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The Swedish model of popular education for inclusion and democracy: supporting migrants and refugees in learning about Sustainable Development Goals with Karin Westberg

Case Study for ErasmusPlus project *Migrants and Refugees as Re-builders*

Erasmus+ Cross-border Intercultural and Societal Entrepreneurs

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<https://uk.iofc.org/M-R-Rebuilders>

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Aim

This case study explores what it means to be an adult educator working with migrants and refugees in Sweden, and, as a practical illustration of that, presents an example of helping adult learners understand Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their implementation in society. The aim of the case study is to show how the work of adult educators (AE) contributes to an inclusive society, in particular through adult learners' (AL) engagement with policy and its potential and practical implications for social change. This case study is part of the action research approach followed within the Erasmus+ project.

Context

According to Migrationsverket (Swedish Migration Board)¹, Sweden has received around 375 000 applications for asylum in 2013-2018, with record numbers in 2015 (almost 163 000). The numbers from different countries of origin vary from year to year, but, according to Migrationsinfo, in 2011-2018 most asylum seekers came from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Eritrea, with every fourth or fifth asylum seeker being from Syria in 2014 and 2015². The education levels vary widely among the immigrants, but, according to Statistiska centralbyrån (Statistics Sweden), 'persons who have immigrated to Sweden for work or studies in the past twelve years have a high level of educational attainment, while persons who immigrated to Sweden as refugees in the same period have a lower level of educational attainment. In particular, a large percentage in this latter group has only attained compulsory education'³. It is safe to say that many of these people need to finish their education, re-educate themselves or take additional courses to have their education recognised by the Swedish system, to find their way into meaningful employment and inclusion in society. AE in Sweden have found themselves in situations where many of the AL are of foreign origin, often new to society, carrying with them anxiety inflicted by the situations in their countries, the journeys to Sweden, and difficulties of

¹ <https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Statistik/Asyl.html>

² <https://www.migrationsinfo.se/migration/sverige/asylsokande-i-sverige/>

³ <https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/education-and-research/education-of-the-population/educational-attainment-of-the-population/pong/statistical-news/educational-attainment-of-the-population-in-2017---educational-attainment-among-foreign-born-persons-2017/>

finding their feet in a new country, navigating a society often profoundly different from their own. In our project, Cross-Border Intercultural and Societal Entrepreneurs, we are asking AE what it takes to deal with this challenge, what competences they need to have in order to do provide the AL the help they need.

The Swedish system of folk high schools is a good place to start for those seeking to advance and complement their education. According to the Internet database *Folkhögskola.nu*, the system offers *allmän kurs* (general course) for those who want to complete their junior or high school studies in order to continue studying at a high school or university in Sweden; *profilkurser* (profile courses) for those who want to pursue a specific interest; *yrkesutbildning* (professional education) for those who want to educate themselves towards a certain profession, and various *sommarkurser* (summer courses)⁴. According to the *Sveriges folkhögskolor* platform, the trademark of folk high schools is their orientation towards active participation, mutual learning in groups, and high level of engagement of the participants in shaping their own education⁵.

Our international project team has developed materials which aim to create meaningful conversations between AE, AL, policy-makers and other stakeholders about multicultural society. In particular, we have created a curriculum, a competence self-assessment framework for AE, and a set of indicators of a person's participation in society. These materials have taken SDGs as guidelines for some of the structure, and an inspiration. This case study has the ambition to shed some light onto how migrants and refugees can take first steps towards being re-builders of societies through adult education which incorporates policy for sustainability.

Popular education and the Swedish democratic society

In March-April 2019 we had an interaction with Karin Westberg, a licensed folk high school teacher and a museum pedagogue with 15 years of experience at the Ethnographical Museum in Stockholm.

What is the relevance of folk high schools as a type of non-formal education in the Swedish society today?

Karin: To answer this question, I would need to get back to Swedish history and the importance of both the political ideology of the foundation of the folk high school system in Sweden, starting in the 1860s, but also the kind of social-didactic pedagogy that helped (and help) many people to get access to education.

