgium reflect a complex landscape with various initiatives and challenges. Here are some key points:

National Roma Integration Strategy: Belgium has adopted a National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) to address the inclusion of Roma populations. The NRIS is the only policy commitment at the national level specifically addressing Roma populations. Relevant policy initiatives are also undertaken at the regional and local levels, including the Flemish Action plan on Eastern European migrants.

Regional Policy Responses: Policy responses differ from one region to another in Belgium. While Flanders adopted a specific Action Plan on Eastern and Central European migrants, Wallonia opted for an approach aimed at all migrants in general. This has affected the initiatives developed at the municipal level in Flanders and the Brussels Capital Region.

Challenges and Recommendations: The housing situation of Roma and Travellers in Belgium remains significantly problematic and unsolved. An increasing number of EU Roma are homeless in Belgium, leading to increased rates of squatting and the recent development of slums. The schooling of Roma children in Belgium involves pitfalls, with deep poverty and homelessness being among the main obstacles to improved school attendance. Recommendations include making the creation of sites for Travellers compulsory, promoting the employment of Roma and Traveller mediators, enforcing anti-discrimination law, and developing suitable accommodation alternatives for homeless families.

Migration and Asylum: Belgium has experienced an increase in asylum seekers, with a particular increase in applications for international protection. The country offers resettlement opportunities to vulnerable refugees in need of international protection under the European Resettlement Programme. Evidence shows that the majority of foreign unaccompanied minors do not apply for political asylum but are apprehended by local authorities, with a significant number being Roma from countries such as Serbia, Bosnia, and Romania.

5. NEEDS and GAPS

- **Gaps and mismatches of the Adult institutions and the sector**

The search results provide insights into the education system in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the Flemish Community, and the French Community. Here are some key points related to the gaps and mismatches in the adult education sector in Belgium:

1. **Non-University Higher Education and Unemployed Adults**: In the German-speaking Community of Belgium, non-university higher education is available, and unemployed individuals sometimes attend courses in institutions for adult education. This highlights the need for targeted educational programs to address the needs of unemployed adults.

2. **Adult Education and Training in Flanders**: Adult education and training in Flanders is unrelated to the initial educational career. The programs offered by the Adult Education Centres and the Adult Basic Education Centres provide a wide range of adult education programs. However, there may be gaps in addressing the specific needs of adult learners, especially in terms of relevance to their career and employment opportunities.

3. **Compulsory Education and Adult Learning**: Belgium has compulsory education from 5 until 18, but the duty to attend school does not necessarily apply, as parents may choose home schooling for their children. This highlights the need to ensure that adults who may have missed out on formal

education have access to relevant adult learning opportunities to enhance their skills and qualifications.

4. **Continuing Vocational Training and Inequalities**: Although continuing vocational training in Belgium is increasing, participation by adults remains below the European mean, and major inequalities exist in terms of access. This suggests a gap in ensuring equitable access to continuing vocational training for adults, particularly those from diverse backgrounds and with varying levels of qualifications.

This provide insights into the gaps and mismatches in the adult education sector in Belgium, including the need to address the specific needs of unemployed adults, ensure relevance and accessibility of adult education and training, and address inequalities in access to vocational training for adults.

- **Skill gaps and mismatches of Adult trainers and the sector**

The search results shed light on the prevailing skills gaps and mismatches within Belgium's adult education sector. Despite a growing trend in continuing training, participation rates among adults in Belgium still lag behind the European average, revealing disparities in access. An examination of skills inequalities in the country underscores the urgency of addressing these gaps, particularly among adults with varying education levels. The European Union emphasises the pivotal role of vocational education and training (VET) in bridging skills deficiencies, offering support to individuals of all ages and stages of learning while fostering business prosperity. In Flanders, adult education and training are distinct entities, with the former providing recognized qualifications and the latter embracing diverse forms of non-formal and informal adult learning. These insights illuminate the multifaceted landscape of skills development challenges in Belgium's adult education domain.

