



REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Greek national report

edited by Academy of Entrepreneurship

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INTRODUCTION

A brief introduction is necessary to explain how the data were collected and the limitations of this report. Greece in recent years has seen multiply the presence on its territory of international organization and NGOs, thanks to these different entities it was also possible to monitor the arrival of migrants and asylum seekers. The monitoring, however, gives us an overview of the number of arrivals, the place, the nationality and other similar connotations of the new comers. Nevertheless, there is a paucity of data and reliable sources concerning the educational and professional background of migrants and asylum seekers; this can be attributed to the fact that, as we will analyze later, Greece has recently become a country of containment and therefore only recently data are being collecting and statistics being produced. Yet, if we go back a bit in the years we can see how the problem can also be attributed to other different factors.

According to different reports¹ a new measure of administrative procedures to regularize undocumented migrants were taken in 1998 and 2001; Fakiolas stated that although after the first regularization of 1998 the statistics on immigration in Greece improved, it continued to persist an insufficiency of relevant information that permeated most developments in the field, and this was attributable to the difficulties faced by the Ministry of the Interior. In this sense during the second regularization of 2001², the government decided to transfer the main responsibility for statistical information output to the Ministry of the Interior, removing it from the Ministry of Labour. On the same length of thought Kasimis³ (2012) re-affirmed that the data on immigration to Greece has long been inadequate and often unsatisfactorily recorded; he also added that the statistics have improved with census counts and other forms of data collection, such as labor force surveys and residence permit statistics. However, he continues, the former are sample surveys with various problems of credibility with respect to migration statistics and the latter lack detailed information. Despite these limitations, this research encompasses different approaches that not only includes the collection of qualitative data from interviews, such as a director and funder of an NGO and an asylum seeker⁴, and participant observations at the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrants and Refugees but also a corpus of official documents and reports have been analyzed, likewise from NGOs and relevant material from other studies.

Statistical data on refugees phenomenon

I. History of migration in Greece

After the formation of the Greek State in the early 1830's two important waves of mass emigration and one of mass immigration took place in Greece. The first one lasted from the late 19th century till the early 20th century while the second one followed the Second World War. At the same time, a wave of refugees settled in Greece after the population exchange with Turkey in 1922 under the Treaty of Lausanne.

¹ See for example R. Fakiolas, 2003, Regularising undocumented immigrants in Greece: procedures and effects. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Volume: 29. Issue: 3. [http://old.psych.uoa.gr/~vpavlop/index_files/pdf_ddpms%20undocumented%20immigrants%20in%20Greece%20\(Fakiolas\).pdf](http://old.psych.uoa.gr/~vpavlop/index_files/pdf_ddpms%20undocumented%20immigrants%20in%20Greece%20(Fakiolas).pdf)
A. Levinson, 2005, The Regularisation of Unauthorized Migrants: Literature Survey and Country Case Studies, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford, http://www.mighealth.net/el/images/1/1c/Regularization_programs_in_Greece.pdf

² Law 2910/2001 provided a framework for a "Green Card II" regularisation programme <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3b209fd54.pdf>

³ C. Kasimis, 2012, Greece: Illegal Immigration in the Midst of Crisis, Migration Policy Institute, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/greece-illegal-immigration-midst-crisis>

⁴ See Annex I

This wave followed the destruction of İzmir and the defeat of Greek forces in Asia Minor after the First World War and the formation of the Turkish State.

The 1980's saw the arrival of the first migrants in Greece. They were mainly Polish and of Asian and African origin and were employed in agriculture, construction and domestic services. In 1986, legal and undocumented migrants numbered almost 90,000, of which almost 30,000 were citizens of European countries. According to the 1991 census⁵, 167,000 foreigners lived in Greece in a total population of 10,260,000. Even though at the time Greece was considered one of the less developed European Union States, its geographical position with the extensive coastlines and the easily crossed borders facilitated the arrival of massive amounts of people. At the same time though, Greece's economic conditions favored the presence of migrants who were mainly employed in low-status and low-income jobs. Migrants were seen as an alternative and more profitable source of labor due to the illegal status of the majority of the migrant population (Kasimis & Kassimi 2004).

Immigration replace emigration

Since the late 80's, different southern European countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal have turned into destinations for immigrants. Depending on their geographical position, they attract migrants from Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Asia and Africa. Basic reasons for the increasing migration flows from those areas were the fall of the Soviet Union and the communist regime, the deterioration of the global economic situation and the religious fundamentalism (Petronoti & Triandafyllidou 2004).

The first mass migratory flow arrived in Greece in the beginning of the 90's mainly from Albania. The second one arrived in the second half of the 1990's mainly from other Eastern European Countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Moldavia and Russia, from Asian countries such as India and Pakistan, and from Africa.

According to the 2001 census⁶, 762,191 people out of 10,964,020 were foreigners from which only 47,000 were EU citizens. These numbers show that almost 7% of the people living in Greece were migrants. At the time however, there were many scholars who estimated that the real number of migrants was much higher and it arrived at almost at 10% of the total population.

The reasons for such an approach were multiple among which were the facts that due to their illegal status many migrants escaped registration while others arrived after the census had taken place. Moreover, the census took place before the Act 2910/2001 was implemented which gave the opportunity to the migrants to obtain legal status.

According to the 2011⁷ census, out of 10,8 (10,815.197) million people, approximately 800,000 are foreigners. More interestingly though, the foreign born people residing in Greece consist of 11% of the total population, out of which 3% were born in an EU country and 8% in a non EU country.

The highest number of valid stay permits were registered on December 2010 since then and until 2014 there is a continuous decrease in the number of valid stay permits. Nonetheless the years 2015 and 2016 present an increase with 572,574 valid stay permits, as reported at the end of September 2016. The increase is probably due to the re-legalisation of some migrants who lost previously their status because of unemployment and who were drawn back to legal status thanks to the permits for exceptional or humanitarian reasons; such permits include people who have lived in Greece for the past ten years and who can prove that they held legal stay status during part of that period. Moreover, long duration stay permits seem to rise in number and

⁵ For more information about the 1991 census visit www.statistics.gr

⁶ For more information about the 2001 census visit www.statistics.gr

⁷ For more information about the 2011 census visit www.statistics.gr

also in rate in comparison with total stay permits since 2012. For the years 2015 and 2016 migrants are mainly occupied in the tertiary sector, with Albanians being the most represented group⁸.

II. Current Situation

Refugees Crisis

The already difficult political landscape in Greece, with its high unemployment rates in the population and even higher rates among third country nationals, has been put under further pressure by the enormous transit or arrival of asylum seekers from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan as well as of people with different motivations (economic as well as political) from other Asian and African countries including Pakistan, Somalia, or Bangladesh, for instance⁹. In fact, in the last few years the flows of refugees and migrants have been intensified as a result of the wider political but also climatic changes in the middle East, Asia and Africa while Europe is facing one of the most challenging periods of its contemporary history.

The East Mediterranean became one of the entry gates of Europe as its geographical position is at the margins, at the crossroads of Asia and Africa in the south of the Mediterranean sea, and includes the large Aegean basin with thousands of islets and islands that serve as mobility networks.

After the first half of 2015 Greece replaced Italy as the first European country of arrivals for refugees and migrants and even in this case was declared, both internationally and by the EU, unable to respond to the huge amount of arrivals.¹⁰ Even though increasing difficulties to cross the borders, until nowadays Greece remains one of the main transit countries for migrants trying to enter in Europe. With major problems in the reception system, such as inefficient institutions and length procedures, it became impossible for Greece to keep up with the increased requests for international protection.

