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Author:  
**Peter Wolkowinski**  
*UIA Expert*



The Urban Lab of Europe !

# MiFriendly Cities Journal N° 3

*Project led by the City of Coventry*



**INTEGRATION OF  
MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES**



# The MiFriendly Cities Project

**The MiFRIENDLY CITIES** project aims to facilitate and recognise the positive contribution of refugees and migrants to the city's civic, economic and social fabric. Refugees and migrants are key actors playing an important role in deciding what makes a "migrant friendly city" and driving the change on job creation, social entrepreneurship&innovation, active citizenship and communication.

Through the creation of a Business Leaders' Forum, a toolkit for employers and intensive training in advanced digital manufacturing, the project aims to create the condition for new job opportunities for migrants and refugees and better match their skills with employers.

At the same time it aims to enhance participation and active citizenship by providing a financial scheme, mentoring and support for up to 50 social enterprises and social innovation projects. Strong attention is given to communication and evaluation of the approaches tested. Over 100 refugees and migrants will be trained as Citizen Journalists to engage with the mainstream media, create their own stories and media channels while 30 will be mentored and supported to become Citizen Social Scientists in charge the project's qualitative evaluation.

**Partnership:**

- Coventry City Council
- Wolverhampton City Council
- Birmingham City Council
- Coventry University
- Interserve - multinational company
- Migrant Voice (MV) - local migration network
- Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC)
- The Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC)
- Coventry University Social Enterprises (CUSE)
- Central England Law Centre (CELC) - NGO
- Migration Work (MW) - NGO

# Table of Contents

<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. THE GENERAL PROGRESS OF MIFRIENDLY CITIES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. THE UK SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Nature	8
3.2 Safety	8
3.3 Journey	9
3.4 Community	10
3.5 Work	11
<b>4. PATHWAYS OF INTEGRATION WITH THE SUPPORT OF MIFRIENDLY CITIES</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Media Lab	13
4.2 Health Champions	14
4.3 Citizen Social Scientists	14
4.4 DIY courses	15
<b>5. LESSONS TO BE LEARNED</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1 Limbo and Innovation	16
<b>6. THE UIA ESTABLISHED CHALLENGES</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>7. CONCLUSIONS – LOOKING TO THE FUTURE</b>	<b>23</b>

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The MiFriendly Cities Approach

The process of building partnerships between the newly arrived, local citizens, civil society, industry and government is a continuous journey, one which the MiFriendly Cities project aims to facilitate and strengthen. Developing these partnerships depends not only on the willingness of the existing communities to accept newcomers - be they refugees or migrants - but also on the newly arrived individuals to take active steps to integrate into the wider community.

Drawing from the field of particle physics, we know that everything consists of particles of

energy, and from this *everything* - from stones to trees, from fruits to animals – is made of the same matter. On a fundamental level, composed of particles of energy, we are all linked and share a common bond. Thus, following this line of thinking, why is it so difficult for refugees and migrants to not only be supported and accepted by, but contribute to a new community?

This question is even more relevant and important in the present times when Urban cities are facing challenges of austerity and the cities having to deliver more for less for their communities.

## Building up local communities by empowering migrants and refugees creatively

How does an established community react to newcomers? How do newcomers join local communities and become part of them?

These questions, arise from the lived experiences and form the subsequent reflections for Journal No 3 of MiFriendly Cities. Now at the midway point of this ambitious yet vital project for the West Midlands area, namely Coventry, Wolverhampton and Birmingham, it is timely to

evaluate and reflect upon the 31 actions and their successes in creating a region built upon a spirit of solidarity whereby citizens are empowered to take the lead in unlocking their city's assets.

The “away day” for the project partners, which took place in early September 2019, highlighted a clear dichotomy in that when all project partners are making progress in the actions of supporting migrants and refugees, then the



time and resources concentrated on existing communities do not appear sufficient in assuring these communities of the positive added values that newcomers bring into local and global communities.

