

# D.T1.1.4

## STUDY TRIP REPORT

---

Activity A.T1.1.

Date  
30.10.  
2019

Name of Partner: Burgenland District

Contact Person: Sonia Moreno (Moreno.Sonia@blk.de)



### **Study trip report**

Study trip has been organized within a framework of the project titled “*Exploring social innovation approaches for the social and economic integration of non-EU nationals ARRIVAL REGIONS*”.

- **This form is designed to capture the social innovation approaches for the social and economic integration of non-EU nationals.**
- **The responses from this survey will be collected, analysed and used to prepare the pilot action concepts.**
- **In order to improve the readability of the questionnaire, please delete options that don't apply to the visited initiative.**

<b>Practice summary</b>	
1. Title of the good practice	<b>PROJECT "THSN PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE START-UPS"</b>
2. Geographical Coverage <i>(underline the right answer)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European</li> <li>• <u>national</u></li> <li>• regional</li> <li>• local</li> </ul>
3. Location of the practice (city, country)	Munich, Germany
4. Main institution involved	Social Impact gGmbH
5. Visit agenda <i>(people met, institution visited)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People met: -Olaf Weberring (Head of Social Impact Lab Munich)</li> <li>• Institutions visited: -Social Impact gGmbH in Munich</li> </ul>
6. Dates of study trip	23.10.2019
7. Thematic area <i>(Intercultural dialogue, Social innovation, Migrants' Economy)</i>	Social innovation Migrants' economy
8. Type of practice visited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing measures for job finding (training, job matching, guidance, recognition of qualifications, etc.)</li> </ul>
9. Participants (PPs + stakeholders)	PP7 (1 participant), PP12 (1 participant)
10. Reporting Person	Sonia Moreno (PP12)
<b>Practice description</b>	
<p>11. Introduction (include any relevant pictures) <i>background information, aim/purpose of the study trip, objectives</i></p> <p>Social Lab is an agency and a non-profit organization for social innovation, which was founded in 1994. Since then, Social Impact has been designing and implementing innovative qualifications and start-up support for socially disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>The institution offers professional consultancy, coaching, workshops and co-working workplaces. Social Impact also offers foundation programs for special target groups (migrants, young unemployed people and people with disabilities).</p> <p>There are already Social Impact labs in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Duisburg, Stuttgart, Munich und Potsdam.</p>	

Their focus themes are:

- Social Innovation
- Inclusive Innovation
- Innovation in Education
- Innovation in the welfare sector
- International Cooperation
- Funding & Financing

The Social Impact Lab in Munich was founded in 2017 by three entrepreneurs, who started looking for a building, programs, etc.



*Pic. 3. The main entrance to Social Impact Lab in Munich*

Today, the Social Impact Lab in Munich employs 7 workers: 2 of them deal with all the administrative issues and the other 5 work in the two programs they offer: the “THSN Program for Refugee Start-Ups” and the program “Start Hope@Home”.



*Pic. 2. Entrance to Social Impact Lab in Munich and their two integration programs*

1. Program “THSN Program for Refugee Start-Ups” by The Human Safety Net Generali Foundation:

Since 2015, more than 1.5 million refugees have come to Germany, most of them from the Middle East. 10.000 of them are living in Munich. Two-thirds are 30 years old or younger. About 60% are male.

The integration of these men and women into the German labor market has proved to be more complicated and has been slower than expected. Most employment offices have not yet developed an effective approach to self-employment.

The Social Impact Lab in Munich helps with this program fill this gap for refugees who

want to become entrepreneurs. The participants of the program learn the basics of entrepreneurship: how to develop an idea and how to create a business plan. They benefit from the broad support of professionals, including coaching and training, and can use their co-working spaces to interact with other emerging entrepreneurs.

About 60% of the participants of this project come from Syria.

## 2. Program “Start Hope@Home”:

The program is aimed towards migrants and refugees who are considering to return to their country of origin or refugees who didn't receive the refugee status. The program prepares them for a new business in their country of origin. Participants receive individual coachings accompanied by a social worker, in order to strengthen their entrepreneurial skills and to develop future paths. The most of them come from African countries like Senegal or Nigeria. The program take about four weeks.

## 12. Implementation of the study trip

*The following issues were discussed during the study trip:*

In October 2017 the workers of the Social Impact Lab in Munich began the Program “THSN for Refugee Start-Ups” with a very small group of refugees. As the group of participants was too small, they soon realized that they had to enlarge their target group, not only offering the program to refugees but also to all migrants.

A new participant with a work permit in Germany can enter into the program at any time, there are not fixed dates. To take part in the program, migrants have to apply online:

<https://muenchen.socialimpactlab.eu/en/program/bewerbungsformular/>

After that, and if the workers of Social Impact think applicants could have chances to run a successful business, they are invited for a personal interview at the institution. A B1-level in German language is desirable. However, this also depends on the idea of business of each participant. Some of them need to be fluent in the language, while other don't need it at all if they speak English. At the personal interview, all the facts regarding the business idea will be discussed.

Once the institution have officially approved their participation in the program, they will be individually coached, depending on their needs. The number of appointments and coachings will also depend on each participant's needs, but it can be between once a week and once every two months. At these interviews, participant will be coached in all the subjects they need, like marketing, online marketing, legal help, business, etc. The institution also can provide the support of a lawyer for free.

The workers of Social Impact Lab in Munich prepare participants to do everything for themselves. They don't do the work for them, as they have to become independent. The period participants stay in the project also differs, but it could take up to one year.

