

INTEGRATING REFUGEES THROUGH YOUTH WORK ACTIVITIES



together
refugees & youth

Policy Analysis
Research quality training Evidence monitoring

POLITIKOS TYRIMŲ IR ANALIZĖS
INSTITUTAS



Erasmus+



INTEGRACIJOS
CENTRAS

IBRODOTO



Active
Youth
Erasmus+ projects

EE BALTIC
YOUTH
WAY

Research on youth work
role in supporting social
integration of refugees



Contents

- Overview of the research
- Opinions of:
 - Youth workers
 - Youngsters
 - Refugees
- Opportunities & challenges
- Recommendations

Implementation of research: July – September 2016.

Location of research: Lithuania and Latvia.



The **aim of research** is to examine the possibilities of integrating refugees through youth work activities in Lithuania and Latvia.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, qualitative research strategy was chosen.

Literature review: already done researches on integration of refugees as well as documents and strategies applied on the European level.

In-depth interviews with:

- **Representatives of the organizations** that are working with refugees on daily basis.
Youth workers
- **Young refugees (6 interviews)** via the social workers that are working with them directly.
- **Focus groups:** youth centre users (14 - 21 years old) and young people from youth NGOs (17 - 29 years old).

Opinion from representatives of the organizations, that are working with refugees on daily basis

Key factor for successful social integration –
MOTIVATION TO STAY



SOCIAL TIES

If there aren't...

... is key factor to leave.

