



Human Rights in Practice

Human Rights as a part of Language Training

to Prevent Honour Related Violence and Harmful Practices in the Communities

JUST/2014/RDAP/AG/HARM/7948

EVALUATION REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

On a Friday evening in January 2018, as this project had reached its final chapter, the Greek-Swedish author Theodor Kallifatides came to speak at the city library in Uppsala, Sweden. The tickets to the event had been sold out for weeks. Theodor Kallifatides is a renowned author in Sweden, much loved for his elegant and beautiful language in a great number of novels. Sitting on a small stage, he told how he had first heard the Swedish language in the early 1960's when he a day was being chased by the Greek police after participating in a protest in Athens. He slipped into a small cinema to hide, where they were showing *The Virgin Spring* by the Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman.

Theodor Kallifatides fell in love with the Swedish language. He migrated to Sweden due to political reasons in 1964. In his applauded novel "A new land outside my window", he explains how he threw himself over the new language like a starving dog over a juicy piece of meat. Within just a few years he was already publishing his first books in Swedish and lecturing at the Stockholm University. Quickly mastering the new language became his road to success. But he has never managed to leave the role of being the "successful stranger". The more he tried to approach the Swedish society, the more he was classified as a stranger. After more than thirty books in Swedish he is still sorted into the category "immigrant authors". Today, he has reached the conclusion that he is and remains a stranger. While also concluding in his novel, that:

"If you are an immigrant and not ready to meet the new with benignity and interest, then you are doomed to end up in the periphery of society; and if a society is receiving new people without being ready to face the new with them, then it is doomed to have problems."

Europe has always seen a lot of people moving from one place to another, for a lot of different reasons. While political persecution in European countries was a reason when Theodor Kallifatides was young, today's Europe has also experienced mass movement of many people from outside the continent, who are still arriving due to persecution, wars, famine or a bleak economic future. The big refugee crisis that appeared in the EU in 2015 meant that slightly over a million asylum-seekers arrived. More than half of those were war refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Before and after that year, hundreds of thousands of more immigrants and refugees have arrived to the EU.

Just like five decades ago, finding one's bearings in a new society, understanding the system, the culture and the language have been big challenges for the newcomers of today. But a greater responsibility also lies with the majority society today. How are we going to avoid that many of the newcomers will not also remain "strangers" in their new homes? The need for tools to enable and improve integration, language learning and a general understanding of the society are even bigger today.

This report is part of the final stage of the project *Human Rights in Practice – Human Rights as a part of language training to prevent HRV and harmful practices in the communities*, supported by the European Commission, JUST/2014/RDAP/AG/HARM/7948. It is a project which in this final stage has intended to include human rights into the language training for newly arrived immigrants and refugees, to improve their integration into five different EU countries: Germany, Greece, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In Greece, Portugal and the UK the courses have also accepted immigrants and refugees that have already spent several years in the countries.

As part of the project stage, a language book with seven units about human rights was developed. The units covered refugee rights; the right to protection of property and housing; the right to marriage, family life and child-care; the right to education; work-related rights; health-related rights; and the right to life and prohibition of torture and inhuman treatment.

The handbook was translated into all five languages of the countries above. The language book and a cognitive language game called Fatima about human rights that was designed earlier in the project have both been used, although to different degrees, in pilot language courses organized in the above five countries. The goals have been to educate language learners about human rights, how these rights are connected to public services and how the learners can navigate better in their society.

INTEGRATION IN THE EU

That integration is a bridge to a society with a better social cohesion is a fact beyond doubt. In the year of the great refugee crisis in Europe, 2015, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a very lengthy report about immigrants and integration. The active participation of newly arrived people in both public life and the labour market is necessary for them to function as autonomous and self-realized citizens, OECD wrote. To enable a successful integration is also an acute interest of the receiving, majority society. Immigrants, refugees and whether they will integrate or live in the fringes of a segregated society has become one the most important questions in many countries, these days even being the sole reason behind election victories or defeats.¹

In the same way, it is a fact beyond doubt that language is a bridge to integration. Much research has confirmed what importance getting skilled in the language of the new society plays behind more successfully becoming part of the receiving country. The EU Commission has itself established that:

...(E)nhanced language skills could help increasing migrants' autonomy and independence. They may also lead to increased social cohesion and to improved job opportunities. In addition, second language competence by parents could lead to enhanced educational opportunities for 'second generation' migrants. Hence, there is a strong case for the development of a formalised language system and framework for legally resident migrants.²

The EU has spent a considerable amount of time, money and energy to do research of its own, in order to find the most effective way of integrating migrants and refugees into European societies. In 2004 the **HANDBOOK ON INTEGRATION FOR POLICY-MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS** was published by the EU Commission, in an attempt to collect and share experiences and to structure the practices working the best. Several new issues of the handbook were published thereafter.

In 2007 the EU Commission began work to develop a common European guideline on how to integrate migrants. After years of debating, tasking integration experts to do research and ordering draft reports, the final *European Modules on Migrant Integration* were announced in early 2014. This was meant to take the integration work in the EU one step longer than what the handbooks had managed to do. The modules were going to serve as a normative

framework and provide governments with recommendations on ways to improve their integration work, based on evidence from the practices that seemed to be working most efficiently. Modules should be developed on three different areas:

- 1) Introductory and language courses.
- 2) A strong commitment by the host society.
- 3) The active participation of immigrants in all aspects of collective life.

The EU commission pointed out the first area as the most important one. Introductory courses and language courses will provide the fundament for all other measures supporting integration of newcomers into the new society. Without an understanding of the language and the basic functions and norms in the society, the newcomers and the rest of society will not have an easy time to get closer to each other. On basis of this, the EU Commission has argued that an introductory course is very necessary to give newcomers basic knowledge about the systems and structures in the new society. The course should educate them about the basics of everyday life and how to navigate and do ordinary tasks, about the labour market and education, as well as about the history and culture in the new society.

The European Modules on Migrant Integration also argues that the newcomers should be given knowledge about their *human rights*. They should be educated about democracy, equal rights and freedom of expression.

It is, however, up to each member state to decide whether this introductory course about human rights should be included in the ordinary language training or if it should stay a separate course. Some states have already combined the two. But others cannot even take a decision about it, since some member states do not even have any publicly organized or financed language training for newcomers. Instead they almost entirely rely on civic organizations to do this work.

The EU Commission also argued in their module framework that integration can be improved and even speeded up if all the newly arrived migrants are sorted into different learning groups, instead of everyone attending mixed groups. The sorting should be based on their competence level, their educational and professional background, and their ability to pick up new knowledge. In this way fewer strong learners have to be held back, and fewer weak learners need to get cold feet, the Commission reasoned.³

In the summer of 2016 the EU Commission also adopted *The EU Integration Action Plan of Third-Country Nationals*, meant to further strengthen member states' integration policies. In this plan the union further stresses that:

Learning the language of the destination country is crucial for third country nationals to succeed their integration process. Language integration programmes should be provided at the earliest stage possible after arrival... [...] Gaining an understanding of the laws, culture and values of the receiving society is crucial for third country nationals to understand the responsibilities linked with their new life in the receiving society and actively participate in it.

Nothing was however said about including an introductory course about human rights in the language training, in this action plan.⁴

The partners in the project Human Rights in Practice have combined introductory training about human rights with language training. In Greece, Portugal and the UK they have also included so-called “oldcomers” in the courses, immigrants and refugees who arrived several years ago and who are easily overlooked in EU plans. Human Rights in Practice has furthermore gone against the recommendations in the European Modules on Migrant Integration by not separating the learners into different groups according to their background and education.

METHOD

This is a qualitative impact report about the pilot language course on human rights, in all of the five involved countries. The report evaluates whether the project's pilot course can be a useful tool for educating language learners about human rights and related public services, to ease with their integration, when both following and breaking with EU Commission recommendations on immigrant integration.

Both field observations and interviews were used as method to gather material for the evaluation. Field observations were made at language schools and community centres in both Athens, Greece and in Uppsala, Sweden. Physical meetings with language trainers and a total of some 40 learners took place at these locations. However, due to a lack of resources only Skype meetings could be arranged with participating trainers and learners in the other countries. In the case of Germany, only replies from the language trainer were available.

Interviews have been made with responsible coordinators in all of the project partners, and some of their replies have been added to the report. Interviews were made with language trainers who taught the courses in all five countries, and with learners who participated in the courses. In total some 85 language learners have been briefed about their experiences, either at physical meetings or over Skype meetings. Only a selected number of interview replies were included in the final report and when nearly identical answers to questions existed, only one answer was added to the report.

