

Revealed Hands



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Location

Jesenice, Ljubljana

Country

Slovenia

Short summarizing description

The project was aimed at vulnerable groups women living in Jesenice, and female asylum holders from asylum home in Ljubljana. The desire was to additionally educate them in the field of textile design, the creation of a video, internet marketing and sales topics, humanitarian work, and social skills, and therefore psychosocially empower them. The project was based on experience from previous projects. Previous projects started in 2012 under the same name which is interconnected and present continuous work and upgraded cooperation with a vulnerable group of women. However, in addition to textile design, this time it provided more space for various artistic approaches, such as movement, play, theatre improvisation, photography, video, poetry with the aim to create a relaxing and creative atmosphere at meetings.

Key Terms

Immigrant women, empowerment, textile

Context and background, Which problems/challenges does your measure try to solve/cope with?

An immigrant woman is at least three times marginalized person: as a woman; as a mother and care-taker; as an immigrant. These facts lead to the following problems of immigrant women: - isolation, missing the feeling of belonging,

low social inclusion; - apathy, depression, burnout, anxiety; - poor self-esteem; - unemployment, poverty; - lack of hope, sense, courage. Their basic needs are: for useful and meaningful creativity, for social inclusion and involvement in the wider community, the need to contribute to the family income, the need to connect with their own cultural roots and dissemination of knowledge. Textile design became medium for women's psychosocial empowerment as well as a sustainable business model for financial independence.

Which are the key objectives of your measure?

Participants (immigrant women) have: learned about textile craft as a powerful tool for self-help or self-improvement (when coping with heavy emotions); be psychologically empowered; got greater opportunities for employment. The project educated local community: got to know better the culture of immigrant women and about the importance of collaboration, co-creation, integration and have encouraged locals to overcome xenophobia, prejudice, condemnation difference of local community. Immigrant women are better culturally and socially included in the local community.

Who are the main target groups and beneficiaries of your measure?

The project Revealed Hands was intended for a group of women living in Jesenice – immigrants from southern Balkans and who were brought to Slovenia by different life stories, coincidences, and conditions in the home country and refugee women from asylum home in Ljubljana, with diverse backgrounds. 90% of the women are socially and economically deprived. The secondary target group are local communities.

Which actions have already been implemented and which results have been achieved so far?

Actions involve: learning of textile design and experiences in various artistic approaches, such as theatre, photography, video, poetry with the aim to create a relaxing and creative atmosphere at meetings; learning how to do internet marketing, selling, communicating and entering European market; learning soft skills which are enhancing social, pedagogical and humanitarian competencies of immigrant women (among those also nonviolent communication) Results: educative participatory events (more than 50); a collection of contemporary handmade pillows, made from woolen yarn of Slovenian sheep, dyed with natural dyes; exhibition of products and photographs town hall Ljubljana; video <https://vimeo.com/217361684>; interactive selling website www.razkriteroke.si; regular meetings of women after project conclusion, organised workshops by project participants, independent entrance of project participants on the market; enhanced social, pedagogical and humanitarian competencies of immigrant women

Which were the main problems and challenges you were/are facing when implementing the project and how did/do you (try to) overcome them?

1: How to involve young people in the project - we managed to involve a young assistant in the project - highly educated, with the immigrant background. She gained experience and managed to attract young people to participate in some activities. 2: How to overcome cultural differences among participants. The project leader is an ambassador of intercultural dialogue. She held practical workshops through which participants experienced and learned intercultural competencies. 3: How to overcome personal differences - used methods of Nonviolent communication, Art of Hosting, Appreciative Inquiry.

Link to website

<http://www.razkriteroke.si/?lang=en>

Starting date

2013-09-01

Duration

40

Regional scale

2 - small region (some municipalities, a mountain valley etc.)

