

LION

Local Alliance for Integration

NEWSLETTER #3



During the last two years, Europe and particularly Greece have faced the largest refugee and migrant influx in their recent history. The need to integrate Third Country Nationals (TCNs) into society and promote their active participation in the Greek socio-political fabric (i.e. access to formal education, social care, employment, healthcare and intercultural coexistence), becomes urgent than ever.

The general objective of the LION project is to promote the active participation of third-country nationals (TCNs) in important aspects of local community and societal life and also enhance the capacities of local authorities in order to effectively address factors that lead to marginalisation and socio-economic exclusion of third-country nationals.



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CONSULTING MANAGEMENT TRAINING



CONTACT DETAILS

Project Leader:
George Koulierakis
Associate Professor
University of West Attica
School of Public Health
Department of Public Health
Policy
196 Alexandras Avenue, 115 21
Athens, Greece
Tel.: +030 213-2010169
email: gkoulierakis@uniwa.gr

www.allianceforintegration.eu

Let's all work together towards a peaceful coexistence and inclusive society

Let's all form the basis for mutual trust and common responsibilities

Let's bring change and hope to our societies

The expected impact of the actions implemented by the project is to effectively address the ongoing socio-economic exclusion third-country nationals often face while living in the host society, reduce disparities between local and migrant populations and secure an inclusive and cohesive society.

The creation of cooperation networks at the local community-level, where collaboration and reciprocity between the involved stakeholders will be accomplished, will play a pivotal role first in ensuring a smooth integration process, attaining the long-term impact of the actions undertaken.

PREVIOUSLY ON LION'S ACTIVITIES

During the first phase of the project, the scientific team identified best practices at EU and national level in the field of healthcare, social care, formal education, employment and intercultural coexistence through desk research and literature review. Then qualitative analysis followed in order to identify empirically the needs of TCNs through the implementation of focus groups and semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders and TCNs in Thessaloniki. This methodological approach not only served as a guiding tool so as to address TCNs' needs but promoted their active participation by suggesting effective ways towards integration in the host society. During the last year the following activities have been implemented:

Paving the way for the host society

- Overall 16 workshops were organised in Thessaloniki: (2) workshops for Frontline Practitioners, (4) for hospital staff, (2) for police officers and (8) for teachers. The aim of the workshops was to raise awareness on issues of migration to professionals who work with refugee and migrant populations, address the needs of TCNs, combat stigma and stereotypes and cultivate intercultural competence.

- A series of Info days with teachers, students, parents and pupils took place to inform them about the LION project, its network and its objectives, encouraging at the same time TCN's participation in the project's recreational activities, giving fruitful feedback and enabling their active participation into society.

Paving the way for TCNs

-A multidisciplinary team was established to provide ongoing psychosocial and legal support through one to one sessions and group sessions with TCNs.

- Three trainings were organised in June 2019 in Thessaloniki for long-settled TCNs so as to become mental health promoters within their communities, thereby acquiring knowledge on mental health issues and possible referral pathways.

-Since January 2019, the "Get to know my city" and "Get to know the people of my city" activities of WP2 have been aimed at supporting and offering opportunities for direct contact between TCNs and the local community. These activities took place gradually; by familiarising TCNs first with the city of Thessaloniki, its history and culture, then by informing them on the available opportunities (such as language courses) and finally, by getting to know the people of the city. TCNs from several age groups interacted with groups and associations in Thessaloniki and jointly organised activities on sports, art, music, culture, etc. On 6 and 21 June 2019, two events were organised in cooperation with WE; one intercultural coexistence festival and one intercultural sports festival aiming at promoting harmonious coexistence, social acceptance, solidarity, tolerance and mutual respect in an environment of celebration, cooperation, co-creation and mutual trust.

Promoting integration through consultation meetings and info days

-A platform was set up, where TCNs and local stakeholders from public institutions, NGOs, service providers and volunteers had met in various activities. They exchanged experiences, concerns and suggested potential solutions regarding TCN's access to equal opportunities. Consultation meetings and info days were organised in five key sectors: healthcare, social care, formal education, employment and intercultural coexistence. The team that facilitated these consultation meetings received important feedback from the participants, leading to the creation of useful informative materials (access guide brochures). The brochures were printed in 5 different languages (Greek, English, Arabic, Farsi and Urdu) and tailored according to TCNs' needs in Thessaloniki.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES AND NEXT STEPS

The project continues to propose and implement a holistic cooperative framework for social integration through active participation, creation of alliances and networking opportunities through the following activities:

- One open space meeting aiming at promoting intercultural coexistence will take place in September 2019 targeting local stakeholders and TCNs.
- The study on the impact of the project and its effectiveness is ongoing and will be delivered at the end of the project.
- Reporting on past activities and on project's progress will act as a reference point for similar projects and activities in the future.
- The scientific team is currently working on a scientific publication under the theme of best practices at EU and national level and will present and analyse the needs of TCNs in the field of healthcare based on qualitative research.
- Lastly, LION project communicates its ongoing and future activities through its website and social media accounts.



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