Continuing Training Participation: Although continuing training in Belgium is increasing, participation by adults remains below the European mean, and major inequalities exist in terms of access. This suggests a gap in ensuring equitable access to continuing vocational training for adults, particularly those from diverse backgrounds and with varying levels of qualifications.

Skills Inequalities: A report on skills inequalities in 21 countries, including Belgium, highlights the presence of skills gaps among adults with different levels of education. This underscores the need to address skills inequalities and gaps to ensure a more inclusive and skilled workforce.

Addressing Skills Gaps: The European Union's focus on addressing skills gaps and mismatches emphasizes the importance of delivering skills and competences that facilitate labor market participation. The role of vocational education and training (VET) is highlighted as a means to support people of any age and at different stages of learning, work, and life, and to help businesses thrive.

Adult Education and Training in Flanders: Adult education and training in Flanders is unrelated to the initial school career and allows course participants to obtain recognized qualifications or certificates. The distinction between adult education and adult training highlights the broader concept of adult training, encompassing all forms of non-formal and informal learning by adults.

These sources suggest that there are skills gaps and mismatches in the adult education sector in Belgium, particularly in terms of participation in continuing vocational training, addressing skills inequalities, and the role of vocational education and training in supporting a skilled workforce.

6. Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online survey with Roma and Migrants

6.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Participants Page

The online survey targeted individuals from migrant communities, particularly those from Syria, spanning a diverse age range of 18 to 60. The respondents exhibited a mix of educational backgrounds, employment statuses, and durations of residence in Belgium. Key demographic insights include a notable awareness of adult education, varying participation rates, and identified barriers such as lack of information, time constraints, and motivation.

Key Points:

- Age Range: Participants ranged from 18 to 60 years, capturing a broad demographic spectrum.
- Gender Diversity: Both male and female respondents provided insights, ensuring a diverse representation.
- Educational Backgrounds: Educational levels varied, including secondary education and master's or equivalent degrees.
- Employment Status: A mix of employed and unemployed participants contributed to the survey.
- Residency Duration: Diverse periods of residence in Belgium, from less than a year to over 10 years.
- Awareness of Adult Education: A considerable percentage demonstrated awareness of adult education programs.

6.2 Key Findings of the Online Survey with Roma and Migrants Citizens

The survey uncovered significant findings related to the participation and perceptions of adult education among Roma and migrant communities. Key themes include the reasons for non-participation, relevant factors for enrollment, and valuable insights into the challenges faced by respondents. The findings underscore the importance of addressing barriers, such as lack of information and time constraints, and emphasize the need for inclusive, innovative, and culturally sensitive adult education programs.

Key Points:

Reasons for Non-Participation:

- Lack of Information: The majority of respondents identified a lack of information as a key barrier to participation.
- Time Constraints: A significant percentage highlighted time constraints as a limiting factor.
- Motivational Factors: Some respondents expressed a lack of motivation as a deterrent to participating in adult education programs.

Relevant Factors for Enrollment:

Respondents emphasized the importance of:

- Innovative Teaching Methods: Including digital material, audiovisual aids, games, and group interaction.
- Inclusive Approach: Focusing on diversity, equality, respect, and acceptance.
- Recognition and Certification: Programs leading to better job prospects and higher salaries.
- Language Support: Tailored to individual knowledge levels.
- Affordability: Ensuring that programs are free or at least affordable.
- Challenges and Discrimination: Survey participants shed light on challenges in the education system, discrimination, and the need for fair and equal opportunities.

Conclusion:

The findings collectively underscore the multifaceted nature of barriers to adult education faced by Roma and migrant communities. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that considers cultural sensitivity, accessibility, and the varied needs of the participants. The insights from this survey serve as valuable input for shaping more inclusive and effective adult education programs.

7. Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online survey with Professionals

7.1 Demographic-Professional Characteristics of Participants:

- Out of the 7 participants, 71.4% identified as members of a migrant community, while 28.6% chose "Other" and specified their status.
- Among migrant community members, all were from Syria.
- Age distribution varied, with 42.9% falling into the 40 to 60 age group.
- Gender distribution included 28.6% male, 14.3% female, and the rest chose alternative terms.
- Education levels were diverse, with 42.9% having completed tertiary education.
- 71.4% were currently employed, and the rest were not.