Data and Information Refugees Arrivals

Only between January and December 2016, 171,909 migrants arrived in irregular way in Greece.¹¹ Even if the European-Turkey Joint Statement¹² has led to a decrease in the number of daily arrivals to Greece from Turkey¹³, according to the official statistics of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR,¹⁴ the number of arrivals of refugees in Greece by sea in 2017 reached 23,974 based.

The most common nationalities of sea arrivals since the 1st of January 2017 until the 29th of October 2017 are refugees from Syria that constitute 41%, followed by Iraqis with 20% and Afghans with 10%.

See in the following table.

⁸ Anna Triandafyllidou (2016) Migration in Greece: Recent Developments in 2016 Report prepared for the OECD Network of International Migration Experts <http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2016.pdf>

⁹ Anna Triandafyllidou (2016) Migration in Greece: Recent Developments in 2016 Report prepared for the OECD Network of International Migration Experts

¹⁰ Council Decision (EU) 2015/1523 of 14 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece (OJ L 239, 15.9.2015, p. 146), and Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece (OJ L 248, 24.9.2015, p. 80). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council, Eighth Report on Relocation and Resettlement, 7 December 2016, COM(2016) 791 final.

¹¹ Frontex Data 2016

¹²<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/>

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20170906_seventh_report_on_the_progress_in_the_implementation_of_the_eu-turkey_statement_en.pdf

¹⁴UNHCR Situation in the Mediterranean. Last updated of 29th October 2017 <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>

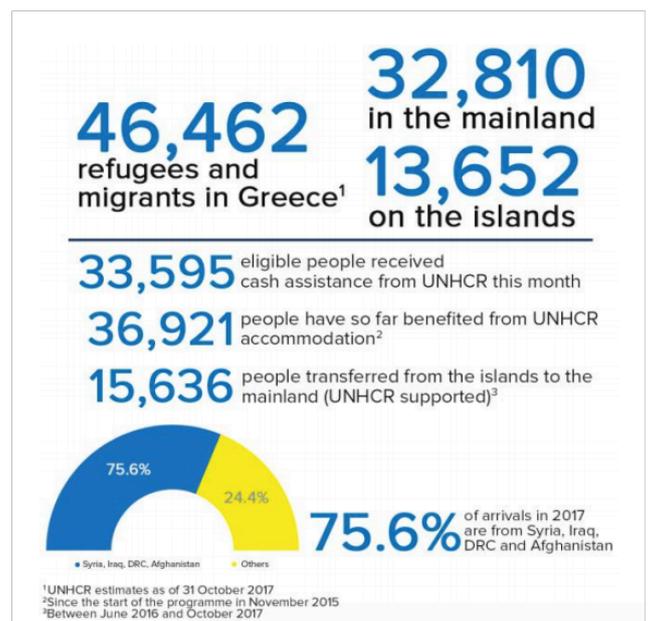
Country of origin	Data date		Population
Syrian Arab Rep.	30 Sep 2017	41%	8,160
Iraq	30 Sep 2017	20%	3,891
Others	30 Sep 2017	11%	2,159
Afghanistan	30 Sep 2017	10%	2,045
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	30 Sep 2017	4%	709
Algeria	30 Sep 2017	3%	650
State of Palestine	30 Sep 2017	3%	618
Stateless	30 Sep 2017	3%	522
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	30 Sep 2017	3%	509
Pakistan	30 Sep 2017	3%	494
Kuwait	30 Sep 2017	1%	248

Source UNHCR

Due to the proximity with Turkey the islands that received more refugees on 2017 are: Lesbos 9,410; Chios 5,507; Samos 4,562; Kastellorizo 1,325; Leros 850 and Kos 678. Other islands counts less arrivals like: Crete 477; Rhodes 366; Tilos 176; Symi 28; Kalymnos 26 and Other Islands 569

Based on the data from January 2017 the demographic is distributed as it follows: Children 36.3%; Women 22.1% and Men 41.7%.

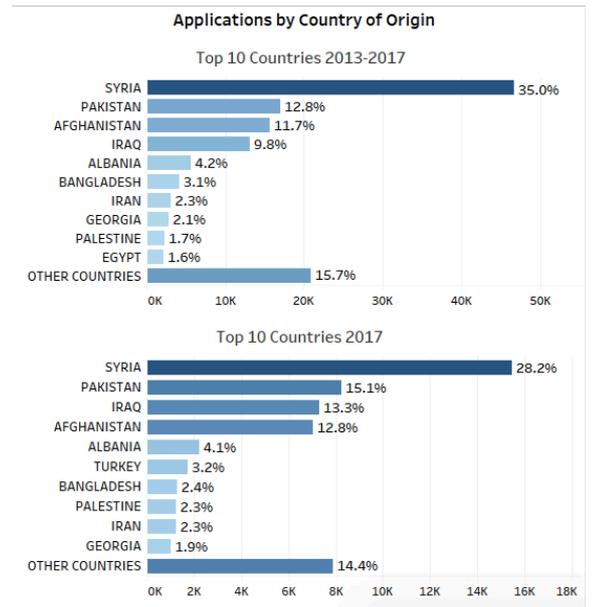
On the 31st October 2017 UNHCR estimates that there are 46,462 migrants and refugees in Greece. Respectively 32,810 in the Mainland 13,652 on the islands.



Source UNHCR

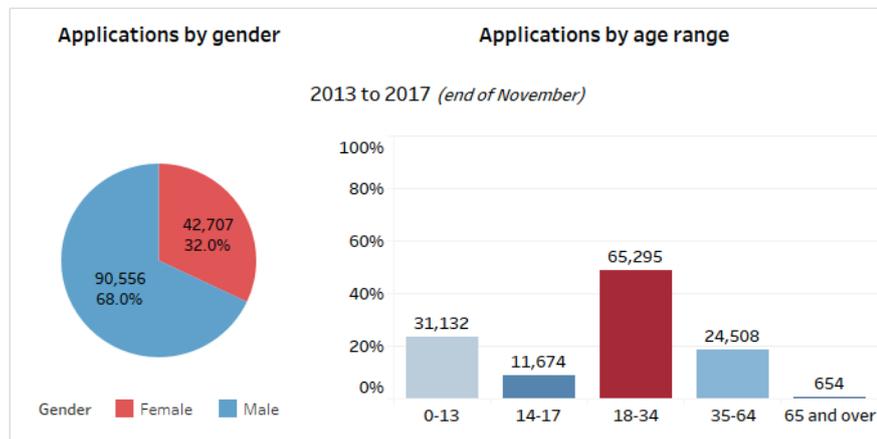
According to the Statistical Data of the Greek Asylum Service in 2017, the asylum or the subsidiary protection was granted to 8,092 persons. Within those the 28.4% are from Syria, 15,3% from Pakistan and 12,9% from Iraq.¹⁵ The following tables show an overview of the asylum procedures in Greece from the 7th of June 2013 until the 30rd of November 2017.

Since 2013 until nowadays the top two countries that apply for asylum are Syria and Pakistan. Iraq replaced Afghanistan in 2017.



Source Ministry of Migration Policies

It's important to underline to the fact that the major age range that apply for asylum is 18 till 34, and the majority of the applicants are men, with a 68,0%.



Source Ministry of Migration Policies

¹⁵ Statistical Data of the Greek Asylum Service http://asylo.gov.gr/en/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Greek_Asylum_Service_Statistical_Data_EN.pdf ; the latest data date back to November 30rd 2017

Migration Law

Greece's legal system on asylum is based on the Geneva Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol. As a Member State of the European Union, EU, and being part of the Schengen area, Greece has to comply with the directives and regulations that constitute the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).¹⁶ The Dublin Regulation¹⁷ is a key instrument under the CEAS; it aims to determine the Member State responsible for an asylum claim and provides for the transfer of an asylum seeker to that Member State. Usually, the responsible Member State will be the state through which the asylum seeker first entered the EU.

