



R1

Young Migrant (YM) & Inclusion: The role of The Youth Worker

10 CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS & BEST PRACTICES



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INTRODUCTION

Young Migrants face numerous challenges when trying to integrate into a new society.

The role of the Youth Worker is crucial in helping these individuals navigate the complexities of their new environment and foster a sense of inclusion.

In these pages, we will explore 10 challenges that Young Migrant encounter, offer potential solutions, and highlight best practices that Youth Workers can implement to support their successful integration.

By implementing best practices and innovative approaches, Youth Workers can make a significant impact on the lives of Young Migrants and contribute to building more inclusive societies.

METHODOLOGY

This document is the result of three activities developed sequentially, each building on the results of the previous one:

- A1 – Challenges and difficulties faced by YWs when supporting young migrants: local focus groups with 42 Youth Workers with extensive experience supporting migrant populations, aimed at identifying their main challenges, training needs and good practices.
- A2 – Migration from a gender perspective: local focus groups with 34 Youth Workers and 42 young migrant women, focusing on the specific barriers and challenges faced by migrant women in their integration process.
- A3 – Youth Workers' needs in their intervention work: an international hybrid workshop with 51 Youth Workers from the three consortium countries, in which the results of A1 and A2 were compared and enriched, identifying shared challenges and common good practices across national contexts.

The 10 challenges/needs collected in this document, together with their associated solutions and best practices, synthesize the evidence gathered through these three activities

1

CHALLENGES-NEEDS

Familiarize yourself with the **MIGRATION PROCESS** & the **migratory grief**, the emotional challenges migrants may face.

SOLUTIONS

Receive training on the migration journey, from their initial steps until they achieve full integration.

BEST PRACTICES

TRAINING of YW on the migration process.

Take advantage of courses and training programs offered by other NGOs.

IMPLEMENTATION SHEET

Profile involved	Internal training coordinator, responsible for designing and delivering the session. Target group: all YWs and volunteers before direct contact with YMs. No prior specialised training is required.
Resources required	In-house training module or training delivered by a specialised organisation (e.g. CEAR, ACCEM, Red Cross). Indicative duration: 4-6 hours. Support material: dossier or guide on the stages of the migration process and migration grief. Budget: external trainer cost if not covered by internal resources.
Conditions for implementation	Mandatory training as part of the induction process for every new YW/volunteer, before direct contact with YMs begins. Annual refresher session for already trained staff.
Monitoring mechanisms	Attendance record and brief pre/post-training questionnaire to verify acquisition of key concepts. This training is put into practice through the T4i Toolkit Reception and Initial Assessment Form, which applies this learning from the first contact with each YM.

2

CHALLENGES-NEEDS

Learn **ACTIVE LISTENING** & basis on pedagogical assistance & communication

SOLUTIONS

Training sessions o active listening for the entire team of volunteers and young workers together. Encouraging a healthy curiosity to understand one another, share experiences, and foster mutual respect.

BEST PRACTICES

Provide training for YW on pedagogical/educational assistance and enhancing active listening skills, with an emphasis on assertiveness, non-violent communication, and giving constructive feedback.

IMPLEMENTATION SHEET

Profile involved	Communication-skills trainer (internal or external). Target group: YW and volunteer team together.
Resources required	Practical workshop using role-play and real cases (not theory alone). Indicative duration: one day (6-8 hours), with the option of splitting it into two sessions. Support guide with active-listening and non-violent communication guidelines.
Conditions for implementation	Integrated into the team's initial training pathway. Reinforced through the periodic supervision sessions described in Challenge 4.
Monitoring mechanisms	Peer-observation assessment during role-plays, using a simple rubric of observable behaviours. Linked to the Assessment Tools and Team Training Exercises (Annex IV) of the T4i Toolkit.

3

CHALLENGES-NEEDS

Self-esteem and MENTAL HEALTH. The challenges of migration, adapting to a new culture, and feeling disconnected from society can significantly affect the mental well-being of YM, leading to conditions like anxiety and depression. Their self-esteem and overall mental health often suffer as a result.

Many YW have endured traumatic experiences such as violence or persecution in their home countries, further exacerbating their mental health struggles.

Primarily, these individuals have faced significant upheaval and loss, requiring stabilisation before addressing other needs. Unfortunately, access to psychological support, particularly in their native language, is limited.

Furthermore, refugees and migrants are often vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation in the workplace, adding to their stress.

The reality is that mental health support within our communities is lacking, leading to long wait times and insufficient assistance for those in need.

