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Study Focus Group

Output 1 report

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ABSTRACT

This report of the study focus groups of the ARTEM project funded by the Erasmus+ Programme is based on a research activity in the seven partner countries of the project (France, Italy, Bulgaria, Austria, Denmark, Spain, and Slovenia). The purpose of this report is to investigate the current situation on training in intercultural competences in the countries in order to develop the following trainings for both migrants and professionals/volunteers.

The research consists of two elements: a desk research on country situation and training offers, plus three focus groups in each country, one with professionals/volunteers working with migrants and two with migrants.

The mapping of the national situations in each country shows that all countries have language training offers, and often complemented by labour market initiatives and a brief introduction to the culture of the host country. However, the offers can differ according to provider and region, and in general, the focus is on learning the language and getting a job, and less on the social and cultural integration of the migrant.

Trainings for professionals/volunteers working with migrants often include aspects of intercultural competences, but these are rarely the focus of training activities. The topics covered by these trainings are relevant and the methodology also deemed suitable, but some professionals/volunteers feel that they still do not match their needs or expectations of being practical and concrete.

The training offers for migrants on intercultural competences are (besides those mentioned above) often cultural activities and events in the NGO sector, where intercultural competences are attained in a non-formal way and perhaps without much structured reflection. Furthermore, there is a lack of activities that are aimed at both migrants and the local community together.

Intercultural competences are defined by the target groups as interpersonal skills and a sensitisation of one's own behaviour.

The intercultural competences seen as central to professionals/volunteers are:

- values/attitudes (being open and respectful, non-judgemental, seeing diversity as a value, meeting people as individuals, setting limits to tolerance)
- behaviour (communication skills, explaining culture in a peaceful way, preventing conflicts, being patient, understanding, showing empathy, facilitate intercultural understanding)
- knowledge (basic cultural knowledge of other cultures, knowing your own culture).

On the other side the intercultural competences assessed important to migrants are:

- knowledge (language, cultural codes, communication, rules and system of host country)
- behaviour (respecting values, being proactive and persevere, create social network)
- attitude (accept gender equality, self-motivation, awareness of own culture).

As it is visible from the order and listing above, there are differences in what are perceived as key intercultural competences for the two target groups. Also, even if the three categories are largely the same, there is a difference in how important they are seen, where knowledge is judged more important for migrants, where values are more central for professionals/volunteers.

When investigating intercultural misunderstandings that have been mentioned, they are often related to stereotypes and prejudice, which suggests that this is also an issue that needs to be tackled for both target groups.

The respondents in the focus groups are already working with intercultural competences with migrants to some extent. This happens in many learning scenarios, from formal, in-formal and non-formal situations. The methods are as well diverse but tries to create situations, where you do things together with migrants and use their questions and needs to activate them and develop their skills and awareness on the different topics. There is again highlighted a need for more activities that involve both locals and migrants.

The training needs on intercultural competences that are identified among the target groups are:

For professionals/volunteers:

- Values (such as patience and open attitude)
- Practical competences (communication skills, dealing with difficult conversations, setting limits, building trust)
- Tools to separate yourself from the work/person
- How to organise/facilitate events in order to support intercultural exchange/mediation
- Knowledge/awareness of different cultures

For migrants:

- Ability to reflect on own position and culture
- Values (tolerance, respect, being non-judgemental)
- Being flexible and adapt, take on cultural codes of host country
- Practicing motivation and pro-activeness
- Communication skills

The practical considerations around training activities should be structured to suit the target groups. There is no clear indication of what structure fits best, since this depends on the type of professional/volunteer and their personal preferences. There is preference to have a mix of methods, which allows for reflection and examples from practice. For migrants a barrier might be language and overcoming their fear of speaking in public, and there is a need to create safe learning environments where they migrants feel at ease to react intuitively and not controlled.

The inspiration from different best practice examples in the different countries also provides the ARTEM project with awareness that the topics identified are relevant and valid. It shows that there are innovative possibilities of the project in regards of working with intercultural competences in a context with both target groups. It shows the need for a more focused training offer on intercultural competences than what is now available to migrants and one where it happens in an intercultural setting. The research have also identified the need to take an empowering approach to migrants and use their culture in a valuable way. Focusing on tackling stereotypes and creating intercultural dialogue in a respectful way is as well deemed important.

BACKGROUND

About the ARTEM project

The **ARTEM** project works towards improving the integration of migrants in the local communities through three key aspects: reinforcing the intercultural competences of the professionals and volunteers who host migrants, enhancing the skills of migrants and creating connections between the local and migrant communities.