Greece is also obliged to respect the binding Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which recognizes the right to asylum.¹⁸

As aforementioned, following two decisions issued in 2011 by the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union, that concluded that Greece's asylum system suffers from *systemic deficiencies*; Greece had to reform its asylum system, taking different steps such as establishing new reception centers, improving poor reception conditions, fingerprinting irregular migrants and asylum applicants, ensuring appropriate treatment of unaccompanied minors.

In order to cope with the enormous migratory pressure of the unprecedented migratory flow of 2015 combined with a shift in the migration route coming to Greece from Turkey different measures were taken.

The Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Turkey reactivated their bilateral cooperation during the 4th High Level Cooperation Council meeting that took place in İzmir, on 8th March 2016. The talks focused on bilateral relations and the refugee-migration issue¹⁹.

This Joint Declaration has to be analysed in the framework of the aforementioned EU-Turkey Joint Statement on 18th March 2016 where the Members of the European Council and the Turkish counterpart confirmed their commitment to the implementation of their Joint Action Plan activated on 29th November 2015 and to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU and to replace it instead with legal channels of resettlement of refugees.

Indeed, since its entry into force on the 20th of March 2016, a division into two big groups of refugees was created in Greece: i) those who arrived before to 20th March were transferred to the mainland ii) those who arrived after the 20th of March are blocked on the Greek islands.

In the same time the so called Balkan migration route, the border between the FYROM and Greece, was closed and it's had the effect of leaving thousands of refugees and migrants stuck in Greece.

This new scenario transforms rapidly Greece from a country of transit to a country of containment. The reduced options for moving onwards, of more than 60,000 refugees and migrants that reached the country before the 20th of March, came to challenge the policy responses so far.²⁰

Europe Policies on Refugees and Welfare Approach with Regards to Entrepreneurship

¹⁶ CEAS, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en

¹⁷ Dublin Regulation, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/examination-of-applicants_en

¹⁸ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2012, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT&from=EN>

¹⁹ <http://www.mfa.gr/images/docs/ellinotourkiko/joint%20declaration.pdf>

²⁰ ACAPS and MapAction https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/160324_greece-analysis-report.pdf

b. Push and pull factors: immigrants path to entrepreneurship

I. Reasons of High Dynamics

- An overview on the current Greek economic situation

Greece has been into a deep economic recession since 2008. During these years unemployment levels have tripled and the purchase power of citizens has plummeted. At the same time and despite repeated pressures from the EU, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank, structural changes in the country's economy and public sector were hard to overpass as vested interests of the political elites, trade unions and some sections of the workforce resist these changes. In spite of that, the latest data from Eurostat shows that the Greek economy is steadily entering a growth phase²¹, after many years of recession. Investments are increasing and exports are back on track with a surge of 18% – the highest rate since 2001. According to the European Commission²², the economy is increasing, the labour market is recovering fast and unemployment is expected to decline further, although average wages may increase only gradually. Public finances remain on track to meet the primary surplus targets agreed under the European Stability Mechanism programme.

- Labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees

EU legislation provides for refugees, understood as all beneficiaries of international protection, to have full access, and for asylum seekers to have partial access, to the labour market, as well as as employment-related support such as vocational training.²³

Obviously the economy of the host country, concerning the unemployment rates as well as the possibility to work within the shadow economy, has a direct impact on refugees and asylum seekers in accessing the legal labour market.

Another disadvantage for refugees and asylum seekers in order to access easily to the labour market could regard the insufficient language skills, insufficient qualifications or education and problems concerning the recognition of qualifications or skills in the host country.

The participation to the labour market is one of the major factors supporting the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into host societies. Looking at the recent years Greece has amended different laws on labor issues. Greece introduced a National Strategy for the inclusion of Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) on the 23rd of April 2013 ²⁴, in order to set parameters of integration for legally residing TCNs on the basis of EU principles and directives. The measures and actions that the Strategy aimed to implement concerned different areas, such as: Services (reception and introductory courses, information sessions, training for civil servants, etc.); Education and Greek language courses and Employment and vocational training (combating informal employment, fostering entrepreneurship, etc.).

²¹ Ekathimerini, 30 August 2017, Greece's economic sentiment improves www.ekathimerini.com/221255/article/ekathimerini/business/greeces-economic-sentiment-improves

²² European Economic Forecast, Autumn 2017 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/economy-finance/ecfin_forecast_autumn_091117_el_en.pdf

²³ DIRECTIVE 2011/95/EU of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:337:0009:0026:en:PDF>

²⁴ National Strategy for the inclusion of third-country nationals, available in Greek http://www.ypes.gr/UserFiles/f0ff9297-f516-40ff-a70e-eca84e2ec9b9/ethnikisratig_30042013.pdf

The National Strategy has also emphasized the need for an integration policy that facilitates better jobs, higher salaries or highly qualified jobs, to first and second-generation TCNs, by improving recognition of the education and professional training they have received abroad. During the triennium 2013-2015 several inclusion programmes were implemented with the co-financing of the European Integration Fund (EIF) by the Ministry of Interior.

On April 1st 2014 a new Immigration and Social Integration Code was approved by the Parliament²⁵, regulating the entry, stay and social integration of TCNs in Greece (EU nationals, refugees and asylum seekers are not covered in this Code). The Code compiles previous legislation transposing EU directives.

On June 7th 2016 the European Commission has adopted an Action Plan on the integration of TCNs²⁶, delineating a framework for action and concrete initiatives to support Member States in the integration of non-EU nationals residing legally in the EU. The Action Plan includes actions supporting pre-departure and pre-arrival measures, education, employment and vocational training, access to basic services, active participation and social inclusion.

After the ratification of several amendments, the Greek law grants a number of rights and benefits to persons granted refugee status or subsidiary protection²⁷ such as the access to health care, access to education and access to employment.

From April 2016, the Law 4375/2106²⁸ regulates refugees and asylum seekers' legal rights to access the labour market. This law establishes that all international protection beneficiaries (refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection) have access to wage employment, or self-employment on the base of the same terms and conditions that apply for Greeks nationals, provided they hold a valid residence permit.

Asylum seekers who possess a valid asylum-seeker card are permitted to apply for a temporary work permit at the prefecture in the city where they live. In other EU countries, asylum seekers may be required to wait 9–12 months to apply for a work permit.

According to the Law 1837/1989²⁹ on the protection of minors in employment Greece the minimum age for employment is 15 years old since until that age children should complete compulsory education without interruption.

²⁵ Law N° 4251/2014 enacting the Code of Immigration and Social Integration, and other provisions.
http://www.enterprisegreece.gov.gr/files/Pdf/2015/residence_permits_july_2015/N4251-2014_EN.pdf

²⁶ European Commission Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals 7 June 2017 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0377&from=en>

²⁷ Presidential Decree No. 141, G.G. A' 226, of 2013, on the transposition into the Greek legislation of Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 (L 337) on minimum standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/54eb4e774.html>

²⁸ Law No. 4375 of 2016 on the organization and operation of the Asylum Service, the Appeals Authority, the Reception and Identification Service, the establishment of the General Secretariat for Reception, the transposition into Greek legislation of the provisions of Directive 2013/32/EC <http://www.refworld.org/docid/573ad4cb4.html>

²⁹ Library of Congress, Children's Rights in Greece <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/child-rights/greece.php>

- Entrepreneurial Culture

The relation between migration and entrepreneurship has been the subject of several studies. Some studies argued that self-employment for a migrant represent an escape from discrimination in the paid employment sector. Others suggested the existence of certain personality features or traits that could be associated with the entrepreneurial activity, and so on.