SOLUTIONS

Train YW & volunteers from all walks of lives in terms of emotional intelligence and coaching techniques.

Volunteers who study psychology, psychiatrist or therapist that offer free/low price help for them.

If possible, provide psychological help in their languages.

There is a collapse in public healthcare. Promote group therapies from migrant grieving.

BEST PRACTICES

Training YW on empathy, emotional management, emotional challenges to better assist YM.

Networking with other entities that already offer this training. Sinergia.

Offer emotional support to YM. Training on mental health pathologies (Should be someone outside the migration process, not necessarily a professional, YW can train themselves to be ready to support them).

Create a pool of professionals who speak their language.

IMPLEMENTATION SHEET

Profile involved	Network of psychology/psychiatry professionals (volunteers or occasional collaborators). YWs trained as a first level of listening support, without clinical functions. It is essential that YWs understand the limits of their role: they support, not treat; they refer when appropriate.
Resources required	Agreements with professional associations or universities to recruit specialised volunteers. Confidential space for conversations. Written referral protocol. Occasional budget for an interpreter or cultural mediator when necessary.
Conditions for implementation	Activated from the first contact (initial assessment) and maintained continuously for as long as support lasts. Any indication of risk (self-harm, acute crisis) triggers immediate referral to public mental-health services; it must never be managed exclusively by the YW or volunteers.
Monitoring mechanisms	Use the T4i Toolkit Referral Criteria and Referral Form to document when and to whom each case is referred. Indicators: number of referrals, response time of the service referred to, and follow-up after referral.

4

CHALLENGES

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Emotional exhaustion of YW. Talking to refugees can be mentally taxing. They cannot lead with everything alone.

It is important that YW stay safe and healthy after listening/supporting YM.

SOLUTIONS

Creation of interdisciplinary teams & give them tools to stay mentally & physically healthy to help YM with their situations.

BEST PRACTICES

Supervisions or meetings of people working with migrants to share case studies and help better.

Create a group of mentors (or other team members) - internal consultations / get-together / sharing-workers suggest.

Link to other associations that work/provide training in your city/country.

Engaging in sports or working on emotional self-regulation, sometimes the best help we can offer is to rest or seek help from a colleague. Keeping our limitations in mind. Taking care of ourselves, and thus, spreading positivity.

IMPLEMENTATION SHEET

Profile involved	Team coordinator or staff well-being officer. All YWs in direct contact with YMs participate.
Resources required	Periodic group supervision sessions (monthly), ideally facilitated by someone external to the team's day-to-day work. Protected time within working hours (not voluntary or added on top).
Conditions for implementation	Mandatory monthly supervision for the whole team. Option to request additional one-off support after managing particularly difficult cases, without waiting for the next scheduled session.
Monitoring mechanisms	Record of supervision sessions held and cases shared. Brief quarterly staff well-being survey (perceived workload, need for support) to detect signs of burnout before they lead to sick leave or staff turnover.

5

CHALLENGES

YW in the role of a MENTOR.

Be able to follow and walk along with YW in the process.

Loneliness, lack of emotional and social support for immigrants. They need **1-to1 support**.

SOLUTIONS

Access for mentors to professional tools.

BEST PRACTICES

Mentoring & coaching training networking with other entities that already offer this training. Sinergia.

IMPLEMENTATION SHEET

Profile involved	YW with specific training in mentoring or coaching, assigned consistently to each YM (avoiding constant turnover of the reference person).
Resources required	Mentoring/coaching training course (in-house or external). Protocol and template to record the pathway and milestones of each YM supported.
Conditions for implementation	A mentor is assigned to each YM immediately after the initial assessment. A minimum contact frequency is defined in advance (e.g. fortnightly) and adjusted according to need.
Monitoring mechanisms	Implemented directly through the T4i Toolkit Support Pathways, where progress, milestones achieved and next steps for each YM are recorded. Indicator: percentage of active pathways with a record updated within the last month.

6

CHALLENGES

STAY CONNECTED: There is a need for YM to **be heard and listened to**.

YM & refugees like common gatherings where they can meet other refugees from their countries or similar and share experience. They often want to speak up, not listen, to share the difficult stories they have experienced.

SOLUTIONS

To generate a **safe atmosphere**. Provide a safe zone for them where they can express themselves without bias and in their languages.

BEST PRACTICES

Offer **WEEKLY GATHERINGS** in a safe atmosphere.

Open our associations to receive them “with a cup of tea in winter and something fresh in summer” and provide them the opportunity to express themselves freely.

Encourage emotional support accompaniment and the creating of **social support groups**.