7.2 Key Findings of the Online Survey with Professionals Working with Roma and/or Migrants:

Employment Status and Job Title:

- 71.4% of participants were employed.
- Job titles included "English Teacher" and "Accountant."

Duration of Employment:

- 57.1% had been employed for over 10 years.
- 14.3% had been employed for 1 to 5 years.

Duration of Residence in Belgium:

- 57.1% had been living in Belgium for 5 to 10 years.

Awareness of "Adult Education":

- 57.1% had heard of the term "adult education" before the survey.

Enrollment in Adult Education Programs:

- None of the participants had been enrolled in adult education programs.

Reasons for Non-Involvement in Adult Education Programs:

- The majority (71.4%) cited lack of time and information as the primary reasons.
- One participant mentioned a lack of motivation.

Relevance Factors for Enrollment:

- Participants expressed high relevance for innovative training methods, an inclusive approach, and potential career advancement through education.
- Language support and affordable/free programs were also considered relevant.

Information Sources on Adult Education:

- 85.7% were aware of sources of information about attending adult education programs in their area.

In summary, the findings highlight a diverse group with varying backgrounds and experiences. The majority expressed interest in innovative and inclusive education, emphasizing the importance of overcoming barriers such as time constraints and lack of information. There is a potential for increased enrollment if programs align with participants' needs and provide accessible information.

8. Brief summary of the key findings reached through the organised focus group / interviews with Roma and Migrants adults

Participants:

- Ahmed Khalid
- Fatima Al-Mansoori
- Hassan Abdullah
- Aisha Mahmoud
- Ali Nasser

Facilitator: Barbara Winn-Hagelstam

Location: Zoom

Date: 15.3.2024

Overview:

In the virtual space of a Zoom focus group, individuals with diverse backgrounds came together to share their unique experiences as part of the DIFE project. The facilitator, Barbara Winn-Hagelstam, set the stage by introducing the significance of DIFE—Diversity and Inclusion in Fields of Education. The project, designed to enhance the inclusivity of education and training, particularly targeted migrants and the Roma national minority.

Integration and Community Connection:

Participants engaged in a lively exchange about their integration experiences, revealing a nuanced tapestry of emotions. While some shared positive stories of feeling connected, others opened up about the persistent challenges they faced. Language and cultural disparities emerged as recurring themes, hindering the full immersion of individuals in the communities they sought to integrate into. Acknowledging the efforts of events and initiatives, participants collectively emphasized the need for deeper cultural understanding and awareness.

Barriers to Participation:

The conversation shifted to the hurdles faced in participating in community activities. Language barriers emerged as a major obstacle, impacting not only verbal communication but also the understanding of different cultures. Lack of awareness about various cultures and outright

discrimination were identified as substantial barriers, leading to a sense of exclusion for some participants.

Training Programs:

Participants shared their experiences with training programs, highlighting the positive impact of language programs on communication skills. However, a critical perspective was offered regarding job training programs, with participants expressing that these initiatives sometimes fall short in recognizing and addressing the cultural nuances of the participants.

Formal Education Programs:

The dialogue then delved into the role of formal education programs, with a specific focus on reskilling initiatives. Participants viewed these programs as instrumental in enhancing job prospects and creating stable livelihoods for their families.

Informal Education Programs:

The value of informal education programs, such as workshops and language classes, was underscored. These activities were recognized for fostering a deeper understanding of the local culture and facilitating connections among participants.

Upskilling/Reskilling Programs:

Opinions on the usefulness of upskilling and reskilling programs were shared, with participants appreciating their benefits but expressing a need for additional support and resources. There was a consensus that incorporating more hands-on components could enhance the effectiveness of these programs.

Equal Educational Opportunities:

The participants offered a mixed perspective on the equality of educational opportunities. While acknowledging some improvements, concerns were raised about discrimination persisting within the school system. The call for fair and inclusive rules in educational institutions resonated among the group.