Through conducting interviews with a wide-range of participants who have taken part across project, five recurring themes have emerged: nature; safety; journey; community; work. By drawing out these themes, it is hoped that a deeper and personal understanding of the

migrant experience can inform our methods to develop an innovative approach to migration, that can then be adopted by cities across Europe.

In order to demonstrate this sentiment, all quotations taken from the interviews conducted have been kept in the original wording spoken by the interviewee to encapsulate the true 'feeling' of what is being said. Thus, 'correctness' of the language was not treated as of primary importance.

## 2. THE GENERAL PROGRESS OF MIFRIENDLY CITIES

An enormous amount of energy has been put into getting the most important actions of the project started and going. The partners of the project have managed to support the creation of social enterprises (16) and social innovation grassroots organisations (11), Community Health Champions (43) trained and are active in their communities, Share My Language (100) sessions now being done in all three cities, migrants and refugees rights health check (66) are verifying the legal situations of these displaced persons, and families in difficulties (34) have seen their accommodation receive make overs. Citizen Social Scientists have been trained (5) and 129 citizens journalists by Media Lab.

In the area of employment, a guide for employers as to how to convert work placements into apprenticeships has been edited, as well as a digital guide for employers concerning the employment of migrants and refugees has been produced. Six employers round tables have taken place and 3 employment brokers have reached over 650 companies. Drop in employment sessions have taken place 49 times.

In the area of skills 92 persons have obtained additional accreditations of their skills, 314 ESOL classes have taken place with an additional 204 being organised due to the enormous need and 41 persons have completed the DIY course, giving them additional skills. A FabLab session has taken place, basing on skills linked to new technologies.

These concrete successes have changed the reality of the project and have made it mature. This became evident when the partner organisations declared, that the biggest achievement to date was the partnership itself. The cities and associations have learnt to work together, have realised what competences and talents they mutually possess and can use in favour of the migrants and refugees they are trying to serve. This maturity has also shown, that the actors in place do not and cannot cover all the migrants and refugees of the West Midlands, creating a need to use traditional channels of information in order to make the specific services of the project available to all.

The mid-term reflexion session made evident two other aspects: that the project should concentrate more on how to influence **the resident population** concerning the positive asset vision of migrants and refugees. Secondly **the legacy of the project**, meaning actions which should continue on behalf of the migrants and refugees has become one of the pivotal subjects of exchange. All three cities are working separately on which actions could be maintained after the end of the UIA financing period.

The resolution of the Brexit question may also permit more clarity as to the position of the central government and how it will propose to finance well piloted projects.

# 3. THE UK SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Numerous people from many partner organisations were involved in conducting interviews with migrants and refugees to develop the “user experience” of this journal, and we offer our thanks to them.

Special thanks to our newcomer friends: Ahmad, Ali, Alvaro, Farisal, Farisaid, Ghouson, Hepizabar, Huma, Hussein, Lorraine, Mercy, Patrick, Phylis, Tanzania, Uyiosa, Zarina and many others. My sincere apologies to those I have not managed to name.

## 3.1 Nature

Interviews conducted with migrants from the Magreb (Algeria, Maroko and Tunisia) who migrated to Northern France identified an area of their lives which was particularly difficult, even traumatic, to overcome. This experience was of a first descent via a lift to the bottom of a coal mine 800 meters below the ground.

First impressions are very important and can remain for a long time. First impressions of the United Kingdom experienced by these migrants were:

**“Very cold”**

This sentiment was experienced by many but also alongside this impression was:

**“I felt free, dew on the grass, I liked it a lot!”**

Additionally:

**“1<sup>st</sup> night: late November. The way from the airport to the flat. Interesting road and very different. Everything was green. Plenty of plants, bushes and trees which I never saw before. It was beautiful. Because of the plants and flowers, it was not boring. Here it’s like spring all the time”.**

Alternatively:

**“I was afraid, did not know where to go or who to ask for help. It was the worst day of my life”**

Or:

**“I saw a daddy long legs and didn’t know what they were”**

## 3.2 Safety

Coventry is a city which was devastated by aerial bombing during World War II and has since become one of the Peace Messenger Cities, now establishing itself as a City of Sanctuary and being recognised globally as a City of Peace and Reconciliation. Whilst few inhabitants across the

City remember the feeling of being ‘unsafe’ when the German bombs fell destroying the historic city centre and medieval cathedral, the collective memory and impact of this trauma is still felt by the Coventry community and is made real every



day by the ruined Cathedral sitting alongside the modern new one.