The project will make use of a system of exchanges of **NON-MARKET** services encountered on the online platform “**ARTEM ACCESS**” to support the achievement of its aims and objectives.

The project is funded by EU's Erasmus+ Programme and is implemented between October 2018 and August 2020.

The project and the following activities is described in detail on the website: <https://www.artemproject.org/>

Aim of the study focus groups

Intellectual output 1 of the ARTEM project, the “study focus groups” consist of a research phase in two steps; a desk research activity conducted by research staff by the partners, plus a qualitative data collection with three focus group interviews per partner (one with minimum five professionals/volunteers working with migrants, and two with minimum five migrants). The research phase aims at identifying existing practices, tools and methods used by professional and volunteer organisations working with migrants. The logic being this being that the practices identified are tested and have provided observable results, are well described and originally developed to fit the needs of the target groups.

The results of the study focus groups as analysed in this report, aims at feeding the partnership valuable information about the needs and requirements among the target groups, which is then used in the development of the coming activities and outputs of the project. This to ensure that the outputs are of high quality, high relevance and at the correct level for the target groups, and ensuring it will fit the needs that exists.

METHODOLOGY

The study focus groups works with two different categories of data – one being desk research and a mapping by the partners on the national situation in the field and the other one a qualitative approach, where the target groups of the project are involved to offer their perspectives on the topics at hand.

Desk research

The desk research was carried out by the partners in each country in order to give an inventory of the existing practices on intercultural skills and competences, including the tools and methods used for training in this field. An overview of the national situation and context on migrant support and regulations are included to give the best opportunities to understand the conditions under which the practices are implemented. Besides giving a general introduction to the topic in each country, each partner has identified a selection of best practices to provide knowledge of which types of measures that have proven effective.

To ensure comparability across the partner countries and the EU, the practices and identified measures have been selected and described on the basis of a set of criteria to evaluate their usability and transferability. The criteria that have been considered are: *validity, availability of detailed description, focus on the topic, and effectiveness.*

Focus groups

To get more in depth information about the needs and experiences of the two target groups of the project, the professionals/volunteers working with migrants, and the migrants themselves, a series of focus group interviews were conducted in each country. One with professionals/volunteers and two with migrants.

The participants for the focus groups were selected on a basis of relevance and accessibility as seen by each partner. Since all partners are experienced in the field of integration, they have access to professionals and volunteers from different sectors and organisations, which could provide valuable input and ensure diverse knowledge based on their different backgrounds and experience. The migrant participants were again selected from their availability to participate and language proficiency, and most partners used their network and existing groups to conduct the interviews. The migrants were very diverse in background and origin and represents both EU and non-EU countries and have been in the host countries from short periods to decades. This approach and selection was done to achieve a balanced and diverse set of information and to help identify any differences in needs and challenges for specific groups of migrants.

The focus groups were conducted in safe environments ensuring a neutral space where information could be shared freely. Interview guides were developed for each target group to guide partners in conducting the interviews and ensuring that the data collected covered the relevant topics and gave us comparable information across the countries.

ANALYSIS

National situations

Since the ARTEM project is implemented with partners in seven different European countries, the national contexts and frameworks regarding the integration procedures and offers for migrants and refugees differ greatly. In this following section, the aim is to highlight the main similarities and differences in the partner countries on a more general level of offers to newcomers to the country. The focus will primarily be on refugees and third country migrants, since these groups are the main migrant target groups of the products and activities that will be developed within this project.

Rights and obligations

In all partner countries, refugees and migrants are entitled to **work and social rights/services** if they have valid residence, i.e. temporary residence permit or refugee status. The extent of these rights vary with the countries, but they seem to be at the same level as for nationals (with some exceptions in things like the social benefits they can receive from the state).

However when it comes to exercising these rights, many migrants find it difficult to access the labour market, often because of language barriers and lack of recognition of skills and competences.

All countries have some level of **language training** available for refugees with approved status for free, however, the level and extent of these varies greatly. From 200 hours and A1 level (in France) to possibility of over a year of full time education (in Denmark). In all countries, the language courses have some element of cultural and social orientation, but for some countries, the issue seems to be that there are no standards for the content of these topics, which in conclusion means there is no guarantee for the cultural or intercultural components of these courses. In addition, in some countries the assessment is that the courses are not adjusted to the level and needs of the migrants in the classes.

For some countries, mostly where the offers from the state/public authorities are sparser, there are NGO and volunteer options in language courses and training. These depend on the associations and funding available, but many are free of charge or with a small fee only. However, the issues often seems to be that the availability of these courses does not meet the high demand and therefor too few migrants are able to use these offers.