The same fundamental questions have been asked to learners and trainers in all countries. But the report also deliberately allows other reflections from the interviewees and field observations to appear, as this can also help us understand how the pilot courses have worked in each socio-political context of the project countries. The questions have been:

- Whether the language material produced by each partner organization has been relevant, and easy or hard to understand.
- Whether the courses have empowered the learners into understanding human rights and getting new, useful information and contacts, about and in public offices and the local society.
- Whether they have been able to see any systematic challenges to the learner's integration.
- Whether the learners have ever felt that the host society has tried to push its values and culture on them.

The educational centres giving the pilot language courses were of different character, due to different systems and responses to the arrival of either immigrants and/or refugees to their countries.

In *Germany* there are accredited language courses financed by the government or by federal states, focusing on a basic introduction to society. Usually only newcomers holding a German residence permit are allowed to access them. Ordinary language classes are often obligatory for newcomers receiving financial assistance from social services.

The German partner participating in the project is *Papatya*, a Berlin-based secret shelter for girls and young women from migrant background who are suffering from honour-related violence. They organized the pilot course through Albatross – Intercultural Girls and Women’s Centre, a non-governmental organization (NGO). They also contracted a German language teacher, who has been interviewed to this report.

In *Greece* there are language courses organized and financed by the government, but they are fewer and not as regular as in the other countries. Only those with Greek residence permits are allowed to access the courses, not the many paperless migrants and refugees in the country. Language courses are mainly offered by NGO’s who receive financial support from the government, who in various cases also take in paperless learners.

The Greek partner participating in the project is *DIMITRA*, an educational organization in Larissa supporting a network of immigrant NGO’s. Five different NGO’s in Athens and Larissa have organized the pilot language course. Two have contributed to this report; CIVIC PLUS in Athens and Piraeus Open School for Immigrants in Athens. Field observations were made in the latter place.

In *Portugal* there are language courses offered to immigrants and refugees through the training program Portuguese for Everyone, which is used by both state employment centres, public schools and NGO’s. The latter can receive financial support from the governmental High Commissariat for Immigration.

The Portuguese partner participating in the project is *Kerigma*, an innovation and social development organization in Barcelos cooperating with networks of NGO’s on combating gender-related violence and supporting socio-economic integration of immigrant women. Four different NGO’s have implemented the pilot course and three of them are interviewed in the report: the Friendship Association in Gondomar; the Edinstvo Association in Setubal; and the Language Centre (BabeliUM) of the University of Minho outside Porto.

In *Sweden* the state has its own program for language training for all newcomers, called Swedish for Immigrants, or SFI. Local municipalities finance the courses. Almost all newcomers have the right to receive free language training if they have a Swedish residency permit. Asylum-seekers can receive language training by volunteers and NGO's who can get public funding for this.

The Swedish partner participating in the project is *Folkuniversitetet*, an educational organization and an umbrella organization for allocation of training funds for immigrant NGO's in middle Sweden. The pilot course was organized by the same teacher at two different SFI learning centres in Uppsala, contributing to the report. Field observations were done in both places.

In the UK there are language courses given through ESOL, English for Speakers of Other Languages, which is partially funded by the government. The courses are organized by ordinary language schools, at colleges and in community centres. Every immigrant and refugee wishing to apply for a UK citizenship must pass ESOL if their English is found to be below a given level. ESOL courses come with a fee.

The UK partner participating in the project is *The Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation* (IKWRO), a charity providing advice and support to Iranian, Kurdish, Afghan, Arab and Turkish women affected by honour-related violence. Several different NGO's have implemented the pilot language course in Darlington, London and in Newcastle. The ones contributing to this report have mainly been Hackney Community College in London and a learning centre called First Step in Newcastle, an NGO.

RESULT

THE CASE OF GERMANY

Germany was the EU member state that received the most asylum-seekers per capita in 2015, the year of the big refugee crisis. The country has also for decades been open to other refugees and to work migration. A well-developed and publicly financed infrastructure for both language and introduction courses exists. In certain gaps that still appear, NGO's play a pivotal role in assisting migrants and refugees.

The German partner Papatya is a secret shelter in Berlin for girls and young women from migrant background, suffering from honour-related violence. Papatya was not part of the project earlier when the game Fatima was used in another pilot course, but joined later to implement the pilot human rights language course. The Papatya coordinator Eva K. explained that they did not use the game as they felt that a lot of things in it did not fit with the federative German law. Furthermore, they chose to restructure the entire handbook so to also make it fit better with the federative German law, and to put a lot more emphasis on honour-violence.

– We did not make slight alterations, but a completely new book to talk about forced marriage and honour-related violence.

The language course was organized through the small NGO Albatross that has several language volunteer workers. The professional German language teacher Marleen W. was contracted to teach the course and to also contribute to the handbook. Marleen first reported that the handbook could not fill a real B1 course, because there are too few grammar exercises per lesson. Papatya for this reason promoted the handbook as additional training material to be used at the language levels B1 and B2, for organizations not having strict curriculums when doing language training.

The handbook was published in January 2018 and have attracted quite an interest. Several libraries including the one at the German Institute for Human Rights ordered the book. Eva is also hoping that the Albatross NGO will continue with the human rights language course by using the handbook.

Papatya organized their courses with only female participants. Like with SFI in Gottsunda, Sweden, they specifically offered the course to women with children. Eva said that it is known in Germany that young men often goes to the courses, but the women are hindered by

their husbands to go, often because of jealousy over them being too close to other men in the classrooms. A way to meet in the middle is to organize women only courses. In contrast to SFI, however, Papatya made sure to also offer childcare to the women. Their experience was that women with children will otherwise not come.

The language trainer Marleen says that she first implemented the pilot course at two different locations, in the facilities of Albatross and at a refugee shelter. The course at the refugee shelter quickly faced challenges as it was not very simple to reach the women.

– At the beginning some of them came to us, but after one or two classes they felt that it was very hard to understand the context and the feeling of the course. Because a lot of them did not have the right level of speech, a lot of them came from Afghanistan. At the end we saw that nobody came. It was sad for me, and we decided to move from the refugee shelter to Albatross.

After two weeks Marleen had managed to gather seven women into two small groups. She had both classes on the same day and with few participants, they managed to create a very private atmosphere where it was possible to open one's heart. The number of learners kept changing however, as this was a voluntary and free course, without a real certificate in the end. There was a high fluctuance and no less than 46 women attended the course, but many of them only for a single lesson. Only one single participant attended the whole three months from beginning to end.

Marleen was however positively surprised over how almost all the women already knew about human rights. She never had to explain what they are. This could partly be explained by the women's background. A majority of them had an academic education. Those who came from Algeria, Iran, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Syrian and Taiwan had earlier studied political science, architecture, economics and tax law, and had themselves taught Persian, history and biology. Other women from Lebanon, Morocco and Turkey were housewives, but were still interested in training and working.

– Everyone was eager to learn and interested in shaping their lives and changing their lives. Many had problems with their husbands, whom they had married not always out of love but because of their parents' decision. Some were already separated or on the way to a separation. That is why we talked a lot about women's rights in marriage and family, and about violence and forced marriage.

Because of the special attention given to honour-related violence and women's rights in the handbook and courses Papatya designed, the classes were mainly framed according to this and what public infrastructure and offices that could offer the women assistance, instead of towards a general integration. And Marleen talks about a climate they managed to create in the classrooms, where the women could go in depth into what structures had brought them to where they were. There were also obvious examples of when the women were helped by this. Marleen says that it has been good for the women to know that they do not have to live with a man when he repeatedly beats them.

– They learned that Germany offers various help, such as counseling and advise. That they can complain to the police. Get therapy and financial support, and alimentation for their children in case of a separation.

Two women in Marleen's course already had experience with staying in a women's shelter before the course and made very different experiences from this. For one woman the experience was positive and it helped her to split from her husband. For the other woman, the experience was rather bad as she faced alcohol and drug abuse by other women in the shelter. She wished for an alternative and talked with Marleen and the Albatross staff. After discussing a few options she felt strengthened in her self-esteem and decided to learn more German, find a work and get more independent from her husband.

Most of the women also made progress, notably with their German language skills and their social and psychological skills. At the end of the course, they seemed more self-confident and stronger, and more able to deal with difficult situations such as the issue of violence in the family. One woman visited a counseling centre specialized in family related issues, and another filled in a report to the police.

– These and other situations have made me aware of the success of the project, and it has filled me with pride to see the development of women and their growing confidence, Marleen says.

She did however see several challenges in the work and in the women's efforts to find a place in the German society. One of the biggest challenges was the relatively high language level, B1 and B2, and the associated difficulty of finding participants for the courses. The high fluctuation in the courses, as well as some of the women starting in another language course, getting internship or even jobs in between, made the work difficult.

