



START POINT

Citizenship Learning in a Shifting Society

PR1

Country Report Slovenia



Introduction

Today, with the free movement of persons, we can see that we live in cultural and logistical diversity. The principle of free movement helps, in particular, to reduce and facilitate administrative barriers of relocation. In the process of relocation, many experience discrimination based on citizenship, as it is believed that those coming to Slovenia from the EU member states are already integrated, while others, coming from non-EU member states still have to go through certain integration programs prepared by the state programs and NGOs.

Aims/Objectives of Report

The aim / objective of this report is to show the needs and differences that migrants face when arriving or moving to Slovenia. How the given situation is resolved at the state level and what types of systematic support they receive, how important is the influence of the non-governmental sector in creating support, development, solidarity and intercultural dialogue. Also, importance of language learning, social integration as well as exclusion and isolation resulting from not only social but also lack of economic integration.

Scope of Research

Since migrations in Slovenia started in 1992, when the local population first met war migrants from different parts of the Balkans. At that time, social integration programs were oriented towards language learning for adults and children, including children in schools and parents in various informal activities, camps, trips, group actions, volunteering. Since then, integration was seen as two-way process, involving in the international processes also the local population. Following the examples of good practice then and today, similar programs are implemented only under the direction of non-governmental organizations which, within the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Affairs, implement social integration and prevention programs under the guidance of professional social workers, cultural mediators, experts. In the research itself, we will look at statistical results, research, examples of good practice as well as possible suggestions for further improvements. Of course, we will mention the differences

experienced by immigrants / foreigners who already come from EU and non-EU countries. This research will also address the consequences of unsuccessful or poorly implemented programs that lead to isolation, social marginalization, stereotyping and discrimination.

Method

Desk-based research, where we will review literature, existing practices and further recommendations.

Scope of research

At the outset, it is important to mention that integration is a two-way process, that not only immigrants must integrate but also the local population. We see integration in several areas, linguistic, cultural and economic. These fields of integration are closely related and through the survey we will notice how the absence of one affects the absence of the other, isolation, exclusion and marginalization. If economic integration means breaking down barriers to achieving personal goals in achieving a standard of living, it means that without material support not only an individual or family can survive, but must afford to live in accordance with the material support they have. The most common problems of economic integration is that immigrants due to low-paid jobs, problems with recognition of their diplomas and education, not knowing workers' rights and the laws of the state, have less contributions and live mostly away from the city center in areas sometimes called a ghetto because they are far from the main events involving locals. To understand better the national Slovenian context on social and economic integration and prevention programs for immigrants, it is important to look at the Economic Migration Strategy. The aim of the Economic Migration Strategy is to define guidelines and measures for promoting immigration that will increase innovation and entrepreneurship, maintain or promote the competitiveness of the economy and increase human resources, ensuring the acquisition of work experience of the domestic workforce in abroad, brain drain by encouraging the circulation of professionals.

Now, if we take into consideration cultural and linguistic integration we will notice that for immigrants from the Balkan-speaking area, learning languages is not such a problem, even grammar is easier to understand. Albanian-speaking groups have difficulty not only learning new words but also grammar because Slovenian and Albanian

language have many differences. A special factor might be education they bring with them. Most language learning problems also stem from

the fact that they may not carry knowledge of their native language, which affects the acquisition of another/second language. The problem is also that there is not enough translator for other foreign languages, as well as the need for a cultural mediator, for whom there is still no formal education and qualification. Due to the lack of translators, (im)migrants rely on the help of their community, taking children or relatives with them to translate, which makes them less dependent and self-confident. This way they start to rely on others and abandon language learning. Integration programs offer learning of Slovenian in both formal and informal environments. It is possible to learn Slovenian individually and in groups, of course the user decides depending on his/her needs. Language learning is, of course, conditioned by the extension of the residence permit. Today, in the process of family reunification it has become a mandatory condition, and perhaps due to systemic pressure, language learning is becoming even more difficult.

Now let's see how the system supports linguistic, cultural, economic and social integration.