Besides more structured language training many countries also have volunteer programmes more aimed at training language, i.e. language partners/mentors, where you get paired with a volunteer in order to train and develop your acquisition of the local language (i.e. in Spain and Denmark). These types of initiatives have the advantage that they often serve as cultural mediators as well, since the volunteer has local knowledge and often becomes the person the migrant go to with questions about various things.

In many of the countries, the offer of language training (for refugees) is accompanied by a **labour market initiative** of some sort, where the migrant is trained or gets qualifications to assist them in getting a job. Again, this varies among the countries and is differently organised even within each country according to city/region.

There is also a difference in whether the labour market initiatives are volunteer and posed as an offer to the individual migrant or if they are selected by the provider of the service, or if they are mandatory as part of the integration procedure facilitated by the authority in charge. These factors can play a large role in the motivation of the migrant to take part of these offers.

Some countries offer a full package (like Denmark, Slovenia, and in some instances France), where language training, work related training/internships and to some extent cultural knowledge and integration information are included in one initiative and structured in a way where the individual can take part in it all concurrently.

In other instances (like Slovenia), there are also examples of these full package offers, but they seem to be more in the NGO/non-public sector. Also, in practically all the partner countries there are numerous projects dealing with labour market integration and upskilling of migrants, but the downside of these are the fact that because they are projects, the practices have a limited time span and are often not continued after the project termination.

What is important to stress is, that even if all countries have support systems in place and initiatives run by public authorities, the reality is that in some countries (particularly in Bulgaria) the implementation of these are lacking or only going very slow.



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	Integration programme	Language	Work related initiatives	Cultural trainings
Austria	Low skilled migrants, so focus on education in integration work.	Available in public system, also additional offers. Offers are free of charge/small fee	Under the Austrian Public Employment services – offer German classes and trainings	Integration pact with values and rules of social coexistence (third nationals have to do test)
Bulgaria	Is initiated by municipalities. Provides housing, healthcare, employment and language training.	600 hours to reach A2, including social orientation on social and political system and cultural traditions. Free in the integration plan.	Included in integration plan.	No standard for courses on social/cultural orientation.
Denmark	Refugee status provides you with an integration plan (1-5 years), including language training and labour market training	Language school up to 15 hours a week (for refugees). A total of up to the equivalent of 1,2 years of full time education. Free for refugees, fee for economic migrants.	For refugees labour market initiatives are begun right away with internships or training alongside language school.	Language school includes culture and social aspects, intro to Danish labour market, educational offers and democracy.
France	Reception and integration contract for refugees (language, civic training, skills assessment, social support)	A1 level up to 200 hours. A2 level prescribed by job centre up to 400 hours. Many association offer free/low charge language courses	Differs. Some exist where there is a mix of work-related content and training together with language training.	Required 2 day civic training on values and living/employment in France
Italy	Refugees with protection status are provided with a hosting contract, stating their rights and duties. Activities to support integration are: literacy courses, job replacement services and services for social inclusion.	Provided under the hosting contract and also provided by provincial centers for adult education.	Elements under the hosting contract.	Elements included in language classes. In some cases municipalities promote local citizens hosting refugees.
Slovenia	Initial integration of immigrants program by government. If in a relocation program they get 3 month orientation programme, incl. language and society information	For refugees and migrants free language course with info about society, history and culture. Informal trainings by NGOs are also available.	Vocational education offers and projects on labour market integration.	Activities most often carried out by NGOs

Spain	For refugees: Care and integration programme with 3 phases of 6 months. Some shorter free sessions for migrants.	Introduction language courses, option of having a language partner (offers depend on the provider in the area).	Language trainings include knowledge on local culture.	
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Table 1: Overview over the offers in the partner countries.

Other offers for migrants

All countries have some other offers for migrants, especially in the NGO and voluntary sector. Many are focused on giving information about social and civil life in the host country, but also information that can help them in their integration process, i.e. on legal issues, health system and job market.

These can be organised as for example events/presentations, workshops, mentoring programmes and informal sessions.

Intercultural competences (ICC) are not often the focal point of trainings and activities. When the topics are addressed, it is often as a smaller part of a larger topic or training. The focus of the offers are often more general to facilitate the integration of migrants.

A few countries (i.e. Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Spain) have activities to facilitate intercultural dialogue, using non-formal methods and creative components (role-play, art, cultural activities).

Mentoring or coaching activities (often on a volunteer level) are also quite frequent in the countries as ways to bring about dialogue on intercultural matters, but often with the perspective of the local person as the bearer and mediator of knowledge. Still, this method seems to be quite successful in creating two way dialogue and exchange.

