



CASE STUDY



A taste of home

CROATIA

A Taste of Home is a culinary-cultural-research project that introduces the culture, customs and societies of origin of refugees in Croatia by recording their memories of home, and smells and tastes of their cuisine. This is an experiment in sharing the life stories and culinary skills of refugees and people from Croatia.

The **Centre for Peace Studies** is a non-government and non-profit organisation founded in 1996. It promotes non-violence and social change through education, research, public policies and activism. Since 1996 the CPS has been committed to building lasting peace in South Eastern Europe through promoting active citizen participation, conflict transformation and building cooperation at different levels. The Centre's programme embraces work on the transformation of conflicts and the affirmation of non-violence, combating racism, xenophobia and ethnic exclusion, and promoting social and economic solidarity. The CPS employs 21 people and has some 50 volunteers mostly involved in supporting the social participation and inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees.





WHAT ARE THE LOCAL SOCIAL REALITIES?

At the European level, the number of social eco The Croatian authorities have seriously neglected the introduction of integration policies especially those embracing work and education opportunities. As a result, refugees are still dependent on state services even after two years of integration. According to the research on refugees' employability (conducted by the Centre for Peace Studies in 2014) only 7.5% of those granted protection are non-state dependent through temporary, rarely steady jobs. The employability and social inclusion of refugees is a very difficult process due to several factors: it is difficult by the very nature of being a refugee, due to having a different background and to forced migration. They face inequality and the difficulty of being accepted into Croatian society, because they lack the language skills, communication and other soft skills, as well as being unable to demonstrate and express their knowledge and skills and competences within a rather narrow labour market.

Many refugees have excellent cooking skills on the other hand, having previous experience as professional chefs in restaurants or as professional cooks. Many of them have a knowledge of different languages - a knowledge that can be easily transmitted and shared.



WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC INNOVATIVE ELEMENTS IN YOUR PROJECT/SERVICE?

Tastes of Home has been researched and recorded over several years. For over ten years we have met people in search of safety and happiness. Some of these stories about the search for a better life have been recorded in this book. Through culinary workshops and public presentations of culinary specialities, as well as through the creation of a cookbook «A Taste of Home» and the recording the eponymous documentary, refugees speak out about the reasons for their exile through gastronomy. Each of the recorded stories were shared voluntarily and in order to protect the identities some names have been changed.

The entire project took place in conjunction with a Peace Studies programme by the Centre for Peace Studies. It was overseen by the mentoring group that was part of the course «Migration and Asylum» and «The emancipation of cultural pluralism in the times of exile», in collaboration with a group of volunteers who provide support for the integration of refugees and the development of the asylum system in Croatia. A valuable contribution to shaping and promoting A Taste of Home came from Fade In – a video activist-based organisation that has made a documentary movie and co-created a campaign on the integration of refugees.

A strong innovative element in the project is its promotion of the economic emancipation of the refugees and other migrants by using their knowledge, skills and earlier experience while sensitising environment/society to the potential of their integration through creating a cooking and language based social cooperative (social entrepreneurship shaped and led by refugees themselves).





WHAT ARE THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT/SERVICE?

Target groups/users

The target groups are primarily refugees and other persons with a migrant background as well as asylum seekers (taking into consideration the fact that they only obtain the right to work a year after the submission of their asylum application). All these people are unemployed, either long-term unemployed, young unemployed or (younger and older) unemployed women.

Principles

The economic emancipation of refugees and persons with a migrant background and their inclusion and participation in the culture, economy and everyday life of Croatian society. In addition to the economic emancipation of refugees, we also aim at sensitising the Croatian public to refugees' needs and at combating prejudice, followed by opening up a space for social hospitality through culinary, language and cultural exchanges.

Drivers

The Croatian authorities have seriously neglected integration policies especially those providing opportunities for work and education, making refugees dependent on state services, even after two years. According to research on refugees' employability (conducted by the Centre for Peace Studies in 2014) only 7.5% of those granted protection are non-state dependent through temporary, rarely steady jobs. The employability and social inclusion of refugees is a very difficult process due to several factors: it is difficult by the very nature of being a refugee, due to having a different background and to forced migration. They face inequality and the difficulty of being accepted into Croatian society, because they lack the language skills, communication and other soft skills, as well as being unable to demonstrate and express their knowledge and skills

and competences within a rather narrow labour market.

Many refugees have excellent cooking skills on the other hand, having previous experience as professional chefs in restaurants or as professional cooks. Many of them have a knowledge of different languages - a knowledge that can be easily transmitted and shared.

Outcome

The Taste of Home collective has set up the social cooperative as an open and inclusive business model. The cooperative will promote intercultural exchange through culinary action and language learning, introducing cultures in different ways.

Culinary-gastronomic work consists of: cooking workshops and classes, show kitchens and public food tasting, food festivals, catering for business conferences and parties, and the publishing of cookbooks. The language and cultural element offers: language courses (in the beginning four different language courses will be offered), the translation of booklets and articles, translation services at conferences and other public events, and cultural (movie, literature, theatre, etc.) evenings. The cooperative plans to employ some 20 people in the near future.

Can this project be transferred to a larger context (a bigger region, the whole country, EU-wide)? If so, what is needed to transfer it (special structures, finances, common definition of standards...)? If not, why not?

The whole project can be easily transferred to a larger context. What it takes is good will, the patience to listen people you work with and hear their needs, creative time for planning and a





readiness to accept ups and downs. Funding is helpful, especially when the process develops a certain structure and turns into a visionary project.

Contact

www.okus-doma.hr, www.cms.hr

Emina Bužinkić, member of Taste of Home collective and member of the Executive Board of the Centre for Peace Studies at emina.buzinkic@cms.hr

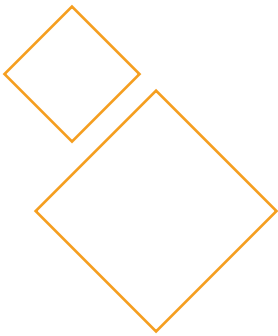




solidar

Rue du Commerce | Handelsstraat 22
1000 Brussels
Belgium
T +32 2 500 10 20
F +32 2 500 10 30

Twitter: @SOLIDAR_EU
Facebook: SOLIDAR
www.solidar.org
solidar@solidar.org



SOLIDAR, together with our national members and partners, has developed 17 case studies in 2015, presenting innovative, effective, sustainable and tailor made models to promote social inclusion, the social economy and quality job creation by adapting a social investment approach. In their daily work, SOLIDAR members and partners anticipate new or unmet needs of socio-economically vulnerable people and empower them to actively participate in society and to access the labour market.

These case studies gather strong evidence of the social impact of the activities undertaken by our members and partners to help Member States making progress towards the achievement of the social and employment objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the implementation of the Social Investment Package.

SOLIDAR is a European network of membership based Civil Society Organisations who gather several millions of citizens throughout Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the values of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the three main policy sectors; social affairs, lifelong learning and international cooperation.



This publication has been produced with the financial support of the European Union. The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.