My mother spent 4 years in what was called the “underground” in occupied Poland. She studied to become a nurse through secret classes, coming and going from teachers flats in such a way so that the occupying forces would not see that a class was being held. She then taught others and was a nurse during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944 carrying wounded fighters under fire to safety. She did not bring us up under this atmosphere, as, like all survivors she wanted to get on with life even though this was in the UK and not in her beloved Poland.

These two European (France and Poland) realities, mentioned above, should help us to feel and appreciate what it means to not feel safe and the third reality is the classroom. Having worked with teachers in recent years I was surprised to find out that one of the basic and fundamental

### 3.3 Journey

There is often a lot of debate about journeys as to whether arriving or travelling is the most significant experience. Refugees and those forced to migrate can often face a difficult journey. Indeed, travelling when you have no choice and are vulnerable to situational change can often lead to testing and traumatic situations. Even if the desired destination is finally reached however, serious challenges may still continue to persist for the refugee and forced migrant.

**The journey: “a long, long struggle – (long silence) traumatic. It affected my mental health.”**

responsibilities of a teacher is to guarantee safety in the classroom as without safety, no learning or progress can be made within.

**“I stay in the UK, it’s safety for me and my family.”**

Several of those interviewed left Syria due to the war, spending many years in transition before they managed to arrive in the UK. Others like those living in Asian countries, had to leave their homeland because of the danger to their lives from undemocratic authorities and arrived in Great Britain knowing it is a safe haven. Others from Africa arrive in the UK due to wars and ethnic purges which leave no room to feel safe in their home countries. Other migrants come from Central American countries where state inequalities and corruption have created mafia-like systems which do not give inhabitants or anybody else the freedom of life.

Another category of persons who live in the UK are those that arrived as children without their parents (referred to as Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children). These children experienced an abundance of difficulties in their childhoods alongside adjusting to life in the UK.

The above quote is representative of many others who have spoken of the trauma faced due to the difficult journeys they have undertaken. After experiencing the effects of conflict, many individuals have fled in order to bring themselves and their children to safety. Indeed, this quote is terribly profound as many other individuals interviewed have also stated that their mental health was affected as a result of the experience of their journey.

Often getting to the UK is far from the end of the story:

**“[The] journey of being shifted from one town to another, you are not allowed to settle, you live your life in a box. You do not go into friendship as you will move. 5 years of moving. After 8 years got papers. Terrible – waste of time and skills and resources for society. Impetus on my mental health is very strong. Always wary of the “knock on the door”. No one asks you nothing. You just get a letter. Go and restart again.”**

### 3.4 Community

**“You do not go into friendship as you will move”**

This line from the above quote is particularly interesting as it highlights the issue of integration into the host community. Whilst it is essential to the wellbeing for any individual to be part of a community - making friends, knowing neighbours, finding out how a particular group of diverse people live, work, shop and operate is fundamental to becoming part of a community – this is made difficult due to newly arrived refugees and migrants being unpredictably moved again and again. Therefore, refugees and migrants are increasingly reluctant to take the steps to becoming a part of the community.

Perhaps there should be a reflection on why the system uproots migrants and refugees in such a way, especially after what they have been through in their own countries and the journey which they have undertaken from their country to the UK. Is this fair? Does it correspond to the values of the country?

Not allowing residency was used by many systems, known as dictatorial rather than democratic.

After World War II, within the countries which fell under the soviet system, people who fought for

So, it is evident that the laws, rules and regulations of the UK do not make things easier for many migrants and refugees. Some have had to wait up to 13 years to obtain some kind of legal status in order to be able to stay in the country. Some, as mentioned above, have been repeatedly moved around by the asylum system, which probably has good intentions, but prolongs the traumas of the fear of the “knock on the door” until the UK can finally become a safe haven.

the freedom of their countries for the duration of the 5-year war were most often sent to Siberia to labour camps to make sure they would forget the West and its values. This process of deportation lasted for many years with the threat of dying due to the terrible conditions, starvation and illnesses. This was the case of Poland where very heroic people found themselves deported.