According to Hatziprokopiou (2008)³⁰ immigrant entrepreneurship in Greece started to be perceived as new phenomenon, still marginal but rapidly evolving, in the first decade of 2000. The increasing visibility of immigrant businesses, particularly in the main cities of Athens and Thessaloniki, has lately been depicted in the media and reflects a reality that has become more and more common. However, immigrant entrepreneurship rarely features in official accounts, whether political or scholarly. He argued that in explaining migrant entrepreneurship, the socio-economic context should be considered alongside the institutional one. As Cavounidis (2006)³¹ stated migrant labour in Greece has been a substitute for family workers in small businesses and households at a time when the indigenous labour force shifted from high levels of self-employment and family work to waged labour and business ownership.

Skandali and Ghazzani (2014) researched factors influencing migrants to engage new business activity in Greece and how these factors have shaped entrepreneurship in the era before the debt crisis. Despite some limitations of this research, from their analysis it has emerge that the majority of the interviewed entrepreneurs were men between 36 and 45 years old, working on the field of general trade and commerce. They belonged to the first generation of migrants and they were funder of the enterprise. At that time the 36% of migrants were from Albania, as we can see in the following table.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Sample (N= 164)

Male	138	84.1
Total	164	100.00
18-25	10	6.1
36-45	60	36.6
Over 55	22	13.4
Country of Origin	Number of Entrepreneurs (n)	Percentage (%)
Bulgaria	23	14.0
Former USSR*	24	14.6

³⁰ Panos Hatziprokopiou (2008), "Migrant entrepreneurship in Greece", in OLIVEIRA, Catarina Reis and RATH, Jan (eds.), *Migrações Journal - Special Issue on Immigrant Entrepreneurship*, October 2008, n. 3, Lisbon: ACIDI, pp. 73-84

³¹ Jennifer Cavounidis,(2006), "Labor market impact of migration: employment structures and the case of Greece", *International Migration Review*, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 635-60

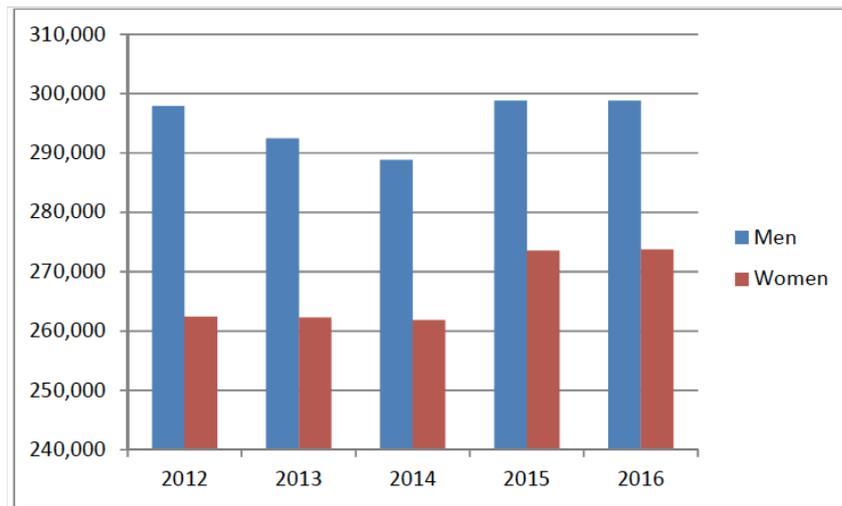
Nigeria	5	3.0
Romania	14	8.5
Business Type	Number of Entrepreneurs (n)	Percentage (%)
Services	58	35.4
Total	164	100.00
First Generation	154	93.9
Total	164	100.00
Founder	151	92.1
Total	164	100.00

Among the most common factors detected concerning the motivations of the migrants to start their own business the first regarded the high need to find a job for themselves and their family members, to ameliorate their social position and be able to support their family financially. As second factor emerged that a high number of interviewed have been influenced in their social and economic way of life by other migrants. The third largest factor describes the entrepreneurial personal characteristics. In this category falls the Opportunity identification, Need for achievement, Risk propensity and Need for independence.

- Ethnic Resources

On of the tool to measure the inflows and outflows of immigrants in Greece is based on the issuing and renewal (or not) of stay permits, nevertheless it should be taken into account that people may stay in the country even if they lose their legal status or may enter the country undocumented. Data provided by the Ministry of Interior upon request show that there were 64,326 permits (of those 39,813 permits in process concern men and 24,513 women), who were in process on 29 September. Two thirds of these permits lie under the ‘other’ category which includes these permits on humanitarian/exceptional grounds.³²

³² Anna Triandafyllidou (2016) Migration in Greece: Recent Developments in 2016 Report prepared for the OECD Network of International Migration Experts



Source: Database of valid stay permits, Ministry of Interior, upon request. Data refer to valid permits on the 31st of December of each year except 2016 where data refer to valid permits on the 29th of September. In Triandafyllidou (2016)

Albanian migrants represent around the 60% of Greece’s foreign population; the second largest group is represented by Bulgarian citizens. Romanians and Georgians are respectively the third and fourth largest communities present in the territory. According to Triandafyllidou while data on valid permits at the end of September 2016 provide for the most accurate picture concerning the TCN population, the 2011 census data are a useful source of comparison and the LFS data for June 2016 provide for an estimate of the EU migrant population.

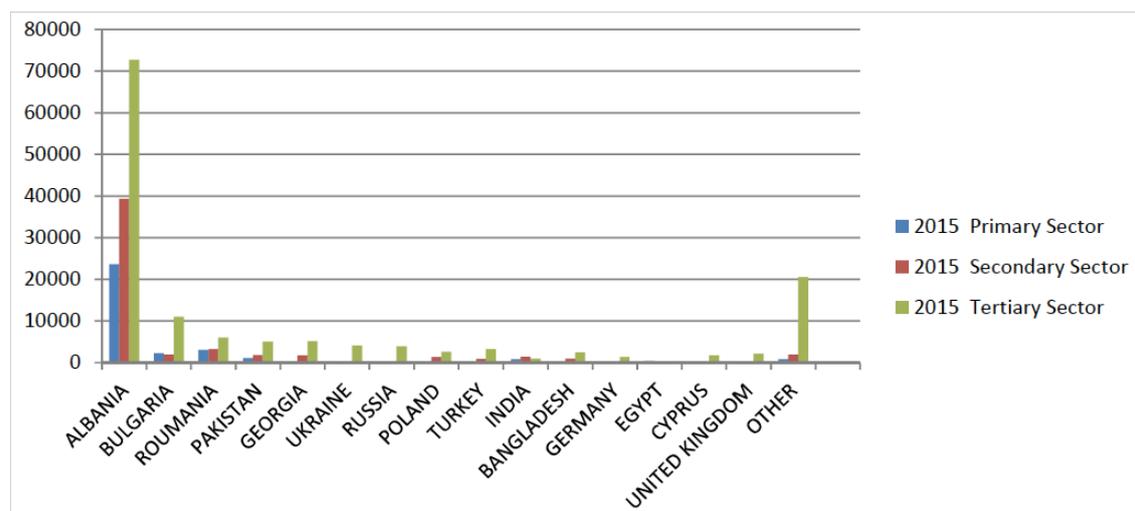
National Composition of the Migrant Population						
Population		Labour Force Survey			TCN valids permit	
Census 2011		2nd Trimester 2016			on 29.09.2016	
Country of Origin	Number	Country of Origin	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Albania	480,851	Albania	364,132	62.1	398,632	53.5
Bulgaria	75,917	Bulgaria	31,569	5.4		
Romania	46,524	Romania	23,208	4		
Pakistan	34,178	Pakistan	15,347	2.6	16,855	2.3

