

Cultivating Understanding of Refugees and Vulnerable Environments (CURVE) Athens, 7-14 May 2023

Evaluation Summary

In partnership with Kairos Europe, Counterpoints Art, Oxford Brookes University, King's College London (UK) and Società Cooperativa Fo.Co. (Italy) and in the context of two separate Erasmus+ KA1 projects:

- Curve: Cultivating Understanding of Refugees and Vulnerable Environments
- Accreditation Adult Education - Job Shadowing Activity

Inter Alia hosted the Professional Development Training "Curve: Cultivating Understanding of Refugees and Vulnerable Environments", which saw the participation of 18 professionals and postgraduate students in the field of migration from Italy and the UK.

The overall aim of the Training was to provide participants with information about the current status quo in migrants' path towards integration, with a specific focus on the role of employment and education, by fostering critical thinking towards finding new, common solutions.

The participants were asked to evaluate their overall experience both during the training, at the end of every day and on the last day of the course through a structured activity, as well as through a questionnaire after their departure.

The vast majority of the participants evaluated their experience very positively (86,7% as *exceptional*, 13,3% as *good*), with the diversity in lecturers invited, the structure and content of the programme being particularly appreciated. Participants also outlined how the environment created by the hosts allowed them not only to gain meaningful knowledge, but also to share their personal and professional experience and expertise.

Concerning the logistics (food, accommodation, local travel), 66,7% of the participants rated the quality of the services as *exceptional*, 26,7% as *good* and 6,7% as *average*. Availability and care from the hosting community as a whole was highly regarded, together with the moments of communal evening meals. One thing that was pointed out was that communication on logistics could have been better arranged in advance.

Regarding the sessions, the collaboration with the hosts/guests/surrounding community was considered *exceptional* by 73,3% of the participants, and *good* by 26,7%. The perception of having a comfortable and safe environment to exchange opinions and mutually grow, both among participants themselves and between participants and lecturers was considered a key player. Moreover, communication and collaboration between Inter Alia and the external hosts was positively rated, in particular concerning the study visits that took place outside of Inter Alia's training space. The adaptability of the staff towards participants' requests was also extremely valued.

The participants rated the overall quality of the guest lecturers (style, knowledge, experience, expertise) as *exceptional* (60%) and *good* (40%). The high level of expertise and hands-on experience of the speakers and lecturers was considered a core point for the

successful unfolding of the Training. One lecture on climate change and migration was not rated as satisfying enough in terms of chosen approach for the presentation of the topic, as it could have been more informative. Furthermore, one participant suggested to alternate the methodology of informal learning with other styles, in order to allow different kinds of learners to feel equally involved in the learning process.

The space for participation was evaluated as generally inclusive and safe, since the majority of participants considered that their opinion was valued *throughout the whole training* (60%) and *some of the times* (26,7%). However, 13,3% of participants felt that their opinion was *rarely* valued, because of the tendency by some people in the group of voicing their opinion more loudly or not valuing all the inputs offered. However, the capacity of mediation by the Inter Alia staff helped mitigate this tendency, especially during most sensitive debates.

80% of participants were *highly satisfied* with the structure and style of the training programme, while 20% were *averagely satisfied*. The structure and flexibility of the programme was praised, although some participants considered it to be very intense, with not enough space for breaks from continuous learning and for collectively reflecting after the sessions. With respect to the duration, the training was considered *about right* by 86,7% and *too long* by 13,3% of participants.

Among all activities, the meeting with cultural mediators - which foresaw an informal and interactive meeting with experts working directly with migrants in reception camps - was the most appreciated one, as it allowed a direct contact with the current reality of the asylum system in Greece and the EU, and it helped participants to get a practical understanding of it. Also having the opportunity to meet diverse people with a migrant background, and the study visits to organisations working in reception and integration of migrants in Athens was considered of great value and, for some participants, impacted on the choice of their future professional career.

With respect to suggestions for improvements, more free time and outdoor activities were requested, in particular with local communities and organisations working on the field, and some logistic aspects have been pointed out, such as local transport from one session to another.

Participants *unanimously* said that they will be able to put into practice what they learned in their ongoing projects and activities within their organisations, as well as in their current studies. In general, this Training allowed participants to broaden their vision and come together with other experts to exchange best practice and learn from others.