This was also the reason why my father could not go back to Poland and stayed in the UK, it was a safe haven in 1946.

**“Here you find people, but not close friends. Here we live in a society which does not care for others. There (back home) it’s an open-door society.”**

Here is another migrant commenting on present-day society in the UK. What she/he missed most is the close-knit society of their country of origin. By “open-door” this person means that neighbours, friends and family can drop in any time to each other’s place- something which is seen as normal. In the UK, the culture and societal norms/set up is different- the impression people get is that the society isn’t as well knit and that

people don't care as much for each other as in their host countries.

**“At first not happy as no people understand me... All family together. Here every time, everybody goes to work.”**

Another migrant goes on to explain that understanding was a fundamental element to not

## 3.5 Work

### 3.5.A From the Migrants Perspective

Many people think that migrants and refugees come to Western European countries in order to profit from the social system and receive benefits.

**“I understand the people and I like the people. Will start own business”**, says an individual who was interviewed.

On the basis of these interviews it is clear that:

- This does not concern refugees who have to survive on very limited support offered by respective authorities, which in turn do not allow them to work. This makes them either dependant or they have to work out ways of “alternative survival” by making themselves useful to other members of the family, friends etc.<sup>1</sup>
- In as far as migrants are concerned, many of them are minors and, therefore, need to be educated. Others learn the language and try to get into the world of work by all the means they have.

A smart phone expert, a fashion designer, a doctor and other medical staff are not able to look for suitable jobs because they either do not have the right papers, do not have sufficient language capacity (meaning English) or they feel

feeling part of the community especially, when their language was difficult to communicate. However, he/she underlines another crucial point that in our Western culture we are forever “going to work” whereas in many other cultures people appear to give time so that families can be together.

isolated in their situation which results in a lower chance of getting a job.

**“I had 2 companies in Syria as a fashion designer. 15 staff. In Lebanon 13 as a tailor”**

Could we not think about a smart phone expert as a valuable worker, introduce him to a company where there are other people who could communicate in his language and facilitate his employment? Could the fashion designer not design clothes, without knowing sufficient English, as he/she will not be working alone, and with someone in the team translating when needed.

Birmingham has already experimented this due to shortage and demands for the much-needed medical staff. The NHS organisation and hospital concerned understand the fact that someone may have much needed medical skills but not the right papers- a situation which has necessitated innovative solutions from such situations.

**“I've got status. I put myself through school, college, university. Lacking a stable job. Someone asks for 5 or 10 of skills. The system is not welcoming. Working as a carer. System does not realise the valuable skills people have. If people can afford to study, and there are no jobs, who are they trying to fool?”**

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<sup>1</sup> It now appears very clearly, that many of the refugees have competences which are in high demand on the job market, but because of their status and the lack of legalization of their situation they cannot be “useful” in society due to the national rules and regulations.

### 3.5.B From the Employers' Perspective

In-depth research has been undertaken for the MiFriendly project around the position of companies in Coventry concerning the employment of migrants and why so many of them are so reticent to employ persons from other countries particularly those from outside the EU. Amongst other conclusions, the report states that:

- 96.1% of respondents said they lacked the confidence to be able to employ migrants and refugees because they have not received appropriate training as to what documents demonstrate eligibility to work according to UK rules and regulations
- 27% of the respondents answered that they had not considered employing migrants or refugees even though 80% of respondents state that they are experiencing difficulties in filling vacancies.
- 64% of respondents claim lack of confidence to employ migrants and refugees while 52.2% would like to have training as to who they can legally employ.