Closing Remarks:

As the focus group drew to a close, participants expressed gratitude to the facilitator, Barbara Winn-Hagelstam, and conveyed their interest in staying informed about the results of the DIFE project, expected to be available in September. The collective sharing of experiences highlighted the multifaceted challenges faced by migrants and members of the Roma national minority, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity and inclusive practices in the realm of education and training.

8. Brief summary of the key findings reached through the focus group /interview s with educators, professionals, and volunteers working with adult Roma and/or Migrant adults.

Participants:

- Lubna Kahlid
- Amjad Allabdullah
- Beike Henne
- Attika Dahri

Facilitator: Barbara Winn-Hagelstam

Location: Zoom

Date: 29.2.2024

Overview:

The focus group brought together educators, professionals, and volunteers actively engaged in the education and training of adult Roma and/or Migrant adults. Participants shared their unique experiences and innovative approaches in the field, addressing challenges and fostering inclusion. The conversation unfolded within the context of the DIFE project, which aims to promote diversity and inclusion in education and training, particularly for marginalized communities.

Educator and Professional Backgrounds:

- Lubna Kahlid, holding a Master's in Social Work, specializes in Migrant and Refugee Integration, contributing over a decade of experience in community development initiatives.
- Amjad Allabdullah, with a Master's in Engineering, actively participates in education and training at a refugee center in Brussels, focusing on comprehensive support.
- Beike Henne, a language teacher with a Master's in Translation, volunteers in unofficial refugee camps, dedicating eight years to teaching languages and organizing activities.
- Attika Dahri, a visual artist, teaches Dutch to refugees at a reception center, leveraging a unique approach by hosting refugees in her home.

Challenges Faced by Educators and Professionals:

Language Barriers and Prejudices:

- Lubna Kahlid highlighted the significant challenge of navigating language barriers and breaking down societal prejudices. Tailoring approaches to specific community needs and fostering understanding were emphasized.

Recognition of Foreign Qualifications:

- Amjad Allabdullah addressed the complex issue of limited recognition of foreign qualifications. Utilizing digital platforms, mentorship, and practical skills development were identified as crucial strategies.

Inclusive Learning Environment:

- Beike Henne shared insights into creating an inclusive learning environment despite language and cultural differences. Interactivity, creativity, and adapting to unique backgrounds were key aspects.

Limited Access to Formal Education Resources:

- Attika Dahri discussed the struggle of limited access to formal education resources. Leveraging available resources, creative teaching methods, and the personal touch of hosting refugees at home were identified as effective strategies.

Strategies for Promoting Community Engagement:

- Building Trust through Interaction:
  - Lubna Kahlid emphasized the importance of building trust through consistent interaction and involving community members in decision-making processes to foster a sense of belonging.

Addressing Legal Processes and Improvements Needed:

- Simplifying Information and Advocacy:
  - Amjad Allabdullah stressed the need for simplifying information, providing accessible resources, and advocating for better recognition of foreign qualifications. Improved collaboration between legal and educational systems was highlighted.

Role of Cultural Exchange and Shared Activities:

- Fostering a Sense of Community:
  - Beike Henne highlighted the vital role of cultural exchange and shared activities in fostering a sense of community. These experiences contribute to breaking down cultural barriers and providing a semblance of normalcy.

Personal Connection in Teaching Approach:

- Family-Like Environment:
  - Attika Dahri shared how hosting refugees in her home creates a family-like environment, fostering trust and openness. This approach results in stronger connections between students and a deeper commitment to learning.

Community Support and Positive Outcomes:

- Deeper Connections and Commitment:
  - Attika Dahri emphasized that hosting refugees creates a family-like environment, fostering trust and openness. This approach results in stronger connections between students and a deeper commitment to learning.

Closing Remarks:

The facilitator, Barbara Winn-Hagelstam, expressed gratitude to Lubna, Amjad, Beike, and Attika for sharing their valuable insights and experiences. The dedication of the participants to the integration of migrants and refugees was acknowledged as truly commendable within the context of the DIFE project.