The question of values and tolerance was also an issue. The participants were both Christians and Muslims, and Marleen set limits and asked for respect and understanding in order to not let the discussion about the different views become too emotional. And this turned out to work. One thing that the learners had in common from the start however.

– It was difficult to develop tolerance for the topic of homosexuality in the meaning of the right to equality.

It was not possible to talk directly with any of the learners in the pilot course for this evaluation report. But Papatya had their own questionnaires designed that were sent out both in the beginning and at the end of the course. As mentioned, only one of 46 participants stayed the full course, but 11 questionnaires were filled in. Those women had all felt at some degree that they were more motivated and empowered after the course. They had been able to open up during the classes to share their own stressful experiences from marriage, children, health, work. Or also from learning German.

THE CASE OF GREECE

During the big refugee crisis in 2015 a record number of over 850 000 people were registered as having arrived irregularly by sea from Turkey to Greece. Both before and after this record year a smaller but still significant number of refugees and migrants have also appeared in Greece. The country has for many years been a first entry point to Europe for people escaping armed conflicts, famines and poverty. Ever since the early 1990's, Albanians leaving instability in the Balkans constitute a very large part of the migrant community. The hundreds of thousands of asylum-seekers that arrived in 2015 often quickly left Greece to reach West European countries instead. However, after several EU member states re-introduced border controls this has today led to a situation where refugees and migrants remaining in Greece are effectively stuck there, unable to move on unless with a very slow approval of European governmental agencies.

All of this makes Greece and its work for integration and language training a very interesting case to study – especially since the government does not take a great responsibility in this field. The public sector related to education is lesser funded in Greece than in many other EU member states, partly because of the financial crisis, but only because of this. The kind of

forums needed for language training has for this reason been mostly covered by independent, smaller NGO's with state funding.

The Greek partner in the project, DIMITRA, has been working with five such NGO's as sub-partners to implement the pilot course. DIMITRA's coordinator in this work has been Fenia P. She explains that 94 learners in total have participated in the courses. The learners have sometimes been Albanians who have already lived for decades in Greece, and many other times newcomers from all over Asia and Africa. Fenia says that DIMITRA chose to put a lot more emphasis on the handbook and to incorporate the game Fatima later, as they had already had training with the game in the former pilot course in the project. They also adjusted the handbook when it was translated from the English version to the Greek one. More attention to the rights of women were added, through more references than in the English-version book.

– We tried to show that in Greece and Europe, women work. In the grammar exercises we carefully thought on writing that a woman was taking driving lessons, a woman was going to the university, etcetera, to show their rights and not only portray them as mothers, Fenia explains.

Sometimes they also chose to replace pictures in the English-version book, when they felt that the learners would not easily relate to blonde or well-dressed people. Fenia recalls how there was also a picture of a woman wearing a headscarf, connected to a passage about religion. A teacher that was going to be a trainer in the course said that this was wrong, that the subject of religion and the headscarf could not be addressed in such a direct way and that it was necessary to show respect. That led to the passage being taken out.

But, once the handbook was printed and used in the classrooms it has been difficult for refugees to follow it. Fenia thinks that a book at language level A2 would fit the learners better than one at level B1. It has proven itself very difficult for learners not already capable of speaking Greek to follow the book.

– Some even had difficulties understanding the difference between migrants and refugees. And some women, although they have been victims of gender violence, could not understand that they were treated differently because they were women. In order to speak about human rights they must have a good level of language, says Fenia.

Still, the very positive feedback is that the learners have really liked talking about the topics in the handbook. The trainers have reported long discussions about subjects that was not expect, like housing. Learners have also reported in the classroom that they learned about the

consumer's office by the book. They had not known about such an office before. They learned about the concept about an ombudsman for rights, which they did not know existed.

– One man who had problems at his work was going to file a report with the ombudsman. The fact that they knew about this now made a difference. Another man was not at all aware that he had the right to take a leave from his job to take care of his new-born child.

The main challenge has however been to find enough motivated people ready to join the courses. Many migrants and refugees in Greece still believe that they eventually will leave Greece for a West European country. Learners and NGO's have told Fenia that many refugees have refused to go to the Greek lessons, even in the refugee camps. This behaviour has been noticed for years and changed somewhat after many of the refugees have had to remain a longer time in Greece, but did not disappear. Migrants and refugees have often continued to explain that they want to be taught English, French and German in language courses, but not Greek since they do not wish to remain in Greece.

This is also a challenge that Lamprini P., one of the language trainers with DIMITRA's sub-partner CIVIC PLUS in Athens, has been facing when teaching the human rights language course. She has been working with a class of 15 people, men and women between 20 and 60 years of age, from Egypt, Georgia, Nigeria, Syria and Tunisia.

– Many migrants and refugees do not want to stay in Greece, or they might be unsure if they are allowed to stay here. For me as a trainer this is the biggest problem. I have faced it in the lessons that I offered. There is an insecurity both for learners and trainers regarding how things are going to be, Lamprini says.

In theory, asylum-seekers can find out that they are going to be reallocated from Greece to another country with a very short notice, which in some cases also has happened and has resulted in hastily aborted language training for both grownups and children.

Lamprini also experienced other challenges when training her participants. While some of them were newcomers to Greece, other learners were immigrants who had been in the country already for 10 years and much longer. They did not face any problems finding their way through society but wanted to improve their Greek language, and so could not find very much new and useful information regarding integration. This is a recurring phenomenon as far from everyone taking language courses in Greece just arrived there.

Having multicultural classes with both immigrants and refugees also proved to be a challenge in the beginning of the course. In some cases, it turned out that these immigrants had adopted

views that could be seen as aggressive towards refugees. They were sceptical towards refugees and could not compare themselves to them. After some time however, this view changed and the tension was replaced by a friendly atmosphere and a willingness to discuss the topics presented in the handbook.

Another challenge that appeared in the beginning of the course, was when sensitive topics related to human rights were brought up to discussion. These topics could sometimes be considered taboo or as not open for debate in the countries where some of the learners came from. Lamprini could see how this at first resulted in a tendency to avoid talking in an honest way, in the classroom.

– Especially in front of men, from their own countries. But after some time it got better. They started to express themselves more and could share experiences. There are a lot of issues to discuss from this book and it is a success when you see people actually wanting to do it.

The two challenges mentioned by Lamprini – xenophobic tensions and taboo topics – could reasonably appear also in other courses, and even in natural meetings between people. The way in which these challenges were solved, however, shows that the course and the handbook can become a bridge between people. The course successfully brought migrants and refugees closer to each other. It successfully also managed to raise difficult questions up to a level where people found it acceptable to discuss them.

Lamprini especially wants to point out the importance in a Greek context, that there is such a handbook to work with. The number of books related to just language learning is limited in Greece. Those dealing with human rights issues at the same time are very, very few. There are some books produced by the government that certain NGO's use for standard language training, but far from everyone find these books useful. The handbook designed for this project has therefor filled a gap and have been useful material from the very start.

She says that it's important to bear in mind, that the handbook is for people at the B1 level. The participants need to have gained vocabulary and grammar structure enough to be able to participate in the classes. But in contrast to Fenia, Lamprini argues that the book can be used in language training also from an earlier level than from B1. It is all about finding the right method.

– I have personally given it to a class at an A1 level. It is difficult to find refugees that have more than B1, so I have used it for the A1 level and have adjusted it to the vocabulary. For me this is very important too, that the trainer can use it according to the content. So that the

learners get aware of human rights early on and do not have to wait until they reach B1, because maybe they never do that.

Similar challenges have also been identified by other Greek language trainers, but they too have been able to at least partly navigate around them, using the handbook. The pilot language courses have also faced other challenges, and to some degree this has depended on what NGO has been responsible for the training. This was visible in the case of the Piraeus' Open School for Immigrants, another sub-partner of DIMITRA in Athens where field observations were also made for this report.

The Piraeus' Open School for Immigrants was established in 2005 and today offers courses in English, French, German, Greek and Italian. The staff intensified their work after the financial crisis appeared, when many Greeks wanted to learn English and other languages in order to migrate themselves and find a better life elsewhere. Arabic and Urdu is also offered, mainly for second generation immigrants who want to get to know the language of their parents better, and for trainers themselves who want to be able to communicate more easily with newcomers. During the refugee crisis in 2015 they offered refugees arriving by sea to Greece to become trainers at the school.

The language school operates in the facilities of a public secondary school in Piraeus, Athens, where they get to use the classrooms every Wednesday evening and every Sunday from morning until evening. People from 32 different countries study at the language school. 500 registered learners attended courses in the spring of 2018 and many of these can be seen during the field observation to the school.

