



**HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERGARTION OF MIGRANTS
WP3 - short-term training for joint events "good practice" Croatia June 5-9,2017.
NARRATIVE REPORT**

Short-term training for joint events "good practice" is one of project activity project "Holistic approach for successful integration of migrants", which was s approved as part of the Call Erasmus+ 2016 EAC / A04 / 2015 of the key measures of Cooperation for innovation and exchange of best practices and campaigns KA202, strategic partnership in the field of vocational education and training. The main objective of the project is the development of innovation.

The good practice training in Zagreb, Croatia from June 5th till June 9th was organized in a way so that the project partners would get the insight into the integration policies and practices and get the overview how integration works in Croatia. Topics were presented so that all aspect of integration were included from reception of asylum seekers, integration plan and its implementation, social welfare, education, employment, health and legal. All institutions and NGOs presenting were chosen due to their crucial role in the integration process and direct work with the seekers and beneficiaries of international protection as well as the cooperation and coordination with Croatian Red Cross.

The training started with the short introduction into the **Croatian Red Cross, Asylum and Migration Department** by the head of the department Sanja Pupačić, what was also the introduction to the integration theme.

First word was given to the **UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR**. In promoting refuge integration, UNCHR Croatia advocates for the development of the relevant educational, health, social welfare and employment legislation and policies. It also lobbies for the future establishment of self-reliance programs for refugees in Croatia, as many find themselves unable to support themselves beyond the two year government sponsored integration period.

Both asylum seekers and persons granted international protection face certain difficulties in realizing their rights guaranteed under the Croatian legislation, in line with European and Refugee Convention standards. UNHCR implements programs to assist refugees related to inclusion in the educational system, in social, cultural and the political system of Croatia, as well as through assistance in securing housing and employment.

UNHCR assists the government, non-governmental organizations and local authorities in the integration of refugees and their children in Croatia, in particular initiatives that deal with overcoming the language barrier, access to healthcare, education, employment and participation in community life through sports and other local leisure activities. UNHCR supports two drop-in centers for refugees where they can be assisted by professionals and a network of volunteers who assist in all aspects of daily life.

Croatian Red Cross having a important role in the reception of asylum seekers, integration of beneficiaries of international protection and in the migration crisis as well as the partner in the project Erasmus +, "Holistic approach for successful integration of migrants" presented

different CRC departments and their role in the migration crisis, reception and integration process.

Croatian Red Cross, Asylum and Migration Department is the implementing partner of UNHCR. **CRC Integration Unit** followed the UNHCR with the presentation of their activities in the CRC Integration house. Since year 2011 CRC has been conducting the integration program through which it provides psychosocial program for beneficiaries of international protection and it helps to connect beneficiaries with the civil society and helps them with acquiring their social and other rights according to the Law on international and temporary protection. CRC gives information and advice; it connects beneficiaries with the needed assistance through the volunteers and directly with the institutions of interest. Initial interview is done with the beneficiaries to assess their needs followed by casework and regular contacts with the beneficiaries, as well as psychosocial support and directing beneficiaries to the other organizations for help based on the assessment. CRC provides information and assistance on health, social, education, cultural and other topics in integration process. CRC provides assistance in Croatian language learning through volunteers working individually with the beneficiaries; inclusion in prequalification and vocational trainings, professional and cultural orientation; assistance with job skills as CV writing, job applications, contacting employers, job interviews. Accent is put on projects with the local community for the purpose of preventing discrimination and xenophobia and promoting interculturality.

Croatian Red Cross, Tracing service presented the activities of tracing family members and family reunification done in the Migration crisis on Balkan route. Services of tracing are also provided for asylum seekers and other migrants as well as to the victims of human trafficking. Department also traces persons who went missing in disasters and traces family members who lost contact due to migration. National Office of the Tracing Service cooperates with other Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, International Tracing Service in Arolsen and Central Tracing Agency in Geneva. Tracing service had a very important role in the migration crisis where they connected hundreds of families that got separated during the journey. They communicated with the neighboring countries in order to reunify families. RFL (restoring family links) activities focused on searching for family members, restoring and maintaining contact and assisting to reunite separated family members by using traditional and new RFL tools, adapted for new circumstances, using new technological possibilities. Special attention was paid to preventive measures with aim to keep family members together during their journey.