Many of the migrants also express that they have most of their intercultural knowledge and sensitivity from interactions (either positive or negative) with local friends and network and through the activities of the NGO sector.

Trainings for professionals and volunteers

The following section will outline the training offers for professionals and volunteers that are identified in the partner countries as well as highlight the main topics across the countries.

There seems to be two main groups of trainings available for professionals and volunteers.

The first are **competence development and trainings** conducted and/or initiated by government/public sector level. The aim of these trainings in general is to ensure that the professionals working with migrants are equipped for the tasks and challenges encountered. In some countries (like Slovenia, Bulgaria and Denmark), these types of trainings have become more available since the large influx of refugees culminating in 2015. This have created a greater need for trainings.

Many of the trainings are focused on a specific field or topic (like schools, health work, youth) and have a broader focus on knowledge, legislation and competences relevant for these types of professionals. As part of these trainings intercultural competences are often touched upon, but are rarely the main focus.

The second group of trainings are offers that are available in **projects and from the NGO sector**. In some countries like Bulgaria the piloting of projects are the first available trainings at all, where in other countries, the NGO sector is very experienced and specialised in conducting trainings in this field.

The disadvantage highlighted with projects is the discontinuity of the offers. Usually the trainings are available for the timespan of the project, but when the project is over, the trainings are stopped and the knowledge and offers are not taken properly advantage of.

Some of the intercultural **topics** dealt with in the trainings are:

- Stereotypes and prejudice
- Communication skills and obstacles
- How to do intercultural activities
- Intercultural dialogue
- Integration as a two-way process
- Ethical dilemmas
- Working on motivation
- Cultural mediating
- Awareness of privilege and biases
- Gender
- Diversity
- Dealing with aggressiveness and violence

The **methodology** used in the trainings identified are usually a mixture of presentations/lecture style knowledge transfer and more practical and interactive components. The latter can be simple tasks and exercises to put the knowledge into practice, reflections over own practice, incorporation and exchange of experience related to the topic, or small games to make the participants have some of the same experiences migrants have (i.e. being put in a context where you do not know the 'rules' of interaction).

Some of these trainings are available at a fee and some are free of charge (especially the ones conducted in projects are offered without costs).

Besides these two main groups there are also some intercultural competence trainings or elements in the educational sector and professional degrees, i.e. in the trainings for teachers of second language or degree for social workers. However, these seem to be more at the theoretical level.

In some of the countries the feeling is that there are trainings available, but they are sometimes not a match for the need among professionals. Or they might be too generic or not concrete enough, or the professionals simply feel that the training is provided by agents, who themselves have very little practical experience with the migrant target group, which makes them less credible.

It is worth highlighting that the majority of these trainings are aimed primarily at professionals, and not volunteers.

Intercultural competences



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This section of the report aims to first of all identify, what the two target groups define and perceive as intercultural competences, and secondly, to narrow down what the most essential ICCs are for both target groups.

As seen by the target groups

When asked to define what they believe intercultural competences or skills are, both groups (professionals/volunteers and migrants) mention interpersonal competences, such as empathy, patience and mutual understanding. Some see it not necessarily as a skill, but a sensitisation or awareness of your own behaviour in relation to others and something that is learned over time in day-to-day interactions. Mentioned by both groups is also the need for a two way process where both sides are actively involved.

For **professionals** in particular the central ICCs needed can be divided into three categories: values/attitudes, behaviour and knowledge. As the titles of the categories imply, the competences are related to first of all the mind-set of the professional/volunteer, secondly to the actions and the mode of conduct of him/her, and finally to the knowledge and awareness he/she has as a foundation for the work done.

For the **values**, it is especially mentioned as important to be open and respectful towards differences and cultures, being non-judgemental and understanding the value that lies in diversity. However, it is also underlined that there should be limits to tolerance, which should be found within the rules and values of the hosting society. Finally, the importance of meeting the migrant as an individual cannot be stressed enough.

When it comes to the **behaviour**, the ICCs mentioned as central are communication skills, meaning both the ability to express yourself correctly and precise in an understandable way but also the body language. The ability to explain culture and differences in a peaceful way and preventing conflicts are also crucial. Being patient, understanding, caring and showing empathy are important skills to create a relation on trust and respect, and active listening can be a help in that.

In addition, the professional/volunteer is seen as someone who should be able to facilitate intercultural understanding and interaction between others, trying to find the things that bring people together and not what separates them.

