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The Urban Lab of Europe !

# The USE-IT! Project Zoom-in N°2 Jobs for overseas migrants

*Project led by the City of Birmingham*



How to qualify 180 local overseas migrants to become employees in the health sector

**URBAN  
POVERTY**



# The USE-IT! project

Social deprived neighbourhoods – urban regeneration – poverty alleviation:

Linking large capital investments with community skills and assets to combat urban poverty

Although Birmingham is a key economic hub, the reality of poverty and underemployment amongst indigenous and migrant populations is leading to increasing social, economic and environmental isolation. Therefore, the USE-IT! project seeks to identify and connect social, cultural and economic assets already existing in poor and migrants communities to major capital and infrastructure investments, in order to reduce displacement and maximise the economic and social benefits of urban development for marginalised residents. The building of a new hospital, local social enterprise structures and universities rich in cultural and creative capital will be relied on to enable the population to self-empower in a sustainable way.

The model proposed will rely on Community Researchers, recruited among local community and trained in research methods to identify local assets. Mechanisms will be tested in order to unlock the potential of poor communities and facilitate the creation of a matching skills service to enhance employment and encourage the spin-off of social enterprises that are socially innovative and resilient. The project will provide peer-to-peer support for communities, and act as change and innovation drivers to bring out bold and sustainable solutions.

As a result of the project, people in the communities will be supported to raise their aspirations and to access affordable educational and training opportunities. They will access jobs opportunities linked to the large investment projects planned for the area (macro-assets), and new businesses will be created and developed in the area by local people.

## For further information

USE-IT! UIA website: [www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/birmingham](http://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/birmingham)

USE IT! Facebook: [www.facebook.com/USEITUIA/](http://www.facebook.com/USEITUIA/); [@USEITUIA](https://www.facebook.com/USEITUIA/)

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USE IT! YouTube: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCfZrYQBA87FszE4JvhlZug/featured](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfZrYQBA87FszE4JvhlZug/featured)

USE-IT! 1<sup>st</sup> journal: [Download](#)

USE-IT! 2<sup>nd</sup> journal: [Download](#)

USE-IT! 3<sup>rd</sup> journal: [Download](#)

USE-IT Zoom-in – The creation of social enterprises: [Download](#)

USE-IT! Social entrepreneurs programme: <http://sohosen.org.uk/>

[www.i-se.co.uk/news/use-it-social-entrepreneurs-programme/](http://www.i-se.co.uk/news/use-it-social-entrepreneurs-programme/)

[www.i-se.co.uk/news/use-it-catalysing-social-change-in-birmingham/](http://www.i-se.co.uk/news/use-it-catalysing-social-change-in-birmingham/)

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# 1 Qualifying local overseas migrants for the British health system

USE-IT! is a £3.13m (3,56 Mio. €) project supported by Birmingham City Council and one of the “Urban Innovative Actions” from the European Commission initiative. It tests **new solutions combating urban poverty by linking larger capital investment projects (macro-assets) in deprived neighbourhoods with local community skills, talents and ideas (micro-assets)**. It does all that with the intention to unlock social and economic innovation and to improve the socio-economic situation of the deprived residents. The project strives to increase the employment prospects of the residents and migrants by generating jobs and stimulating local economy.

For an overview about the USE-IT! project, its background and innovative approach, its mechanism and partnership, the recent activities, challenges and achievements take a look at the [1<sup>st</sup>](#), [2<sup>nd</sup>](#) and [3<sup>rd</sup>](#) journal and the [1<sup>st</sup> zoom-in](#) of the USE-IT! project.

## Key element & objective

One key element of the USE-IT! project is the matching of job skills in the community with job opportunities through larger investment projects in the deprived neighbourhoods of Sandwell and West Birmingham (Ladywood, Soho and Smethwick).

Background is the new construction of a hospital in Smethwick and the permanent lack of sufficiently qualified personnel in the British National Health Service (NHS), which is responsible body for the hospitals in Great Britain. At the same time there is a high number of overseas migrants in the surrounding area of the new hospital who are looking for better qualified jobs. However, their qualifications and educational backgrounds are largely unknown.

Thus, USE-IT! strives to **match overseas migrants from the neighbourhood with an educational health or medical background with job opportunities in the hospital**; supporting employment and better health and medical services in the communities of Sandwell and West Birmingham.

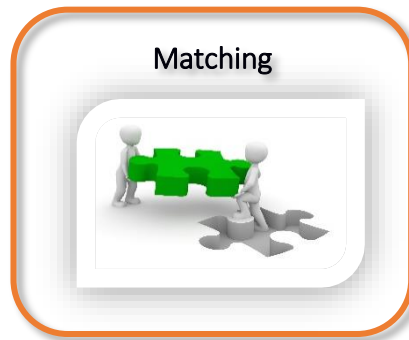
For this, a **partnership** of the NHS Trust and its ‘Learning Works’ (one-stop-shop for access to training, development and employment opportunities in the NHS) with local community organisations, job clubs and local doctors has been set. The partnership strives to identify, qualify and support suitable overseas migrants on their path to a job in the NHS; helping them their way out of poverty and social exclusion and, at the same time, gaining skilled personnel for the NHS.

