

WG2 Research Seminar

Tackling the migration and refugee challenge

Exploring innovative policies and practices through the lens of social enterprises and third sector organizations

Organizers:

EMPOWER-SE COST Action, EMES Network, Euricse, University of Trento.

Partner projects:

ERC StG *HOMInG*, MIUR-FARE *HOASI*

Scope of the seminar

This seminar focuses on the potential of local communities to self-organize and design effective solutions for tackling the challenges posed by migrations to local societies, namely through the creation of innovative organizations.

These organizations include social enterprises, which combine an entrepreneurial dynamic to provide services or goods with a primacy of social aims and cross various borders; across sectors (public, conventional enterprises, cooperatives, associations), resources (market, public grants and philanthropy) and activity fields.

This seminar is specifically addressed to scholars that have been exploring innovative paths of social, economic and political inclusion of migrants achieved by local communities across Europe. Many of these initiatives are being promoted by individuals, immigrant organizations, local businesses, religious organizations and groups of volunteers who are self-organizing to deliver first aid and co-provide basic services, work and social inclusion and advocacy. Such initiatives may include suitable housing, education, work and entrepreneurship, and the design of new skills assessment tools. Since most of these initiatives developed spontaneously at the grass-root level, they are difficult to grasp. Hence, our endeavour is to promote an interdisciplinary discussion forum that can contribute to systematizing innovative practices and pave the way for further empirical and theoretical analysis in a field of research that has relevant policy implications.

Papers may address one of the following four thematic lines:

1. Housing arrangements and pathways for asylum seekers and refugees: state of the art, dilemmas, ways ahead.
2. Innovative tools and methodologies aimed to facilitate the social and work inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in EU countries.

3. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers living in mountain and rural localities: determinants of inclusion versus exclusion processes.
4. Unlocking the potential of third sector organizations and social enterprises vis-à-vis the asylum seeker/refugee challenge.

Thematic line 1. Housing arrangements and pathways for asylum seekers and refugees: state of the art, dilemmas, ways ahead (connection with: ERC StG *HOMInG - the Home-Migration Nexus* and with MIUR-FARE *HOASI - Home and Asylum Seekers in Italy*, both based at the University of Trento)

Local reception is also, and from the very beginning, a matter of providing shelter. Housing is fundamental to the social protection of all vulnerable groups, including asylum seekers and refugees. Their access to some sort of accommodation, and then their housing careers, are critical to their processes of integration. Refugee housing is made all the more challenging by the legal and temporal uncertainty which is inherent in the asylum seeker condition. As influential are widespread forms of stigmatization and, almost as often, under-resourced or segregative public policies. It is not by chance that many studies of refugee housing have been conducted all over Europe in the last few years. Yet, most of these studies tend to be isolated from each other; more dialogue and comparative analysis are now in order.

In light of these premises, this thematic line aims to gather contributions that address the factors which make housing for refugees more or less effective, inclusive and sustainable. It will do so, by gathering both specific case studies and contributions with a broader theoretical or comparative remit. Special attention should be given to the interaction between initiatives in housing and in other social welfare domains, with all of the actors and the sources of funding involved – international bodies, national or local authorities, NGOs, social movements and refugees themselves. As critical will be the contributors' ability to shed light on the prospects and limits of the refugees' spontaneous housing initiatives. How, if at all, housing for/with refugees enables them to feel at home – both in dedicated facilities and in the outer environments – is the last question to be addressed by contributions in this thematic line. We are especially interested in papers which analyze the contribution of social enterprises and third sector organizations to housing.

Thematic line 2. Innovative tools and methodologies aimed to facilitate the social and work inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in EU countries.

There is a wide consensus in the literature that the way migrants integrate into the labour market, and the time they take to do so, will determine the long-term impact of their integration on the economy in the receiving country.

At the same time empirical observations corroborate that when not backed by social integration the sole labour-market integration is not always conducive to the building of cohesive societies; rather, it can strengthen separatism and, in the most severe cases, conflictuality.

We invite presentations investigating the crucial structural, social and cultural dimensions influencing the path towards social and work inclusion. We are particularly interested in studies exploring how far the engagement of local communities by means of third sector organizations and social enterprises helps recipients overcome barriers to their socio-economic inclusion.

Particularly welcome are presentations on innovative strategies and tools that have proved effective in unveiling and assessing recipients' skills and matching work capacities and demands.

Thematic line 3. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers living in mountain and rural localities: determinants of inclusion versus exclusion.

Out-migration from rural territories is still a worldwide phenomenon, visible in many mountain and rural regions across Europe. Nonetheless a counter-process has been registered over the last two decades: immigration towards peripheral areas. While some of the new highlanders choose to move to the mountains, others are somehow compelled to move there, pushed by necessity or even by immigration policies, as it is the case of asylum-seekers and refugees. Current migration processes result in a diversification of population across European rural and mountain spaces, where the post-2015 arrival of large numbers of asylum seekers is creating new challenges for the communities living in these territories.