Regarding **knowledge** to be best equipped for the intercultural work, many agree that some basic knowledge on the culture of the migrants are beneficial, however it can be difficult to have detailed information about all countries of origin. It is also pointed out that it should never lead to generalizing. Some awareness of one's own cultural elements and possible prejudice is also an advantage. Keeping in mind that migrants comes with certain expectations to their new host country, but that some of these expectations are often not met, can also help the professional/volunteer when working to understand the actions and attitudes of the migrant.

In general, it seems for the professionals/volunteers that of the ICCs mentioned, the values and behaviour are more important than the knowledge. If you possess the intercultural values and your behaviour fosters positive interaction, then you can overcome many of the obstacles in the work – the knowledge gives an added value and can save some time and possible misunderstandings, but you can work around not having the specific knowledge.

For **migrants** the intercultural competences and skills defined by both themselves and the professionals/volunteers in contact with them are overall classified in the same categories. However, where

values and behaviour were seen as the most central for professionals/volunteers, for migrants the most important categories are key knowledge and behaviour. Attitude, (or values), is, while still important, less emphasised.

It is also mentioned by migrants especially, that ICC are less important than more existential issues and covering basic needs and skills to settle in to the host country (like finding a job).

The **key knowledge** defined as central to migrants when focusing on ICCs are mostly related to aspects of the host country. This includes first and foremost learning and using the language of the host country – this is underlined in all partner countries. This also includes aspects of expression, how to use body language and how to communicate accordingly to the traditions of the local community. The knowledge part of ICC also includes learning the rules and system of the country as well as getting acquainted with the local culture and traditions.

The ICCs on **behaviour** revolves around respecting the values and codes of the host country as a migrant, adapting your behaviour accordingly (i.e. being punctual and respecting gender equality), but also to still preserve your own culture/traditions and to share them with the local community. Another behaviour that is seen as needed is to be proactive and persevere in the integration process. This means that as a migrant you need to be the driver in taking contact and relations to the local population. Participating and creating a social network is perceived as key to engage in and learn to navigate the host country.

The final aspect of the ICCs for migrants is the **attitude** (values). Here it is underlined as important to accept gender equality, keeping self-motivation and to have an awareness of your own beliefs and cultural references. Migrants, as well as professionals/volunteers need to accept that integration is a two-way process and be understanding of cultural differences. However, the attitude category is less mentioned and no as deeply elaborated as the behaviour and key knowledge.

It is interesting to note that the ICCs assessed important for migrants are not fully equivalent to the ones for professionals/volunteers. There is a larger focus on cultural knowledge for migrants, which can be explained by the fact that they are resettling into a new society, and are expected to - and also want to - learn about it. Where being open and respectful is seen as an essential value among professionals/volunteers, it is more often described as a behaviour when it comes to migrants, i.e. that they respect the values of the country or that they are open towards the new society, etc. It is also interesting that there is a focus on the pro-activeness and perseverance of migrants in their integration, where this is not as significant for professionals/volunteers – only when expressed by migrants, who wish the local community (in general) was more open and engaged in social and networking with migrants.

Intercultural misunderstandings

When speaking of intercultural competences it is also important to speak of intercultural misunderstandings, if we see these situations as examples of interaction, where the proper ICCs could have prevented the misunderstanding. The following tries to look at these situations faced by migrants in order to analyse what is at play.

In general the migrants experience **stereotypes** that are based on ethnic/national prejudice, i.e. that certain nationalities work as market owners or cleaners, have no education or have specific personal characteristics. They feel these are based on the fact that people have superficial and limited knowledge about their

countries and culture, and generalise the little knowledge they have. Sometimes it is also based on fear and media stories, i.e. anxiety towards Muslims.

Migrants feel this makes it difficult for them to interact with locals, for example, they have experiences with neighbours refusing food they have offered or who will not invite them in, or are more generally reluctant to socialise.

On the other hand, there are stories of migrants having prejudice and stereotypical perceptions of their host country as well. This includes expectations of the country to be homogenous and the population to be the same, but also the view that locals are cold and reserved. Some migrants, who have been in the countries for longer periods point out, that this is not true, you just have to be a little more persistent getting to know them and interact in the ways locals do, i.e. joining an association and do volunteer work.

These situations suggest that prejudice and stereotypes are still a highly relevant topic to work with and tools to overcome these, as well as methods to become more aware of your own cultural biases and baggage should be a key component in intercultural trainings. The fact that migrants feel the people they are confronted with have little knowledge of their countries and cultures may indicate, that at least the awareness of this is more important than what was implied when the key intercultural competences were defined as described above.