Waiting in a classroom to continue his course with the handbook, the language trainer Christos K. says that the very first thing he would like to emphasise is that the human rights language course has given the learners the ability to have a cultural exchange.

– It has given them a forum to openly talk about issues that had not been mentioned before. They have other Greek language lessons here, but they have never had a possibility for this cultural exchange.

There has of course been a small danger with people exchanging cultural information, says Christos. There must be balance and someone who can lead the conversation to a comparative level. Some of the Albanians found in the human rights course once came to Greece as war refugees from Kosovo, but they are much more integrated today than any newcomers. Like Lamprini, Christos experienced how these already well-integrated people initially could not at

all consider themselves as once having been the same as refugees from Syria or Middle Eastern countries. A dialogue about this first had to take place.

The number of learners in Christos course was initially 16. The course was so appreciated that he decided to continue with those learners who wanted to have more lessons, and about half of them did. Christos will ultimately end up having had more than 20 classes. On this day eight learners gathers in his classroom. One is a woman from Indonesia, another woman is from the Philippines, and the rest are all Albanian men and women. The language level is not the same among all the learners, but they can all communicate rather well in Greek. They all have jobs and have already stayed in Greece between 15 and 28 years.

This immediately also tells us that the course in this case could not serve to introduce Greece to the learners and enable their most fundamental integration. It did, however, provide them with plenty of new information regarding their rights and for example certain public offices, that they did not know about. And it is fascinating and upsetting at the same time to see the lack of knowledge of rights among them, despite their integration into the Greek society, at Christo's language class.

The learners start the class with repeating chapter five in the handbook, about work-related rights. Christos asks them whether a Greek employer can make a difference between people, and only hire certain people to a job which requires no specific age, physical capacities or other criteria? The learners disagree amongst each other. One of them thinks this sounds like a logical behaviour with an employer looking for new staff. Christos explains that this would many times be contradictory to human rights. If for example age turns out to be a reason why certain people are sorted away, this could qualify as age discrimination. This is new and certainly interesting information for the learners, as a majority of them are between their late 40's and early 60's.

In another discussion, Christos asks them whether Greek and foreign-born workers should have the same salary, doing the same kind of work? Interestingly enough several of the learners think that it would be logical if they as foreigners would not have the same salary, even when doing hard manual labour. And even if this would be incorrect, that is something that cannot be changed. Christos continues: would it be correct for a shop to put up a sign in their window, saying that they are hiring new staff but only Greeks? It sounds logical, according to several learners. Christos tells them that discrimination in salary due to a foreign

origin is permitted by law, and that a hiring policy based on ethnicity goes against the principles of the free market, as long as you have your legal documents in order.

None of the learners in the class room are paperless, but in Greece legally and working legally, but none of them have been aware of these fundamental rights before joining Christos' course.

The handbook with grammatical exercises is the only tool that Christos use in his course. There is a blackboard and chalk in the classroom, but no projector, no computer or other technical equipment to follow internet links provided in the handbook. Despite this, the long, verbal discussions seem to be teaching the learners a lot of practical information. They are also very active and participating.

Asking the learners about their previous knowledge about human rights and what they knew now, it seems as if they have gained quite a lot from the course that has a direct impact of their understanding of their own life situation.

– When I first started hearing about human rights I did not have the slightest idea what they are. But gradually I learned very important things that are very helpful in my life and in my job. About the rights that we are not given, despite the fact that we are legal here and we have documents. We deserve rights, but are not given these rights as immigrants, says the Filipino woman.

– I had heard many things before about human rights, because some friends who studied in Hong Kong had heard learned about them there. But here in Greece... I have been working here for 10 years but I have never been told before about the rights that I have. Not by the state, not in a seminar, not in a program, never. The only things I have ever heard has been from trade unions, but I have not understood it, says the Indonesian woman.

One of the Albanian learners, a woman in her 50's, explains that she has really liked learning about her rights, as she as well has realised that these rights are being violated by her employer. The course has made her start to demand a proper pension and that her boss pays the social insurance tax for her.

– My boss has asked me, “how come that you deserve a pension since you are not Greek?” I have answered that I have my papers and I have proof that I deserve a pension. And he did not agree, despite the fact that I have worked more than 20 years for him. I experienced racism here, when he asked me that just because I am not Greek. And I wonder if the employers themselves are familiar with these rights?

This learner remains sceptical however, that this situation will ever change in Greece and that migrants and refugees are ever going to be able to take their rights. One of the reasons for this scepticism also found among the other learners, regarding fully implemented human rights, is that they can see flaws with the Greek system itself. They are denied the fundamental democratic function to vote for the political leadership in Greece.

In Greece the situation is very complex, as migrants and refugees are not given a full Greek identity. This means that they do not have full political rights. The same also goes for their children, born and raised in Greece. The government has passed a law that allows the children of these migrants and refugees to remain in the country, while according to the old legislation, they should have been sent back to the country where their parents came from. But full political rights are still not given to these children, nor to the migrants in this classroom, despite them having spent decades in Greece, working and paying taxes.

Do any of you vote in the Greek election? Christos asks them.

– No, we do not vote. We do not have the right to, says the Indonesian woman.

The language school in Piraeus is part of a network together with three other Open Schools for Immigrants in the Athens area, which in turn is part of a larger network called Solidarity Schools. The Open Schools are mainly run by activists and volunteers of the radical political left in Greece, who are considered to do a priceless contribution since the government is not taking a very large responsibility itself with language training. The progressive profile of the Open Schools also means that they look at gender-roles and patriarchal mind-sets from a critical point of view.

During the lesson, Christos makes the learners observe half a dozen of pictures showing people engaged in different kind of work. Picking tea, doing hard manual labour, being a fire fighter, driving a taxi, etcetera. He asks the learners what kind of work they would be willing to do. Almost all of them answer according to perceptions of typical “men’s work” versus “women’s work”, based on traditional values. One female learner even use the argument that women drive cars slower than men, which is dangerous in traffic, which is why it is much safer going in a taxi driven by a speeding man.

Christos immediately challenge these perceptions, by pointing out that there are already female fire fighters around, that women also have the physique to do hard manual labour, and with more answers. But rather than providing the “right answers”, this should probably be seen more as providing “modern answers” regarding how to look at traditional values. How

successful this is remains to be seen in a longer perspective. There is an open discussion between the trainer and the learners, and they still agree to disagree when the class is finished. The learners did not feel that the Greek society had tried to push its own values on them.

A majority of the learners in the pilot courses in Greece answered questionnaires about what they had learned, that were distributed at the final class. According to their answers, which were summarized in the project report *Pilot Activities Impact Questionnaire* by Elena Tzelepis at Panteion University, the learners had by the end of the course understood more about human rights. Their navigation in everyday life now seemed easier and they felt more motivated and optimistic. According to the questionnaires however, everyone that was working felt they had the same rights as all other human beings, which is not what was uttered in Christo's class. Possibly, these students did not fill in this question in the questionnaire.

The situation in Greece is an important example of trying to enable or improve integration while also having limited resources. While an abundance of challenges always exists, the fact that the Piraeus' Open School is progressive and also in solidarity accept migrants and refugees without any residency permits, means that the facilities where the pilot course has taken place has also been targeted by the law.

After class, Nikos Agapakis who is the President of the Administrative Board of the Open School explains how the language school on the one hand is supported by the local government, who allows them to use the facilities of the public secondary school. But on the other hand they have also seen a presence of the Greek police who are on the look-out for paperless people.

– Recently the police arrested a few of our learners as soon as they got off at the bus stop, right outside the school building. Just because they were paperless. This has resulted in both other paperless learners and trainers worrying about more such incidents, says Nikos Agapakis.

This kind of actions can have impacts on whether learners can physically attend a possible continuation of the human rights language course at the Open School, in case they are paperless. This is yet another example showing the very complex situation in Greece. Nonetheless, the pilot course has overall been seen as a very welcome and useful tool, as proper and useful handbooks are precious commodities.

THE CASE OF PORTUGAL

While most of the countries in this project have received a large number of asylum-seeking refugees during the last years, and these refugees have also been typical participants in the pilot human rights language course, the situation in Portugal has been different. The big refugee crisis of 2015 was not noticed in the same way there, as Portugal was not a country that refugees chose as their first destination. Some came, but the country has mostly seen many migrants come from Eastern Europe, former African colonies and Brazil.

