



# Supporting Integration of Migrant Learners, Asylum Seekers and Refugees

## Editorial

The integration of people immigrating presents a special challenge; it is a complex and long-term undertaking. Everyone should make an effort to foster the successful integration of immigrants. Those in favour of immigration are persons closely working with migrants, they represent educational sectors: teachers, trainers, educators; or social and care sectors: volunteers, social care workers, municipal guards, police etc.

The project SIMILAR aims at fostering integration of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers through a multi-dimensional approach which includes multicultural approach and empowering measures in the areas of integration and social welfare.

Due to their varied and complimentary experience and expertise, the consortium of the project is consisted of the following partners: [University of Lodz](#) (Poland), [VHS Cham e.V.](#) (Germany), [Ljudska Univerza Velenje](#) (Slovenia), [Menedék – Hungarian Association for Migrants](#) (Hungary), [CARDET](#) (Cyprus). Partnership was selected in a way to assure the highest quality performance. Each partner has an experience which will bring the unique input to the project.

This newsletter represents selected highlights of the work done during the first 6 months of the project, through a sample of the latest project outputs and related news stories by project partners.

## SIMILAR project kick-off meeting in Poland

The SIMILAR project has held its project kick-off meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at the project coordinator's (University of Lodz) facilities in Lodz, Poland. A total of 11 participants attended the workshop, including 4 people from the host organization and 7 people from the remaining four partners of the project.

The consortium presented the aims of the project and the activities that will be conducted during the project's life cycle and discussed about its status and the tasks ahead. The aim of the meeting was to start a dialogue between the different project stakeholders in which partners gained a deeper knowledge of the peculiarities of each organization / institution, and better understood the project vision and the proposed means to achieve that vision.

Overall, the meeting was an enriching experience that increased the mutual understanding among the consortium, and also highlighted the risks involved due to its heterogeneity.



## SIMILAR project online platform

The official [SIMILAR project website](http://www.similarproject.eu) was launched in April 2017. The website was created by CARDET and at the moment contains basic information on the project, its objectives, and its partners. This interactive platform will feature news, project's findings and updates, such as reports, policy briefs as well as opportunities for collaboration, e.g. events announcements, workshops and training sessions. Also, all the tools and guidelines that will be developed in the context of the SIMILAR project will be available on the website in downloadable format. The website is currently available in English, but it will be translated in Polish, Greek, German, Slovenian and Hungarian.

## SIMILAR at the ET2020 Working Groups' Joint Seminar on Migration in Brussels

The Volkshochschule im Landkreis Cham was invited to the ET2020 Working Groups' Joint Seminar on Migration in Brussels on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2017. During the seminar the VHS Cham presented the activities and experience in relation to the project "Feel like a migrant – a multicultural approach to teaching" and also presented our new project "SIMILAR". The seminar brought together approximately 70 experts from school education, higher education, vocational education and training, adult learning, digital education and citizenship education from across the EU. It included afternoon workshops featuring interesting practices implemented in different Member States.

## Focus Groups with Migrants - "Menedék Association for Migrants"

Menedék Association for Migrants started organizing and conducting focus groups and individual interviews with experts and migrants in Hungary. In February we conducted interviews with to 10 migrants, mainly refugees. We have asked about their experiences in the support systems they encountered and their aspirations. These are very helpful experiences that will help the research team to compile the National Report. The next focus group with experts will take place in the middle of March. Meanwhile our researcher is working on the data analysis (desktop research and literature review).





## Focus Groups and Interviews in Cyprus – CARDET

In the past 2 months CARDET has conducted several focus groups and in-depth interviews with migrants (including asylum seekers and third-country nationals) and experts from local authorities and bodies responsible for the different phases of migrants' integration. The aim of these activities is to find out what kinds of support systems have been helpful or less helpful for both target groups and what kind of support would migrants and experts need.

The results that will come up from the focus groups and interviews which will be conducted in all partner countries will be summarized and analysed in the Cross-country Analysis Report, which will be developed by CARDET in the following months.