IMPLEMENTATION SHEET

Profile involved	YW responsible for facilitating the group, supported by trained volunteers.
Resources required	Suitable and accessible physical space. Small budget for refreshments. Simple materials for group activities (depending on participants' age profile and language).
Conditions for implementation	Fixed weekly meeting at a time accessible to participants (compatible with training or work). Clear confidentiality and respect rules stated at the start of each group.
Monitoring mechanisms	Record attendance and participation at each session. Brief quarterly questionnaire on satisfaction and sense of belonging to assess whether the space continues to meet the need to be heard.

CHALLENGES

WHO IS WHO: Youth Workers need information on how to minimize the barriers faced by young migrants.

Legal barriers:

Young Migrants may face legal obstacles such as residency permits, citizenship applications, and immigration policies that limit their rights and opportunities.

1. Legal status
2. Permission for work
3. Help from the government (for children, for refugees, lower income,...).

Socio-economic living conditions barriers:

Immigrants often encounter difficulties in basic processes such as:

- Health system: Young Migrants may face barriers in accessing healthcare services, leading to unmet health needs
- Education system: Learning difficulties due to language barriers
- Housing: Difficulty securing leases and rental agreements
- Validation of diplomas: Slow bureaucratic processes.
- Access to training, education: Limited financial resources to afford training programs.
- Access to employment: Difficulty securing contracts, specifically in jobs related to their prior professional experience.
- Access to basic food supplies: Due to low financial resources.
- Driver's license: Which hinders their mobility and employability.

SOLUTIONS

Let them know how the process is and where to ask for help.
Provide help to fill in the forms and legal information needed.

Inform them about economic support they can receive from the government and different associations.

Minimise Bias.

Help immigrants to understand unfamiliar vocabulary: such as registering, municipality, etc.

BEST PRACTICES

Provide a list of links and practical information to facilitate overcoming barriers.

Provide basic training in legal knowledge and provide legal advice (volunteers)

Offer a list of support-help from the state (public) and private help-better in their language.

Making agreements between third sector entities and private companies to promote hiring.

Networking with other entities that already offer this training. Sinergia.

IMPLEMENTATION SHEET ON LEGAL BARRIERS

Profile involved	YW responsible for facilitating the group, supported by trained volunteers.
Resources required	Suitable and accessible physical space. Small budget for refreshments. Simple materials for group activities (depending on participants' age profile and language).
Conditions for implementation	Fixed weekly meeting at a time accessible to participants (compatible with training or work). Clear confidentiality and respect rules stated at the start of each group.
Monitoring mechanisms	Record attendance and participation at each session. Brief quarterly questionnaire on satisfaction and sense of belonging to assess whether the space continues to meet the need to be heard.

IMPLEMENTATION SHEET ON ON SOCIOECONOMIC BARRIERS

Profile involved	Social worker or social educator. YW (Youth Worker) trained in socio-occupational support, intercultural mediation, and social aid management. Volunteer network for language support and professional mentors.
Resources required	Resource guide for basic needs (food banks, emergency social aid, housing). Partnerships with training centers, language academies, and driving schools. Network of collaborating companies for labor market integration and support with degree recognition. Funds or scholarships for administrative procedures and training programs.
Conditions for implementation	Initial needs assessment (health, housing, language, employment) from first contact. Individual support for priority procedures and a tailored socio-occupational pathway. Periodic follow-up sessions and mediation with external services.
Monitoring mechanisms	Individual tracking file recording each initiated procedure and its outcome (e.g., healthcare card obtained, housing secured, employment started, course completed). Monthly review of the intervention plan's progress with the YM.

CHALLENGES

UNDERSTAND CULTURAL BARRIERS in the integration process.

It's essential for Youth Workers to grasp the significance of cultural barriers in the integration process. These barriers can heavily influence communication, resulting in misunderstandings, stereotypes, and prejudices.

Adjusting to a new culture can be overwhelming and isolating for young migrants, leading to feelings of alienation and disconnection. Refugees and migrants are often vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation in the workplace due to bias.

It's essential for Youth Workers to grasp the significance of cultural barriers in the integration process. These barriers can heavily influence communication, resulting in misunderstandings, stereotypes, and prejudices.

SOLUTIONS

Educate oneself and comprehend the origins of individuals and the necessity of shedding, cultural or Western biases to warmly welcome and integrate them by appreciating their backgrounds.

Strengthen the knowledge of second and third languages in the educational system so that in the future we will be a country with a greater capacity to welcome immigrants. In this way we will be able to contribute to the elimination of prejudices that are perpetuated over the years due to the inability to know the reality of the other and the consequent depersonalization of immigrants.