Several folk high schools and studieförbund (study associations – TS) developed together with movements like the Peasant movements, Workers' movements, different Church movements, Temperance movement, Women's movements. All these movements emerged when Sweden entered into the industrial period, in order for society to cope with the societal changes which ensued. Groups of people who did not have access to education needed it desperately to be able to fight human exploitation and conservative power conditions. Farmers needed education to learn about technical changes and how to manage their own farms. Workers in newly built factories needed education in general, but also to be aware of their rights, which resulted in the emergence of worker's unions. Today there are still several folk high schools and study associations run by workers' movements, like Brunnsviks folkhögskola, Medlefors folkhögskola, Runö folkhögskola, Studieförbundet ABF and more. All these movements are still represented in the face of Sweden's folk high schools.

⁴ <https://www.folkhogskola.nu/om-folkhogskola/>

⁵ <https://www.sverigesfolkhogskolor.se/om-folkhogskolan/detta-ar-folkhogskolan>

Today, according to the *Sveriges folkhögskolor* platform, the organised popular education (*folkbildning*) in Sweden is carried out by 156 folk high schools and ten *studieförbund*⁶. *Studieförbund* are associations which promote popular education through study circles, meetings and events (for example, Nykterhetsrörelsens Bildningsverksamhet – Sobriety Movement’s Educational Activities, popularly known as NBV, Sweden’s oldest study association)⁷.

The movements that Karin mentions were foundational for the emergence of Swedish democracy and welfare state as we know it today. In 2014, the Swedish Government represented by the Ministry of Education developed a document named ‘*Allas kunskap – allas bildning*’ (Everyone’s knowledge – everyone’s formation)⁸ which explores in detail the role of popular education for democracy and civil society in Sweden. The document states that this role is very significant today, and has been since the emergence of popular education in parallel with the folk movements. It was the popular education in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century which made it possible for people to educate themselves in order to become politically active. Folk high schools enabled a general civil formation within the peasant class, which was a prominent social force in Sweden.

Folkbildning, often translated into English as ‘popular education’, literally means ‘the formation of the people’. The philosophy of *folkbildning* developed in the German culture of the 18th century, and rose to prominence in higher education with Vilhelm von Humboldt. His idea was to think of education as a way for a person to develop themselves and be able to relate to their environment. The prototype of such way of thinking of education was the Greek notion of *paidea*, according to which a person develops their whole life and is able of take part in the civil life⁹.

Today the Swedish State sees popular education as a strengthening factor for democracy, because, according to the Ministry of Education:

- it creates educational environments which stimulate engagement in society;
- it gives place and voice for citizen movements (e.g. feminist, environment);
- its many courses and study circles have practical orientation;
- it creates opportunities for participants to create art and be not only consumers, but creators of culture;
- it plays a central role in local development;
- it creates partnerships between non-profit, state and private sectors;
- it creates opportunities for people to understand political processes, express their opinions and demand accountability.

What is the relevance of popular education for migrants and refugees?

Karin: There are new groups in Sweden today who haven’t had access to education because they come from countries suffering from war or oppression (non-democratic countries). Folk high schools can and do play a major role in providing support for such people in understanding the Swedish society at a deeper level and finding their place in it. The goal of folk high schools

⁶ <https://www.sverigesfolkhogskolor.se/om-folkhogskolan/detta-ar-folkhogskolan>

⁷ <https://www.nbv.se/om-oss/>

⁸ <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2014/03/prop.-201314172/>

⁹ Tomislav Zelić (2018) *Bildung* and the historical and genealogical critique of contemporary culture: Wilhelm von Humboldt’s neo-humanistic theory of *Bildung* and Nietzsche’s critique of neo-humanistic ideas in classical philology and education, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 50:6-7,662-671, DOI: 10.1080/00131857.2017.1374841

remains to raise the level of education in Sweden, which is good for integration. A particular aim of Kista folkhögskola is to make education attractive to Muslims; not to promote the religion itself, but to create an educational space where people feel safe about their religious (and non-religious) beliefs.