Working with intercultural competences

This section focuses on describing how professionals and volunteers already work on intercultural competences with the migrants they meet. This is illustrated through the examples they give themselves, but also through the experiences of migrants. Focus here is on the work done with ICCs and for that reason other elements of the work they do is not included of this transnational report.

The purpose of this is to map some of the work already done, some of the experiences with applied methods and the situations of these interactions on interculture.

First of all the **situations/learning environments** described by the focus group participants range between formalised trainings (i.e. language courses), in-formal learning situations (for example information/educational offers conducted by NGOs) and non-formal situations (where focus can be on a specific activity, but where learning still occurs. Examples mentioned are classes, focus groups, small group work, parties/social activities, debates, home visits, individual meetings, field visits and cultural and sporting activities. This wide range of activities shows the many different scenarios, where the intercultural competences are both in use and can be learned/practiced. What is common for all of them is that they need to be facilitated.

The **methods or approaches** used by professionals/volunteers in these situations are also varied, but they have some commonalities. These are outlined in the following as essential points:

- A coaching inspired approach where you do with and not for the migrant
- Answering questions in a way that explains and mediates culture and using the questions as a starting point for discussions
- Training situations (like job interviews) to work on cultural codes such as behaviour, dress code, attitude, body language
- Presentations, mediating information, explaining culture and traditions
- Paying attention to and facilitating the interaction/relations between the people participating
- Adopting a professional position and not getting too personally or emotionally involved

- Trying to nuance the image of society, people, situations etc. in order to show the differences in society and people
- Encourage critical thinking
- Taking the goals and wishes of the migrant as starting point to work with motivation

It is mentioned several times that in most countries there are actually a lot of information available in different forms. So the need does not seem to be particularly of this type, but more on some of the other categories, especially when migrants are asked, **activities that involve both locals and migrants**, because that allows them to interact and engage socially. Activities that are most suited for this are in the in- and non-formal genre, like workshops on a common interest or cultural activities.

Specific needs for trainings on intercultural competences

Apart from the experiences and knowledge on intercultural competences that are already in use by the practitioners, the aim of the research was also to investigate the potential gaps and needs that are currently still there. This goes for trainings in intercultural competences for both professionals/volunteers and migrants.

For **professionals/volunteers** as described previously, there are already many trainings on offer, so the dimensions below are the ones specifically highlighted as still being needs.

The dimension of **patience** and having an **open attitude** are still highlighted as values that should be trained to the degree they can.

When it comes to more practical skills and competences there is a need to work on developing **communication skills**, especially the non-verbal communication skills. Another aspect of communication, where there is a need to strengthen the skills, is how to **deal with difficult conversations** and communicating about sensitive topics. This is something professionals/volunteers find difficult without sounding as if they are pointing fingers or imposing their own culture on the migrant. At the same time as culture should be respected, it is underlined that it is important to **set limits to tolerance** and what types of behaviour is unacceptable (i.e. violence against women). Also highlighted as important in this regard is competences in **conflict resolution** and prevention, but also in **creating trusting and equal relations**.

Regarding the personal engagement in the work, it is stressed, that it can very overwhelming work at times, and it can be necessary to **separate yourself** from the person you work with and be aware of what your own limits are. This might be especially true for people working as volunteers, where the relation towards the migrant can become very friendly and personal.

There is some indication of need in ICCs regarding being able to **organise and facilitate events** and activities that by themselves support intercultural exchanges, like educational events (cooking, culture, etc.) that involve both migrants and locals. Another side of these skills to act as a facilitator is the need to do intercultural mediation and have someone who can mediate for the migrant towards the community.

As previously touched upon, there might be benefits of having some training in and **knowledge of different cultures** in order to understand the background of migrants better.

The needs of the **migrants** as defined by themselves and the professionals/volunteers again differs as we saw when they defined the central ICCs.

For migrants there is a definite knowledge component, however it is described that there are already a lot of offers available in most countries that provide knowledge, also on cultural information.

There are indications that many migrants may need more competences in **reflecting on their own position** and what they themselves reflect, in working on **being non-judgemental**, as well as tolerance and respect are mentioned as important intercultural values to continuously train.

What is mentioned in most countries is the necessity for migrants to **adapt themselves** and be **flexible** in adjusting to their new environment. It is perceived as positive when migrants makes an effort to integrate and **take on the cultural codes** of the country. This is very much an attitude that can be difficult to learn, but the need for it can be underlined through different methods that illustrate the necessity of it.