The Portuguese project partner Kerigma has cooperated with four NGO's in different locations to implement the pilot course, in a setting that has been different from the other countries. Most of the participants have been of migrant background, or have been foreign exchange students, and even Portuguese citizens themselves have participated, although the latter was not interviewed for this report. In other words, this was an opportunity to show if the handbook can also be useful to teach and discuss human rights with a different kind of clientele. In contrast to the other project countries, all of the classes which joined the pilot course also used the game Fatima, to some degree. Kerigma redid most of the exercises in their handbook for the course, since the ones in the English-language version sometimes did not fit into the Portuguese context. The grammar structure or the subject itself had to be adjusted.

One of the four NGO's to cooperate with Kerigma was the Language Centre (BabeliUM) of the University of Minho, in the town Braga, where the pilot course was implemented in two classes with a total of 40 language learners. The learners were mainly university exchange students from China, and some others also came from Argentina, France, Iran, Iraq, Ireland and USA. The medium age was 20 years. The course was run as an intensive, shortened version in eight lessons over a course of two weeks. The research assistant Emília P. at BabeliUM was one of the responsible trainers, and she explained how they used the game in a level B2 class but concentrated on using the handbook and had it in both level B1 and level B2.

– It was very good using the game and the book, as the majority of the learners felt that they could learn their rights while also having fun. The project allowed them to become more aware of human rights and refugees, and by learning more they could do more regarding what their own countries are doing to help refugees.

But the learners also felt that because the course was so short, it did not allow them to deepen their knowledge into each chapter. They could not learn very much about each individual right that each chapter focused on in the handbook, and they felt that they should have been given more time to learn about specific rights. Emília also thinks that some of the handbook exercises could have been replaced by oral and written grammar exercises, because it was not always very helpful the way it looked now.

The learner's overall experience was very positive, and they felt that such a human rights course should be part of every Portuguese language course. However, not everyone agreed to that human rights problems existed in their own countries. Notably, the Chinese exchange students did not like to hear that fundamental rights are violated in China. Emília said that their perception of human rights is different, and you had to step carefully not to make them feel offended.

– They do believe that they have human rights problems in China. But when we discussed the part of freedom of speech, and the other learners said that this does not exist in China, the 27 Chinese learners said that, no we do have freedom of speech, it is just that we cannot say anything we want to. So it was complicated and tricky, but we had some very interesting discussions.

Meeting Emília's language learners one day over Skype, it is easy to see that the different point of views had led to interesting debates about the different topics in the handbook. The learners had initially thought that they already knew a lot about human rights but had been proved wrong, as they learned a lot of new things. One Latin American learner says that he has been inspired into finding out more about problems related to human rights in the world. In the course they had focused extensively on the refugee situation in Europe, and he wants to know more about why countries like Hungary and Poland have not accepted refugees, and why the EU is not forcing them to.

The Chinese exchange students, making up the majority of the learners, comments on this and says that the situation in China is different from that in Europe.

– Here, we are talking about human rights and making several references to the refugees. But in China we do not have the refugee problem. And if people in China talk about human rights, they mostly think about how people do not have access to food, education and such.

– When we talk about human rights in China, we hear about the situation for refugees in Europe, another Chinese learner fills in, making it perfectly clear how difficult it is to address human rights violations in the Chinese one-party state.

Still, several of the learners have felt that the course has been a useful tool in helping them to find their way in the Portuguese society. It was particularly helpful for some of the learners who have planned on staying in the country.

– There was information about how to navigate in the Portuguese society, this is of course valuable because it allows us to know which institutions do what, in case we want to come live here or in other European countries, says an American learner.

An Iranian learner says that she is most happy with the course at BabeliUM. She compared it to the Portuguese for Everyone language program for migrants at a public institution, where she had joined her brother for three classes. Comparing the two courses, she found the human rights language course much better.

– For me, the situation in Portugal was really interesting to begin with, how the government is supposed to help the foreigners who are coming here. My brother's classes were interesting, but these human rights classes have been at the university and the topics are a lot different. I have preferred this course because it has given a more academic reflection about Portugal.

Several of the learners feel, however, that the problem of the course was that it has been made for people who are migrants. Which not all of the learners are. One American learner says that certain aspects in the course did help him to understand more of the situation in Portugal, but the main part did not concern him. The Chinese university exchange students feels the same way, and this led them to not fill in the questionnaire that was passed out at the end of the course, since it focused a lot on migrants and refugees. The Chinese learners do not want to identify themselves as either of these, as they are in Portugal for only one university semester.

During the course, the learners also discussed things they can see complicate integration. Even if they describe the Portuguese people as very open and sympathetic, problems with practical things like finding accommodation has an impact on integration. The cultural context is another thing. One Chinese learner mentions the radical difference between how people tell jokes in China and in Portugal. This had proven to be a difference very important to overcome, in order to communicate and understand the other person. Another Chinese learner continues with mentioning such a fundamental thing as your appearance, as something that can complicate integration.

– Whenever you go into a restaurant other people will look at you, because you are a foreigner. I think many refugees think about this thing too. They are treated as foreigners because they look different. Many think that people in China, Japan and Korea look exactly the same. And we do not. The appearance is a bigger barrier than the language, because before you even speak a word, people will think you are different from them.

Other learners mention religion as yet another hinder to integration and understanding one another. One American learner has experienced intolerance simply because she is an Evangelical Christian. She was having a very good conversation with a Portuguese person and as soon as it came out what church she belongs to, the other person got up and just walked away. Growing up in the USA and being an Evangelical is very normal, so having that sort of reaction in Portugal was a culture shock for the learner. Finding ways to overcome this now appeared more important after taking the human rights course.

The pilot course was also organized in the town of Gondomar by an immigrant NGO called The Friendship Association. It serves as a meeting point for Russian and Ukrainian immigrants, trying to ease with their integration. For this reason both the game and the handbook were very appreciated tools. The NGO arranged for a professional teacher from the Portuguese for Everyone language program to implement the course and had 22 participants. All of them have been in Portugal between eight and ten years. They are in level A1 in Portuguese so they engaged in the course when they heard that it is in B2, as an opportunity to check their language level.

Nathalya K. is the coordinator with The Friendship Association and herself an immigrant from Ukraine. She explains over Skype how the course material was very adjusted to what they needed and they have found it very useful. The trainer also found the material useful in her lessons. The learners also very much liked the game and the handbook, as it gave them the opportunity to both read, listen, write and discuss. Especially the listening to the Youtube videos was mentioned as a very positive aspect.

– They at first found the course interesting because of the language, but also got interested in the human rights side because all people knew something about the topics. The migrant community also has small children and it was important to discuss the right to education.

When they approached the book they have always made comparisons between what human rights looks like and how the real society actually works, but Nathalya says that there is not

many disparities. Because the laws are more or less human rights obeying, there are just a few differences.

The learners were first told that they would receive a printed handbook in the course, but due to a late delivery Nathalya had to distribute photocopies of the book instead. She stresses this as one of the difficulties with the course. Since they had a real teacher and Nathalya also used to be a teacher in Ukraine, and has pedagogical knowledge, it would have been much better to work with the real handbook.

Despite this, the course has been so highly praised by the first participants that Nathalya arranged for a second group to take the course in the beginning of 2018. This will be outside of the pilot training and it is interesting to see how people find the course so valuable that they still want to join up.

Lyudmila F. was one of the learners in the first group that took the course. She migrated from Ukraine to Portugal in 2003 and went to the Friendship Association to get help with her documents, when she was told about the course and immediately decided to participate.

– I have lived here in Portugal for 15 years now. But even today after that many years I am concerned about new laws and what impact they can have on me and my children.

She cannot say that she got any significant new, societal knowledge since she got in touch with the association, but she did get more aware of the refugee situation, and of the importance of supporting them. Like the other learners she is already somewhat integrated into society. She has a job, Portuguese friends and her husband who is Ukrainian already had a Portuguese citizenship since earlier. But Lyudmila's language level in Portuguese is not very advanced. She wanted to increase her knowledge also in this regard.

– The young generation migrants that arrive here from Ukraine can speak some English and communicate with the Portuguese. But my generation does not have that advantage, so this course can be important for people from my generation who arrive.

Lyudmila has never felt that she has been forced to adapt to the Portuguese society and any special values but have been free to keep on to her own way of living. Even when they have explained to their children's school teacher that they as Ukrainians do not celebrate Christmas on 25 December but on 7 January, the school teacher already knew about this and did not oppose that the children stay home on the later date to celebrate with the family.

In the city of Setubal yet another immigrant NGO, The Edinstvo Association, implemented the pilot human rights language course for participants from the local community. The course went on for two weeks and had about 15 learners who were immigrants from Russia, Ukraine and Moldavia. One of the learners, who incidentally is also called Lyudmila, explains over Skype that they did not end up using the game Fatima. But instead they did roleplaying in every lesson, pretending to be doctors and patients talking, etcetera.