Karin's ideas are supported by the official opinion. The Ministry of Education mentions among strengths of popular education the ability to reach those who are furthest removed from education and work, to help them establish themselves on the employment market, to develop their personalities, support each other. Folk high schools have strong connections with the Arbetsförmedlingen (Public Employment Service) and local and regional businesses, and are good at help those who for various reasons could not accomplish their education in the formal sector, to find work or continue studies¹⁰.

Examples of programmes and courses for newly arrived delivered by folk high schools and study associations include:

- Etableringskurs (Establishing Course), carried out by folk high schools as an assignment from Arbetsförmedlingen; these courses are 6-month long and include Swedish language and job orientation. In 2017 about 5350 people took part in these courses, 60 per cent of them from large cities;¹¹
- Swedish from Day One and Everyday Swedish are for asylum seekers and those who have got their permit but still live in the premises provided by the Migration Board¹². In 2017, just under 50000 people took part in these courses.¹³ (This course is part of the Erasmus+ Project Curriculum, Hexagon area 4 - 'Understanding').

In 2017, study associations organised activities for more than 48300 asylum seekers¹⁴. The regional governments show in the same year that study associations, folk high schools are the main organisers of structured and continuous work with asylum seekers, together with religious communities and the Red Cross¹⁵. About one-fifth of all participants of study circles in 2016 were born abroad,¹⁶ and in the same year around seven percent of all those born abroad aged 13 or older took part in at least one study circle.¹⁷

The elements of popular education methodology which make it especially relevant for migrants and refugees

Karin: As one of my favourite expressions (by a Swedish pedagogue) states, "Folkbildning - (opposite to formal education) - is what is left when you have forgotten what you learned" (Karin's translation). It is important to integrate knowledge within yourself and not only learn mechanically.

To expand a little on what Karin is saying here, it is useful to quote Studieförbundet, another study association:

¹⁰ <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2014/03/prop.-201314172/>

¹¹ https://www.folkbildningsradet.se/globalassets/rapporter/regeringen/2018/fbr_sb2018_webb.pdf

¹² https://www.folkbildningsradet.se/globalassets/foldrar/fbr_minifolder_asyl_original2_webb.pdf

¹³ https://www.folkbildningsradet.se/globalassets/rapporter/regeringen/2018/fbr_sb2018_webb.pdf

¹⁴ https://www.folkbildningsradet.se/globalassets/rapporter/regeringen/2018/fbr_sb2018_webb.pdf

¹⁵ Länsstyrelsen i Jönköpings län (2017). Länsstyrelsernas återsrapportering av uppdrag 43 enligt regleringsbrevet för 2017. 851-5335-2017.

¹⁶ https://www.folkbildningsradet.se/globalassets/fakta-om-folkbildning/fbr_fickfakta2018_webb.pdf

¹⁷ https://www.folkbildningsradet.se/globalassets/rapporter/regeringen/2018/fbr_sb2018_webb.pdf

It's in the name – popular education means forming (bildning in Swedish – TS). Forming is about getting new insights and seeing the context than about learning new facts. 'Bildning is that which is left after you have forgotten what you learnt', said Ellen Key more than a hundred years ago. This is still valid¹⁸.

So what is it that makes this approach of 'folkbildning', popular education, so relevant when working with migrants and refugees? Below are some of the 'ingredients' which are important on their own, but take on a whole new meaning and level of importance in the circumstances of a multicultural society.

1. Building on the wealth of the individual experience

Karin: There is a lot to say about the didactic aim in folk high schools. One important 'ingredient' is to value the AL's background. We all have experience from our lives including studies (different degrees), work, family life, cultures, religions, democracy, oppression...

2. Empowering the learners

Karin: Another focus to 'lift people up': first, to coach all to develop self-confidence and self-esteem (which is fundamental for being able to go further); then to give opportunity to people to become aware of their own opinions about society so that they can be full democratic participants, get educated, learn the language, know about their rights and duties in a democratic society, vote, fulfil their dreams.