# 4. PATHWAYS OF INTEGRATION WITH THE SUPPORT OF MIFRIENDLY CITIES

The MiFriendly Cities activities have been devised purposefully to involve migrants and refugees directly in the processes of integration into local communities. Based on the experiences of the migrants and refugees themselves, **the most important criteria for success in integration is fighting the isolation of individuals, networking and, especially at the beginning, giving people the support that everybody receives from the**

**local community.** Being “displaced” particularly implies not having a local community and having to build it from scratch.

The varied actions and activities effectuated by MiFriendlyCities partners stimulate migrants and refugees to contact each other, and with the communities they live in, approaching this from different angles and perspectives.

## 4.1 Media Lab

This course aims to empower refugees and migrants to speak for themselves in the media and to key stakeholders such as politicians as well as to build understanding and encouraging solidarity between communities across the West Midlands.

The course is run by Migrant Voice, a migrant-led and migrant orientated organisation. For the last 10 years they have specialised in giving migrants and refugees a voice in the UK and amplifying that voice in the media and in policy circles. Surveys<sup>2</sup> have shown that the voices of migrants and refugees are unheard of in 85% to 90% of new stories which concern them. Migrant Voice supports migrants and refugees to produce videos, photos and articles for social media in a way which provides migrants and refugees with opportunities to clearly speak out in the media.

**“After the Migrant Voice media lab, I am now equipped with some skills on how to tell my story.”**

**“I have found the media lab session on photography useful and I now intend to use my photographic and videography skills to tell my story on how I survived some traumatic experiences in my life as a migrant.”**

**“Added value – confidence to express myself, use this confidence to engage with people. Help to move forward. Sometimes we feel all alone. We don’t express what we’ve been through or what we are going through.”**

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<sup>2</sup> Victims and Villains, Migrant Voices in British Media, 2016

## 4.2 Health Champions



*Graduation day for the community of Health champions*

The Health Champions course encourages people from different communities to become well-informed on issues relating to health and wellbeing. These individuals receive well-prepared training which allows them to signpost persons from their communities in the direction of organisations and services which they may need and are able to use. In addition to this, the Central England Law Centre has produced [a very accessible guide](#) concerning the rights of migrants and refugees and regulations in relation to access of the National Health Service (NHS) that's is being used by both refugees/migrants and practitioners to be better informed in this area.

As says one migrant:

**“A great learning tool. I would recommend the Health Champions course to anyone in getting involved and helping their community.”**

## 4.3 Citizen Social Scientists

Coventry University has always tried to be a useful and practical asset in relation to the challenges the city of Coventry faces. Acknowledging that migrant and refugee communities can be rather closed, CU has proposed courses run by university specialists to train migrants and refugees as

Others make very pertinent and relevant comments:

**“We are trying to make our communities as friendly as possible – no fear to access different services”**

**“The more people we have championing health in the community the better.”**

**“I’ve made some new friends, by being well informed I am more capable to signpost people to the correct entity.”**

The cities involved in the course are structuring it so that the information that the Health Champions can use is pertinent and relevant, organise monthly meetings for them and ensure that they have all the necessary recognition to do their work in the community as volunteers.

The health champions themselves say that they have been able to discuss health questions to do with variety of people with different points of view. They have shared their knowledge with others about varied health issues in the community and have been able to give others confidence in health-related issues. Their attitude towards their own communities has also been developed. For example, they know they have to be energetic and pro-active, but at the same time approach issues and individuals in a delicate, subtle and understanding manner.

“Citizen Social Scientists”. They share with them the important intricacies of how to conduct interviews and how to deal with the material collected. This is to involve the trainees more in the local community and as citizen researcher in the evaluation process of the whole UIA project.



This very original approach is aiming at training 30 persons in total and thereby include people from a range of migrant and refugee communities.

For Catherine Harris, from Coventry University, training peer researchers so that they are part of the community adds immense value. The participants benefit from the course run by the university as their theoretical knowledge interlinks with and strengthens their hands-on field work.

The participants have also become much more aware of the MiFriendly Cities programme, increasingly informing their communities about

**4.4 DIY courses**



*Our Pop-Up Furniture Factory trains migrants and refugees to be able to upcycle used, unwanted furniture. This will then be donated to families in need*

The pop-up furniture factory has been participating directly in the integration of

the project. Coventry University will continue to mentor the participants after they have finished the course and will employ them to do evaluation work of the whole project.

