



Pathways to Inclusion: Supporting Migrants in Their Journey

Author: **David Mizzi**

Moving to a new country is already hard enough – adapting to unfamiliar surroundings, embracing a different culture, and trying to build a new life. However, for migrants, the challenges don't end there. They face additional hurdles, such as finding employment, having their qualifications recognised, and even something as basic as opening a bank account, all complicated by language and cultural barriers.

Recognising these difficulties, the Human Rights Directorate (HRD) embarked on the Learning-Exchanging-Integrating (LEI) project, generously funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). Launched in 2019, the project aims to support migrants in their integration process by equipping them with essential language and cultural skills. 'Ultimately, without language and knowledge of the services around them, integration is going to be challenging,' emphasises Erika Borg, Senior Manager at the HRD.

The Faculty of Education at UM has been a major stakeholder by providing courses for migrants. As part of the LEI, the I Belong Programme organises classes tailored for migrants, including language classes in Maltese and English as well as cultural orientation sessions to help migrants become familiar with the local environment. Additionally, the Department for Inclusion and Access to Learning introduced a Diploma in Education for Cultural Mediation, which trains professionals in facilitating positive relations between migrants and host-country citizens.

In order to shape well-informed policies, it is essential to directly hear about the challenges faced by migrants. The LEI project organised Turning the Tables sessions, where migrants themselves led discussions and voted on the most pressing topics they wanted to be discussed. These included education, employment, documentation, detention, and political rights. Relevant experts

were invited to contribute to these discussions, empowering migrants with valuable information necessary for successful integration into local communities.

While there is always more that can be done, the LEI project proved to be crucial in providing migrants with the help they need. 'While integration is a complex thing, I see it as being made up of three parts. Migrants need to show initiative by learning some Maltese and a bit of the local culture. But they also need to feel welcomed by the local community and public sphere. Finally, the government needs to ensure that the right services are in place,' explains Borg.

The good practices and lessons learnt from the LEI project, along with the feedback received during the publication consultation process will form part of the second integration strategy. **T**

The project was co-funded by national funds (25%) and AMIF (75%).



Supporting migrants in their integration process through various programmes and workshops.

Top left: Photo courtesy of Mr Anthony Zammit

Top and bottom: Photos courtesy of Mr Saleh Mamme

Middle: Photo courtesy of Ms Maria Ellul