3. The role of the educator in teaching critical thinking

Karin: Teachers at folk high schools are more like guides and try to make the learners think of their own focus when learning new things together, to inspire them, which hopefully makes them more willing to fulfil their tasks. Many students who are migrants or refugees come from countries where the teachers are supposed to represent the knowledge in a more authoritarian way, and the learners just 'copy' it. The same thing, unfortunately, sometimes happens in the formal educational system in Sweden. That kind of 'learning' does not always make you aware of your own thinking or gives you a possibility to express your thoughts. Critical thinking is extremely important for a democratic and inclusive society.

4. Groupwork and pluralistic approach

Karin: Another important pedagogical tool is to work in groups, to value others' perspectives and learn from others who have other age and backgrounds. We as teachers learn a lot from our students. Take part in discussions and learn to listen to other people's opinions and to express your own in a good way. We value pluralistic meetings.

5. Subject integration

Karin: We often work thematically as we think it gives learners a more complex way of learning when they integrate history, social science, Swedish (key-words) for example. Migration is one of the themes we work with.

¹⁸ Det hörs på namnet – folkbildningen betonar bildning. Bildning handlar mer om att få nya insikter och se sammanhang, mer än om att lära sig fakta. "Bildning är det som finns kvar när du glömt vad du lärt dig", sa Ellen Key för över hundra år sedan. Det gäller fortfarande. Source of citation: <https://www.studieframjandet.se/cirkelledare/info-for-cirkelledare/>

In connection with this I would like to mention, regarding my work with refugees and migrants (most of whom have got rights to stay in Sweden, which is a requirement to enter Allmän kurs), the importance of fiction, literature. Good relevant fiction that I carefully pick as part of a broader theme, makes all of us able to mirror ourselves, no matter who we are or where we come from. One good example is four books (we normally read the first three of them) by the Swedish author Vilhelm Moberg. "Utvandrarna" (The Emigrants), "Invandrarna" (The Immigrants) and "Nybyggarna" (The Settlers) are about the time when many families emigrated to USA among the 1,5 million people between 1860-1920. The books are about the new life in a new country, how the immigrants deal with the everyday challenges and the feelings regarding all that you have left behind and people you will never see again at home. People connect easily with the story and also learn about a poor Sweden not very long ago which made people emigrate from starvation and different kinds of oppression. This has been one of my most "successful" ways to work thematically with "Migration" on a global level and with Sweden as an example, giving many learners an opportunity to tell their own story.



The more literal translation of *nybyggarna* into English is 'new builders', 'builders of the new', or, perhaps, 'rebuilders', which is a great confirmation from the authority of the Swedish literature that, as our project aims to show and manifest, migrants and refugees can and do become rebuilders – of their own lives in a new place, of the society they come in which is never perfect and always subject to transformation, and, potentially, of the societies they left. The phenomenon of migration is not new, and the fact that the issues described in Moberg's novels about the Swedish emigrants of the 19th century are still relevant for the immigrants and 'settlers' in Sweden in the 21st, gives hope that an understanding and empathy can be achieved across cultures, borders and generations.

SDGs training: an example of adult education for social change

In this section we will explore how the 'ingredients' that Karin mentioned as key elements of education at a folk high school are used in an example of training in SDGs carried out at Kista folkhögskola.

Course structure

Karin: In 2016 all the groups at allmän kurs (General course) at Kista folkhögskola worked thematically with Agenda 2030 where we integrated history, social science, Swedish language and English. The goal was to learn about Agenda 2030, a UN and Swedish agenda for sustainable development, and the Paris agreement on climate change. The course lasted four weeks, one whole day a week plus some elements during the social science, history and Swedish classes. The teachers met a few times to plan and design the course in advance.

This is what the course structure looked like:

1. A lecture by Susanne Hedman (a reputed "expert") about the background and history of Agenda 2030 for teachers and other staff at Kista folkhögskola. All teachers did reading about the subject.