– I was pregnant when I attended the course and had to go to health centres, and I am quite new in the country and do not speak the language very well. So it was very useful for me to learn the rights and language regarding health, education and more, and to know how it works in Portugal. It was detailed and very good.

The 15 participants in the pilot course at The Edinstvo Association were both newcomers to Portugal, like Lyudmila, while others had been in the country already for up to ten years. This meant that the language level was far from even and while some were able to master a lot of the level B2 language in the handbook, this was a bit hard for Lyudmila.

Still, the course was very useful for her as it also taught her about her rights as a worker in Portugal. It turned out that everyone working has a lot more possibilities to protest against mistreatment at the workplace, than what Lyudmila has ever experienced before.

– This was a big topic that we discussed as everyone here has to work. We talked about rights, about the employment office. That lesson about working was actually the most useful and also the longest one. We learned about how long we are allowed to work according to law, about where to go to complain if we are made to work extra hours. About union. I was very surprised and impressed that you can actually complain here, and get help, because we do not have that in Ukraine.

THE CASE OF SWEDEN

Sweden has for decades positioned itself as being open to migration and as being a safe haven for refugees. Between September 2013 and July 2016, the Swedish Migration Agency gave all Syrian nationals arriving as refugees a permanent residency. Sweden was first in the EU with such an offer. In the record year of 2015 Sweden received the second most asylum-seekers per capita in the EU. The arrival of many newcomers from Syria and elsewhere has placed an

even greater responsibility on the system to integrate them all, and to use the best tools for this.

The Swedish state has also invested greatly in infrastructure for integration. Every municipality must enrol asylum-protected newcomers into an at least 60 hours long introductory course about Sweden, called Societal Orientation. But in February 2018 the Swedish government started to reform this course, to make it focus more on “the norms and values that is fundamental for our society”.⁵

This is indicative of the greater attention that the rather cryptic concept of “Swedish values” has been getting in Swedish politics in the last years. But with such an attention in governmental integration efforts, would it also come with a “top-down” way of teaching? Where teachers treat the learners as inferior, rather than to have an equal interaction? This is exactly the kind of method that the last report in this project concluded that integration teachers should not at all follow, as it might alienate the learners.

In Sweden the pilot language course was implemented by the language teacher Maria N. at two different centres in the city of Uppsala. Both centres belonged to Uppsala municipality’s free Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) language course and Maria scheduled 12 lessons at each centre. There was an irregular attendance by many students, as this was not a standard course with SFI. Maria is not sure of how many students she had, including those joining just one or two classes, but all of the 50 handbooks available were handed out. Most students were of refugee background.

Maria started the course with using both the game Fatima and the handbook but saw that very few learners completed the tasks handed out to them in the game, such as finding out information at public offices. The greatest challenges were the structural ones, trying to make the learners remember to do their “homework”.

– I felt that I would have needed to focus a lot more on explaining where each learner were to go to complete their tasks, by showing a map or something. And I felt that this would need a course of its own, so for this reason I ended up working mostly with the handbook.

The handbook, in turn, proved a bit difficult to work with in the very beginning due to language barriers. But Maria was soon able to notice an improvement. The course was given to learners at level D in SFI, which is equivalent to stage B1 on the Common European Framework, but she thinks that the course could also be given at the end of level C, equivalent to somewhere at the end of stage A2.

Maria was surprised over how little the learners knew about the concept of human rights at the beginning of the course. Many of those with a refugee background knew about the United Nations, as they themselves often had been assisted by various UN agencies. That was however often the only concrete knowledge. Despite this lack of knowledge and not being able to use the game, she still did feel that the learners understood the course concept and in some cases could also grow from it.

– All of them already knew that there are social benefits and they understood how it was all connected when we went through the course. There were also a few learners that came to tell me that they had discussed the topics at home. At one lesson we could also see that they did not know too much about the existence of women’s shelters in Sweden.

Maria did the opposite of trying to top-down impose Swedish values on her learners. Instead, she spent each lesson trying to as openly as possible discuss the various topics in the handbook without judging any values that appeared far from her own. She did on several occasions experience clashes between her own values and those of the learners, but every time she was able to take a step back.

– The point is that you should have a discussion and not say what is right and what is wrong. But at the same time, I was surprised over how very positive most of the learners were about everything in Sweden. Everyone thought very highly about equality between men and women. They were not aware of the problems that we have in Sweden too, Maria says.

This unreflective, positive image of Sweden was one of the first challenges noticed by Maria and also during the field observations at her classes. This also proved to sometimes act as a hinder for an open discussion in the classroom. When Maria asked questions about the human rights in the handbook and asked the learners to compare it to the actual situation in Sweden, they many times answered in very short sentences that everything was fine. Sweden is simply “better” than everything else.

At times, it felt like there was a risk that this could have counter-productive consequences, and lead to the learners not understanding the Swedish system, its good sides and its bad sides. The glorified image could in itself act as a challenge to the learner’s integration. Only after a starting phase in Maria’s courses did it seem easier to discuss the difficulties that the learners actually had experienced in Sweden.

One of the two locations where Maria taught the language course was at a community centre in the suburb of Gottsunda, a short distance south of Uppsala. Here, the course was

specifically designed for immigrant or refugee women who at the same time are mothers with small children. This is a special category of learners otherwise mostly unable to attend courses. Slightly under ten women from almost as many countries attended, almost every time bringing their small children with them. The milieu probably made it more difficult for the women to concentrate than it would have been without the children. Nonetheless, the women attending the course did learn new and important information.

Judging from the field observations in the classroom, it was very true that the learners with the exception of a Spanish woman had very little or no knowledge of the concept of human rights. However, it was not at all difficult for some of them to relate the topics to moral standpoints that they also agreed on. They of course already knew about problems they had seen in their countries of birth. They already knew what was considered morally wrong, before seeing an example of it in the handbook. They just did not know that these wrongdoings are also breaching against international humanitarian law.

In one class, a learner from Guinea said that her land had seen a slow but still existing development of human rights taking a bigger place in society. Discussions had appeared, that would have been seen as taboo only years ago. In the large cities in Guinea, it is now not at all accepted in the same way as before for a husband to strike his wife. This could now have consequences. Such a change is however yet to reach the countryside where the traditional, patriarchal way of society still rules.

A learner from Afghanistan agreed with this. One thing goes in Kabul, where there is now even a female bus driver, and something very different in the rest of the country.

Another learner from Nigeria could tell the rest of the group how common it is that poor Nigerian children quits school to start working instead. Now she also knew that this was against the right to education for children. She could also tell about the problems with Christians and Muslims treating each other badly in Nigeria, against one or the other depending on where in the country you are. Now she knew that some of this practice could fall under the label discrimination based on religion.

Maria's classes in this sense often turned into very effective discussions, where the learners could compare their countries of origin with Sweden, could compare the situation in their countries with human rights. By sharing their own experiences and listening to the other learners it several times became evident that they could learn something new, and Maria many

times allowed these discussions to continue even when they moved into areas not part of the handbook.

Compared to the very basic situation at the Open School for Immigrants in Athens, the community centre in Gottsunda had a lot better technical tools to use in the education. Even in the very small classroom where Maria met with her learners there was an expensive touchboard hanging on the wall. For this reason Maria relied in almost every lesson on showing shorter educational or information videos on Youtube, from various public institutions and offices in Sweden. This was meant to help with the explanation for the learners. Links to these videos were also added from the very beginning into the handbook. This was a very good way of using information provided by the institutions, about the institutions.

However, in a very Swedish spirit of wanting to show diversity, these videos several times included persons speaking regional dialects of Swedish. These dialects were difficult to understand for most of the learners. The educational videos have probably also been produced with the intention of having Swedish primary school students as an audience, and not language learners. For this reason the Swedish in the videos was several times spoken very fast, at a speed which made it difficult for the learners to understand. Maria was aware of these challenges and made sure to pause every video in order to repeat and explain what had been said, which resulted in these moments taking up more time of the classes than intended. This shows that using better technical tools will not always automatically result in a better understanding.

Another example from the field observations shows how the learners were able to open up about systematic challenges in Sweden, and also in the end become empowered. Maria held a class about the right to property and a home, which was a very relevant topic for the women attending. They themselves were subletting apartments and struggling to find long-term solutions in a Swedish housing situation that is difficult for everyone.

The women asked Maria several questions and were eager to get answers. One learner from Syria started reading out loud from an email that had been sent to her from the Uppsala Housing Agency, to compare what she has just been taught by Maria. The same Syrian woman also continued saying that sometimes it does not matter if you contact a private landlord and happen to be the first one calling.

