



NEWLY ARRIVED IN A COMMON HOME

**BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF DIASPORA  
STAKEHOLDERS AS COMMUNITY AGENTS  
FOR THE INCLUSION OF NEWLY-ARRIVED  
MIGRANTS**

Cypriot report (Nicosia)

CARDET

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## Forewords

NEAR (NEwly ARrived in a common home) is a European project that aims at fostering social orientation of newly arrived migrants during their settlement in the receiving countries. Funded under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), NEAR activates a process of mutual trust, knowledge and cross-cultural transfer between migrants and local communities, building a sense of belonging of “a new common home”.

The project is highly context-specific and offers a unique approach towards integration at local level in four target areas (Lisbon, Nicosia, Perugia, Milan) that cater to different groups of migrant beneficiaries and combines multiple strands of activities: building the capacity of and empowering diaspora stakeholders, facilitating access to services and labour market entry for asylum seekers and international protection holders, strengthening inclusion levels of newly arrived children, and enhancing orientation and opportunities for newly arrived university students.

NEAR is coordinated by Fondazione ISMU (Italy) and is implemented in partnership with Tamat NGO (Italy), CARDET NGO (Cyprus), AIDGLOBAL (Portugal) and the Catholic University of Milan (Italy).

Capacity building and empowerment of diaspora stakeholders (named “Community Agents, CAs”) plays a central role in the NEAR approach. Since the early start of the project, partners mapped diaspora and other migrant stakeholders in the four cities to identify the most suitable neighbourhood. After setting up an outreach campaign, they organised consultation meetings with interested diaspora stakeholders to identify the knowledge gaps and needs and co-design training programmes on relevant public, private and non-profit integration services by also partnering up with key service providers at local level.

This report takes stock of a year-long outreach, training and engagement of diaspora stakeholders. In doing so, it aims to facilitate the transfer of experiences, tools, knowledge and practices for organizations, practitioners and other interested groups to build the capacity of and empower diaspora communities as actors in the integration of newly-arrived migrants at local level.

## 1. Taking into account diaspora communities in selecting target areas

By definition, diaspora means a scattered population whose origin lives in a separate geographic location. Whilst the word was originally used to describe the forced displacement of certain peoples, “diasporas” is now generally used to describe those who identify with a geographic location, but now reside elsewhere.

Being in a country where migration is well-known, one of our main concerns in participating in or leading programs with migrants is to consider their needs and always have them at the deciding table, especially when it concerns their well-being, inclusion in the country, or even their potential in the general community.

Choosing areas of diaspora was something we had a lot to consider since a lot has changed and has been changing in the past couple of years, especially the past 2,5 years when we, like the rest of the world came across the COVID-19 pandemic.

As an organization in the process of looking at the areas and the which people to contact in order to join our community agent family, one thing was clear and that was that we wanted people who were already in the country for more than 3 years and have already a distinguished role in the area and in the migrant community so that the newly arrived migrant to feel more comfortable to talk to one of their own or to someone that had to go through the similar procedure or even faced the same problems. Also, for the community agent themselves to feel more helpful with more details and specific information.

Knowing our criteria for our Community Agents and while until recently the majority of migrants coming to the country was mainly from Asia and the Middle East (Philippines, Nepal, India, Syria, Pakistan), we contacted associations and individuals we knew and collaborated, in order to participate and get further training on building their skills through training. The professional background is mainly domestic workers and mediators/translators.

At the same time, concerning our target area, we chose the most well-known area to migrants that has mostly all the important information centers as well as government offices but at the same time an area that involves entertainment.

With this in mind, Nicosia (Lefkosia), the capital of Cyprus, one of the oldest cities in our part of the world, today is a sophisticated and cosmopolitan place in the Eastern Mediterranean, rich in history and culture, combining its historic past with the amenities of a modern city.

The heart of the city, within the 16th century Venetian Walls, has a number of interesting museums and art galleries, Byzantine churches, and a number of medieval and neoclassical buildings while the narrow streets retain the romantic atmosphere of the past.

Much of the charm and beauty of Nicosia is to be found in the old city with its labyrinthine alleyways and elegant courtyard houses. Outside the Walls, the new city with its modern facilities is a cosmopolitan center of a modern European capital.

### Strengths:

- Years of experience with the target group and already a working collaboration with the most associations and NGOs related with migration
- Clear image of what were their needs
- Collaboration between public and private, contacted when identifying potential CAs

### Criticalities:

- The last 2 years we have had many asylum seekers mostly from Africa unfortunately due to COVID protocols but all the problems that came with it are still in the system and very hard to get close.
- Also we notice that the mentality of migrants coming from the middle east and Africa are not so open-minded in helping others unless they had something to gain.
- Last but very important the period we were working on this COVID was something that unfortunately couldn't let us elaborate and do more than the bare minimum.