2. *We asked a person from the Foreign office in Stockholm to lecture for all students (allmän kurs) and staff in our school about the 17 goals in Agenda 2030, the history and background and about future plans. (Utrikesdepartementet (Foreign Office) is formally responsible for the Agenda 2030 on a national level).*
3. *When the students were aware of the 17 goals they formed groups of 4-6 persons and discussed what goal they found most interesting to work with.*
4. *The teachers helped clarify tasks in groups, and when all students were part of a group with their own chosen goal of the 17, they got an agenda of how to do the work:*
 - a. *Study facts and learn about the chosen goal. Why did you choose it, what are the problems?*
 - b. *Present an example from today that illustrates the problems that the goal deal with. In what country?*
 - c. *What are the solutions? How are they working on it in that country? Is there something we (you and I) can do about it?*
 - d. *Contact an organization which is actively working on this goal and interview them about their solutions to the problems.*
 - e. *Present the goal you have chosen to other groups in our school. You can use powerpoint, a role play, a theater sketch, as well as writing down your results in a report.*

We all had a big meeting where the groups presented their work for each other. Even if they had picked the same goal of the agenda, they had chosen different problems in different areas. Several groups chose problems in Sweden, like Goal 1 - Ingen fattigdom (No poverty) where they focused on homeless people in Sweden, or Goal 16 - Fredliga och inkluderande samhällen (Peacefull and including societies), where they focused on how Sweden works with receiving refugees.

It is easy to see how the elements of folk high school education which Karin mentioned earlier and which are important when working with migrants and refugees were employed to make the SDGs training worthwhile. The most obvious is a thematic focus, exploring the theme of SDGs, which is a big political agenda today. Groupwork and pluralistic approach were evidently employed in the course to allow the learners to learn from each other, whereas the role of educators was more of guides and facilitators to support the learning process; the function of an 'expert' was to present the theme, open up the discussion, rather than impose any particular view. Empowering learners to think critically, create their opinions, explore the reality in the field was the main focus of the training. Finally, building on the experience of the learners was fundamental, both incorporating previous experience, but also creating new real-life experience of the chosen problems and how society works to solve them.

Results

Karin: Both teachers and students learnt a lot, both from the material about Agenda 2030, but also from the case studies presented by the students. This learning happened at both professional and personal level. Some learners studied organisations in their local areas, so that they could see how their communities engage with sustainability; at the same time we all had a national and a global picture in mind. As a teacher, I saw it as my role to coach the groups, give feedback and motivate them.

The students made many interesting connections between the formulated goals and their own thinking of that goal. One group picked Goal 5 (Gender equality) and made interviews with the

Police about men’s violence against women. Many reflected on the situation for women, for example regarding Goal 4 (Quality education). An interesting discussion came up regarding goal 4 as we listened to a lecture about the fact that many women drop out of school or lose a lot of their education because of their menstruation periods, when they are forced to stay home. This also came up regarding Goal 6 (Clean water) as many girls don’t have access to clean water or good sanitation, toilets etc. during these periods.

Of course, the result of a project like this is bigger than learning about SDGs. It is learning about social change, its mechanisms and leverage points, and the folk high school approach is crucial here in allowing the students to do the necessary field work, learn from the field and from each other. It is a good example of learning about how a society works and how we as citizens can participate in it, from shaping our opinion, to making it heard, to taking action through the many civil organisations which form the fabric of a democratic society.

Migrants and Refugees as Re-builders: The relevance of the case study for our project outcomes

The case study exemplifies and illustrates some elements of the intellectual outcomes which we have developed in our project.

First of all, the elements of adult education highly relevant for migrants and refugees, and in particular the SDGs training described here relate to the areas of the ‘5 Life-skills Modules Hexagon’:

Area 1 (Sustainable Livelihood), as the training raises awareness of the fundamental human needs and rights;

Area 4 (Understanding), as it promotes critical thinking and societal engagement, and

Area 5 (Participation and Social Entrepreneurship), as it invites the participants to explore what various actors in communities do for sustainability.



Source: Migrants and Refugees as Re-builders Curriculum Handbook¹⁹

¹⁹ <https://uk.iofc.org/curriculum>

Secondly, the case study illustrates how AE use competences presented in our Competence Self-Assessment Framework, more specifically in Tool 1 (Self-Determination Assessment Matrix), where AE are invited to reflect on how they as educators relate to the global society, and Tool 2 (Inner Compass for AE), more specifically such competences as andragogy aptitude, cultural intelligence and patience and understanding. Below are the excerpts from these tools.