National Composition of the Migrant Population						
Population		Labour Force Survey			TCN valids permit	
Census 2011		2nd Trimester 2016			on 29.09.2016	
Georgia	27,407	Georgia	13,915	2.4	18,996	2.5
Ukraine	17,008	Ukraine	11,059	2	19,774	2.6
UK	15,388	Russia	11,010	2	15,069	2
Cyprus	14,448	Poland	8,384	1.4		
Poland	14,145	Turkey	8,290	1.4	1,670	0.2
Russia	13,809	India	7,856	1.3	14,456	2
India	11,333	Bangladesh	7,759	1.3	6,522	0.9
Bangladesh	11,076	Germany	7,713	1.3		
Germany	10,782	Egypt	7,376	1.2	12,314	1.6
Egypt	10,455	Cyprus	7,188	1.2		
Moldova	10,391	UK	4,539	0.8	42	Almost zero (0.005%)
Philippines	9,807					
Armenia	8,113					
Syria	7,628					
Afghanistan	6,911					
USA	5,773					
other	80,056	other	56,818	10	260,139	35
Total	912,000	Total	586,163	100	744,695	100

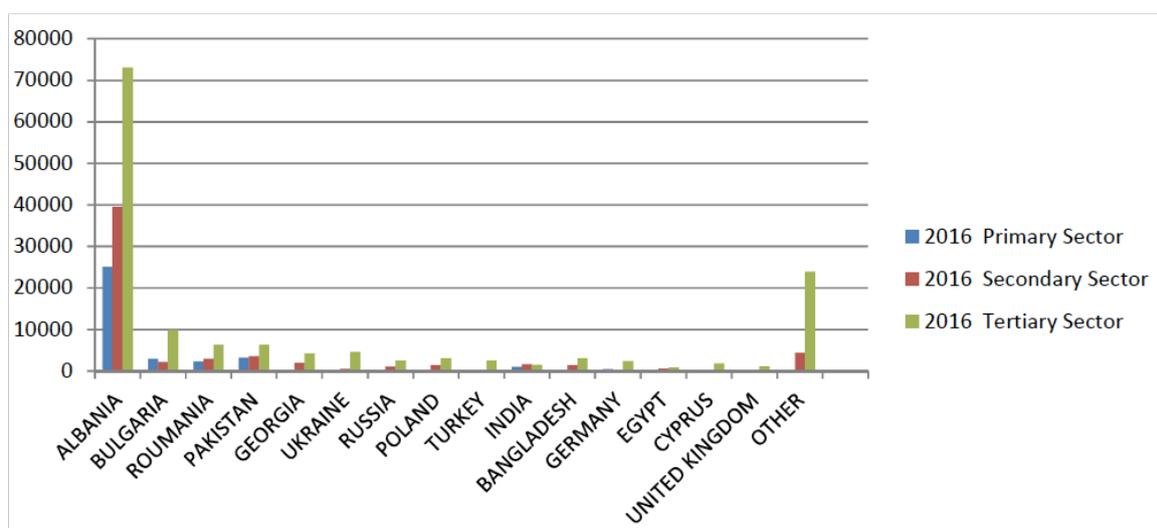
Sources: Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.), National Census Data 2011, also Labour Force Survey, 2nd Trimester 2016; Ministry of Interior, Valid Stay Permits on 29 September 2016, in Triandafyllidou (2016)

In the biennium 2015-2016 migrants are mainly occupied in the tertiary sector; nevertheless exists a large representation of Albanians, in all three sectors for both years³³ as we can see in the following graphic that shows the nationality by sector of employment.

³³ Anna Triandafyllidou (2016) Migration in Greece: Recent Developments in 2016 Report prepared for the OECD Network of International Migration Experts



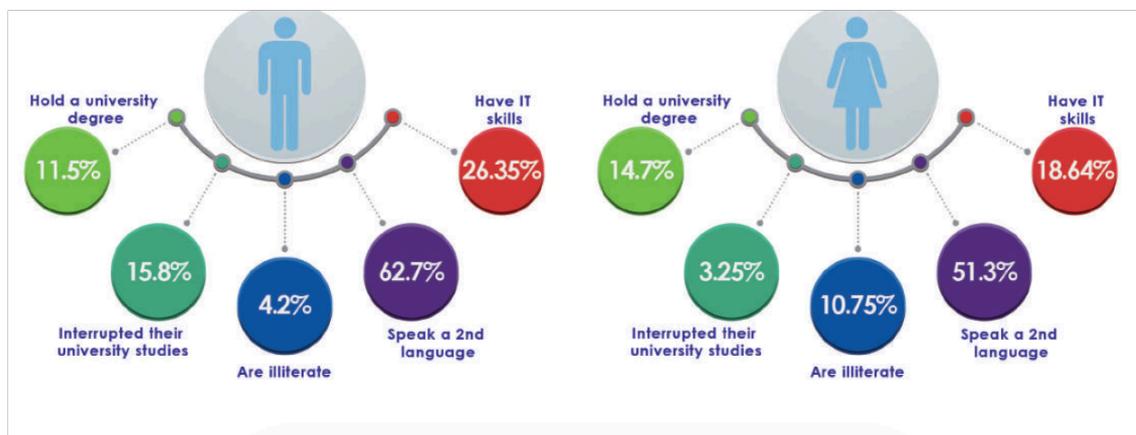
Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority Labour Force Survey, 3rd and 4th Trimester 2015. In Triandafyllidou (2016)



Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority Labour Force Survey, 1st and 2nd Trimester 2016. In Triandafyllidou (2016)

It is not easy to have an exhaustive overview about the educational and professional background of refugees in Greece. Among the possible explanations we could mention the fact that, as aforesaid, Greece recently became country of containment with the entry into force of the EU-Turkey Joint Statement. For this reason strong tools to facilitate the integration of refugees by mapping their needs are now being developed. To fill this gap of information we have to resort to independent researches.

The NGO Solidarity Now ³⁴ published a brief snapshot ³⁵ on the information of 724 adult beneficiaries of its programs. Among them only the 11,5% of men and 14,7% of women hold a university degree, but respectively the 26,35% of men and the 18,64% of women have IT skills. Given the conditions of the country of origin the 10,66% has dropped their studies. Men have been most affected, in fact they represent 87% of those who dropped university studies.



Source: Solidarity Now

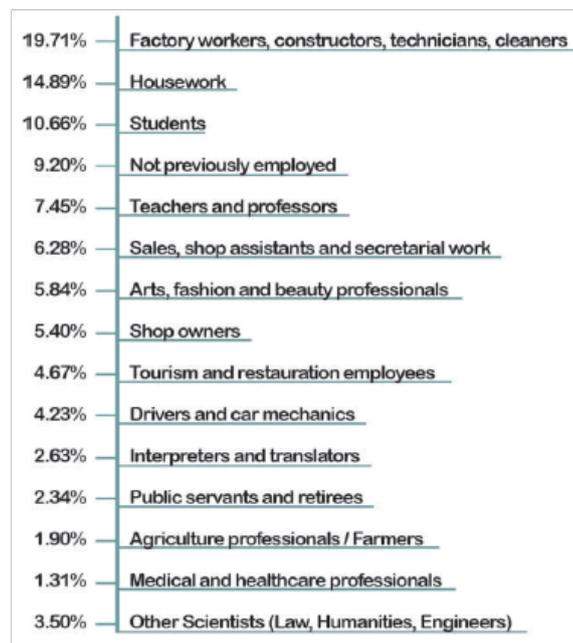
The lack of a system that recognizes and accredits their academic and working competencies leads many of refugees and asylum seekers search for a job that is not related to their qualifications.

In Greece the demand for interpreters from NGOs as well and European and International bodies has grown considerably over the last year. In Solidarity Now the 17,86% of their employees have refugees or asylum seeker status. Instead, in their country of origin, they devoted themselves to other sectors, from the construction to tourism. A 3,50% were dedicated to law, humanities and engineers professionals; 2,34% were public servants and retirees and a 1,31% medical and healthcare professionals.