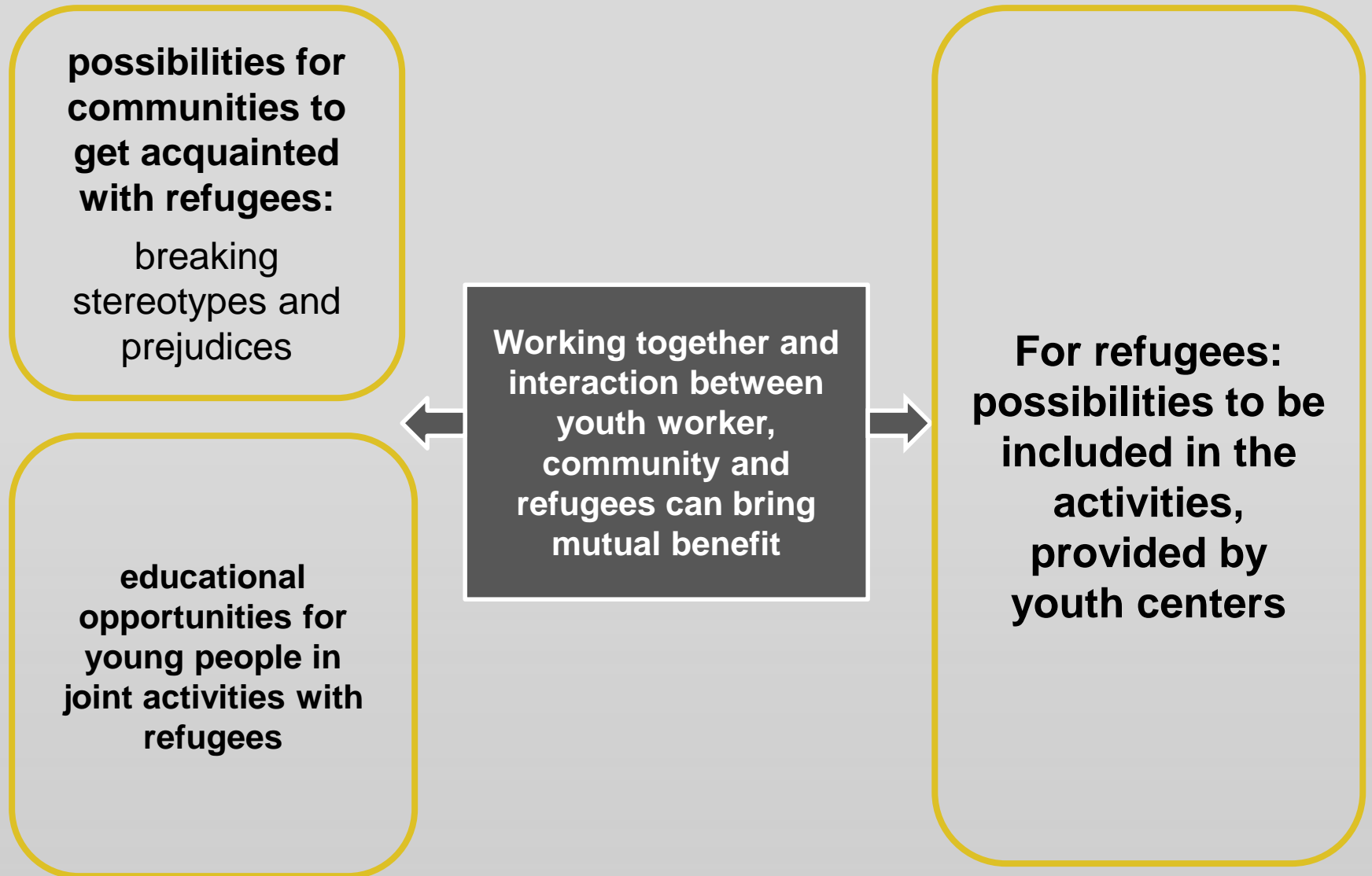
If there is

... helps to feel social safety.

... helps with finding accomodation and work.

Success of integration and creating social ties are a lot more frequent among young people.

Opinion of youth workers



Opinion of young people

Concerning cultural differences young people are:

cautious about the different norms that exist in the societies and if the refugees would be able to adjust to the rules and laws of Latvia or Lithuania



very **curious** about the cultures of the people who are coming to their countries and are expressing their positive attitudes towards variety and learning about them

Respect of cultures need to be both-sided

Proposed 3 types of participation in youth centre or youth NGO

Young refugee as a **service user**

- to attend organized events
- to come for consults regarding adjusting to a new city, knowing the opportunities for studies or work
- to be represented as any other foreigner (for example in student unions)

Young refugee as a **resource**

- to involve them into the events as special guests
- or if the refugees would decide to join the NGO, to use their knowledge and experience to help other refugees

Young refugee as a **member** or **co-worker** of an NGO or an **attendee** of a youth centre

- according to their interests
- to join in the regular activities of youth centre
 - to join the organizations and be accepted
 - to be as co – worker according to their knowledge and experience

Thoughts from refugees

First to survive...

willingness to join offered activities depends on their situation:

- if they are single or coming with family,
- do not have psychological problems,
- already are studying or working,
- have no problem with housing,
- etc.

...and then participate

Participation in proposed activities has to have a **clear added value for their integration** in order to support their motivation to be active.

They would like playing games, watching movies, participate in cultural evenings or trips, cooking, making crafts, creating websites (learning how to do it), playing musical instruments, etc.

*Refugees **would like to be invited** to join the organizations or youth centres as they are aware of the public opinion and do not feel too confident to simply appear*

INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Young refugees need to be treated as any other young people who have their interests, opinions, problems, etc.

- Refugees are coming from different background, have difficult experiences and are facing more complex challenges that need to be addressed individually.
- Cultural differences need to be taken into account.

INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Youth organizations are open for new members or new employees with migrant background, and see them and their experience as valuable recourse.

- Active participation in civic life might be not attractive if young refugees do not have similar experiences in their native countries.
- Joining NGO is not on top of their priorities.
- Different working culture.
- All information about organization, all documentation and activities are held in national language.

INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Youth centres and youth NGOs are a space to improve national language.

- Some activities can take longer to explain or to implement. Some youngsters can be unsatisfied about this situation.
- Some activities will have to be adapted to the special needs of foreigners.

INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Young people from youth NGO's see themselves as a resource to raise awareness of refugees in their communities.

- Organizations might be losing their regular scope of activities;
- Refugees don't want to be public and want their privacy to be respected.
- Communities in small towns can be reluctant.

INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Prejudices and stereotypes existing in the society can be changed through interaction with young people

- Refugees don't want to go public and want their privacy to be respected, so they might refuse to cooperate.
- Young people who have more international experience might not be interested in such activities.

INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Youth centres and youth NGOs are offering space and different possibilities for refugees to build social ties in local communities.

- Bullying is a possibility.
- If the first contact is negative, future interaction would be a lot more difficult to encourage.
- Language barriers.
- Cultural differences.

INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Youth NGO's as a platform to implement ideas and receive support.

- Complexity of such activities is requiring having similar experience and high motivation.
- Cultural differences.

INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Youth organizations can provide various services

- Language barriers.
- Doubts about professionalism of provided services.

INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Youth workers have most of the competences req. to work with refugees

- Lack of attention for special training.
- In the process new challenges can appear and youth worker might not get relevant support.

INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Youth organizations can be a key actor for different initiatives with media

- Refugees don't want to go public and want their privacy to be respected.
- Lack of good examples.
- Communities in small towns can be reluctant.



RECOMMENDATIONS

For:

Youth workers

Youth centres

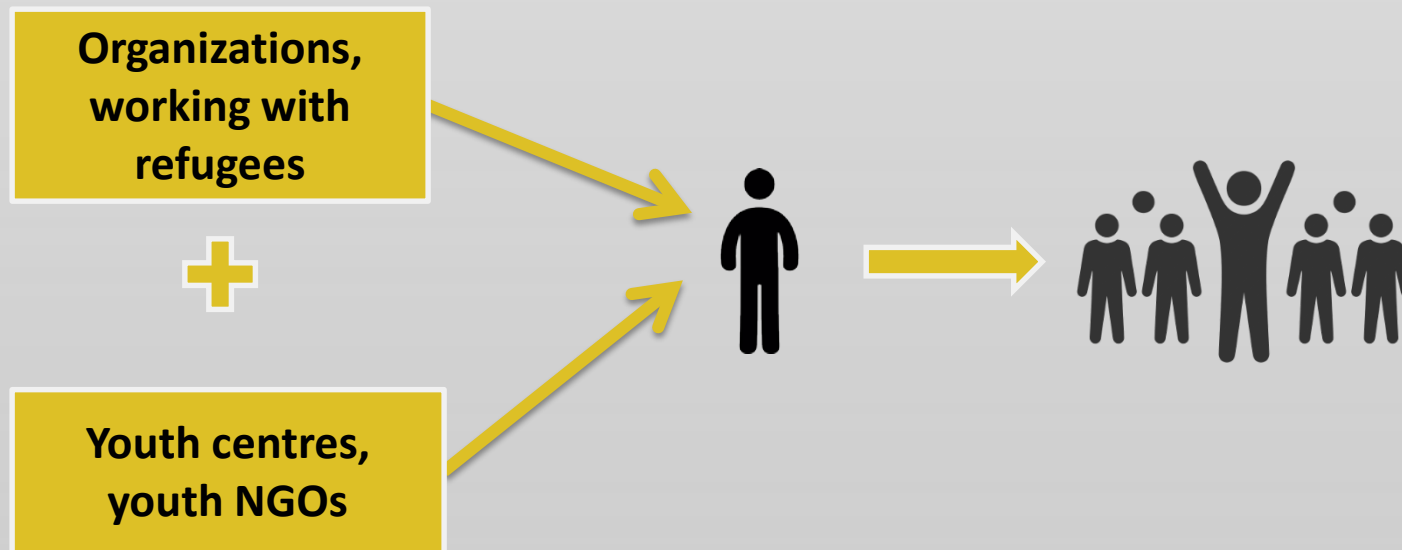
Youth NGOs

Young people

A **closer cooperation** between youth NGOs, youth centres and the organizations, that are in charge of the socialization of refugees in the country **needs to be encouraged**.

