



**Cultural learning experiences and experiential learning
paradigms for social and labor integration of
disadvantaged young migrants**

Elaborated by: ARSIS



ARSIS, ASSOCIATION FOR THE SOCIAL SUPPORT OF YOUTH



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1. Introduction for group discussions

1.1 Criteria:

2 groups: 1 of young migrants / 1 of professionals

Duration: minimum 1 hour each

Date: between December 2022 and March 2023

Criteria groups:

Group 1 / Age for young migrants: 25 -35 years old

Group 2 /Professionals: institutions, experts, social workers etc.

Number of persons: minimum 6 persons in each group

Focus on the needs: 4 to 5 questions.

Format: open for discussion with 1 moderator





2. 1.Group Discussion: Young migrants

2.1 Purpose of the group discussion

This template functions as the basis of analysis for the Focus Groups that took place in Greece (ARSIS).

The aim was for participants to express their own perspective on their stay in the country, their experiences, their needs, their degree of integration in Greece, suggestions for improvement in order to gather the necessary information according to which a comprehensive online tool will be created that will promote active citizenship through creative learning, to enhance labor market integration (context).

2.2 Context

Place: Athens, Paraskevopoulou 3, Sq. Attikis, **Adama Job Center - Caritas Hellas**

Date: Friday 31/3/2023

Number of persons: 5

Profiles of the group and intermediate organizations: The connection with the young refugees was made with the cooperation of the association Caritas Hellas, which aims to create, implement and carry actions and programs of humanitarian and charitable content, as well as the development of the spirit of solidarity within society. With the support of the labor counsellors, we organized a discussion group with 5 French-speaking refugees, coming from the Congo (aged to 30 - 40 years old - 3 women and 2 men).

In particular, these people have lived from 5 to 10 years in different parts of Greece, have received an asylum card, are in the process of renewal or are still waiting for it to be issued. They have also passed the first integration phase but have not been fully integrated. A French-speaking interpreter participated in the discussion in order to accurately convey the perspective/statement of the participants.

Tools used (Technical, material etc): The discussion took place in person by filling in all the necessary documents such as the list of participant and the consent form. In addition, participants were given a short briefing on the Life in EU programme and the indicative questions to guide the discussion.

2.3 Topics

Topics:

The topics discussed were the following:

- Personal questions: age, job and type of job, residence, how and when they arrived in Greece, country of origin, family, studies.





- First years in Greece, whether they worked, where they stayed (in a camp or in a house through a program/organization), whether they attended Greek or English language courses, how they were supported by the Greek state and for how long, asylum card and procedures for issuing other legal documents (waiting time, whether it was issued or still waiting).
- Difficulties / fears they faced (e.g. public services, with language, in hospitals, difficulty in finding a job) and dreams / needs (refugee training in language, job skills) they have to feel socially and work-wise integrated in the country.
- In addition, they proposed changes to improve their living conditions, for their better and more effective integration, socially and in the labour market.

Needs that have been highlighted:

Through the open discussion that took place, the following needs were highlighted:

- the need for continuous support from the state
- educational support: seminars, language learning (English / Greek), skills enhancement, recognition of degrees from their countries of origin.
- Need to find a job with a good salary, good working conditions, finding a job based on their existing educational background.
- Easier and more direct procedures regarding legal documents

2.4 Conclusions

Insights:

It seems that for a better social and work integration it is necessary to have secured housing, some financial and a continuous educational process to enhance their skills.

It is necessary to cover basic livelihood needs, which despite the fact that refugees have been living in Greece for years, have not been met. Through this, refugees will be able to focus on subsequent educational activities that will help them to become active citizens and empower them in the labour market.

Another conclusion identified is the need to create user-friendly educational tools which will help them to better understand the country they live in, networking and create employability opportunities.





3. Group discussion 2: Professionals

3.1 Purpose of the group discussion

The purpose of the discussion group with professionals working with young refugees is to create a comprehensive picture of the training needs of citizens.

3.2 Context

Place: Athens, Greece

Date: Friday 24/2/2023

Number of persons: 7

Profiles of institutions/projects: The following professionals participated in the discussion group:

- A social worker (1) from “**ELIX - Conservation Volunteers Greece**” has been involved in the creation of a workshop that aided young refugees in creating a CV and general work readiness for adulthood.
- In addition, two work consultants (2) from the organization “**Caritas Hellas**” participated (The purpose of Caritas is the creation, implementation and realization of actions and programs of humanitarian and charitable content, as well as the development of a spirit of solidarity within society.) More specifically, the job counsellors work for “**Adama Job Center**”. The **Adama Job Center** is an online platform (adamajobcenter.crs.org), which connects refugees seeking employment in Greece with potential employers throughout the country. The initiative comes to support the work of the **Adama Center** in Athens, which provides face-to-face and remote employability and social services to asylum seekers and refugees in Greece. The platform also includes a section with available training seminars or workshops, in order to gather this kind of information and encourage private sector companies and other actors to offer personalised training opportunities to refugees, which will equip them with more skills when entering the Greek labor market. The platform will be progressively updated with new jobs, candidate profiles and training programmes.
- In addition, a psychologist and coordinator (1) of the “**ESTIA**” project (Housing programme for international applicants) participated from ARSIS, where she was in charge of the social center set up for accommodation, integration, psychosocial support and job counselling.
- In addition, one teacher and one interpreter/educator (2) from the “**ACE - All Children in Education**” project were involved, responsible for school support, integration and preparation of young refugees and their preparation for adult working life.
- The last participant who joined the discussion group is the Social Scientist (1) who is project manager of “**Civilhood**” project in Greece, which aims to strengthen social and professional skills of unaccompanied minors in order to facilitate their access to the labour market and their rights as citizens.