Croatian Red Cross, Disaster Management presented the role CRC had during the migration crisis on Balkan route. Refugee movement in Croatia has been organized and facilitated by the Government; transport, humanitarian aid and all services were provided for free. At the beginning of the crisis migrants were entering Croatia on more points, and after the route was established there was one entrance and one exit point. CRC was named, by the Ministry of Interior, as coordinator of all humanitarian organizations. This for CRC involved establishing daily coordination meetings and other mechanisms involving more than 20 organizations and institutions. The CRC maintained daily coordination with the Crisis Coordination Headquarters led by the Ministry of Interior in the transit reception centers and used this opportunity to regularly advocate for improvement of condition of beneficiaries,

based on the evidence from daily work. This fact sometimes created the problems because other organizations and beneficiaries did not understand CRC mandate, sometimes they didn't understand that some of the decisions were made by Mol. CRC has provided emergency humanitarian aid in all transit reception centers and at entrance and exit border crossings, and distributed water, food, clothes, hygiene items, non-food items, as well as support in tracing family members, restoring family links and psychosocial support. Furthermore, CRC staff and volunteers have made continuous efforts to facilitate access to protection for vulnerable groups of refugees and migrants and their access to relevant services. Shifts were organized in 3 shifts, 4 teams of approx. 20 staff and volunteers, working, 24/7. The teams included interpreters in the Arabic, Farsi, Urdu and Pashtu languages. In transit reception centers, Croatian Red Cross provided assistance to refugees and migrants upon their arrival by train until the pre-departure train boarding. Rapid needs and vulnerability assessments were made and immediate assistance provided, including humanitarian aid, emotional and practical support, psychological first aid, facilitating health care, RFL and relevant information. Thanks to tireless humanitarian diplomacy efforts the esteem in which the CRC teams were held, they were allowed access to all sectors in the transit reception centre, at all times for humanitarian purposes. The CRC Protection and PSS/RFL teams were allowed access to transit reception centre where stranded migrants remained, and provided them with food and non-food items, as well as organized access to health care, psychosocial support and RFL services. Tailor-made care was provided to specifically vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant women, older persons, persons with disabilities and special needs, persons under extreme stress also to persons at specific protection risk such as separated children, women travelling alone, unaccompanied minors. CRC developed a tailor-made system of care for staff and volunteers in order to prevent work-related stress and burn out.

Visits were organized to **Reception center for asylum seekers, Zagreb** and to **Reception center for asylum seekers, Kutina**.

Ministry of Interior is in charge of leading and organizing the work in the reception centers. Mol is conducting jobs in the reception and accommodation of asylum seekers and is responsible for the asylum questions and granting of international protection, as well as they are responsible for the safety in the reception centers. They cooperate with humanitarian organizations in conducting of jobs of reception and accommodation of asylum seekers. **Integration department of Mol** is responsible for the giving all the information, to the beneficiaries granted international protection, on what steps they need to take in order to acquire all their rights with the institutions and what are their obligations as well as all the important contact information. For that purpose Mol distributes a handbook translated into the most spoken languages, Arabic and Farsi. They hand in the solution for the international protection to the beneficiary and also they are present at the signing of the contract for housing between beneficiary and apartment owner and provide free legal counseling. They also help in the moving of the beneficiary from the reception center to the private accommodation together with the CRC.

Reception center for asylum seekers, Zagreb (Porin) has the capacity for approx. 600 persons, at the time of the visit there were approx. 500 asylum seekers in the center. Reception center houses mostly single men and some families. **Reception center for**

asylum seekers, Kutina has the capacity for approx.100 persons, at the time of the visit there were approx. 80 asylum seekers in the center. Reception center houses families and unaccompanied minors. **Croatian Red Cross, Asylum and Migration Department** is working in the both reception centers. Since 2003, the CRC has provided practical assistance in daily life, social services, psychosocial support and protection services to asylum seekers in the reception centers, supported by UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior. Specifically tailored support has been provided to the most vulnerable groups such as separated unaccompanied children (USC), victims and potential victims of torture and persons with special needs. Based on experience from providing direct assistance, the CRC continuously advocated for improvement of the reception conditions, especially for vulnerable groups. Activities implemented in the reception centers correspond with the psychosocial, health and practical needs of asylum seekers during the asylum procedure; furthermore they focus on the needs of vulnerable groups such as children, USC and people with psychosocial difficulties. It includes organizing and structuring tailor-made social services, psychosocial support, assistance in accessing healthcare, organizing social, educational and sports activities, support for obtaining their rights and accessing the services, assistance with the school enrolment and successful completion of the school program, intercultural learning, life skills training, Croatian language courses, workshops for children, creative and musical workshops, carpentry and technical workshops and other activities based on their needs and interests. A significant part of the CRC work includes activities on prevention of violence, including gender-based violence, human trafficking and exploitation, and activities with the local community aimed at prevention of discrimination and xenophobia and promotion of diversity and social inclusion.

Jesuit Refugee Service is present and acting in reception centers in Zagreb and Kutina and provides assistance, to seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, through psychosocial counseling, medical and material support, pastoral care and legal support. They also help in finding accommodation for the persons granted international protection.

Center for social welfare, Novi Zagreb branch, Zagreb is one of the branches most active in Zagreb in the integration department. Big number of the beneficiaries of international protection use their services because they are located in the part of the city where the reception center is. When beneficiaries are granted international protection Center for social welfare is in charge of providing the financial assistance. Beneficiaries without financial resources are entitled to the Permanent Aid which is given on monthly basis for the two consecutive years. The amount of assistance depends on the number of family members, age, capacity for work, pregnancy and single parenthood. To get the financial aid beneficiaries have to be registered at an employment services. Beneficiaries are also entitled to the One-off Assistance in the case of the current financial difficulties due to the specific needs. This financial assistance can be granted in the amount covering the amount for which it has been approved. The Center for social welfare is also responsible for finding housing for the beneficiaries which they are entitled for free of rent and utilities for two years from acquiring their international protection status. For housing the government apartments are used as well as private apartments with whose owners the Center for social welfare has a signed agreement. The Center is responsible for overlooking of the signing of the contracts between the beneficiaries and the owners as well as for all the housing issues.