From the participants' point of view, they underline that the course has increased their integration between themselves and in their communities, giving them the opportunity to contribute to the community. They underline that this type of activity builds trust between migrants as participants.

MiFriendly Cities also ran a Social Innovation competition through MigrationWork in which many migrants and refugees presented their own innovative ideas for their communities. [Coventry University Social Enterprise](#) is supporting migrants and refugees by creating social economy companies (see Journal 2). Both these actions bring people from different backgrounds together and allow migrants and refugees to integrate better and more quickly by approaching living in the UK in a pro-active and holistic way.

migrants and refugees. Courses in DIY techniques, based mainly on carpentry and refurbishing existing furniture are being conducted. This permits newcomers to get to know each other, have an activity and make their first steps into UK communities. The socialisation aspect of this work is very important to its participants, who underline that this activity allows them to work flexible hours which permits individuals to do other things such as looking after handicapped children. On the other hand, they also underline the importance of learning new competences which are useful to their lives and they very much appreciate the fact that much of the time they are refurbishing furniture for needy families.

# 5. LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

The varied experiences of Mi Friendly Cities show that including migrants and refugees in the process of integration in innovative and creative ways increase their capacity to get to know other persons, be it from other communities or those who are long-term residents. It also widens the scope of mutual understanding. As in the case of Citizen Social Scientists, who will be actively participating in the project, they will be conducting some of the research required to be able to evaluate its progress.

This learning stands out **in comparison to many other migrant and refugee experiences whereby the group of people who are the objective of an**

## 5.1 Limbo and Innovation:

MiFriendlyCities is truly an innovative programme and the first reason which justifies this claim is the fact that asylum seekers have their role in all the actions of the programme which is often rarely the case for programmes with UK based financing. However, this originality is relatively limited as other UK rules make living with an asylum-seeking status very difficult. Some institutions cannot reimburse travel expenses to individuals with this status so some people have felt obliged to do so out of their own pockets - something which should be unnecessary.

The journey of integration starts from the first day of someone's presence in the UK. As the quotation cited above indicates, migrants and

**action are often treated as an aim and not as a partner.** Empowering migrants and refugees to become an intrinsic part of the local community is, after all, the main aim as it provides them with an active role rather than being passively "integrated" by others.

In all, these experiences once again bring to mind fundamental questions such as:

- at which point does someone stop being a migrant or a refugee?
- why are national policies and decisions in opposition to the rationale of integrating local communities as soon as possible?

refugees have often been through all sorts of severe difficulties before getting to the UK, so sadly for many of them the waiting time to the point where they feel useful in the country and feel safe is terribly long. Discussions were held as to whether intermediate structures, such as social enterprises, could not permit these persons to be active and therefore integrate them more quickly. In my opinion it does not appear that new governmental measures will take the direction, or reasoning, as mentioned before. Notwithstanding, the Sounding board – a group of cities working on integration is looking intensively at the question of whether we can start and encourage integration from day one.