LEARNING THE SLOVENIAN LANGUAGE

Sometimes immigrants start learning language on their own, they either look for organization, association or even paid options to learn Language. On the other hand, an employer provides language courses, which is not obligatory and does not happen very often. Others attended courses organized by the municipality, mostly, immigrants attend courses organized by non-government organizations or associations which are for free and are more flexible, according to individual needs. Problems that arise are that it is very difficult to attend Slovenian language courses regularly due to long working hours, which consequently affects family and social life. There was also a proposal to organize a language course within the employer's company, as this would allow the course to be adapted to the morning and afternoon shifts of employees. Learning a language also makes sense while looking for a job, as you are supposed to have more of free time, but this is not necessarily required for the jobseekers but for active employment policies.

As a result, foreigner workers and immigrants have problems due to (too) poor knowledge of the Slovenian language in everyday life, documentation related, participation in working and living environment in Slovenia. Due to their ignorance of the Slovene language, workers and immigrants can be quickly excluded from conversation at work. Regarding paper work and administrative processes, immigrants also

go through inappropriate attitudes of officials towards them regarding their poor language skills. There is also a belief that certain cultures are still treated as inferior, coming from south and east and superior coming from west and north. When facing problems in everyday life, bureaucratic procedures and employment from other EU Member States rely on their social network, on their (Slovenian) partners, Slovenian or "original" friends and acquaintances, colleagues, and can come to the rescue landlords, people coming from Third World countries mostly depend on their community support.

LANGUAGE SUPPORT AT WORKPLACE

Most immigrants do not know rights as well as responsibilities. It often happens that in the labor market they are neither aware of their labor rights nor where to seek help. However, when they arrive, no one prepares them for that, as well as the fact that they mostly receive information from the circle of people they work with and socialize with. In this way, ignorance of the rights of workers, immigrants and migrants leaves them to find themselves in difficult problems that, due to the inability to solve, must sometimes leave the country, lose their jobs, health and pension insurance. The easiest way to integrate into working and social environment in Slovenia is with learning Slovenian language. Suggestion that we hear from immigrants and foreigners is that courses need to last at least 180 hours and also include material on Slovenia language and history, Slovenia culture, society, etc. Afternoon language courses are seen not to be effective because communication still exists only among classmates, and can help that much to be involved in daily conversation at work among coworkers.

(NON) RESTRICTING THE IMMIGRATION OF EU WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS

Recently, there was a survey conducted whether Slovenia should have immigration restrict, encourage or maintain workers at the same level as they are now. Restrictions would mostly refer if workers from other

countries (not from the EU, 44.3 percent), immigration of workers from the EU Member State (20.6 percent) should have the same possibilities while entering the marketplace if not having the same requirements when it comes to submitting visa and administrative work.

INTEGRATION INTO SLOVENIAN SOCIETY

Generally, opinion on the workers' integration is divided, statistic shown that workers coming from EU member states are well taken care off, workers coming from non-member states still need guidance and projects that could help them with integration. Most Member States have, at least to some extent, established labor market integration policies, addressing different groups of immigrants. It is noticed that the inflow of migration in 2014-2016 positively effected changes in integration policy by improving visibility of integrations programs into society and labor. These policies have also helped to establish new or better forms of cooperation, between different government bodies, stakeholders and services providers, introducing quality assurance and systematic monitoring mechanisms of integration. Finally, it was noticed that lack of integrations processes narrowly lead towards exclusion.

INTEGRATION STRATEGY

They are aimed at promoting the social inclusion of people with a migrant background, whereas there were set two integration plans. National Integration Plan from focused on education, training, employment and cultural integration, and the plan created instruments for measuring the results of integration policy. It included general objectives, timeframes and indicators to verify the achievement of the set objectives:

- optimization of individual support for young immigrants;
- improving the recognition of foreign diplomas;
- increasing the share of immigrants in the civil service of the federal and state governments;
- provision of health care and care for migrants;
- position of immigrant women;
- lack of social and economic integration can lead to isolation, discrimination, marginalization;