Youth centres and youth NGOs could involve people of migrant or refugee background into activities where they could meet and socialize with locals.

Using already existing activities **young people** should contribute to building up the social ties between refugees and the local community.



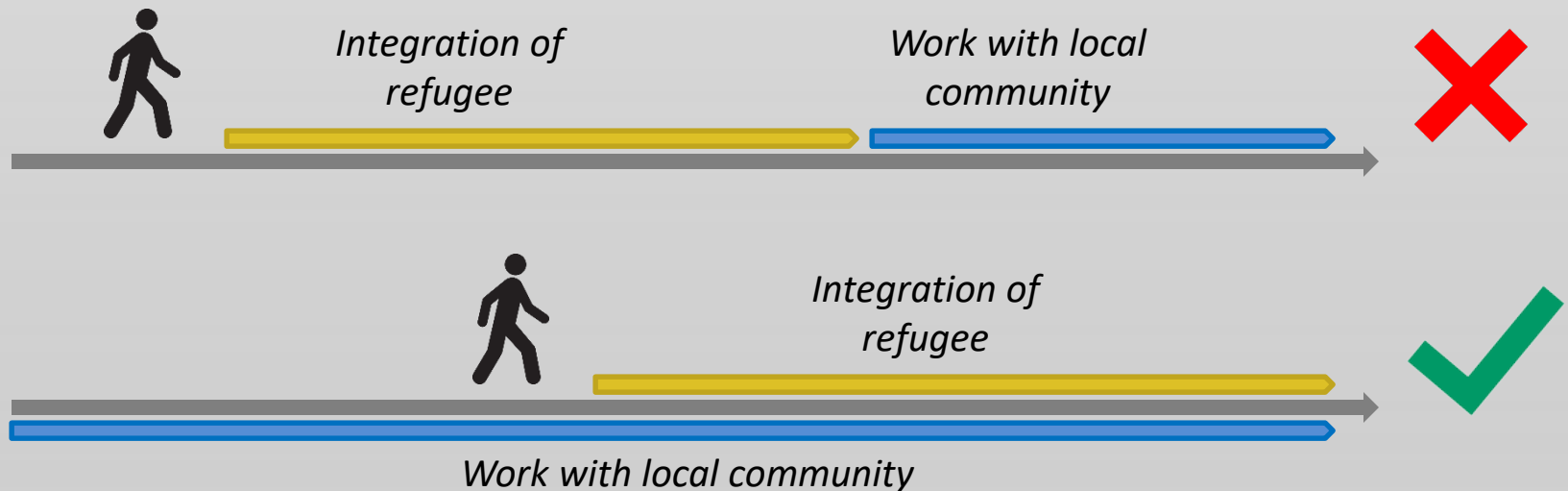
Two-way integration models have to be implemented.

There are two groups of beneficiaries:

- ✓ *those, who are refugees or asylum seekers and*
- ✓ *those, who are members of the local community.*

NGO's should be working towards local communities to be more tolerant.

Youth workers should take into consideration that even though they do not have to "put out the fires" and start working with young refugees now, they should be dedicating the time and start preparing young people for interaction and living with others.



Before starting work with social integration of refugees...

Youth centres and youth NGOs

- Have to assess their own capabilities, resources, etc.
- Organizations shouldn't depart extremely from *what they do the best*. "Hunting for finances", where additional funds are allocated can lead to distortion of institution.

Open youth centres

- Must to think out well each element of interaction.
- It should start with the simplest activities, giving time for refugees to do nothing, not to put pressure and high expectations.

Youth workers

- Need to receive training on working with young people from refugee background and including them into activities with local youth.
- The training should include intercultural learning, human rights education, diversity, work with groups, conflict management, and interfaith.

THANK YOU!