# 6. THE UIA ESTABLISHED CHALLENGES

## MAPPING MiFRIENDLYCITIES AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED UIA CHALLENGES

Challenge	Level	Observations
1. Leadership for implementation	Medium	<p>Coventry City Council is the managing authority of MiFriendly Cities. Up till now the city has tried very hard to coordinate the work of the project with the other two cities – Birmingham and Wolverhampton, with a big presumption that such a coordination is realistically possible. These efforts have now been tuned down as each city is dealing with the project in its own way. Even concerning the legacy question, each city is starting to work separately. Therefore, the estimation of the challenge has changed, with the acceptance, that after 18 months of efforts not much more coordination can be, nor will be achieved. The diversity of commitment is a worry as is the need to increase the autonomy of actions. This diverse commitment remains a challenge and the autonomy of action needs, according to some, to be increased. The need to constantly co-create a common vision also remains a challenge.</p> <p>In all a lot of progress has been achieved, in the cooperation between the three cities and all the partners: putting into place of actions, employment of staff, contributing to the general progress of the project, networking between the project partners, taking stock of the partner’s competences and learning to profit from them. However, realizations are still uneven; in Coventry the city team is very strong and can do many things internally, whilst in Wolverhampton and Birmingham most of the actions are externalised, which takes a lot of time, involves complicated procedures and does not allow such a steady progress in the partnership between the local authorities and their partners. For example, the very interesting “Share My Language” action has been put into place and managed directly by Coventry City Council, whereas Birmingham has chosen to do a call to many NGO’s who are now running the sessions. Wolverhampton is doing something similar. This has taken a long time, and in the opinion of the Coventry management, does not give the same results. Share My Language is an example of the need to raise aspiration levels. This diversity between the cities is not a surprise.</p>

1. Leadership for implementation	Medium	<p>Challenges in the administration of the project; a lot of work has gone into simplifying documentation, giving new sense to methods of coordination and adapting the evaluation/impact process to the needs of the project. Staff changes have also influenced this situation. This has been made possible through an adapted form of management, which is constantly attempting to re-interrogate the procedures and ways of taking decisions. The new ways of working focus more on areas where there is room for improvement and where the legacy of the actions proposed has a chance to become permanent. The legacies will probably be different in each of the participating cities, which are now starting to reflect on which actions to maintain.</p> <p>The situation concerning the coordination with the partner organisations is relatively much easier, as they fully recognize the value of the MiFriendly partnership and regard this as the most important legacy. The partners are now concerned with maintaining the actions which are shown to be the most valuable to migrants and refugees and identify that together they may accomplish more and more efficiently. This has been made easier by an evolution of the evaluation/impact tools of the project, where it appears that the general acceptance and understanding of the project has improved, uniting the partners even more within the project.</p>
2. Public procurement	Low	<p>In Wolverhampton there were some challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- length of time to get approval via UIA to go out to procurement was a major challenge. This impacted on the timeline of the tendering process delaying the planned contract start date,</li> <li>- CWC recognised that there were not many providers in the area who could deliver the Pop-Up Furniture Factory, receiving only one bid.</li> </ul>
3. Integrated cross-departmental working	Low	<p>The MiFriendly logic, has influenced the relations of the Library and Migration Dept. headed by Peter Barnet. Cross departmental collaboration has begun with several city departments, but most intensively with the Health and Employment departments. A newly Arrived Communities Steering Group which is chaired by the Director of Public Health has been created which allows for more coordination and cooperation between the different departments as well as between outside operatives. Good links have also been established with the departments of housing, social care and education.</p> <p>The project has established a good working relationship with the Coventry Job Shop and in conjunction with them delivered the inaugural Employer's Awards where they recognised Employers in the city.</p> <p>Further to this the project has been working with the Public Health Department to connect with the Health Champions strand of the project which is kicking in now in 2020.</p> <p>Another area the project worked cross departmental was with the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) who have been helping to promote the project across the city and helps to arrange things when in true difficulty in particular cases.</p>