Center for social welfare, Kutina was visited when visiting the Reception center in Kutina. They provide help for the families and unaccompanied minors staying in Kutina. For beneficiaries granted international protection they provide financial help through Permanent Aid and One-off Assistance. Their social workers serve as guardians to the unaccompanied minors staying in the reception center in Kutina and in Home for the children. They provide them with all the help needed and advocate for the unaccompanied minors.

Red Cross local branch, Kutina is closely cooperating with the Center for social welfare in Kutina. They are responsible for all the beneficiaries, granted international protection, staying in Kutina. They regularly make home visits to the families and provide them with the information, psychosocial support and are directly in contact with the CRC Integration house in Zagreb.

City office for Education, Culture and Sport (they were invited to present but couldn't participate) is responsible for the quotas in the kindergartens, primary school and high schools. They give the approvals if the children can sign in. CRC Integration Unit works closely with the City office for signing in all the children from families granted international protection.

Open Public University as an institution for lifelong learning is providing wide range of high quality formal and non-formal education programs and cultural activities for all citizens who want to improve their vocational and key competencies with inclusion of unemployed, older adults, disability persons and other disadvantage groups. They also provide education for persons of international protection. They presented two projects; first project was as a partner of CRC called 'Life skills' through which 11 beneficiaries were educated in fields of cooking, welding, auto lakirer, fork lifter and a second program 'Women on job market' through which 9 women were empowered and educated in the fields of service industry like cosmetics. Most of the beneficiaries are now employed in the field that they studied in.

Croatian Employment service is the service where all the beneficiaries of international protection have to be registered in order to get other benefits as social help, health protection and free public transport in city of Zagreb. Every beneficiary is assigned an agent that is in charge of his job plan. Beneficiary is obligated to register with the employment service once a month in order to keep the benefits. Employment service provides courses and prequalification but the knowledge of the Croatian language is required which is a big problem because most of the beneficiaries don't know enough Croatian to be able to attend.

Croatian Employers' Association was established in 1993 as a voluntary, non-profit and independent employers' association that represents, promotes and advocates for the interests of its members. They presented the economic, social and development snapshot of Croatian market. The CEA was chosen based on the cooperation with the CRC Integration Unit on the topic of employment of beneficiaries of international protection. The existing plan for employment is to the benefit of the beneficiary's employment. CEA gives information on certain employers in certain sectors looking for workers and CRC connects them with the beneficiaries looking for work.

Croatian Law Center presented the overview of the Croatian legal frame and laws. CLC provides free legal support for the asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in the reception centers and once a month in the CRC Integration house. Most often questions are on actualization of their rights as beneficiaries of international protection in Croatia, like right to health protection and the extent of their rights, family reunification with family still in the countries of their origin, right for permanent stay and Croatian citizenship, right to work and job search, right for one-off financial help, driving licenses recognition, working in other EU countries etc.

Association for psychological assistance provides psychological help to asylum seekers and to beneficiaries of international protection. As all the institutions and organizations working with migrants in their work use translators to communicate with the beneficiaries, they presented the importance of working with the translators in a very specific circumstances of providing psychological assistance. In this case it is important that the translator knows the rules and follows them during the interview. The translator is not to make personal contact outside of the interview with the beneficiary and his purpose is to translate word by word the conversation between the psychologist and a beneficiary. Not all translators are able to work in such conditions.

The Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities presented the crucial part of Croatian Migration politics which is the integration of migrants in Croatian society as a dynamic, two way process of adjustment of migrants on one side and Croatian citizens on the other. Croatian government in year 2013 named the Permanent Committee for the implementation of integration of foreigners in to Croatian society. Croatian Government's Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities named the Working group for the operative implementation of integration of foreigners into Croatian society. The role of the Working group is operational; to implement planed tasks and to report to the Permanent Committee on the course of implementation and on possible obstacles in implementation. Working group consists of representatives of competent ministries, central governmental offices, Croatian employment office, Government office of cooperation with NGOs, representatives of civil society organizations – Croatian Red Cross, Center for peace studies and well as international and other organizations that are directly included in work with the s category of foreigners which are Institute for migration and nationalities, Jesuit refugee service, UNHCR and others. Working group created the Action Plan for removing the obstacles in exercising certain rights in the area of integration of foreigners for the period 2013. to 2015. and now still being commented on for the period 2017. to 2019. It covers topics from social welfare and health protection to housing, language learning and education, employment, international cooperation, intersectional cooperation, sensibilisation of public and of professionals working with migrants.