³⁴ Solidarity Now <http://www.solidaritynow.org/en/orama-praxi/>

³⁵ Solidarity Now snapshot May 2017 <http://www.solidaritynow.org/en/snapshot-%CF%84%CE%B5%CF%8D%CF%87%CE%BF%CF%82-1/>

The Athens Observatory for Refugees and Immigrants (AORI) has made a Census of the Refugees and Immigrant Population in Eleonas Camp³⁶, that covered 543 heads of refugees household / families and 1.600 people in total. According to it the 30% of the respondents were working in the country of origin, the positions they cover was respectively: employed or self employed 17%, private sector employees 10% and public sector employees 3%. Some of their jobs were: shop salespersons 11%, construction laborers 7%, farmers 6%, tailors 6%, cooks 3%, hairdressers 3%, builders 3%, engineers 3% and electricians another 3%. Just the 1%, corresponding to 16 people, has found a job up to now.



For what concerns the education level almost the 42% has not attended school³⁷, but this could be due for the fact that the population in the camp is very young; for rest of them a 21% graduates of primary education, a 29% secondary and only an 8% tertiary education.

- Market Opportunities

As mentioned before Greek unemployment rate remains more than double the Eurozone's average. Beneficiary of International protection, both beneficiary of refugees status or of subsidiary protection, have access of the labour market. Nevertheless they continue to face enormous impediments to enter in the labour market as a result also of the Greek protracted economic crisis and its related high unemployment rates. Despite that, according to a Mercy Corps³⁸ Youth Labour Market Assessment findings sectors that can absorb working force of refugees or migrant could be:

- Tourism;
- Information and Communication Technologies;
- Call Centers;
- Manufacturing and Logistics;
- Agricultural Sector;
- Domestic Services;
- NGOs.

II. Reasons for low dynamics

³⁶ Eleonas is a government-run camp, supervised by the Greek Migration Ministry, it was the first camp to open on mainland Greece in August 2015.

³⁷ 48% are aged under 18, 34% are aged 18-34.

³⁸ Mercy Corps, YOUTH-LED MARKET ASSESSMENT: September 2017 Navigating the labor market in Greece

- Inactivity Trap / Unemployment / Socio-Economic Situation

According to the European Employment Policy Observatory, EEPO, report on the challenges in the labour market integration for refugees and asylum seeker in the EU-28, Norway and Turkey of May 2016 the main challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers were as follows:

- legal and administrative challenges;
- institutional challenges;
- economic and labour market challenges;
- education and qualification challenges;
- societal challenges.

Conforming to the report there are some highlights regarding Greece. Under EU legislation Member States have the possibility to regulate the timing of access to the labour market for asylum seekers, in Greece when a refugee obtain her/his Full Registration card can access the labour market.³⁹ Some challenges can be raised respect to the length of the asylum procedure. Due to the enormous amount of applications the time lag between pre-registration and full registration of asylum applications was estimated at an average period of one year in May 2016.⁴⁰

As mentioned earlier, even if refugees can access the labour market they may face high competition in accessing work, in Greece this is aggravated by the current context of financial crisis in the country.

In fact, many of the roles that would have been traditionally filled by low-skilled entrants from other countries were lost, as they were in the sectors most badly hit by the crisis (notably construction, transport and retail). Greek families are also less likely to employ domestic and care workers in the context of the crisis – jobs traditionally taken on by foreign women.

Asylum seekers may resort to working in the shadow economy, which in turn subjects them to further poverty and vulnerability.

In fact if we take in consideration the economical context and the still high unemployment rates and other obstacles resulting from language barriers as well as phenomenon of discrimination, it is particularly difficult in practice for refugees to have access to the labour market. This could easily lead to shadow employment.

According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority in its Labour Force Survey of the 3rd quarter 2017⁴¹, the unemployment rate of third-country nationals is greater than that of Greek nationals, while the percentage of the economically active population of third-country national is significantly higher than the relevant percentage among the Greek population, as we can see in the table below.

³⁹ Presidential Decree 220/2007 “on the transposition into the Greek legislation of Council Directive 2003/9/EC from January 27, 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers” Gov. Gazette 251/A/13-11-2007

⁴⁰ ECRE and AIDA October 2016, The length of asylum procedures in Europe, <https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/AIDA-Brief-DurationProcedures.pdf>

⁴¹ Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) announces the results of the Labour Force Survey for the 3rd Quarter of 2017, https://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics?p_id=documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4IN&p_p_lifecycle=2&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_cacheability=cacheLevelPage&p_p_col_id=column-2&p_p_col_count=4&p_p_col_pos=1&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4IN_javax.faces.resource=document&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4IN_in=downloadResources&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4IN_documentID=292093&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4IN_locale=en

		Employed (data has to be multiplied for 1000)	Unemployed (data has to be multiplied for 1000)	Inactive (data has to be multiplied for 1000)	Unemployment rate (%)	Labour force rate (%)
CITIZENSHIP	Greek	3,597.4	896,3	4,257.0	19,9	51,4
	Foreign	226,3	73,8	121,5	24,6	71,2

- Restrictive registrations for refugees and immigrants

Although asylum applicants and international protection beneficiaries have the right to work, the Greek State cannot guarantee a job position for them, as it cannot guarantee a job position for Greek citizens themselves. The Greek State does not provide housing or provide any allowance, except for a disability allowance to those who have a disability of any kind.

c. Supportive Measures for Refugees and Immigrants entrepreneurship

I. Refugees and Migrants needs

The interviews ⁴² confirm the fact that at the moment the current livelihoods opportunities are limited, although different organization are starting to provide some services or have the will to do it. Given the new situation it is necessary to think of more sustainable solutions. Other services that facilitate adaptation to the new context, such as language classes, are still limited or at an embryonic stage. It also appeared from interviews that attending courses in NGOs is not perceived as a real recognition. Bureaucracy emerged as a real issue, not only for the knowledge or otherwise of the Greek language itself. Despite the process is more clear nowadays, different humanitarian actors still have some difficulties in describing the variation in steps and exact procedures creating confusion in obtaining assistance and documentation. It is not yet possible to have a system that recognizes the qualifications and skills of migrants and refugees. The idea of self employment is widespread and connected to an idea of independence and greater incomes. However, a pre-registered or a registered asylum seekers do not have the right of self employment or to open a business. Only the asylum seekers that have had their asylum status granted do have the right to self-employment. Obviously, there are other barriers, like the financial one. Regulation is high, for example as a fee to start a business of over 450 euros plus the taxes must to be prepaid for the year. At the moment there are no microcredit systems.

⁴² For the full transcript of the interviews consult Annex n. 1

II. Access to finance

- Access to bank

During the ACCMR Livelihood working committee meeting of December 2017 it was raised an issue concerning the fact that some employers consider as eligible candidates only individuals who already have a bank account in a Greek bank. However, due to the capital controls banks are no longer allowed to open new bank accounts to individuals who are unemployed. In the same meeting the challenges detected were the same as identified in the previous meeting such as lack of language skills, recognition of diplomas/skills, access to vocational training, incentives for participation and commitment to Livelihoods services and job matching.

- Public and Private financial Support Scheme

According to the country legislation, in order to start business refugees have to provide to the responsible public services the necessary documents that prove their legal status, ie. if or not they are beneficiaries of international protection.

Specifically, it is required a regular residency permit or an immigrant visa.