Other involved partners

Institute Oloop, Ministry of Culture - Republic of Slovenia, Municipality of Ljubljana, Museum for Architecture and Design Ljubljana, Poligon - creative center Ljubljana, Smetumet NGO Ljubljana

Contact person

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Category 2: Integrating migrants into the local/,regional labour market

Integration of migrant women into local and national labour market was and is implemented by: selling the products on art-markets (setting public relations, getting visibility among customers and handicraft community), selling the products in art shops in Slovenia, communication through social media and internet, clips on national television, TV documentary; including immigrants into humanitarian and voluntary activities of NGO Up; being present on diverse national public events such as Volunteer of the year (organised by National Youth Council), Week of long-life learning (organized by Andragogic centre), cultural and culinary festivals; hosting important public persons in NGO Up, Jesenice, such as president of Slovenia, ambassador of UK, Austria, India; cooperation with regional NGO network; project exhibition in the town hall of Ljubljana; including Slovenian women and local community into activities.

Category 5, PR impact and awareness raising

PR and awareness raising has been very successful throughout the whole project in Slovenian media landscape and also globally through diverse channels: newspapers, radio, TV, web pages and social media. With special media attention, we covered starting promotional activities in Ljubljana and Jesenice where we exchanged cultural-design practices with guests from Textile Art Center from New York. Presentation of their good practices has contributed to the quality of the project and its international promotion. We held public events in Ljubljana and Koper where participants had a chance to introduce themselves to Slovenian public and were an inspiration to other groups and organisations. For those events, we were mentored by public relations specialist Nataša Briški. During the project, national television produced a TV documentary Med zidovi (Between the walls) which was shown on several occasions. We also held exhibition in Ljubljana town hall during 25th Biennale LJ.

Category 6, Innovative dimension

Project is innovative because products are designed with the highest quality under the mentorship of design group Oloop and aimed towards high-end markets; cooperation and knowledge transferred among migrant women and women who are asylum seekers; sustainability of the project - participants gained skills and knowledge which empowers them to continue to work independently and to sell their products on the market ; innovative ways of learning and project mentors - again carefully selected methods by the mentors to transfer the knowledge and skills needed and empower participants; to combine the need of diverse vulnerable groups - cooperation between migrant women and women who are asylum seekers; overcoming language barriers by handicrafts (knitting, crocheting) - no spoken communication needed; project was organised innovatively - creating small groups by their interest and needs; respectful and connecting communication, participatory decision making, intercultural dialogue.

Category 7, Transferability

Project Revealed Hands is in a nutshell connecting women of diverse backgrounds, making them communicate and cooperate without speaking the same language, transferring the knowledge, skills and attitude within the group and to the community. Because of all the reasons stated above makes the idea of developing handicraft projects to empower women and the community easy to transfer into other regions especially when the leader or the mentor is sincerely working with the target group. There is also one thing to remember: handcrafting esp. knitting and crocheting is not only skills and knowledge: it's scientifically proven to have a positive effect on human brains; when you create in a group it gives you a sense of belonging, of community; it's empowering in terms of business and possible economic independence. Definitely the results of the project can be transferred to diverse communities and regions with a bit of mentorship from our side.

Category 8, Embedment in a comprehensive welcoming strategy



In the project Revealed Hands we managed: to build new intercultural connections; to spread awareness about the importance of hand-work in the time when everything is digitalized; to connect textile art and design with education and social fields and use them as a tool for other goals like inclusion, communication, cooperation, co-creation; to empower culturally, socially, psychologically and emotionally vulnerable groups. The project educated local community about the importance of collaboration and co-creation; provided possibilities for extra income for vulnerable individuals; to design a sustainable business model; to transfer gained knowledge into other projects regarding inclusion of migrant women - concretely in the projects (for empowering migrant women and to enter in Slovenian job market) of Ministry of social affairs already implementing.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/cdd0wcxqload705/Revealed%20Hands_Oloop_Brochure.pdf?dl=0

<https://vimeo.com/217361684>