## 2. Outreach and early engagement

Cyprus is one of the EU countries that accept migrants yearly. Fortunately, enough our organization has developed collaboration with a formal and informal organization that involves migrants such as the Philippine associations, Migrants information center, etc. After getting in touch with the associations they helped us find the write C.A that wanted to expand their knowledge and help throw out the process with a newly arrived migrant!

The C.A were both working with organizations and as individuals, since the years living and working in CY were enough to create their own network and community to help others. A big rationale for choosing the C.A was mostly the confidence on themself to guide others in the write directions but also to have partially the knowledge on how things are moving on the migration issue.

Firstly, the first step was mapping the criteria of the community agents:

- Being in the Country for at least or more than 3 years.
- Language (Speak and understand well English)
- Being a member of the community of migrants
- Having a distinguished role in the community
- Have know-how being among public and private services.

Since we had established our criteria for Community Agents and since most of the migrants coming into the country were from Asia (Philippines, Nepal, India, Syria, Pakistan) and the Middle East (Philippines, Nepal, India, Syria, Pakistan), we contacted associations and individuals we knew and collaborated with so that they could participate and get further training on building their skills. The majority of the professionals are domestic workers and mediators/translators

In the last 2 years, we have had many asylum seekers mostly from Africa unfortunately due to covid protocols but all the problems that came with it are still in the system and very hard to get close to.

The following table presents the diaspora associations and communities CARDET worked with.

Legal Form	Name
Organisation	Cyprus and Filipino Organization
Association	St. Catherine Parish Catholic Community
Association	OFW Cyprus
Association	Greens Migrant
Organisation	Migrant Information Center

#### Strenghts:

- Our organization's good collaborations with associations and organizations involving migrants made it easier to reach and find information or know the needs.

#### Criticalities:

- Specific nationalities more willing to participate
- African ethnicity was more difficult to reach due to covid situation.
- The formal data and information we found were more on a specific group of migrants such as Asylum Seekers/ refugees instead of on general information.
- Religious concerns

### 3. Identification of needs and final selection

When we had identified key members of their communities, we provided informal opportunities to get to know them. A round table of discussion was implemented with the 10 community agents in order to suggest and tell us their needs.

The Community Agents were called to participate in a round table talk that which they were going to identify the needs of the general public of migrants. The Round table was delivered via Zoom due to COVID - 19 protocols. We contacted 15 agents/mentors from different organizations. At the round table, only 10 could participate those were the final chosen C.A to participate in the training.

At first, we presented the purpose of the meeting, and then we had a conversation to discuss the needs and the problems migrants face and what problems their fellow nationals express.

Few of the needs they requested that they would like to have more information and get trained in the Services such as migration information centers, public services or indented authorities such as law office of the republic was few of the list of services the migrants recognize to be important to know more and have additional and elaborate knowledge.

Along with a lengthy discussion with the C.An issue that they would like to know about is the Migrant law/rights, Labour law, Housing Security, and communication skills such as soft skills and employment relations are the reasons we created the list of services for the community agents.

The results that came out of this are the following:

#### **The type of information fellow nationals asks often.**

- Their rights – Migrant Law (migrant rights)
- Contract related information
- Details on how to adjust with the employer
- Survival information (Food, housing etc)
- Salary
- The adjustment with the employer when they arrive in Cyprus.
- Labour Law

#### **Topics that the C.A are feeling more confident to work and spread the knowledge.**

- Sense of family 4 counseling
- Contact other organization/association
- Being a mediator
- True advice
- Share their Experience
- Welfare, labor law
- Soft skills

#### **Topics that the C.A need extra information**

- Soft Skills
- Health issue – Guidance
- Social Insurance
- A list of organizations and offices can call and contact

#### **Suggested topics for the upcoming training**

- Soft Skills
- Right and welfare of the migrants
- Benefits of working
- Security (health, self, protection against violence)
- Orientation between the Employers employee relationship

Strengths:

- All C.A was on the same page since all of them had to go through similar situations

Criticalities:

- COVID protocols – We did it online
- Not all participants were able to participate.

## 4. Organization of content for the training programme

We decided to organize the training program around the thematic that came up from the round table, giving priority to the more pressing topics and excluding the less important ones due to unknown situations that we had to deal with which was covid and work accordingly.

Our choice of venue for the sessions was also based on this logic, (COVID protocols) as we held meetings in our offices. A coffee break and breakfast were offered at every meeting, allowing trainers and participants to interact and get to know each other better. To ensure the attendance of CAs, all meetings were held on Sundays as originally anticipated. Multiple experts and service providers are involved in training modules for the community agents, with the purpose of teaching them how to be mentors to themselves and others. For CY training we included a team of experts of social worker, a life coach, and a communication officer to help our C.A in their better adjustment in the host country.

In order to make sure and good communication, a WhatsApp group was created CAs.

This training program consisted of three modules. Below the thematic was:

**MODULE 1 – Legislation:** Training on Culture that outlines the important elements of the Cyprus culture, customs, and traditions. On Political System refers to the Cyprus political system, processes for civic participation, and the benefits of Cyprus accessing the European Union. Economy: It depicts the economy of Cyprus with particular emphasis on the banking and taxation system, in relation to the options available to TCNs. And on Employment and Labor provides an overview of the local labor market with reference to the types of employment and to the public agencies responsible for TCNs, employment relations, and residency status.