Until now, the institution supported diverse kind of business. Although the most of applicants wanted to run restaurants or culture centers, there are also some of them who had business ideas brought from their countries of origin that don't exist in Germany. The workers don't judge their ideas, they let participants make their own experiences.

Once participants start to run they own business, their participation in the program is officially finished. However, the institution tries to keep the contact with them and to provide additional assistance if they need it. Experience has shown, that participants whose businesses didn't end up well, don't have neither the capacities nor the financial means to start a new one in a relatively long period of time.

### 13. Evidence of success (results achieved)

Since the beginning of the program and until September, 30th, 31 participants created a new business and became self-employed, which means about 20% of the whole participant numbers. Although this number refers to the whole country, the most of them came from Munich. The institution is well-satisfied with the results, and although they mean, they could take anyone into the program in order to make statistics raise, they prefer to continue recruiting the participants in a selective way.

As they realized that such a solution would be strongly necessary in rural areas, they are developing a new "THSN for Refugee Start-Ups" in the rural city of Beelitz, near to Berlin.

#### 14. Difficulties encountered

The very first problem the institution had to face was to get and convince people to the program, as the program was new and nobody had heard of it before. Therefore, they visited some welcoming houses, groups of volunteers, etc., to get to know the target group directly. After a period of time, the refugees first and then the migrants in general came by themselves seeking help to start their new own businesses.

Another difficulty encountered was the fact that the workers of the program had begun with the wrong expectations. They had created a new project with a "European mentality". They expected the refugees to have some previous knowledge in the "German way" to start a business, but participants had to learn everything from the beginning (German law, indicators, target groups, etc.). Also they all had different levels of education depending of both their countries of origin and the opportunities they had had there.

Also the workers of the program realized that the psychological problems the refugees brought complicated their learning speed, so they had to be more patience.

As Munich is a cosmopolitan city, they never had problems neither with the population nor with any xenophobic groups.

To the question, if they have to motivate the participants, they deny it. Participants have to be already motivated if they want to run their own business. Motivation is not a matter of the institution.

#### 15. Which structural founs support this good practice?

The project "THSN Program for Refugee Start-Ups" is completely financed by the Generali Group. Since the current financial period only lasts until 2020, the Social Impact Lab has to renegotiate the project again. However, although the institution cannot officially assure yet the continuity of the project within a new financial period, they don't have any doubts about it, due to the good results.



16. Is there any cost to participate in engaging with this good practice?  
If yes, what are additional costs incurred by project participants?

The financial costs for this program are completely covered by the Generali Group. Participants don't have any costs or fees. However, before they start to run their new business, they have the option to demand a micro credit at the Deutsche Bank Foundation in Frankfurt am Main with a maximum amount of EUR 3.000,00, which is repayable over within 6 months. As the institution offers this option only since 3 months, they don't have any solution yet in case the participant doesn't pay it back.

The Social Impact Lab in Munich also offers workshops for companies (Red Cross, Caritas, Deutsche Bank, etc.), which have to pay for its participation in the workshops, while the migrants can take part without paying any fees.

17. What is new and/or innovative about this good practice?

Many of the refugees who are living in Germany were self-employed in their home countries, and studies show that 10-15% are interested in becoming self-employed in Germany, due in part to the difficult bureaucracy.

The program strengthens refugees and migrants and helps them become successful business people. It help refugees to start their own businesses, enabling them to build a new livelihood, contribute to the local economy, and restore their personal dignity.

In addition, participants become more independent and confident, since the program shows them the way how to do everything for themselves.

18. How has this good practice boosted immigrants' integration?

"THSN Program for Refugee Start-Ups" begins with people's individual interests, competencies, and strengths, and works to promote them. Should a start-up not be the right path, Social Impact will support the participant in a search for an alternative, e.g. employment. They also had some cases of a participant of the project who run a business and employed again some migrants in her/his business.

For this reason, the number of migrants interested in the program is increasing, due to the positive experiences of other participants.

19. What lessons did you learn? What are your overall conclusion?

This program shows that creating new business is also possible for migrants, if participants really fight for it. Even though if Munich is not a rural area which might deal with discrimination and xenophobia problems, they found the tools to bring refugees in particular and migrants in general to run their own business, finding a way to bring them to a successful path, despite of a lack of knowledge in the German language or its laws.

Participants also learn to become more confident with themselves and independent. This point differs with the most of the integration programs that are carried out in Germany, whose workers try to cover all necessities the migrants have. THSN for Refugee Start-Ups also claim professionalism, separating the work in the project from a personal involvement, in order to bring participants to their goals in a very professional and successful way.


20. Outreach and dissemination

*Newsletter, useful websites, mailing group, local government*

- List of the attached document(s):  
List of attendance
- Link to website: [www.socialimpact.eu](http://www.socialimpact.eu) / [www.muenchen.socialimpactlab.eu](http://www.muenchen.socialimpactlab.eu)
- Contact information of the good practice:  
Olaf Weberring - Head of Social Impact Lab Munich  
Adress: Balanstr. 73, Haus 21 A / 3. OG, 81541 Munich  
E-Mail: [weberring@socialimpact.eu](mailto:weberring@socialimpact.eu)  
Phone number: (0049) 89 809 135 110

D.T1.1.4 – STUDY TRIP REPORT: SOCIAL IMPACT LAB MUNICH Munich (Germany), 23.10.2019

List of Study Trip Participants

Organization	Last Name	First Name	Signature
PP7 – Uni Pilsen	Pěchota	Jan	
PP12 – Burgenland District	Moreno	Sonia	