The key objective is to **gain qualified personnel for the new NHS hospital**, a major provider of health resources and employment in Sandwell and West Birmingham, and **bring local overseas migrants into jobs** in the NHS. This, by identifying and training local overseas migrants with relevant medical and non-medical qualifications to be matched with jobs available in the hospital.

# Matching local overseas migrants with job opportunities

## Objective

- Gain qualified personnel for the new NHS hospital, major provider of health resources and employment in West Birmingham
- Bring local overseas migrants into jobs in the NHS health care system.

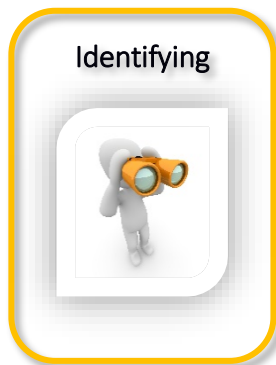


Job opportunities at new hospital

- Hospital workforce plan

Match-up database

- Job opportunities
- Potential employee



Potential overseas migrant employee

from local with relevant medical and community



through local

- community organisations
- work clubs
- word-to-mouth

- Social care providers
- Interim jobs
- Social services
- etc.

non-medical qualifications



through

- The [Learning Works](#)
- [Brushstrokes](#) Community project
- Mentors (general practitioners)
- Peer support
- Language training (EILTS)
- Accreditation process (support)
- Work placements
- Hosting apprentice
- Job placement

## 2 USE-IT! approach

For an overview about the approach (NHS Skills Matching with local overseas migrants), look at [interviews](#) taken with USE-IT! clients and Raffaella Goodby, board member of the NHS Trust.

### 2.1 Identification of local overseas migrants with relevant medical and non-medical qualifications

To identify suitable local overseas migrants for training and matching with job opportunities in the new [NHS](#) hospital (National Health Services), the key is to **win local community organisations and work clubs** for the USE-IT! project.

The **advantage** of local community organisations is that they are locally anchored, already for a longer time in the community, and in touch and more trusted by the people. This facilitates very much to spread the word of the USE-IT! project and the support provided. To establish with overseas migrant communities such contacts and trust as well as appropriate communication channels would have taken much longer time for an external (new) organisation (if at all).

The **task of the NHS Trust** (USE-IT! partner) is to inform local community organisations and works clubs, working with overseas migrants, about

- the USE-IT! project,
- the kind of people / skills they look for,
- the support they provide for suitable overseas migrants to get a job in the new hospital (cf. 2.2).



The **task of the local community organisations and work clubs** is to

- spread the information via their communication channels,
- check which of their clients might have the requested job or educational skills to become part of the USE-IT! programme,
- refer the identified persons to the [Learning Works](#) (cf. 2.2).

As these tasks are within the range of work of the organisation, not time-consuming, and even helpful for their clients, they were willing to support the USE-IT! project and provide the support free of charge.

## Emconet

Emconet - the Emerging Communities Network - is a registered charity that serves to empower newcomers from Central and Eastern Europe, who decided to live, to work or to study in the UK. Elena from Emconet talks with the people coming to the organisation about their personal / professional / educational background and what they want to be. She does in-depth personal interviews. Based on this they develop a personal development plan. If useful, she guides the people to the Learning Works, Brushstrokes or other employment carrier organisations. Through the connection with the Learning Works she can offer further information and services to their clients.

*“Why should I not join the USE-IT! partnership?! It is no extra time or effort for me. It belongs to my job.”  
(Elena, managing director of Emconet)*

In this way, the local community organisations and work clubs functioned as access points to the USE-IT! programme.

Another very successful, but unexpected way to identify overseas migrants with relevant medical and non-medical qualifications was the **‘word-to-mouth’ communication**.

## Horani Othman, USE-IT! client becoming a pharmacist in NHS

“A neighbour told me about a local refugee organisation for asylum seekers and this organisation informed me about the USE-IT! project, the free IELTS language training courses and the Learning Works.”

Already identified individuals (and friends) informed other appropriate migrants about the program and the supporting services. As a result, many more people found their way into the USE-IT! programme. Sometimes even people not involved in the USE-IT! project, but which had heard about it, informed friends and neighbours (also via social media).

## Lessons learnt & Recommendation

The NHS hospital trust is now working with over 50 community organisations. Traditionally it has been very difficult for an institution as large as a hospital to work with small, local community organisations. In fact, none of the 50 engaged community organisations had a working relationship with the Trust prior to USE-IT!

