



The power
of **kindness**

AVAIL

Amplifying the Voices of
Asylum Seekers and Refugees
for Integration and Life Skills

Project summary



This project is funded
by the European Union



This project is about participation. It's a project about working with asylum seekers and refugees to rethink integration.

Services and policies all too often risk being designed and determined without effectively listening to asylum seekers, let alone actively letting go and enabling refugees to develop the services and policies that impact them. It is common to see media headlines that express sentiments around the problems of refugee forced migration and yet solutions designed to enhance integration rarely embrace the diverse skills, qualifications and experiences of refugees themselves as part of the solution.

This project aims to create routes in which people with lived experience can have an impact at different levels – services, strategy and policy, and broader society. Built on principles of co-production and participation this project brings together four diverse countries along the European migration routes– Latvia, Italy, the UK/Wales, and Ireland. Over a two year period in each country we will explore and learn from different ways of involving people with lived experience, including:

- **Refugee led** and co-facilitated orientation programmes in Wales. Using a Peer Educator model, we will be designing and delivering an orientation and lifeskills service for newly arrived asylum seekers.
- **Community buddying** programme in Ireland and Latvia. We will be testing the impact of buddying systems between members of host community and newly arrived asylum seekers on integration.

- **Power of radio.** In Italy we will be establishing a radio station led by refugees for newly arrived people seeking protection with an aim to reach over 300,000 people.
- **Vehicle of sport.** We are embracing and celebrating the benefits of sport as an integrative tool. We will establish refugee football teams in Italy to impact 2,000 people through local tournaments.
- **Refugee led language learning.** Services for refugees? Think again. This part of the programme will enable host communities to learn from qualified refugee language teachers their preferred choice of refugee languages.
- **Influencing strategy.** We will develop a VOICES Network in the UK that will train and support groups of asylum seekers in changing minds (through working with the media), policy (through advocacy work) and practice (through Red Cross service improvement) in Wales, Scotland, England and the UK as a whole. We will also be enabling refugees to design, facilitate, and lead a conference in October 2019.

These models will start in the Summer of 2018 and run until February 2020. All models will be tested with an underpinning question – what impact do participatory models have on integration?

If you want more information please contact Fiona Harvey, AVAIL Project Manager at fionaharvey@redcross.org.uk or visit www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/how-we-support-refugees/avail-project