Training in intercultural competences for migrants should also have a focus on the role of **motivation and pro-activeness**, which as mentioned before is central in being successful with settling in. This includes taking responsibility for your path and being persevere in your efforts.

Communication skills in general, besides learning the local language, is also a training need still relevant for migrants even if it is included in other training offers. The ability to listen and talk in line with the cultural codes as well as being able to express your thoughts and needs in a concise way also facilitates further engagement and interaction with locals. This is the final and maybe the most important need that migrants express, namely the need to meet and interact with more locals of the host country. This is what they find the most difficult often, but they see these relations as essential to learning about the country and the culture. Therefore, **tools and knowledge to engage with locals** are key ICC. They express a wish to have more events with locals that can promote socialisation, also learning situations which are common and where they would like to present their own culture as well and share their pride of it.

Training practicalities

In order to plan the training offers of the project as relevant to the needs and requirements of the target groups, this section tries to uncover what any potential barriers might be towards participating. This could be practical, organisational or simple regarding the expectations to content.

For the target group of **professionals/volunteers**, there is definitely a barrier in **time**. They are all busy with their daily tasks and find it difficult to set aside time for trainings. In addition, there are different opinion within this group, where some prefer a more intense 2-3 day training, where others find this unrealistic and would prefer more sessions, but scheduled over a much longer period with time in-between. And when it comes to volunteers, the needs are that the trainings are either evenings or weekends. So there is no perfect way to **structure** the trainings, it should be adapted to the chosen target group and the local context/situation.

The research indicates that a **mix of methods** would suit the professional/volunteers good. So including both formal, in-formal and non-formal methods, and should include both good practices, experience, examples and time for reflection over own practice.

Finally, there is the obstacle of finance for many professionals and volunteers, where some training offers are expensive and the reality in many organisations working with migrants is that they have little funding available.

For **migrants** the barriers for engaging in trainings are often related to **language**, they often are still learning the language or they do not feel comfortable speaking the local language in front of other people. Some migrants, refugees in particular have had difficult migratory paths, which have made learning difficult for them. Furthermore, it is sometimes the case that migrants in order to please a trainer/teacher are too **controlled in their reactions** and does not reach in their immediate way, which can make it difficult to know if they understand and adopt the knowledge/skills mediated.

Regarding **time**, the migrants also feel that they are often busy and have little time to take part in trainings. They learn language, they have jobs, etc. and they want training offers to be intensive and interactive.

Inspiration from best practices

As mentioned previously there are already training offers of different types and topics in the different partner countries that touch upon and teaches ICCs to some extent. The purpose of the best practice identification done by all the partner countries is to draw upon the experiences of these practices and take the important learnings to inspire this project. The focus has been on identifying best practices that have been successful, provided results and are transferable to other contexts.

Best practice from **France** and trainings on interculturality provides us with information about what is already content of the trainings for professionals when it comes to interculturality. Central in these trainings are:

- Acquiring proper knowledge on the different concepts in relation to culture and integration
- Emphasising not to overestimate our differences, but providing perspectives on those differences which can lie in interpersonal communication and perceptions of situations and values
- Considering and investigating the national (French) culture
- How to adapt to different modes of communication, and to defuse potential conflicts.

The knowledge of this practice provides us with more certainty, that the ICCs and need identified in the research are **valid and relevant** for the topic. Also, it highlights the **innovative possibilities** the ARTEM project can offer with the added focus on working on ICCs in contexts with both migrants and volunteers/professionals.

Experiences from **Slovenia** on developing a common model of education for migrants in a previous project (Auto Training for Immigrants), where they worked also with introducing ICC to migrants. What is worth highlighting about this practice is that it was based in the needs of the migrants, adapted to them, plus was based on their active participation. The trainings included basic information about the country, system, etc. (which are the essential aspects our research also showed that migrants focus on). But also there are specific training sessions revolving around culture, intercultural dialogue and communication for 1 full day.

Also from Slovenia there is examples of a training for NGOs working with migrants, where the focus was to build capacities to organise events on integration of migrants. The aim of this to generally strengthen the local environment to support integration.

These Slovenian examples underlines the need to work with both professionals, local communities and migrants. What the ARTEM project can take from this is that migrants might **need a more focused and extensive ICC training** lasting more than one day, as well as the **need to facilitate meetings** between

professionals/volunteers and migrants to create a mutual learning environment to foster integration in a two-sided process.

This point is also taken from the **Bulgarian** example of Bread Making for Inclusion, where bread-making workshops for both migrants and local communities were used as a facilitator for cultural exchange and interaction. These were very successful since they put migrants in a situation where they could train different skills (language and culture), but at the same time feel empowered, because they could use and teach something they were proud of (culinary traditions and skills).