The reason USE-IT! has been successful in achieving this is that the specific goal of helping overseas health professionals has created the opportunity for the relationship to get established. Now these connections are in place and this network of community

contacts is going to be part of the legacy USE-IT! leaves behind for the hospital.

Another lesson learnt is that some overseas migrants (potential clients) had been too shy to get in touch with the Learning Works. They were not used to talk in English. In these cases it was very important that the local community organisations accompanied these clients for the first encounter with the Learning Works. This helped them to make the first (necessary) step.

Also a lesson learnt is that the tasks of the identification and supporting services (cf. 2.2) do not mean any real additional effort for the community organisations; that these tasks are part in a greater extend of the organisation's field of activity. This facilitates the partnership greatly.





## 2.2 Training of identified overseas migrants

To prepare the identified overseas migrants for the job vacancies in the [NHS](#) hospital (National Health Services), the key is **personal training and services** for their personalised pathways to the job employment.

Mainly responsible for this is the NHS [Learning Works](#) ([video](#)). The Learning Works is a one-stop-shop for access to training, development and employment opportunities within the Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust. They provide **profession related support** to the identified individual in order to be able to return to their practise with the NHS. This includes:

- finding out what needs to be done to be able to work in the person's former job area (with relevance to the NHS) and receive guidance;
- support in the educational and professional accreditation process;
- providing apprentice training and work placements in the NHS hospital and related local organisations in the health sector;
- providing job placements in the NHS hospital.



Another important element in the provision of personalised services (to become an accredited qualified individual for the NHS) is to build **partnerships with local third sector organisations**. Partnerships have been established **to enable additional services** for the individuals, which the Learning Works alone could not provide, i.e.

- providing clothes for interviews,
- coaching and mentoring,
- free language training courses,
- social support services,
- interim work placements.

**Elena,**  
**managing director of Emconet**

“Through the Learning Works and their support the people start believing in themselves again, they become more confident, they set up goals, they believe that it is possible to make something out of their lives and get a better job.”

One of the main partners is the organisation [Brushstrokes](#). It provides **guidance and support** throughout the whole process till the work placement. Main service is the free training (financed through USE-IT!) for the language exam IELTS (International English Language Testing System). Passing the IELTS test is a prerequisite to be able to start with the training to become a doctor or be able to work in the NHS. The training courses also help to improve the English skills in general and become more confident talking in English

### Horani Othman, USE-IT! client becoming a pharmacist in NHS

“Key support for me has been Brushstrokes to help my English and the opportunity to have a job placement so I can learn about practice here and practice my English.”

Another key element in support of the professional development of the identified overseas migrants are **personal mentors**. They support them in the process of getting a work placement in the medical/ health sector in particular by explaining:

- the medical/ health system in UK,
- what the job of a doctor in UK entails, what a typical day is like (i.e. working range and working hours, salary),
- potential career options that fit to their personal situation and professional qualification,

- which support they can receive to become an accredited doctor in the UK in terms of requalification and training,
- putting up the CV.

The **advantage** of the mentors is that they know the medical and health sector from inside out and can pass this experience and expertise to the mentee.

### Lessons learnt & Recommendation

The bottleneck to bring the overseas migrant into job placements in the NHS is the command of the English language. Therefore, the **professional language courses** and their financing (which could not always be paid by the overseas migrants) have been a crucial element for the progress of the migrants. The provision of childcare during the courses would be very helpful and would allow mothers in particular to participate more regularly in the language courses.

### Maha, USE-IT! client, doctor from Sudan

“The course is helping me in many ways. First, I met other students who need to pass the IELTS exam, and we start to motivate each other and made a study group. Second, the tutor is doing a great job by providing valuable material, which can help us to practise. Finally, the continued support from our tutor checking extra work and giving books to overcome our weaknesses is really great.”

An unexpected challenge was the need to **convey** the USE-IT! clients **cultural competences**, in particular how to talk and behave with a patient. Here job observership in a hospital and the mentors have been very helpful to train communication and behaviour skills. I.e. Cape Hill Medical centre provides two six-week evening courses for doctors to discuss medical issues, practise their English and role-play communicating with patients.

At the same time, the **job observerships and interim (volunteer) work placements** have been helpful not to lose the professional skills, get to know the medical and health sector in the UK from the inside and to improve the language skills. More job observerships of this kind already during the language training would be helpful as well as more mentors. Here [GMC](#) (organisation responsible to improve UK's medical education and practice) could be the body to contact medical organisations and doctors and animate them to become mentors and provide observerships.