TOOL 1. SELF-DETERMINATION ASSESSMENT MATRIX

The matrix is based on Self-Determination Theory. We have separated life competence into internal and external categories to provide a more detailed inquiry into this very important aspect.

My relationship with:	Life Competence (internal)	Life Competence (external)	Relatedness Competence	Autonomy Competence
The global society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are my personal values, the values of the organisation(s) I work with and my society, which nurture a global social responsibility for humanity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What skills, qualities and competencies have I recently discovered in myself which are useful and valued in any society, across cultures? What have I done to encourage learners to use their skills to strengthen a multicultural global society? What else can I do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have I recently learned about my identity and responsibilities as a global citizen? What have I recently done to nurture the learners' sense of global belonging and caring for the planet? What else can I do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do my multiple affiliations (my cultural and (non-) religious background, work, education, family, friends, hobbies, etc.) help me have multiple perspectives on my life? What have I recently done to encourage the learners to have such multiple perspectives on their lives? What else can I do?

Source: Migrants and Refugees as Re-builders Competence Self-Assessment²⁰

We see how well connected the SDGs training was for the last dimension of our Matrix, 'My relationship with the global society', as it creates conditions for the learners to reflect on the global political agenda and their role in it. The training was a good way to develop these competences in both AE and AL.

TOOL 2: INNER COMPASS FOR ADULT EDUCATORS

²⁰ <https://uk.iofc.org/competence-self-assessment>

ANDRAGOGY APTITUDE

The word 'andragogy' is distinct from the term 'pedagogy' (Greek: 'child-leading'). Andragogy is originally also a Greek word, meaning 'man-leading'. In adult learning it might be a good idea to distinguish differences from child learning. Malcolm Knowles [1] has suggested a theory based on six assumptions related to the motivation of adult learning:

1. **Need to know:** Adults need to know the reason for learning something.
2. **Foundation:** Experience, including error, provides the basis for learning activities.
3. **Self-concept:** Adult learners need to be responsible for their decisions regarding their education, and involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
4. **Readiness:** Adults are most interested in learning subjects with immediate relevance to their work and/or personal lives.
5. **Orientation:** Adult learning is problem-centred rather than content-oriented.
6. **Motivation:** Adults respond better to internal versus external motivators.

PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING

'Love, peace and understanding' might be an old expression from the 'Flower Power' era. Yet it embodies effective conditions for learning, especially when the participants might be in a rather vulnerable state. In order to absorb new concepts, when living in a stressful situation, the adult learner needs peace of heart. Love is a strong word, yet the learning will be more efficient when the learners 'love' their education. This might also lead to a more relaxed attitude towards everyday life, which will be helpful in comprehending their new context.

Ask yourself: To what extent have I recently been able to...

- create a relaxed, non-judgemental atmosphere when working with learners?
- encourage learners to be true to themselves?
- make humour and playfulness part of the learning process?

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Cultural intelligence can be understood as the capability to relate and work effectively across cultures. There may be cultural prejudices among learners. Educators may even use the cultural quotient as a motivating factor in learning. It is not only to 'teach the pupils', it is more of creating a learning space for the unique individuals within the room to inspire each other. Different cultures might be a great inspiration in the right context.

Ask yourself: To what extent have I recently been able to...

- encourage learners to challenge their own prejudices?
- use diversity as a resource for learning?
- challenge my own prejudices and appreciate diversity?

Source: Migrants and Refugees as Re-builders Competence Self-Assessment²¹

Andragogy (education of adults) is different from pedagogy (education of children) in a number of ways, as the excerpt above shows. It is clear that the popular education model builds solidly on all the elements of andragogy, as it takes into account the personal experience of AL, their internal motivation, their interest in solving problems and taking part in developing their own learning process. It feels as if popular education is more prone than formal education towards patience and understanding, i.e. to meeting the learners where they are, in their own circumstances, discovering their inner truth, rather than forcing them into strict boundaries. Finally, the cultural intelligence is a direct consequence of the popular education approach, as it clearly aspires to use diversity as a resource for learning.