– He can still pick someone else if you do not happen to have a Swedish name.

Here, these other learners also agreed that this must fall in under the new work they had learned: discrimination. Another woman from Palestine continued talking about the subject in the housing situation.

– My family name can be spelled in a way that it sounds like a Swedish man's name. I can use this when applying to get an apartment. My husband's name is no good since his name is Ahmed, she joked.

This in turn led to a continued discussion about what kind of financial support you could receive from social services, if you live in an apartment and already receive some support. The Syrian learner asked question after question. She excused herself with saying that the Swedish Social Insurance Agency had told her to find the information herself, as she speaks well English. But she had hardly been able to, since she was not used to deal with such agencies. Maria then ended up giving the learner a homework to the next week, to herself try to find out an answer through the Swedish agency. She took this task on with great enthusiasm.

This example from Gottsunda shows how the pilot course was also able to generate important side discussions that could help to empower a learner, as long as the trainer was flexible enough like Maria, to take advantage of the situation. These moments could also open up very necessary and important discussions on discriminatory practices in the Swedish society.

Learners here did however not feel that the Swedish society tried to push its own values on them. Difficult bureaucracy was instead singled out.

– There are a lot of difficult things with living in Sweden. It is hard to find an apartment, to find a job. It takes a long time to get into the system and get all the necessary documents. You need a lot of patience, said a Nigerian learner with the very fitting name Patience.

The other centre where Maria implemented the pilot course was the Linné Adult Education in central Uppsala. In these facilities the course was joined by over 40 learners, coming from wide range of countries but mostly from the Middle East. Here, the sheer number of students and the fact that some of them came only once or twice created a challenge for Maria. The handbook was distributed to every learner until it ran out. When even more, new learners arrived to the last class, Maria was forced to write words and sentences on the board in a time-consuming way.

Here, just like in Gottsunda, the learners had only a very vague idea of what human rights were at the beginning of the course. Some of them knew about the UN and that dictatorships can be internationally condemned, not much more. But here too, the learners already had their

own morally based opinions on what is a rightful and wrongful behaviour. On several occasions could the learners explain how they themselves had experience with human rights violations, or had gotten to know about them because of friends or relatives inflicted. While no learner knew about 1948 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone knew very well what “torture” meant. It was the same with violence against women.

– Every Syrian woman knows about honour-related violence, throughout her whole life, said a middle-aged Syrian woman.

But most of them have never before lived in a country where human rights have ever been respected, and where violations and inadequate public protection can ever truly be dealt with through the state and its regulations.

– Laws against honour-related violence also exist in my country, to some degree. But if a woman goes to the police to report that her husband is beating her, the husband would only pay the police to have them release him and instead imprison the wife, said a woman from Damascus, the capital of Syria.

This and other experiences has often resulted in a widespread lack of trust with public institutions. From Somalia, to Syria, to Afghanistan, learners could share their own experiences of this mistrust. When Maria had a class about the right to decide over one’s own life and why marrying off children is violation of international law, all of the learners agreed that this was wrong. But when Maria asked them how they should react if they found out that a person in their close environment was marrying off their children, no one suggested contacting the police or other public institutions. This seemed to be a “private” matter. It seems that a very important step in the integration of newcomers must be to improve this trust in the system, no matter how positive they already think Sweden is.

During the half hour break in one of the classes at Linné Adult Education, another SFI teacher had a look at the learning material of the pilot course. His comment on it adds an important aspect to the report regarding this mistrust in the system as a systematic challenge to integration. The SFI teacher quickly argued that the pilot course was very necessary, since he had experienced great challenges in explaining to his learners what rights are. Depending on their background and what the learners had been through, they could have very different views on how rights corresponds to responsibilities.

– On several occasions we have had discussions on paying taxes appear in the classroom. Some learners have declared that they will certainly not pay taxes once they start working and

have said that the Sweden are silly to do this themselves. They have not understood at all, that the Enforcement Authority will be sent after them if they do not pay taxes.

All learners present at the last classes in the Gottsunda community centre and at Linné Adult Education filled in questionnaires about how they felt and what they had learned. Their answers are also found in the report *Pilot Activities Impact Questionnaire*. The learned themselves stressed that they had difficulties with understanding the theoretical introduction to human rights. But they did feel that their awareness was increased thanks to the course, mostly regarding practical matters as newcomers to the country. They also better understood services in the society.

One remaining challenge for the learners was the lack of any real Swedish friends. Maria at one point distributed leaflets about finding a job in Sweden, where it said that seven out of ten people find a job through personal contacts in society. The closest Swedish contacts that the learners had were volunteers with integration NGO's, that they met perhaps once a week or once a month. No one had ever been invited into a Swedish home, while all agreed that they would easier integrate into society if they did get real friends in it.

THE CASE OF THE UK

For several decades the UK has seen an influx of migrants from former colonies and other countries, as well as many refugees arriving. While it is hard to say what kind of impacts a Brexit could have on this, the UK is one of the biggest economical engines in Europe and will likely remain a dream and destination for many migrants and refugees. Even with the country leaving the EU, it will have many newcomers in need of effective integration.

The UK project partner IKWRO implemented the ten-week pilot course in Darlington, London and in Newcastle with the help of several different NGO's and five language trainers. The five trainers focused almost entirely on testing the handbook in the classrooms, because it was they who wrote it and they wanted to see how it worked in a learning environment. They worked with the lessons in the handbook but used it bit by bit with photocopies, as the printed handbook had not yet arrived. The trainers did not use the game in their lessons, because they considered it too difficult to use it together with the handbook with a large group of people, over a short time.

The trainer Lynne C. implemented the pilot course at a learning centre in Newcastle called First Step. She had about 25 students in two separate groups, one of them being a class dedicated just for the human rights course, and the other one being a class where she also taught English conversation. They were female only classes, with many participants being migrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan, and others were refugees from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria and other nations.

Lynne says that she mostly worked with classes being at a lower language level. The older learners who generally had less education as children struggled with the materials. The questions and concepts in the game were quite difficult and she thinks it could be better incorporated if the language level is higher. Thinking that the exercises would be too difficult, or not relevant, she instead used the handbook as a supplement to other training material that she already had.

– For example, when we talked about the right to education worldwide, the women wanted to know about the education system in the UK instead. I had resources about this that I had used earlier so I used that as well. Obviously, everywhere this course will be taught there will be different needs and different participants.

There was also a lack of clarity in the material about what level it was aimed at, says Lynne, meaning that activities were not evenly set across all units. For example, some of the free writing tasks in the handbook were very difficult. And vocabulary tasks often needed to be introduced with a long explanation, in contrast to some of the grammar exercises that were very easy. To overcome these different levels she mixed bits of each unit in the handbook into a combination that worked the best according to the learner's needs.

Lynne has mostly experienced a lot of progress with the course. She says that her learners now know about the human rights. They can define the difference between forced marriage and arranged marriage, they can talk about their plans for supporting their children as they grow up and get married. Some of the questions posed to the learners around marriage and relationships had also never been considered before by the learners, and they were challenged by this in a positive way. This included questions about same sex relationships and about their children marrying outside of their religion.

– On the whole it has been very positive. Towards the end the learners told me that they had learned a lot of new vocabulary which has been useful for them, living in the UK.

Specifically, the right to housing and how they can contact their city council regarding social

housing, how they can deal with private landlords and what rights they have as tenants. All of them are tenants and don't own their own houses. So those practical things were useful. A lot of the vocabulary too, regarding health, was useful.

She also feels that the learners were positive to sharing experiences in the classes. They were willing to talk about their own, sometimes traumatic experiences. The flipside of that is of course that it can get very emotional. The session when they were talking about women who had come as asylum-seekers to the UK and are unable to return home but have family in another country, was particularly difficult to manage. But in the end, it was quite positive because those learners that got upset and tearful got a lot of support by the rest of the class.

What might be a good idea for future classes with the human course, she suggests, is that the trainers get a possibility to set up more support following the sessions and outside the sessions, so that they can make sure that the learners actually can access the services that they need.

But Lynne already feels that the learners have been helped with their integration by the course. When she for example taught about the right to education they watched a film about a British school day. The learners stated that this was new knowledge for them and they spent time talking about British schools afterwards, about how to support children and how to get involved in the life of the school and engage with teachers. They stated that they had found this lesson particularly useful in order to now try to play a more active role in their children's school life. Because of a continued high demand, Lynne is also to continue giving the course.

– It has been so successful that I am continuing both in the First Step centre and also in what is called a Children Centre, which are set up in deprived parts in cities to work with local families. In the west end of Newcastle, we have a lot of people who speak English as a second language, and I will be teaching this class for women there as well. We have taken that decision because we want to talk a lot about domestic violence and family situations.