What is also of value in this example is the **empowerment perspective** and the use of specific cultural characteristics as positive and worth sharing. This is an important aspect to take into the ARTEM training, remembering to value the experience and culture of the migrants and giving them a chance to feel proud.

Another way to empower is seen in the **Danish** practices of both mentoring and integration counsellors, where the methodology is always to do with, not for. So working towards goals is a matter of identifying the dreams and wishes of the migrant and supporting them in the steps that needs to be taken to reach this. As a professional/volunteer, your role is to guide the migrant through the system and culture, but you always include the migrant in the work and make them the main driver in the process.

This aspect of empowerment is important to ARTEM when it comes to the expectation to the migrant participants. Remembering that **they have dreams and motivation** and we need to support this, and not impose our expectations on them is key to **keeping them motivated** and responsible for their integration process.

As well as empowering and facilitating meetings, it is important to work on stereotypes and prejudice. As we have seen from our research this is central to support positive integration – and it is also a two-way process. The Antirumours project from **Spain** offers experience on what is important in that regard. The focus of this project was to disassemble rumours and stereotypes that hinders the intercultural process because they foster racist attitudes and discriminatory practices. Of interest here is the focus on communication, how we formulate and put things into words, and the discourses we buy into (or not). The micro level of the project proves that this is a topic that can be tackled in the face-to-face situations and from there spread to a wider community.

For the ARTEM project, this approach will be of value in the meetings between the different target groups, and the focus the trainings should have on **stereotypes and respectful communication**.

Going into specific methodology the best practice from **Austria**, the Cultural Flower, gives inspiration to how in practice the meetings between groups and people can be facilitated. This method uses a simple tool to familiarise a group with each other in order to create awareness of the similarities and differences. In this way the participants are encouraged to exchange, speak about themselves and embed their identity in relation to the other people of the group.

This is a great example of a simple way to **create intercultural dialogue** in a safe and equal manner, where the focus is on the individual identity and not the stereotypes and cultural prejudice that might be towards certain migrant groups.



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SUMMING UP

The analysis of the findings in the research can briefly be summed up in the overall conclusions below to support the conclusions made in the previous sections of this report:

- All countries have trainings including intercultural competences available for both professionals/volunteers and migrants (however Bulgaria is just recently beginning to)
- Intercultural competences is touched upon in all countries in the language training offers for migrants, however it mostly have the form of providing knowledge to the migrants on the local culture and is in some cases very superficial
- The offers from the NGO sector in the partner countries are also focused on providing migrants with information to tackle their life in the new country
- Some intercultural activities are offered in all countries (primarily in the volunteer sector), where intercultural exchanges happen and are supported
- In the trainings that incorporate intercultural competences it is often just a small element among a broader topic. Only very few training offers specifically focusing on intercultural competences exists in the partner countries
- Intercultural competences are perceived by migrants as being less crucial than more basic needs such as finding a house and job. Intercultural competences are seen as something they feel is important when they have been in the country for a while. This implies that they do not necessarily see how intercultural competences could help them in e.g. getting a job
- Migrants feel they mostly learn intercultural competences from network, friends and personal contacts, indicating that the personal relation is valuable in learning these competences
- The needs for intercultural competences are not perceived to be the exact same for both target groups. For professionals/volunteers the need is values, behaviour and knowledge (in that order), but for migrants the priority is knowledge, behaviour, values
- There is a need for more training for both target groups. The need for joint trainings is especially prevailing
- Common training needs for both groups are: communication skills, patience, openness and being non-judgemental, awareness of own culture in relation to other cultures, and being able to adapt to other people, situations and cultures

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is important to focus on facilitation of in/non-formal learning situations to create awareness about the intercultural competences that are learned. The reflection about the learning process is important for the individual to adopt the knowledge and transfer it to other situations.
- There is a need to make clear the importance of intercultural competences and why they are essential for the integration process of the migrant.
- The target group of professionals and volunteers have largely been treated as one category in this research. However, it is worth keeping in mind, that there are significant differences in their roles and positions. Volunteers often get a closer and more personal relation to the migrant, whereas there is often more of a power relation in place between the professional position and the migrant.
- There is a challenge in conducting projects in this field. There is a continuous pitfall in the fact that the projects are limited in time, so there should be a high focus on the sustainability of the project activities.
- A flexible module would suit the target groups best. This means a model that could be adjusted to the individual situation of the country and group of participants in relation to structure, timing, etc. This would also help ensure the sustainability of the model.