And finally, the case study illustrates the Social Micro-Indicators for Inclusion and Economic Integration for the Area 5 of the Hexagon of our 3d intellectual output:

²¹ <https://uk.iofc.org/competence-self-assessment>

SOCIAL MICRO-INDICATORS FOR PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES



Training module and objectives	Social micro-indicators	Likert scale (1-5)	Source of verification
<p>Sustainable livelihood and social entrepreneurship (See page 25 of curriculum)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To learn about and discuss the factors that undermine people's livelihoods in post-conflict areas. To know what the key assets are that can restore and maintain livelihood in post-conflict situations. To analyse critically the links between natural ecology and sustainable livelihood. To start exchanging / developing strategies for the common good with countries of origin 	I can explain local issues (economic, political, social and educational) that impact positively on our community		Reports about integration have been commissioned by parliament
	Community intergenerational events are organized to enhance community cohesion		Attendance at intergenerational social events has increased in the community
	Community-based activities that deal with food waste (community fridge, community kitchens etc.)		Increase of number of supermarkets and restaurants offering unsold food to community fridges and kitchens)
	Community-based activities that tackle consumerism or private debt (e.g. 'library of things')		Number of loans that the 'library of things' reports
	Virtual awareness campaigns for restoring and maintaining livelihood in post-conflict areas		Number of virtual meetings with family and/or community members to share experiences of creating sustainable livelihood in post-conflict areas
	Trips planned by settled migrants to explore potential social action projects with peers		Number of trips by migrants to countries of origin for exploring potential social action projects with peers
	Workshop for start-ups and/or cooperatives that will work towards achieving SDGs in community		Number of social enterprises and/or cooperatives that last more than 1.5 years in the community

Source: Migrants and Refugees as Re-builders Competence Self-Assessment²²

This last section of the Indicators is dedicated to sustainability and societal engagement of migrants and refugees, and the SDGs training seems to create opportunities to learn about their communities and sustainability, especially going in the 'field' and exploring social action projects, as well as looking at various local problems and initiatives.

²² <https://uk.iofc.org/social-micro-indicators-inclusion-and-economic-integration>

Conclusions

The action research approach applied by the Erasmus+ Project 'Cross-Border Intercultural and Societal Entrepreneurs' has shown how adult education, and in particular *folkbildning*, contributes to a democratic and pluralistic society. We have tried to illuminate the Swedish model of popular education which is a foundation of democracy, recognised as such by the *folkbildning* movement itself, as well as by the Swedish official discourse. We have seen what an important role *folkbildning* plays in the integration into society of migrants and refugees, and how it collaborates with and becomes entrusted by the government for this role. This is the context behind the thoughts which one AE shared with us, speaking from the personal experience of working with students of various cultural backgrounds, and which elements of the popular education she considers most relevant for them. Indeed, the *folkbildning* approach, characterised by a focus on internal motivation, pluralism, taking into account the AL's experience and embeddedness in the society and community, seems extremely well-suited for the needs of migrants and refugees. Our project's adoption of SDGs as one of the frameworks for our intellectual outputs has made the study of the SDGs training course highly relevant, and the case study shows that such a training is, indeed, a relevant thematic way to motivate the learners to engage with the society they live in, from the personal level of discovering their own societal concerns, through the community level of exploring how their local communities try to tackle the issues they are passionate about, to the global level of understanding the United Nations Agenda for sustainability and its political history.

All the resources developed within the Erasmus+ Cross-border Intercultural and Societal Entrepreneurs project are available in English, Spanish, Turkish, Swedish, Somali, Arabic and Tigrinya and can be downloaded from:

<https://uk.iofc.org/curriculum>

<https://uk.iofc.org/competence-self-assessment>

<https://uk.iofc.org/social-micro-indicators-inclusion-and-economic-integration>

We would welcome your feedback and comments to the article and to the educational tools we are sharing within the EPAL network. Send this to: Tatiana.sokolova@hotmail.co.uk