

TownLAB_MEET | PROJECT CARD

PROGRAMME

Townlab_MEET is a project initiative promoted under the Europe for Citizens programme, action 2.2 of "Networks of cities - democratic engagement and civic participation".

THE PROJECT CONCEPT

Townlab_MEET intends to promote transnational relations between bodies and citizens of different areas of the continent, thanks to a partnership which includes organizations from Eastern, Central and Southern Europe and a structured schedule of international meetings and research activities, as well as information and awareness rising. Among the most debated topical issues at EU level, due to the complex management of reception and of resulting processes of social integration, immigration is one of the most tangible phenomena at local level, with direct repercussions on the daily life of each community. Assuming that one of the pillars of the European Agenda for Immigration is "honouring the moral duty to protect: a strong and well-established "common European asylum policy", that the reception is important but not sufficient, the project aims to activate mechanisms for cultural inclusion and contamination, so as to prevent the spread of xenophobic ideologies and to eradicate resentment towards migrants.

THE PARTNERSHIP

6 local administrations

- ✓ **CHIESANUOVA (THE LEADING BODY - ITALY)** is a mountain town of 233 inhabitants in Valle Sacra area (Metropolitan City of Turin, Piedmont Region). For more than 15 years it has been a virtuous example in the field of hospitality and reception, being active in the system of protection of asylum seekers and refugees (SPRAR) and having received, over the span of years, about 300 people from different ethnic groups (African, Eastern European, etc..).
- ✓ **QUINCINETTO (ITALY)**, a municipality of 1,029 inhabitants, located in the north-west of Piedmont Region, is an Italian local authority that for many years has been promoting initiatives and policies aimed at aggregation and integration. This municipality has been twinned since 1996 with the city of Marnaz and from this initiative, the desire has emerged to promote the European spirit through the enhancement of integration of peoples, pursued through the sharing of tools such as culture, music and tradition.
- ✓ **MARNAZ (FRANCE)** is a municipality of 5334 inhabitants in the Rhone Alpes region. For decades it has been an active body in the field of immigrant integration and has conducted awareness-raising initiatives against racism and discrimination and training courses aimed at improving the integration of foreigners into their daily and professional lives. On its territory there is also a CADA (Centre d'accueil de demandeurs d'asile) and a centre for unaccompanied minors (Saint Exupery).
- ✓ **KOSTINBROD (BULGARIA)** is a municipality of 17,125 inhabitants, located north-west of Sofia about 20 kilometres from the capital. This town is characterized by the organization of numerous festivals, concerts and social events which are preparatory to the pursuit of cultural progress and social sustainability of its territory, as well as of the processes of integration of migrants, ethnic minorities and disadvantaged people into the world of work.
- ✓ **NOVO MESTO (SLOVANIA)** is a town of 22,415 inhabitants, located in the south-east of the country. This municipality is characterized by the presence of a structured network of associations and organizations and by a strong intercultural component at civil society level where volunteering and citizen participation have always been strongly supported by the municipality and its institutions, particularly in the educational, cultural and social sectors.
- ✓ **SUBOTICA (SERBIA)** is a town located in the autonomous province of Vojvodina. One of the main activities of the municipality is to promote Subotica as an intercultural city also by means of numerous local and European projects and collaboration with CSOs, which have enabled start-ups of different mechanisms to support a real intercultural understanding and respect for diversity.

2 Universities

- ✓ **UNIVERSITY OF THE STUDIES OF TURIN (ITALY)** is a University of Piedmont Region that through its Department of Humanistic Studies pursues and develops the transfer and dissemination of disciplinary and methodological knowledge into the socio-cultural context of Piedmont, the enhancement and use of material and immaterial cultural heritage by means of non-traditional methods, as well as promotion, support and development of cultural activities.
- ✓ **GERMAN UNIVERSITY OF SPEYER (GERMANY)** was founded in 1947 as the State academy for administrative sciences. This University's educational offer covers a wide range of courses based on methodologies with multidisciplinary approaches in the areas of "Public Administration", "Public Economy" and "Higher Education and Research Management".

1 Non-Governmental Organisation

- ✓ **LDA SUBOTICA (SERBIA)** was established in 1993 and operates as a member of the network of LDA Associations in the following areas: training programmes for local civil society; cross-border and regional cooperation programmes; empowerment of young people and training courses for leadership skills; youth volunteering programmes; promotion of local citizens participation; promotion of inter-cultural dialogue, respect for human and minority rights and good governance in multi-ethnic local community activities.

THE OBJECTIVES

- ✓ **To implement the understanding of European policies by EU citizens** by means of:
 - a) a two-way process of analysis and research with the aim of framing the phenomenon of immigration, a study of the regulatory framework and the role of institutions (from EU level to local administrations level), as well as focusing on opportunities in the areas of employment, training, education and social security services;
 - b) programming of public information events in these six involved countries, which are useful to raise awareness of citizens, stakeholders, refugees and asylum seekers about the instruments adopted by the EU;
 - c) widespread dissemination and sharing of information through different types of communication channels (brochures, printed media, web pages, social networks, radio, TV, etc.).
- ✓ **To pursue the democratic and civic participation of European citizens** by means of:
 - a) conducting workshops, thematic tables and focus groups with the application of participatory methodologies, stimulating the comparison between stakeholders from different countries and giving priority to the active involvement of civil society and stakeholders directly involved in social integration processes (asylum seekers, refugees, operators of reception centres, etc.);
 - b) carrying out structured interviews and statistical surveys, sampling subjects of different nationalities, roles, ages and citizenships;
 - c) experimentation with electronic platforms of participatory democracy on different types of themes (labour market, services, social inclusion, etc.);
- ✓ **To encourage intercultural dialogue, social commitment and struggle against stigmatisation of migrants,** by means of:
 - a) replicability of the pilot project "Lab Fraternité/Fraternità" tested within the framework of the Call "Twinning between cities" of Europe, for citizens from municipalities of Quincinetto and Marnaz;
 - b) exchange and receptivity during cultural initiatives and public events (e.g. guided tours of reception centres) and experimentation with unconventional languages (e.g. community social theatre and blues music);
 - c) involvement of European students, young people from outside the EU and unaccompanied minors in playful and educational workshops of creative thinking;
 - d) sharing of pilot projects on labour inclusion of migrants (social agriculture) and widespread reception (experience of Chiesanuova in the framework of the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees).

THE EXPECTED RESULTS

- ❖ Participatory drafting and signing of the "Townlab_MEET position paper" - a document of intent containing proposals, guidelines and good practices on integration and struggle against the stigmatization of immigrants, which is preparatory paper for signing of agreements between local administrations, universities and NGOs and for continuation of economic, cultural and social relations at the end of the project.
- ❖ Launch of support processes and assistance to companies and associations in the field of social and labour integration of refugees and asylum seekers.
- ❖ Creation of electronic instruments of participatory democracy available to EU citizens and migrants.
- ❖ Identification of financial resources for the continuation of transnational strategies and the expansion of the network of cities.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION | E-mail: townlabmeet@gmail.com