By the integration plan it was suggested that immigrants should have orientation courses and not just language courses which has been included in most of the integration programs not just in school,

institutions but also NGO sector. If the immigrant successfully completes the integration course, he/she gets the Certificate of completed integration course. The test is for free. Immigrants coming from third countries are obliged to participate in the integration course,

since they must meet certain preconditions in order to acquire the right of permanent residence in Slovenia. If an immigrant does not have his/her own income, he/she can apply or just sign for free classes that are provided in schools or in organizations, also financed by the state. From the first day of work, workers are entitled to the following:

- to vocational training, vocational schools and continuing vocational training;
- to housing, including social housing, or to private accommodation;
- language classes and social integration programs, which are for free;

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Social and economic integration affects identification integration, also. Economic identification affects other dimensions of integration. With increased isolation as one of the consequences of failed social integration, exclusion occurs. Exclusion and isolation reduce participation in society and initiating change. As a result, social ties and solidarity between different social groups become weak and migrants have nothing to identify with but only their already built environment, not the local one, and therefore less trust in it.

SITUATION OF MIGRANT WOMAN IN SLOVENIA

Due to demographic characteristics such as the aging population and the high employment rate of women, and the lack of state investment in public social welfare infrastructure, households are facing increasing pressures to provide care. Monetary compensation policies (e.g. care and assistance allowance) as an alternative to the organization of public services also contribute that migrant woman rather stay as a long time care givers for their families. Lacking working experience due to long-term care for the family bring migrant in position of being less paid and accepting low paid jobs in order to have any sort of occupation. All this, however, leads to more frequent employment of migrant in the gray economy, which is the cheapest source of workers.

Migrant families are it usually offered to live in less developed parts of cities because the price range is more suitable to their current financial situation. This is where we face immigrant communities being self-segregate. Because of these factors, immigrants tend to settle in lower- and middle-class housing and in neighborhoods dominated by residents with similar socioeconomic characteristics. Immigrants, for

the most part, live in areas where they meet people from their own ethnic groups. However, on a positive side community support positively impacts integrations processes in sense of belonging but brings negative impact in sense of social integration such as, speaking local language, knowing your local neighbors, being part of your wider local community.

Housing issues and distance creates problems for migrant women because most of them do not have a driver's license and cannot regularly attend activities aimed at their past time activities or social integration programs. The current situation among migrant women is that they face issues of ethical affiliation. In fact, with the issue of ethical pluralization where it is difficult to separate from own ethical belonging. Mostly, this causes the sense of losing their own identity, and being judged among the same ethnical group. Ethical pluralization is a great step that leads to the support of the wider community only by reducing the potential for social integration as well as the process of language learning. This problem itself leads to social exclusion not only due to lack of knowledge of the language but also to a sense of independence, dependence on others and free movement that will always seek support if not faced from the beginning. The next problem that arises is the problem of identity, where they remain strongly tied to the way of life they had in their homelands. Finding a new identity is a difficult process for them, especially if you take into the account that these are women already in their mature years who came with an already built identity as well as knowledge and skills. In this way, migrant women also experience the isolation and segregation that result from not addressing social integration issues from the beginning. Because of the responsibilities they have due to the family and the old way of living that binds them to their roots, integration processes are often rejected, or they take a very long time. Therefore, the position of migrant women in Slovenia is sometimes ungrateful because they mostly fight for a new identity and the fight against stereotypes and prejudices.

Issues/Problems

- optimization of individual support for young immigrants;
- language support should be adopted to working hours and supported by employer;
- differences among EU state members and non-EU state members on the work market and administration protocol;
- improving the recognition of foreign diplomas;
- increasing the share of immigrants in the civil service of the federal and state governments;
- provision of health care and care for immigrants;
- position of immigrant women;
- lack of social and economic integration can lead to isolation, discrimination, marginalization;

Research results: Good Practices (if applicable)

Good Practice 1

<https://www.szslo.si/integration-of-migrants>

Good Practice 2

<https://www.filantropija.org/en/>

Good Practice 3

<http://projectpal.eu/partner/association-of-developing-voluntary-work-novo-mesto/>

SURVEY ANALYSIS

Field-based Research

The majority of people who participated in completing this questionnaire said they agreed to participate in the survey.