Tools used (Technical, material etc): The professionals' discussion group was conducted in a face-to-face session via the online platform zoom. To better inform the participants, material was distributed with information about the project (purpose, objectives, duration, countries and organizations involved), information about documents to be filled in (List of participants and consent forms) and finally information about the photos to be taken as evidence of the project.

3.3 Topics

Topics: The discussion was essentially an exchange of experiences from professionals of various specialties who have been working for years with young refugees. More specifically, to report on *difficulties* they have encountered in relation to the procedures that exist in Greece regarding refugees, especially in their integration, in their professional life and in their general effort to be educated about citizenship, and how they have dealt with them. *Tools* they used to work with refugees (applications, training processes, cooperation with institutions) and their opinion/ideas on practices that are more efficient in preparing a structure for the citizenship education process that is more responsive to the needs of young refugees.

Concerns identified: There are the following axes in which problems were observed: In terms of *bureaucracy and services*, issuing legal documents for refugees were difficult or delayed. Delays in appointments with public services and difficulty in finding an interpreter/mediator. Quite often the system is not helpful with the refugee population.

Regarding the *employment context* of refugees there is often a lack of a proper link between the skills of refugees and the labour market and what employers are looking for. In addition, there is a violation of the working conditions that were agreed in the beginning between employers and workers, such as unpaid working hours, non-respect of agreed working hours and wages.

Finally, since a refugee found a job through an organization/agency that helped him, there was no one responsible to monitor the progress and development of the refugee, no one to assist him/her on their working life.

Regarding the *educational part*, the young refugees did not know basic of their social and labour rights and life skills in general. Regarding language learning (English and the language of the host country) it was reported that they spoke little or no English.

3.4 Conclusions

Insights: Through the discussion group of professionals, the following needs and observations emerged:

- The need for continuous training of refugees through the assistance of online applications and parallel human support (for example, educational tools for learning English and Greek to be translated into their own language, social and employment





- rights and obligations and acquisition of life skills, understanding the host country culture) and general empowerment of refugees.
- Development of the training based on the themes of history, politics, social affairs, law and rights, values, religion, geography, culture, and customs of the host country through creative platforms and internet applications.
 - The need for an «umbrella of services» to guide them and link them to the labour market.
 - In addition, it is important to have a hub that refugees can contact after their social and labour integration to report problems/difficulties and provide feedback on the whole process.

Social media post of group discussion:

Focus group with professionals:

- <https://arsis.gr/life-in-eu-proothisi-tis-energoy-symmetochis-t/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/arsis.gr/posts/pfbid0mjQohKk4woM5K8C98dtEe3La2tbbyMRIFd2VYPq8SRQNWjPYCBpgZxp3cCwZPgyNI>
- https://www.instagram.com/p/CqX48SUoFJ8/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7046824471638216704>
- <https://twitter.com/ArsisNgo/status/1641059716527714304>

Focus group with young migrants:

- <https://arsis.gr/life-in-eu-cultural-learning-experiences-and-experiential-learning-paradigms-for-social-and-labor-integration-of-disadvantaged-young-migrants-proof/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/arsis.gr/posts/pfbid025kE1ria8LGLWpfxdsZdnMGaCtjnTKeUdxz2qHk3zZLx9SjDqCuhJiuXEyAVKLhBl>
- https://www.instagram.com/p/Cqaltqll6JV/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7047204748390731776>
- <https://twitter.com/ArsisNgo/status/1641439631127478274>





4. Self-assessment

4.1 What were the strengths of your group discussion?

The focus group of professionals consisted of experienced refugee workers, who over the years had been through various positions and civil society organisations. In more details, they were familiar with refugee legislation, the specificities and needs of this population and the host society - country. Regarding the people who formed the group of young refugees, they were people who had lived for several years in the host country and knew exactly what their needs were, what they were asking from the host country on a social and professional level. They were sociable and open to share their experiences and what was on their minds.

4.2 What were the improvement for your group discussion?

Regarding the group of young refugees, as time went by they seemed to be more direct in their answers, giving precise and detailed answers, justifying each of their answers.

Regarding the group of professionals, the discussion consisted of experienced professionals who have been working for years in the refugee field, they knew their work in depth (legal framework, work rule, rights) and there was a fruitful and productive dialogue exchanging views and delving deeper into the topic of discussion.

In addition, different professional specialties came into contact, shared problems they face, realized that the problems are common and that a common path must be charted in tackling them and strengthening them

4.3 How easy was it to prepare the group discussion?

Preparing the discussion groups was not easy. As for the professionals, the only problem was finding a common day and time but it was overcome because it was done remotely through the zoom platform and it went very smoothly, creatively and productively.

Regarding the group of young refugees, due to the specificity of this population it was very difficult to find a day and time as well as to find people who speak the same language and to coincide their availability with the availability of the respective interpreter.

4.4 How will you use the results in your organization?

The results of these discussions are proving particularly important as we explore the needs of both professionals and young refugees and can be better prepared for the future. In particular, we can better train workers, strengthen their existing skills and reinforce them with others they may not have as the data and the needs that arise are constantly changing.

Similarly, the needs of the refugee population direct us to create and implement new practices that will be more effective for their social and labour integration.





4.5 Other comments

Through this process it became clear that it is important to organise more frequent discussions with professionals and young refugees and to highlight problems, good practices and corrections regarding the integration of refugees in the host country. It is a guide for the management of this population not only for organizations working with refugees but also for society and the state in general. In conclusion, to improve their integration process and their lives in general, we need to be in constant communication with them and listen carefully to their needs, demands and concerns.