9. Identification of Good Practices

Name of Best Practice:	The Integration Programme for Newcomers
Country:	Belgium
Short Description: (300 words max)	The Integration Programme for Newcomers in Brussels is a comprehensive initiative designed to support individuals settling in Belgium. It addresses various aspects of newcomers' lives, including language learning, citizenship training, and assistance in navigating essential services. The program is accessible to individuals registered in the foreigner register of a Brussels municipality and offers free integration courses conducted by experienced social workers or trainers who have personally undergone similar integration processes.
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	The Integration Programme promotes a smoother transition for newcomers by providing essential information about language learning, civic responsibilities, and societal navigation. The use of experienced social workers as trainers ensures empathy and understanding, making it easier for newcomers to integrate. The program's flexibility, offering language courses in Dutch or French based on individual preferences, enhances accessibility and inclusivity.
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)	Countries with significant migrant populations can adopt a similar integration program by establishing partnerships with local organizations. Tailoring the program to address the specific needs and languages of the target population is crucial for success. The online availability of language courses and personalized support in the individual's language contribute to its adaptability for diverse communities.
Website link:	https://bewelcome.brussels/en/welkom/
More Info:	

Name of Best Practice:	Integration Classes in Belgium
Country:	Belgium
Short Description: (300 words max)	Integration Classes in Belgium provide an inclusive and accessible way for foreign nationals, including recognized refugees and individuals with subsidiary protection, to feel at home and gain a deeper understanding of the country. These classes offer a free integration program conducted in various languages, ensuring that participants can engage comfortably.
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	Integration Classes aim to foster a sense of belonging by offering courses on essential topics such as working, living, education, and rights and obligations in Belgium. The program goes beyond language learning, providing practical assistance in finding employment or training opportunities. Additionally, participants gain insights into the cultural and recreational aspects of Belgian society, promoting social integration.
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)	Countries with diverse migrant populations can adopt a similar Integration Classes model to facilitate integration and social cohesion. The key is to offer classes in multiple languages, accommodating the linguistic diversity of the target audience. Collaborations with local organizations and community leaders can enhance the effectiveness of the program, ensuring it addresses the specific needs of participants.
Website link:	https://www.fedasilinfo.be/en/integration-classes
More Info:	

Name of Best Practice:	Civic Integration Programme in Flanders and Brussels
Country:	Belgium
Short Description: (300 words max)	The Civic Integration Programme in Flanders and Brussels offers comprehensive support to newcomers, whether they have recently arrived or have been residing in the region. The program addresses various aspects, including social orientation, Dutch language learning, pathways to employment, and participation initiatives. With a dedicated program counsellor, participants receive personalized guidance throughout the integration process.
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	The Civic Integration Programme focuses on empowering individuals through practical education and support. Participants gain insights into Belgian life, housing, and work, fostering a sense of belonging. Language learning is tailored to each individual, and the program actively supports finding employment or engaging in volunteer work. By offering a well-rounded approach, the program contributes to social integration and helps participants navigate their new environment.
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)	Other regions or countries with diverse migrant populations can consider adopting a Civic Integration Programme model. The key elements include personalized support, language learning options, pathways to employment, and engagement in community initiatives. Collaboration with local employment services and educational institutions is crucial for a successful transfer of this best practice.
Website link:	https://www.integratie-inburgering.be/en/welcome-to-flanders-and-brussels
More Info:	