BEST PRACTICES

Encourage youth workers to explore and understand migrants' countries of origin.

Engage young migrants and show interest in learning more about their cultures, religions, and traditions.

Organize social events, sports activities, and community gatherings to help young migrants build social connections so they feel included in their new environment.

Provide language classes for YMs, translation services, and language exchange programs to help young people improve their communication and language skills.

Leverage new simultaneous translation technologies to enhance communication with migrants, fostering closeness and empathy.

Develop awareness-raising and social consciousness campaigns.

IMPLEMENTATION SHEET

Profile involved	YW responsible for facilitating the group, supported by trained volunteers.
Resources required	Training in intercultural competence. Translation/interpreting tools, including simultaneous-translation resources. Budget and space for community-meeting activities.
Conditions for implementation	Mandatory initial training plus annual refresher training. Intercultural meeting activities scheduled regularly (not only as one-off events) to create continuity in relationships.
Monitoring mechanisms	Number of intercultural activities carried out and level of participation in each activity. Periodic survey of perceived inclusion among participating YMs.

CHALLENGES

YOUTH WORKERS VOLUNTEERS are needed.

It is crucial and beneficial to engage citizens in volunteering. They must understand the essence of volunteering and its importance. Teaching and learning the responsibilities of volunteers essential. It's demanding work, requiring availability 24/7. Volunteers must be prepared to offer help and have a genuine desire to make a positive impact on their lives and our society.

SOLUTIONS

Search, identify, and train individuals—VOLUNTEERS—who are eager to lend a hand.

Promote the concept of giving: *"give to gain"*. Expand the pool of volunteers. Provide comprehensive, professional training on the responsibilities of volunteering. Educate about the financial assistance available from certain organisations for volunteers.

BEST PRACTICES

Provide training courses on the responsibilities, strategies, and boundaries of volunteering. Clearly outline expectations and the tasks they will undertake.

Utilise both our own training resources and those offered by other organisations. Seek out high-quality training available in the market and leverage synergies.

Engage volunteers and connect them with other volunteers. Ensure the well-being of volunteers by guiding them on how they can contribute, commit, and dedicate themselves effectively.

Facilitate connections between companies interested in volunteering and genuine community needs.

IMPLEMENTATION SHEET

Profile involved	Volunteer coordinator, responsible for selection, training and follow-up.
Resources required	Selection process and prior interview. Mandatory induction training (responsibilities, limits, operating protocols). Written collaboration agreement setting out both parties' commitments.
Conditions for implementation	Mandatory prior training before any contact with YMs. Annual renewal of the volunteering commitment, including a review of availability and motivation.
Monitoring mechanisms	Record of active volunteers, hours contributed and training completed. Periodic follow-up interview (every six months) to identify support needs or risk of dropout.

CHALLENGES

GENDER: MIGRANT WOMEN.

Migrant women face a series of increasingly profound and specific challenges. These challenges include gender-based violence, the pressure of family responsibilities, and exploitation through human trafficking. Often, they are unable to identify the abuse they are experiencing or are afraid to report it because they are alone and unaware of the procedures.

SOLUTIONS

Specialized knowledge on the subject and, if the entity lacks expertise or a specialist in the field, awareness of the specific resources available for migrant women.

BEST PRACTICES

Provide training.

Undergo training as a youth worker to acquire knowledge on gender-based violence and develop tools for identifying and addressing potential cases of violence.

IMPLEMENTATION SHEET

Profile involved	Equality focal point within the team, responsible for mainstreaming the gender perspective.
Resources required	Training in gender perspective and interculturality for the whole team. Awareness-raising materials. Potential partnerships with organisations specialising in migrant women.
Conditions for implementation	Cross-cutting training for the whole team, not only the equality focal point. The gender perspective is incorporated into each YM's initial assessment rather than treated as a separate module.
Monitoring mechanisms	All project indicators (employability, participation, referrals, etc.) are disaggregated by sex. Annual review of results from a gender perspective to identify gaps and adjust the intervention.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Young Migrants face numerous challenges when trying to integrate into a new society, but Youth Workers can play a crucial role in supporting their inclusion and empowerment.

By addressing language barriers, cultural differences, discrimination, and other obstacles through innovative solutions and best practices, Youth Workers can help young migrants thrive and contribute to more inclusive and diverse communities.

By fostering a sense of belonging, providing resources and support, and advocating for their rights, Youth Workers can make a significant impact on the lives of Young Migrants and create a more welcoming and inclusive society for all.

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