**MODULE 2 – Services:** Training on Education, outline the education system of Cyprus by giving emphasis on the rights of TCNs. Healthcare and Social Insurance Services: It discusses the healthcare system of Cyprus along with the rights and obligations of TCNs as well as refers to issues relevant to Social Insurance Services for TCNs. Access to Utilities: It provides information on how to access a list of utility services, such as water, electricity, telecommunication services, internet, transportation, and postal services

**MODULE 3 – Communication:** Training on finding out what is the role of each leader and at the same time find out what is not their role in the community. Get familiar with asking the right questions and know more tools on soft skills.

### Strengths:

- We got a chance to talk about mentoring and coaching skills in supporting newly arrived migrants. Their will to grow to go at training about supporting other people.

### Criticalities:

- We had difficulties with the location we did the training. This came to our attention after we finished the training.
- Also COVID was something we faced difficulties with.

## 5. Training methods and tools

For the training, we chose to use a trainee-centered approach. This approach can be described, as while trainers are still expert figures in a trainee-centered teaching model, trainers and trainees play an equally active role in the learning process. The trainer's primary role was to coach and facilitate the trainee's learning and overall comprehension of material, and to measure learning through both formal and informal forms of assessment, like group projects, portfolios, and participation. In the trainee-centered, teaching and assessment are connected because trainee learning is continuously measured during trainer instruction.

The training was face to face and the main tools used for the training were PowerPoint presentations, handouts, and blackboards.

Part of the training was to create "A COMMUNITY MAP", a map that which the main goal was to create an interactive "place" to show and tell the experiences and share the secrets of the neighborhood. By building the map of the neighborhood, encourage communities to actively participate in telling the cultural, social, and creative story of the area.

In our meeting, C.A. eagerly shared secret places that help them visit with their imagination their home country but mostly they shared expenses they love from Cyprus. Feelings that they have while walking around the city. They mentioned places such as their Sunday church, Having a pick-nick at the municipality park. Loving the times when fairs are happening since they enjoy eating Cypriot Traditional Food (loukoumades, souvla etc). they love listening to music and we were surprisingly happy that our C.A. already knew traditional songs.

### Criticalities:

- A minor subject that came through our conversation in a topic of religion that one of the C.A. expressed that it would be easier for her to work with people that are not Muslim... after talking and giving her the chance to explain what she means that due to her beliefs she would feel more comfortable but yet she will try to help them as much as she can.

## 6. On-going engagement of CAs

C.A throughout the training was really engaged since they express they feel grateful that they were given the opportunity to be part of a new process that can lead to training that they will get part of. Also, being a part of the process and being heard of what the real needs are.

At the training, we used several techniques in order to keep the engagement of the C.A.

- **Roleplaying:** In this technique, a trainee and a facilitator (or trainer) act out possible work scenarios together. Trainees can practice handling difficult situations with this method in industries that have client or customer contact.
- **Case studies:** Case studies can be a good training method for developing analytical and problem-solving skills. During training, trainees are shown scenarios, either real or imaginary, that illustrate common work situations. Trainees are then asked to analyze the case independently or in a group to come up with ideal solutions and scenarios.

As part of keeping in touch with the group and sharing experiences, we created a WhatsApp group. Few of the C.A that we followed up already applied some information they learned at our training to their community, especially for the labor law and soft skills.

The general feedback that we had after the training was done was that the training was more suited to deliver more accurate information to the newly arrived migrant or maybe sometimes to migrants that are already in CY and they could find someone to help them.

## 7. Co-creation of communication campaigns and tools to best target newly-arrived migrants

C.A was encouraged to exchange ideas through our meetings. One of our gatherings we had with the C.A was dedicated completely to them and they're experienced. They were asked to elaborate with the rest of the group on their personal stories, emotions, and even what they like or don't while living in Cyprus.

The C.A was very excited to participate and help us build a map for the newly arrived so that they can travel along with them with the hope of feeling more safe and happy in the new country they came to. Results were easy to have since the stories have been told, emotions were shared, and songs were sung. They shared their love of the sun and that this country has and because of that, they have the opportunity to do many activities with their fellow nationals or be part of general activities that the city offers such as neighborhood tours.

Something that took by surprised the trainer was that when C.A was asked to associate a space, place, or area in the neighborhood with one of the basic emotions the majority of the C.A mention the problem we face in CY on the north side of the island and that makes them feel very sad!

### Strengths:

- CAs making themselves available for any activity and follow-ups.
- CAs brought their experiences to the workshop, which formed the basis for the development of communication activities.

### Criticalities:

- C.A.s are mostly domestic workers and do not have a lot of free time except on specific days such as Sundays and late at night. This creates a problem on how they could get involved in other activities.