The goal is to put together a very diverse group of women in the class room, to break down some barriers. Just on a small and local level, which can then spread out into the wider community. The west end of Newcastle is very diverse with a lot of asylum-seekers and refugees but also people coming from other communities. If they can break down barriers and promote integration there, it can also influence the learner's families and friends.

At the Hackney Community College in London, another language trainer called Siobhan M. also implemented the human rights course in cooperation with IKWRO. The College offers

language courses that are ESOL accredited, the kind of courses you must pass to be able to apply for a UK citizenship. Siobhan is an ESOL teacher and her learners in the course came from a wide range of countries in Africa and Asia. Speaking to 19 of them over Skype an afternoon, it quickly became obvious that they had found the discussions and perspectives in the course very interesting.

– But this group of people have already been here in the UK for a long time, the shortest time is two years. They are not recently arrived and they already have a lot of experience about getting jobs, finding homes, and more. So I do not know if the course helped on a practical level, but we told each other stories, things we had kept quiet about earlier, Siobhan explains in the Skype call.

The learners have used the material and course to connect human rights to violations and problems they have witnessed in their own lives, in their countries of origin, or in the UK. One Bangladeshi woman vividly tells us about the common practice of child labour in her homeland, which she now knows is against international law. Another woman from Turkey says that she has learned that there are no human rights in families in Turkey, because the family members are not equals.

– Depending on if you are a man or a woman you will have different situations and I see now how this is discrimination, the learner says.

Another learner, a Jewish Kurd from the Kurdistan Region in northern Iraq, was able to bring up the very important subject of freedom of religion and the widespread intolerance against people of a different faith. She tells us her story about how she barely survived Saddam Hussein's massacre in the town of Halabja in 1988, where 5000 civilian Kurds were gassed to death. After, she fled to Israel but returned to Iraq to marry a fellow Kurd, who happened to be Muslim. This interfaith marriage was not accepted in either Israel or the Kurdistan Region, and after facing what the learner now understands is discrimination, she and her husband found refuge in the UK. The fact that she can tell us this story without facing loud remarks over such a sensitive topic, shows the very open discussion climate that the course has managed to create.

This group in London also manages to voice a lot more criticism against how well Western, democratic governments follow human rights, than in any other place. A Somali woman attending the course criticises how the EU has made deals with Libya and Turkey to have these governments prevent refugees from coming to Europe. This means that people are

denied the possibility to apply for asylum and pushed back to countries where human rights are systematically violated.

– I think that the European countries have to respect the human rights and not send us back. Why do you make human rights laws if you do not follow them?

A man from North Sudan joins the conversation and agrees that we have to talk about Libya and the way Europe acts. Libya is now the worst place in the world, where humans are imprisoned underground and sold as slaves, like animals. He has been in the very same refugee situation himself. He finds a video on his cell phone and hold it up to show us, to make his point crystal clear. It shows a man in Libya being tortured by having his bare feet burned by fire.

A Congolese woman also starts talking about Libya, questioning why several Western nations intervened military in 2011 and promised human rights, but have now largely retreated and Libya has fallen into ruin. Are the human rights only for Europeans, or also for Africans?

It is rather refreshing to in this group also hear a discussion about how human rights violations have not only been committed by oppressors from the global south, but also from the very Western governments that can easily appear as morally superior.

It appears that no one in the group has felt that the British society tries to enforce its values and culture in the integration process. A Turkish learner says that you can be free both in your culture and religion in the UK. The North Sudanese man adds that according to his experience, 75 percent of all people in the UK will treat you will as long as you speak English well, but the other 25 percent can still look suspiciously at you if you are not from there.

But two Somali women soon express anger over what they feel are very serious culture clashes between authorities in certain European countries and the Somali community, over how they bring up their children. They say that many Somali children have been taken away from their parents by the child protection services in Holland, Norway and Sweden. What seems to be the problem is that some Somali parents speak hard to their children, and this is misinterpreted as aggression. Then, the children have told their schools lies about being mistreated at home.

The women have read about this practice in social media discussion groups for expat Somalis and see this as a state violation. They say that they would never mistreat their children. According to social media this is a growing problem and it is said that 20 Somali children were taken away in only one month. Nothing can be done to get the children back. The

women say that they cannot support such human rights, and that this is now the biggest problem for Somali community in Scandinavia.

It is true that some countries and especially Norway have been criticised for too often having child protection services take minors away from their families after only vague accusations of problems. Parents can however intervene to get their children back, and the numbers mentioned by then women seems excessive. In the era of rumours quickly becoming undisputed facts on the Internet, it is interesting to see how this was quickly interpreted as culture clashes. While at the same time, the course has opened up such a platform for dialogue that a Somali-Italian woman who has a different view on the accusations and on parenting can express them in front of the other.

– Even children need to have rights, because some parents are really bad to them. Some children are killed by their mom and dad. In every culture there is something bad, something wrong. Somali parenting is often not good either. Sometimes we have to start thinking that, ok, this culture thinks a little bit better about some things. Why cannot we think that way too?

Elsewhere in London, the language trainer Hind Abaris who also taught one of the pilot courses for IKWRO told in her written feedback that she had also experienced other examples of this lack of trust in authorities. When she had her class about unit 7, the right to life, a lot of negative thoughts about officials “who are supposed to protect us but do not” appeared. The British government was accused of not wanting to help newly arrived and instead looking away.

One final example must be mentioned to illustrate the diversity of results and effects that the course has given in the UK. As we have seen, a suspicion over the authorities has been born in some places and the course has served as a platform of system critical dialogue. In some cases such a suspicion is also understandable. But in other places the pilot course has resulted in the direct opposite ideas. In Newcastle the language trainer Emily K-M implemented the pilot course via an ethnic NGO. Emily herself once came to the UK as a migrant. She deliberately spoke a lot about the need for trust and cooperation with authorities that the learners felt fear for.

– Because of the places they came from, my learners had a bad view of the police. They were still not comfortable with approaching the police. And the impression was that the police work for the white British people, and not for me. But after the course they felt more empowered and likely to go to the police.

Instead of having her learners leave the classroom over the suggestions to get closer to the authorities, Emily's course was so popular that it was only standing class at one point. Consequently, Emily was also asked to teach the course again under 2018.

Some of the language trainers created their own questionnaires and sent out to their learners at the end of the course. The replies showed that a majority of them had appreciated an opportunity to learn more about the UK system. While most of them already were integrated in part and knew how to access services, several said that they had still learned new things regarding education, health and employment matters, and how to utilize social services.

CONCLUSION

The interviews and field studies have shown that the language learners have found the pilot course interesting and useful, no matter what context it has been taught in. Regardless of if the learners have been newcomers or oldcomers, refugees or as in Portugal even Chinese and Western language students, the course has to one degree or another managed to offer help, knowledge, a chance to process their own experiences and traumas, or has at least led to interesting reflections.

Working with both the game Fatima from earlier in the project and the new handbook proved too difficult for most trainers. All but the Chinese and Western language students found the course material relevant, but the newcomers did have significant difficulties in understanding such a high language level. This is an issue that needs to be address if the project is to expand.

It is still an open question how many of learners that could actually recite the human rights if you asked them some months later. But the way in which the course managed to connect human rights to experiences, problems and identities with the learners themselves turned out to be a great asset. For the same reason it would have probably been less fortunate to separate the learners according to background, as this could have easily had a negative effect. The more educated would not have met with the reality and mindset of the less educated, and vice versa. By breaking against the recommendations in the European Modules on Migrant Integration they learners could exchange perspectives and develop together.

The information about public services, new offices and the contacts the learners have also heard about is likely something that will stick with them and probably help to ease their integration. That this was seen as valuable is evident in the case of Newcastle, where both the language trainers Emily and Lynne were asked to give the course again due to its popularity – mostly among people who had already been in the UK for years.

Judging from the examples from all five countries, combining an introduction about human rights with language training and here following the recommendations in the European Modules on Migrant Integration, has been both possible and valuable. The Human Rights in Practice course is evidently useful for both newly arrived immigrants and refugees, as well as for those with several years in the new society.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/documents/policies/legal-migration/integration/docs/ec_oecd_joint_report_indicators_of_immigrant_integration_2015_en.pdf

² www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/ministerstvo/integracia-cudzincov/dokumenty/european-modules-on-migrant-integration-ec.pdf

³ www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/ministerstvo/integracia-cudzincov/dokumenty/european-modules-on-migrant-integration-ec.pdf

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf

⁵ www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2018/02/samhallsorientering-for-nyanlanda-ska-handla-mer-om-normer-och-varderingar/