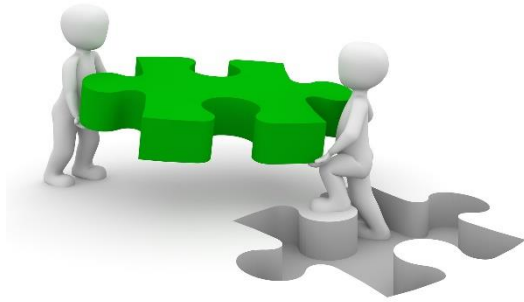
Also to animate overseas migrants to make a change in their life, in particular the ones that lack confident and communication and language skills, key is the personal support in improving the language skills and guiding (and accompanying) them to relevant support organisations and services.

A website in different languages would also be helpful for this purpose, demonstrating first contact points and services in Birmingham for people who want to work in the health and medical sector coming from oversea.

*Raffaella Goodby, board member of NHS Trust*

“As the director responsible for workforce in this Trust and a lead on recruitment and retention in the Black Country, I was really surprised at the high number of highly skilled healthcare workers working in unskilled roles in the area. We believe that investing in these people will help us to fill NHS vacancies now, and in the future.”

## 2.3 Matching job opportunities with trained persons



In order to get suitable personnel for the positions in the NHS hospital, at the beginning the job shortage areas and workforce needs were determined through a **workforce plan**. Based on the workforce plan the [Learning Works](#) (cf. 2.2) started to look for matches for the shortage areas. The information from the workforce plan they put up into their “**opportunities database**”.

The same happens with the identified overseas migrants (cf. 1). Their professional skills and training data are included in the **database** and updated with the training progress (**client profile**).

Through the database, the job opportunities and the trained overseas migrants are matched. The database is also used to share with the overseas clients a range of observership and mentoring opportunities and additional training and learning support.

### Lessons learnt & Recommendation

Key is the frequently updated database. The workforce plan has to be updated regularly and focus on the high vacancy areas. For this, the Learning Works needs to liaise constantly with NHS bodies and hospitals and request up-to-date workforce plans. Thus, they can quickly match the skills of their client with the recruitment needs.

#### Lawrence Kelly, Learning Works Co-ordinator

“USE-IT! has increased the standard of these workforce plans because hospitals now see a practical application for them and that something proactive is happening.”

### 3 Key success factors and outlook

Key to the current success of matching overseas migrants with job vacancies in the NHS is the **diverse partnership of local community based partners that deliver a wide range of personalised support and social and professional services for the individual learning pathways** of the USE-IT! clients to be able to work in their former job area in the medical and health sector.

Key is the Learning Works that together with the NHS trust promote the partnership and delivery of the diverse services to the USE-IT! clients.

At the same time, the partnership allows to deliver a range of services, which the Learning Works and the NHS Trust could not provide alone. But they have to learn to work in and nurture the partnership, to build up durable structures as it is a voluntary cooperation. This is not an easy task for a large organisation like NHS.

Notwithstanding, due to the success of the USE-IT! approach the Hospital Trust wants to further explore this way of working (i.e. setting up partnerships with specialists community organisations) to see if employment pathways into health careers can be set up for other disadvantaged groups. To this point there are projects to support:

- Children leaving care.
- Ex-Offenders
- The homeless
- People with physical disabilities
- People with mental health issues.

**In the future**, further attention must be paid to a **financial support scheme** for overseas migrants. This is because the livelihood must be financed during the training and education phase (up to 5 years), like the training itself. This is particularly important for people with families. I.e. more paid placements could be offered. The NHS Trust could retrain relevant migrants i.e. as nurses for their hospital and pay their salary over a certain period of their training. The funding could come from the funds that normally are used to recruit personnel from abroad (paying them for relocation, finding a home, etc.).

Access to finance/loans for overseas migrants must also be created i.e. a revolving fund. Since they have a job in the NHS in prospect, this should be feasible.

Also a sustainable financing mechanism for the language courses and IELTS exam needs to be developed and applied as the language is the bottleneck for the further forthcoming and training of the overseas migrants (cf. [USE-IT! 3<sup>rd</sup> journal](#), p.20).

All the support activities could be combined under one regional umbrella programme for overseas healthcare worker, based on the USE-IT! experience.

All this (financial) support will help to convince overseas migrants to go through all the training and requalification process, which can take up to 5 years and then be “just” a junior doctor.

Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) is an Initiative of the European Union that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges. Based on article 8 of ERDF, the Initiative has a total ERDF budget of EUR 372 million for 2014-2020.

UIA projects will produce a wealth of knowledge stemming from the implementation of the innovative solutions for sustainable urban development that are of interest for city practitioners and stakeholders across the EU. This Zoom-in, written by a UIA Expert, captures and disseminates the lessons learnt from the project implementation and the good practices identified. It is part of the capitalisation and dissemination activities of the UIA – Urban Innovative Actions Initiative.



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