Local authorities and non-profit actors that have been prolific in proposing innovative approaches to integrate migrants have often succeeded in developing new economies and regenerating local communities, put under stress by the ageing and decline of their populations. By merging traditional knowledges of mountain / rural localities with new production techniques, various local initiatives have allowed outlanders to emerge as promoters of sociocultural transformations. Nevertheless, the key problem lies in the little visibility of effective grass-roots welcome initiatives, whereas the downside of local reception patterns (cases of mismanagement, inadequate infrastructures, violence among and against clients etc) are highly visible in the public debate. This thematic line aims at discussing both case studies of migrants that have decided to settle down in marginal and remote localities and good practices of refugees/asylum-seekers' reception across rural and mountain areas of Europe. We are especially interested in contributions which explore the role of social enterprises and third sector organizations in facilitating the socio-economic inclusion of recipients in rural and mountain localities.

Thematic line 4, Unlocking the potential of third sector organizations and social enterprises vis-à-vis the asylum seeker/refugee challenge.

Faced with the refugee crisis, many third sector organizations and social enterprises have expanded their activities, thereby providing advocacy and monitoring of asylum seekers' rights, as well as the delivery of services. We are particularly interested in critical investigations exploring the type of relations social enterprises establish with public administrations and how these may influence the quality of the welcome services delivered and the ability to detect new needs and generate social and territorial innovation. Welcome are particularly analyses investigating the models of service designed and the processes experimented by social enterprises in cooperation with receiving territories.

Researchers are also invited to present contributions focusing on the governance of the reception process at the local level and the way local populations are being actively engaged in the welcome process.

Event description

This seminar is conceived as a high-profile academic event aimed at exchanging initial thoughts in an incipient field of research covered by the EMPOWER-SE COST Action thematic line: social enterprise and migration. Enough time will be devoted to present and comment on contributions presented.

One of the goals of the seminar is to contribute to EMPOWER-SE Working Group 2 with regards to immigration issues, but also to create connections that can lead to future joint research proposals. To this end leading investigators will be invited to present the research findings of the EU and international projects they are coordinating. Among others, we will discuss the following projects' outcomes: SIMRA and SIRIUS (Horizon2020); HOMInG (ERC Starting Grant); PlurAlps (Alpine Space); EUMINT (Interreg Italy-Austria), and RurAction.

An academic publication with selected papers of this EMPOWER-SE COST Action Research Seminar will be published a few months after the event.

Disciplinary approach and submission

We invite proposals for paper presentations focusing on findings of theoretical analyses, empirical quantitative and qualitative field research, and comparative analyses covering various EU countries. We welcome the submission of papers drawing on all fields of social science (sociology, economics, political science, law, geography, social anthropology, social work). Interdisciplinary perspectives are particularly welcome.

Interested authors should submit a 250-300 word long abstract of their contribution that includes: author(s)' full information (including country, gender and whether ECI); contribution title; main research objective/question; methodological approach; (expected) results and contribution. All submissions will be made via email to the address empowarse-migration@emes.net by 15 July 2018. A full paper template will be shared with selected authors when they are notified so they can submit their contribution by 1 November 2018.

Dates: 22-23 November 2018.

Venue: University of Trento, Italy – Department of Sociology and Social Research.

Scientific committee:

- Paolo Boccagni, University of Trento (Italy)
- Andrea Brighenti, University of Trento (Italy)
- Jennifer Eschweiler, Roskilde University (Denmark)
- Silvia Ferreira, University of Coimbra (Portugal)
- Giulia Galera, EURICSE (Italy)
- Malin Gawell, Södertörn University (Sweden)
- Ingrid Machold, Federal Institute for Less Favoured and Mountainous Areas (Austria)
- Andrea Membretti, University of Pavia (Italy)
- Mary O'Shaughnessy, Cork University Business School (Ireland)
- Manfred Perlik, University of Bern, Centre for Development and Environment (Switzerland)
- Giuseppe Sciortino, University of Trento (Italy)

Organizing committee:

- Paolo Boccagni, University of Trento (Italy)
- Leila Giannetto, EURICSE (Italy)
- Rocío Nogales, EMES Network (Belgium)
- Thomas Pongo, EMES Network (Belgium)

Targeted participants

Researchers and practitioners currently involved in the topics described above are welcome to apply. Around 25-30 papers will be selected for a maximum of 6-8 per thematic line.

Financial support

Mobility (travel & accommodation) for selected presenting authors will be covered by the EMPOWER-SE COST Action. No other financial support will be available.

Key dates

10 May 2018: Call published

15 July 2018: Deadline for the submission of abstracts

3 September 2018: Notification of acceptance to authors

1 November 2018: Full paper submission deadline

16 November 2018: Programme published

22 November 2018: Seminar begins

For any questions about this seminar, please write to empowerse-migration@emes.net