These were mostly adults between the ages of 20 and 30 who wanted to be involved in the social and political life of their country. Most of them were members or beneficiaries of programs of voluntary organizations, non-governmental organizations, while in a smaller number of educational institutions of separate and independent sectors. When asked if the target group has access to social activities, we received mixed answers, half of our respondents think they have while the other half think they do not have as much access to participation. Our respondents were not very familiar with good practices that encourage the participation of target groups in social and political activities of the state. They are of the opinion that most people living in larger cities have access to this information, and that the language in which this information are published is also a problem. In the analysis, we also learned that almost half are of the opinion that such information is almost never obtained. The majority of the target group agrees that good practices are not to the liking of the general public. Most NGOs are responsible and offer examples of good practice, in a very small percentage, the target group responded that they heard about those good practices from government institutions and human initiatives. The main obstacles to motivating knowledge and participants were found in the lack of leaders, availability, resources, motivation and educated people. The main way of disseminating information on how to cooperate and engage in social activities was found in social networks, personal contacts and in the traditional way. They also mentioned that the lack of socializing with the local population also affects the dissemination of information. To a lesser extent, there were barriers such as access to technology and resources. When asked what they would do if they were responsible for raising awareness of the problems of the target group's participation in decision-making processes, respondents said that they would like to encourage programs that would fund organizations, introduce new measures and initiatives. Our respondents answered that they are not active participants in democratic processes, they are mostly female and most of them are in the age group between 36-45 years, living in Slovenia.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Key results of research (short summary)

The review provided an overview of developments in the field of integration of migrants and persons with international protection. It builds on the comprehensive monitoring of this field, especially in the field of asylum, which is carried out by various non-governmental organizations within the framework of various projects financed by the Republic of Slovenia and the European Commission. On the other hand, NGOs are the ones that carry out a lot of supportive integration activities. The general observation is that still a lot has to be done in the field of integration as a two-way process. There are many moments and elements that affect the success and efficiency of integrations, and in a way, they indicate a significant fragmentation of activities and the absence of a stronger coordinating function. Therefore, it is extremely important to include all actors and stakeholders who have something to contribute in the decision-making processes in Slovenia. The following is a collection of recommendations based on requests expressed by NGOs. For the effective integration of migrants and persons with international protection, the following recommendations need to be implemented:

- Slovenia needs to create a comprehensive system of support for integration, which will work both ways: offering support to immigrants and the local population.
- Establishment of local coordination in the field of integration, which will include all actors in this
- field (social work centers, employment services, schools, kindergartens, health centers, employers' representatives, etc.).
- Extending the entitlement of immigrants to an intensive orientation program by involving local actors in the field of integration.
- Design of adapted Slovenian language learning programs, especially literacy programs, in the form of individual lessons.
- Development of education for intercultural mediation at the level of the educational program and inclusion in the national professional qualification.