With the exception of these documents, immigrants and refugees enjoy the same rights as Greek citizens in opening a business.⁴³

III. Access to Non financial business support

- Access to Mainstream Business Support Services (*What Works, What Doesn't and Why?*)

Different international organization, NGOs and now with the support of ACCMR, joined the effort to disseminate as much as possible the services available, for example, the information materials is translated in several languages among these Arabic and Farsi. In spite of this, the main challenge is due to the fact that different support elements in this field are currently being activated. It is however clear that bureaucratic obstacles to obtain all the necessary documents, in addition of the above mentioned deterrent of opening a bank account, represent two critical challenges. According to a joint report from different NGOs alternative residency documents for people living in sites or self accommodated refugees that are not in posses of an official rental contract are not accepted. They also face problems with getting an AMKA, the Greek social security numbers and AFM, the tax identification number, that make registering in the unemployment register arduous. Further, the lack of communication with the Ministry of Migration Policy concerning the availability of social security mechanism make impossible to refugees to access to social welfare⁴⁴.

- Refugees and immigrants as specific target group for business support

⁴³ Dikaiologitika 05 April 2016 <https://www.dikaiologitika.gr/eidhseis/oikonomia/101542/undefined>

⁴⁴ Danish Refugees Council, Transitioning to a Government Run Refugee and Migrant Response in Greece, <https://drc.ngo/media/4154531/joint-ngo-roadmap-12122017.pdf>

Some of these services are just in their initial phase other projects dedicated as examples to promote the social and entrepreneurial capacities of migrants have already been implemented in a recent past.

Exist public services that are broadly available with the limitation that are only in Greek. Current services are mainly focused on career counseling, help in preparing CV an so one. These services are runned one by one or done in small workshops around specific topic. Some organizations do brief information sessions on the right to work and accessing to job.

- Case Studies: Successful inclusive non financial services

Since years different organization support migrant and asylum seekers with language classes. Form the first need just to teach the Greek languages the offer has expanded to different languages such as English, or other services related to the education.

Between the different organizations it could be mention METAdrasi – Action for Migration and Development ⁴⁵, a Greek NGO founded in 2010. It operates mainly in the following two sectors: interpretation services and the protection of unaccompanied children. It offers specially trained interpreters in thirty-three languages and dialects to provide vital communication with refugees, legal support, and certification of victims of torture.

It also escorts unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) from border detention centers to appropriate accommodation facilities throughout Greece and operates Transit Accommodation Facilities for UASC.

Their work includes two innovative activities that have been implemented for the first time in Greece: Guardianship and placement of children in foster families.

In the last years they won different awards for their work, among them:

- The North-South Prize 2015 of the Council of Europe awarded to the co-founder & president of METAdrasi, Ms Lora Pappa, received the award from the President of the Republic of Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa for the outstanding work in promoting solidarity, democracy and human rights.
- PILnet’s European Pro Bono Awards 2016: first prize in the category of “Award for Exemplary Partnership in the Public Interest” in cooperation with the American law firm Reed Smith for offering free legal assistance to beneficiaries of international protection in Greece.
- Collective Action Award “Models of Excellence 2017” by the “Citizen’s Movement for an Open Society” for its significant volunteer work.

⁴⁵ Metadrasi, <http://metadrasi.org/en/home/>

III. European Good Practice Engaging Refugees in Self Entrepreneurial Activities

Good Practices for Migrants and Refugees in Self Entrepreneurial Actions

Still widely discussed in the academic community is the importance for migrants and refugees to rebuilt their lives in the host countries. As Collier and Betts (2017) stated *“The denial of the right to work has had catastrophic consequences for many refugees, leading to a long-term erosion of skills and aspirations, and often exacerbating a sense of alienation and hopelessness”*⁴⁶

Considering the city as a place in continuous redefinition which represents a possibility for social constructions (Castells 2002), it is necessary to look at how people and places change as a consequence of external events. Cities can be seen as places where both migrants and the local population interact in daily basis, be it through working, studying, living, playing or raising their own families. As a response to facilitate the integration of all beneficiaries of international protection different programmes and services implemented by the Greek Government, inter-governmental organizations as well as national NGOs have popped up.

At national level it has been launched the project Expanded Community Centers, co-funded by the EU and the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, that aims to cover 252 municipalities. One of the services provided is the guidance towards other services such as accommodation; job orientation and job findings for migrants and refugees.

Regarding the Municipality of Athens, a Department of Migration and Refugees Affairs has been created, its intent is to support the integration of migrants and refugees through education, employment and training activities. The municipality through the AORI has undertaken a research to determine the characteristics and trends of the refugees population and understand the public opinion on the relative issues.

The Municipality of Athens also has established the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrants and Refugees, ACCMR, in order to support an efficient and targeted coordination of initiatives and programmes implemented in the city. The Forum through different working committees aims to work towards a defining a comprehensive service delivery system to tackle the short term and long term goals of integration; one of these is the Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment Committee that is related to employment services and other livelihoods activities such as micro-enterprise, cooperatives and other entrepreneurial activities.

Different initiatives have been taking place in Greece with the support of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, AMIF.

The Municipality of Athens is one of the partner that implemented the project CITIES GroW - Integration of migrants through economic activity in cities, led by Eurocities.⁴⁷ This project had four main objectives: matching buyers and suppliers to access to public and private contracts for immigrant entrepreneurs; engaging with businesses local job agencies and local educational institutions to promote jobs skills match for employment of youth with migrant background; create services to promote and support migrant entrepreneurs and find anti-discrimination strategies on the local job market.

⁴⁶ P. Collier, A. Betts *Why denying refugees the right to work is a catastrophic error*, The Guardian, March 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/22/why-denying-refugees-the-right-to-work-is-a-catastrophic-error>

⁴⁷ Eurocities <http://www.eurocities.eu/>

The organization Etaireia Four Elements⁴⁸, as Greek partner, implemented two different projects that aimed to empower refugees. The project ARISE, Appetite for Enterprise, which goals were to promote the social and entrepreneurial capacities of migrant women through the development and exploitation of food-related knowledge and skills that provide possibilities for income-generating activities. The project foster the development and implementation of economically sustainable food-related innovative business ideas in order to promote mutual learning between the culture of migrant women and the one of the welcoming communities. The project REST, Refugees Employment and Training, aimed to integrate refugees at the workplace considering European employers need practical and direct support that responds to the uncertainties related to their legal, social and working status, as well as to intercultural and psycho-social issues, to prepare employers for integrating refugees whose legal status has been officially clarified and who have official permission to work and to implement concrete initiatives that aim at facilitating the access to work of migrants.

The Melissa Network⁴⁹ is an organization run by a local community group of migrant women in Athens. They were partner in the project Enhancing the Integration of Women, Beneficiaries of International Protection by Development and Implementation of Multifaceted Integration Trainings, which scope was to foster the integration of refugee women by designing and conducting integration trainings, to exchange knowledge and experience at cross national level in the sphere of integration training for refugee women.

The IED - Institute of Entrepreneurship Development⁵⁰ is one of the partner of the project Innovative practices and joint urban initiatives to foster the integration of migrant women in the receiving society within urban agriculture practices. The project aims at supporting the exchange of good practices, transferring and implementing innovative practices and joint initiatives that foster the integration of migrant women, including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, in the receiving society within Urban Agriculture Labs, through educational and recreational activities, vocational training, help to access to the labour market, anti-discrimination and cultural initiatives that promote intercultural dialogue and a culture of welcoming communities, with the involvement of public administrations, social partners, migrant organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

The project Bridging the Gap (BTG)⁵¹ implemented in Greece by Academy of Entrepreneurship, produced a training methodology and materials to enable business incubators, VET trainers and employment centers, to work alongside local entrepreneurs so they can engage also with marginalized/disadvantaged learners in order to empower them to develop the qualities, skills, experiences, and attitudes necessary to initiate their own enterprises.

The project involved six organisations from different EU countries that had an expertise and experience in business incubation and VET training, as well as in working with target groups made up of hard to reach individuals – e.g, youth, migrants, disable.

