



TEMPLATE FOR COLLECTION OF BEST PRACTICES

Code of the good practices

Country	Progressive number	Value chain code
Greece	05	E

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This template is a tool developed within the project Express: EXchange of Practices for Refugees and migrants' Self-entrepreneurship, an Erasmus + project, under Key Actions 2/Exchange of best practice. The aim of the project is to empower young migrants and refugees, creating and/or strengthening - where existing - supporting services for the development of self-enterprises by this target population.

The practices collected within the project will be shared with practitioners/organisations working with young refugees and migrants and will constitute the content of a Learning, Teaching and Training Activity to be delivered to partner organisations.

STEP REPRESENTED IN THE VALUE CHAIN FOR SELF-ENTREPRENEURSHIP

(please select 1 or more field in which the practice can be considered as representative. It is important to select the prior field, but others can be selected as secondary)

- A. Competence assessment of young migrants/refugees
- B. Training on self-entrepreneurship
- C. Mentoring scheme
- D. Informative campaign
- E. Networking activities**
- F. Support to access financing/social financing
- G. Other: (specify) _____

EXPRESS logo

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GENERAL “TECHNICAL” INFORMATION

TITLE:	Welcommon
COUNTRY:	Greece
TYPE OF INITIATIVE:	Private (NGO)
ACTORS:	Social cooperative “Wind of Renewal”; in the beginning of the initiative also the city of Athens and UNHCR
BUDGET:	Varies, difficult to provide figures
FINANCING SOURCE:	UNHCR-related programmes (but this financing was limited in time and stopped in 2018); Donations/Crowdfunding
DURATION:	2016-ongoing
DATE /YEAR:	2016
GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE:	Athens
SDG COVERED:	1-5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17
SOURCE:	Information by Wind of Renewal/ https://welcommonhostel.gr/
MOTIVATION/SELECTION CRITERIA:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Integrated approach to (labour market) integration of migrants/refugees- Strong empowerment approach in particular towards migrant women- Linking social action also with climate action



“CONTENT” INFORMATION

ADDRESSED NEEDS (VALUE/MAIN GOAL):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity-building/Training: Raising the employability of migrants/refugees - Labour market integration of refugees - Providing assistance to migrants/refugees (in particular migrant women with children) helping them to access decent housing, health care, education - Creating links between migrants/refugees and the local community
TARGET POPULATION/BENEFICIARY:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refugees (in particular more vulnerable groups such as mothers with children)
LOCAL CONTEXT:	<p>Since a number of years a high number of refugees come to/are blocked in Greece. In most of the cases infrastructures do not cover their basic needs. There is an urgent need to provide shelter, support structures and use good practices for social and labour market inclusion. Policies for integration and social inclusion are missing at the moment. The association “Wind of Renewal” therefore decided to use an empty office building in order to set up an innovative centre for hosting refugees and promoting their social and labour market inclusion. The association integrated the initiative in a series of activities promoting social and ecological transition.</p>
SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE/MODEL:	<p>Through the initiative “Welcommon”, the social cooperative “Wind of Renewal”, together with public and private (NGO) partners from Greece and other countries, was able to cover the basic needs of up to 200 refugees and promote their education, training and integration into the labour market.</p> <p>The WELCOMMON Hostel has a quite uncommon history. For many years the building was used as a public clinic. During the Greek economic crisis, in February 2013, the clinic was shut down and merged with a bigger hospital. Wind of Renewal began renting the building in August 2016. The social cooperative refurbished it in order to transform it into an innovative center – WELCOMMON – for the hosting and social inclusion of the most vulnerable refugees. The project was not simply meant to be for the refugees but with the refugees –working with them for their benefit, as well as that of the neighborhood and the local community. It became one of the most innovative and creative centers for hosting, empowering and socially including refugees, based on the idea of “empowerment through the community”. It was supported by the Municipality of Athens and the UNHCR, but also by many volunteers coming to Greece from different countries all over the world.</p> <p>Welcommon offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accommodation for 150-200 refugees, in 66 rooms, and additional; facilities for gatherings, tutorials, artistic activities, library, cinema etc.;



- food, in line with the guests' nutritional requirements and habits;
- psychosocial support, provided by 3 social workers and 1 psychologist;
- primary health care by a nurse, with respect for the cultural and religious sensitivities of the refugees;
- non-formal education/creative activities for adults and children: language (Arabic, English, German, Greek), science, mathematics, music and painting classes etc.;
- activities promoting social inclusion, through cooperation with organizations and services based in Greece and the relocation countries.

Moreover, two kindergartens inside the centre and one library were created. Visits to museums, galleries and parks of Athens as well as sports activities were organised every week.

Guests were selected by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, in the framework of its relocation program and with priority given to vulnerable groups, such as pregnant women, families with children, the elderly, disabled persons etc.

However, in 2018 support by the UNHCR and public authorities stopped, as authorities requested the refugees to be housed in apartments located in different parts of the city.

The association Wind of Renewal decided to start refurbishing the seven-floor facility and to transform it into a social hostel combining sustainable tourism with social and cultural activities and job integration for Greeks, migrants and refugees. The Welcommon Hostel is a social experiment, a centre of innovation and art, green and social economy and for social and employment integration. In addition, it serves of course as a hub where travelers can get insider' information to organize their trip in the city, discover interesting social events and groups, but also information on other Greek cities, Islands or villages.

Education and training programmes, social inclusion activities as well as essential health services were maintained.

The aim is also to create new employment opportunities for everyone in areas such as upcycling, ethnic cuisines, culture, green / cyclic economy, energy efficiency and others.

The hostel is run in cooperation with refugees who therewith receive hands-on training regarding management and maintenance of a hostel and social economy entrepreneurship more in general.

MONITORING PROCESS:

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IMPACT & RESULTS:

In the first phase the hotel hosted 150-200 refugees.



	<p>The interactive and participatory training courses that were/are organised involve(d) each day approximately 50 refugees and 10 volunteers.</p> <p>Since 2016, more than 320 volunteers supported different intercultural (education) projects and more than 800 refugees, migrants, locals and volunteers participated.</p>
SUSTAINABILITY/VIABILITY	<p>After UNHCR funding stopped, the initiative went on, but with a high dependence still on donations and other type of financial support, as well as on volunteering. It could, however, become viable within a short period of time, as the hostel starts to become more and more known and attract an increasing number of guests (among them also many groups).</p>
SUCCESS FACTORS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A very integrated approach linking integration into the labour market with skills training and social integration. - Focus on the empowerment in particular of women (providing them, through a childcare system, also the opportunity to take part in the different training courses, etc.).
NETWORKS/ACTORS SUPPORTING THE PRACTICE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGOs at Greek and international level - Local community - (international) volunteers - At the very start: the city of Athens and UNHCR
ASSOCIATED RISKS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial risks, as the hostel is not yet fully viable, but rent has to be paid, credits repaid, building and infrastructure to be maintained, etc. - Corona-related risks (the hostel had just started to receive an increasing number of groups etc. with good perspectives – also in financial terms – for the future)

Notes for collectors:

1. Please, catalogue your practice in the file name as follows: Country acronym _ letter of the value chain represented _ nr. of the practice _ name of the practice. (e.g. SE_A_1_aaa). This will support in the reporting phase.
2. Please indicate the working methodology used to collect the practice (e.g. interviews, web research, direct compiling of selected organisation, etc.)