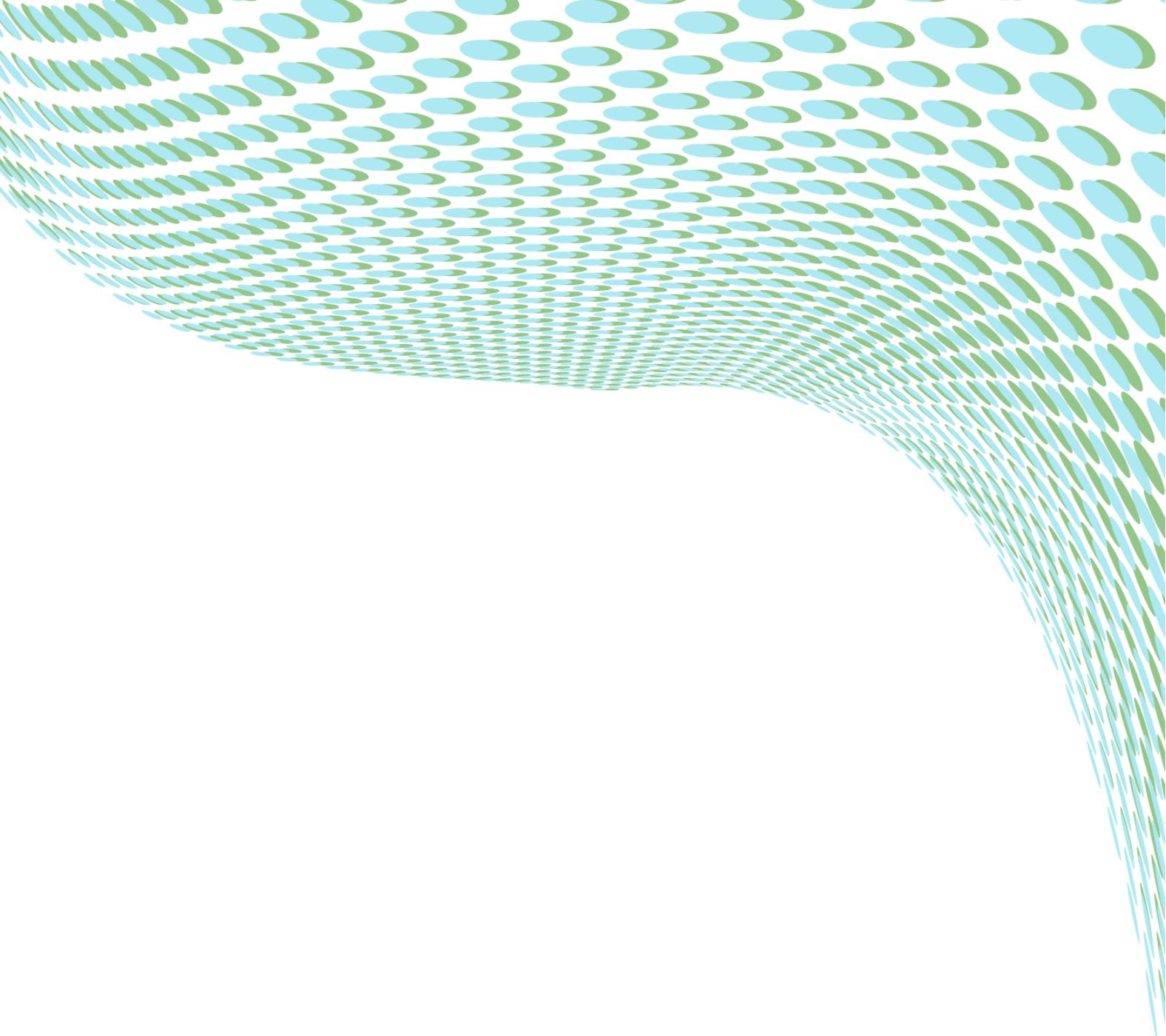
- Establishment of a program for strengthening competencies in the field of intercultural mediation in integration actors at all levels - from national to local.
- Design of community-based programs to support dispersed accommodation opportunities to facilitate the accessibility of integration support instruments.
- In addition to enhanced activities for learning the Slovenian language, it is necessary to create special vocational guidance programs and adapted vocational education programs (especially in deficit areas).
- Establishment of a mechanism for raising awareness and informing employers as well as strengthening their competencies for intercultural communication.
- Applicants for international protection must be granted faster access to the labour market, from the current nine months to a maximum of three months after applying, in order to give them the opportunity to work legally and to find employment.
- Carrying out a thorough analysis of the reasons and circumstances that affect the social activation of individuals.

Recommendations for future action (always in relation to START POINT's aims):

- exchange of good practices
- study visit or internship in other organization to get more practice
- study case
- voluntary work

Resources:

- https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/integration-practice/migrant-participation-project-slovenia_en
- https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-slovenia_en
- <https://rm.coe.int/168008b14f>
- <https://gcap.global/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Faces-of-migration-2020-ENG.pdf>



Center for Social
Innovation



Co-funded by
the European Union

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Project no. 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000026469