Name of Best Practice:	Mandatory Integration Programme in the Brussels Region
Country:	Belgium
Short Description: (300 words max)	The Mandatory Integration Programme in the Brussels Region, effective from June 1, 2022, aims to acquaint newcomers with Belgian society and culture. It is obligatory for non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals between 18 and 65 years old with a residence permit exceeding three months. The program includes language classes (French or Dutch) and covers practical aspects of daily life, promoting active citizenship and empowerment.
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	The integration program aligns with principles such as equality, respect, and anti-discrimination, fostering inclusion and social cohesion. By focusing on language learning and practical life skills, participants enhance self-reliance and contribute positively to economic, educational, social, and cultural aspects of society. The program's mandatory nature ensures a timely and structured approach to integration.
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)	Countries or regions with diverse immigrant populations can consider implementing a mandatory integration program to facilitate newcomers' assimilation. Emphasizing language learning, practical life skills, and adherence to integration principles contributes to building inclusive societies. Customizing the program to local contexts and collaborating with employment services can ensure successful adoption.
Website link:	https://kpmg.com/xx/en/home/insights/2022/06/flash-alert-2022-128.html
More Info:	

8. Conclusions and recommendations

Skills Gaps and Needs Identification:

The comprehensive exploration of migrant populations in Belgium, coupled with an in-depth analysis of the education and training landscape, policy initiatives, and gaps, reveals a nuanced and complex scenario. It is evident that addressing the needs of these diverse communities requires a multifaceted, inclusive approach.

Belgium's commitment to its National Integration Strategy and regional policy responses demonstrates a recognition of the challenges faced by these populations. However, persistent issues in areas like housing, education, and discrimination highlight the importance of continuous efforts and collaboration between national, regional, and local authorities.

In the realm of education, the findings underline the significance of understanding the unique challenges faced by migrant learners. Factors such as early dropouts, limited access to education, and discriminatory practices necessitate tailored strategies. The survey insights further emphasize the importance of innovative teaching methods, an inclusive approach, and addressing practical barriers to participation.

The adult education system in Belgium, with its diverse programs and continuing professional development for trainers, offers a foundation for addressing skills gaps. However, the identified gaps in access and relevance underscore the need for ongoing refinement and inclusivity.

Closing Recommendations:

Closing these gaps requires a concerted effort from policymakers, educators, and communities alike. By fostering cultural competence, implementing targeted programs, and promoting equal opportunities, Belgium can move towards a more integrated and inclusive society. The findings from this comprehensive examination serve as a valuable resource for shaping policies, programs, and initiatives that truly meet the needs of migrant populations in Belgium.

Summary of Key Findings from Online Survey and Focus Groups/Interviews:

In conclusion, the findings from both the online survey and focus groups/interviews provide valuable insights into the experiences, challenges, and perspectives of professionals working with migrants, as well as the individuals themselves. The diversity among participants, spanning demographic characteristics, employment status, and duration of residence, underscores the complexity of their backgrounds.

From the survey, it is evident that a significant portion of professionals working with migrants have extensive experience, with over half employed for more than a decade. However, the lack of enrollment in adult education programs points to potential untapped opportunities for further skill development and career advancement.

The focus group with migrant adults delves into personal narratives, shedding light on the nuanced challenges faced by these individuals in their efforts to integrate into the community. Language and cultural barriers emerge as persistent obstacles, emphasizing the need for targeted support and initiatives that foster deeper cultural understanding.

Insights from Educators, Professionals, and Volunteers:

The insights from educators, professionals, and volunteers involved in the education and training of adult migrants highlight the multifaceted challenges faced in this field. From addressing language barriers and prejudices to the recognition of foreign qualifications, the participants underscore the importance of tailoring approaches to individual community needs.

Identified Good Practices:

Identifying good practices in Belgium, such as the Integration Programme for Newcomers, Integration Classes, Civic Integration Programme, and Mandatory Integration Programme, provides a blueprint for other countries to enhance the inclusivity of education and training for marginalized communities. These programs, with their focus on language learning, practical skills, and personalized support, showcase the potential for positive impact on social integration and empowerment.

Moving Forward:

In moving forward, it is crucial to leverage the identified good practices, taking into account the diverse needs and backgrounds of the target populations. Collaborations between local organizations, educational institutions, and governmental bodies can play a pivotal role in implementing and adapting these practices to different contexts. Ultimately, fostering inclusivity, breaking down barriers, and promoting diversity in education and training will contribute to building more equitable and vibrant societies.

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