⁴⁸ Etaireia Four Elements, <http://www.4-elements.org/en/home/>

⁴⁹ Melissa Network <http://refuaid.org/melissa-network/>

⁵⁰ IED - Institute of Entrepreneurship Development <https://ied.eu>

⁵¹ Bridging the Gap <http://www.btgap.eu/>

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Outreach

- Working with Partners: Raising Awareness Regarding Potential of Immigrants as Entrepreneurs

The TREND project can contribute to obtaining useful information for refugees who wants to undertake or re-start a path in the self/employment. Despite improvements in legislation, practices that favor real integration into the host society and facilitate entry into the labor market are still in an embryonic state. Nevertheless, various public and private bodies are activating to fill the different gaps.

B. Improving Access to Finance

Nowadays, there are several barriers to opening a business in Greece. These barriers may be greater if you are a refugee. As we saw the obstacles include both the economic and the bureaucratic part. Nevertheless, as it has been repeatedly stated various measures have been taken with regard to livelihoods for migrants and refugees.

ANNEX I

Interviews Transcripts

The interviews were conducted between January and February 2018 in Athens, both of them in the headquarters of the NGO Hestia Hellas.

Trainers

Lauraine Velez, coordination and co funder Hestia Hellas

Dimitris Basoukos, accountant and co funder Hestia Hellas

Hestia means “hearth, fireplace, altar” and embodies the ancient Greek Goddess of the family, home and domesticity. As the hearth was the centre of **family life** in the ancient world, Hestia Hellas aims to provide a **safe space** for refugees and locals to come together, interact, socialize, learn **essential skills** and build a **home** away from home.

Hestia Hellas is a group of dedicated people who have worked in the NGO and humanitarian sectors for decades in a range of capacities. Some are Greeks who feel urged to respond to the refugee situation that has gripped their country. As recent refugees themselves, they are sensitive to and understand first-hand the effects of being forced to flee your home, family and country. As well, **Greece is Xenias country**, which means foreigners, regardless of class, was considered guests and was provided *philoxenia*.

Others are Americans and Europeans who, through synchronicity, came to Greece and were called to utilize their decades of experience to serve. The team continues to expand and come together with people from all over the world.

- How would you describe the situation for refugees with regard to their entrepreneurial opportunities in your country?

Refugees and Greeks are affected by the same issues in this crisis.

Refugees can't count on the closeness of their family and a backup support for example also economic. Also they don't know the context. They have to adapt themselves in the new environment, get to know the culture, the languages. Also the bureaucracy represents a big challenge, it's really difficult to extricate yourself in bureaucratic meanders. It is necessary to know not only the practices but also the language.

- Which policies and initiatives to support refugees in their entrepreneurial initiative exist in your country? Can you mention examples of good practice?

In the training we offer transferable knowledge and opportunities. The opportunity of the market are related to the ICT, like web design or to renewable energies, for example solar panels.

It is necessary to think about sustainability, in the long term.

Could be a resource too to have a circle on line of entrepreneurs refugees even in different countries to share information and good practices.

- According to your vision, which are the toughest challenges refugees face in your country related to starting their own business?

One of the big challenges is represented by the bureaucratic part, the taxes to start an enterprise are very high.

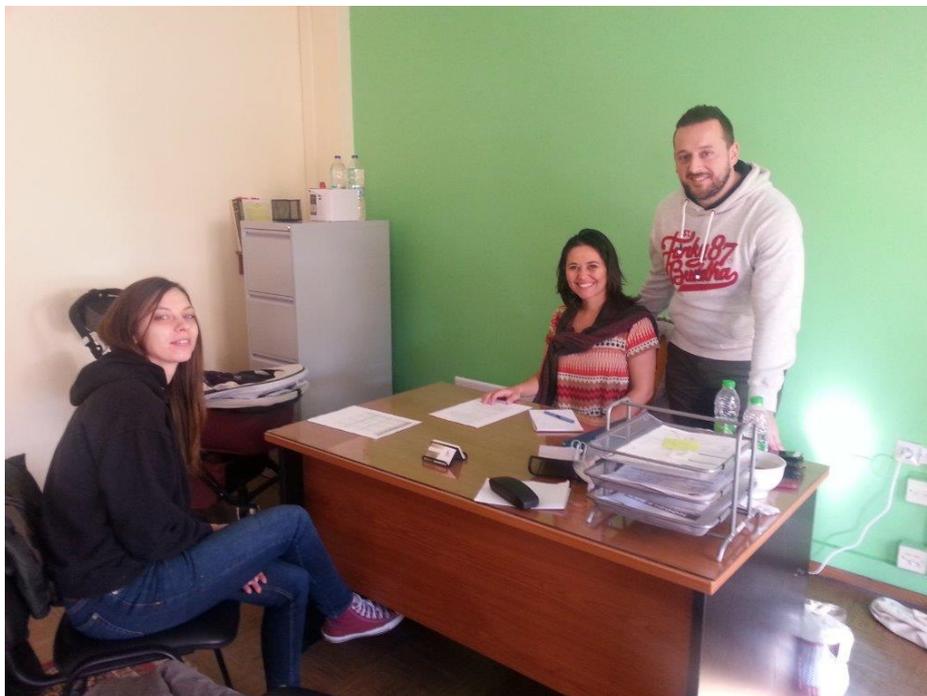
- What tools/needs/support could put you in a better situation for working with refugees to support them in starting their own business?

Refugees experienced different traumatic situations. It is necessary to address their traumas and then integrate them in the host society.

After all what they have passed through and also a lot of lost expectation and deception they feel demotivated and hopeless. Especially the adolescents need a role model they are afraid of failure. They need to know themselves and discover who they would like to become.

- Considering training as one type of support to be given to refugees, which contents and methods of training would you suggest?

Some of the refugees are overqualified the problem is to recognize their skills and knowledge and adapt to the new context. To become entrepreneurs in Greece they have first of all adapt their way of life to that one of the context of the host society and relate the professional part not only the living. In our traineeship course dedicated to this topic are at least for 4 hours per day. Refugees are willed to become entrepreneurs because its parallel to an idea of freedom, also is related to a meritocratic idea and results oriented. We should not forget also the monetary incentive. Some of them were already entrepreneurs an have skills acquired.



Beneficiary

Wael, Syrian in Greece since 2015

- How would you describe the situation in this country when it comes to involvement in the labor market and starting a new business? Do you have access to support or mentoring for starting a business?

I arrived in Greece in 2015 and at the moment the organization weren't involved in livelihood strategies. This kind of support started recently. For this reason I tried to leave the country, but I couldn't. I was working in black for a Lebanese restaurant as handyman a for 10 euros per day. I stayed in Athens for six months before decided to move. I went in two islands. I worked as cultural mediator for an NGO and I was volunteering too. I came back to Athens in September 2017. I am involved in a collective space for artists, we make expositions and we sold some paints abroad. I am enrolled in a programme "Education Unites:



From Camp to Campus” from the U.S. Mission to Greece to learn english at the University.

- What do you feel is missing for you in order to start putting your business idea into action? What could help you in implementing it more easily?

I still don't have my papers. If I had them the financial part it will be the most problematic. The bureaucracy is not simple. Many times even in offices they do not know what to do because regulation is not clear. It would be simpler if the practices were standardized. Moreover, the language is a big barrier. The psychological issues have to be taken in consideration. Refugees suffered different traumas, in order to rebuild a life this issue has to be addressed.

- If you are offered training in entrepreneurship, what themes would you consider relevant to your needs?

I would like to learn about time and budget management; communication skills in order to keep my costumers. It will be interesting to have more workshops with both locals and refugees to strengthen the connection. I would like to open a small shop something familiar for all the Syrian refugees in Athens but also catching for the locals related with the food, maybe sweets.

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