<p>4. Adopting a participative approach</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>	<p>The partners have come a long way. At the beginning of the project, it was felt that the partners knew what the needs of the migrants and refugees were. In practice the needs of the participants were not always satisfied and the project partners started to change and adapt their services to the real situation. An example of this are the courses done by the FabLab, where the “intervention” of business mentors was not possible due to the level of competence in English being too low. The participants also needed legal support much quicker. Both these needs were rapidly satisfied through changes to the way the project worked and closer links between WP. This has induced changes in the relations between partners in a positive way. From the beginning the project was announced as bottom up and participatory. In practice the partners did not really feel this was happening, especially during the first year. When different courses and trainings were put into place the participatory aspect developed, as participants were giving their feedback, new needs were identified and solved if possible and co-construction of responses has been used several times. However, the general feeling is that the project has not really managed to involve the participants sufficiently. This does not come out in all the interviews done for Journal 3 by different partners, where comments on what to change in the project are very rare.</p> <p>Not all the actions have the same potential for feedback and participation. The development of social enterprises or the DIY course allow for this a lot, whilst for example legal advice is more concentrated on direct help to the client, so it’s less participative.</p>
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<p>5. Monitoring and evaluation</p>	<p><b>Low</b></p>	<p>The initial plan on monitoring, evaluation and impact was very wide and had been dominated by the needs of the application form and took less into consideration the practical results of the evaluation. The WP tried to come to terms with the progress of the project and some very good work was done: e.g. on the position and approach of the private sector. However, the partners did not understand all the documents that they had to produce and were not getting much feedback. The width of the evaluation also worried the expert already at the first visit.</p> <p>The management team together with the WP lead revised their position and after consultation with the expert and UIA proposed a revised version: 6 main themes were proposed. These were discussed with all the partners and obtained their approval. In addition, the WP will consist of qualitative material, done on the basis of interviews, self-evaluations by the partners, case studies and questionnaires. At the mid-term conference, a very precise and communicative presentation of the results of the project was shown. The September 2019 away day, with the participation of the expert, showed that the project was achieving a lot of good results, but that basically they were not identified as such, nor given the added value in terms of PR and communication. The expert proposed an initial list of “jewels” from his point of view and this has influenced the project to be more creative as to how to identify the added value needed. This has happened at the same time that the communication WP has improved enormously and therefore the “jewels” should become more visible.</p> <p>In exchanges with the partners, other “jewels” became visible; moving the FabLab to the central library, changes in the way partners collaborate, evolution of the relationships between NGO’s and local authorities etc.</p> <p>All the partners feel, that the new methods adopted fit the reality of the project much better and show what is really being done in the everyday work.</p> <p>The main worry expressed could be that the resident population is not cared for enough in this project, where the financed actions mainly aim at the migrant and refugee populations. There is a strong feeling that <b>integration depends on progress from both sides</b>. Notwithstanding the area of monitoring and evaluation is now a much lower challenge than in previous months due to all the fundamental work which has been done.</p>
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6. Financial Sustainability	Medium	<p>Elements of the project will be financed after it ends. Other funds will support some of the actions. The project will have left a legacy (refugee centre, etc.) and has managed to support development in securing funds for the actions. As austerity continues and migration continues, it's more and more important that we get the learning from the project. Closer collaboration between the cities and the RMC's is developing.</p> <p>If everything goes normally we will be in a better situation than before. New government policy can be operational and the programme will use the learnings to be in advance. It is planned to apply for additional funds but in the future. There are still enough funds available to deliver activities for example, such as the Health Champions.</p>
7. Communicating with target beneficiaries	Medium	<p>The MiFriendly Cities project's funding concerned mostly, or even completely migrants and refugees as the main target groups. Indeed, both these groups are the main beneficiaries.</p> <p>However, the project also had the ambition to improve the scale of persons in the three cities who would have a more positive approach to migrants and refugees. The work done for example on the employer's questionnaire clearly shows that they are ready to employ such persons, if they obtain the necessary information about the statute and legality of each person to be able to work. As they don't know these rules (EU residents excepted), few migrants and refugees are employed. This example and others has provoked a rising feeling among the project professionals, and especially the communication WP, that without innovative methods, the project will not be capable of influencing the thinking and opinions of the resident population. As the expert wrote in the Journal 1, people's opinions are more often formed by "what the neighbour said" with almost a total refusal to accept statistical data as a worthy source of information. The preoccupation of the partnership is thus how to include as much as possible the resident population in the actions, how to communicate to society at large, and how to help the migrants and refugees to simply become part of the local communities. There is a strong will to integrate information into the mainstream information networks. Work on integration requires a "two-way street".</p>

8. Upscaling	Medium	<p>The <b>guides</b> that have been produced (Employers survey 2019, Employers Guide, Interactive Project Guide) have to be shared already at the present time with other localities as the aim is to influence and support others cities and towns in developing their policies in regards to migrants and refugees. The interim evaluation in November is creating a milestone and positive traction around an important event, where the results of the first half of the project were presented. However, in the UK, the capacity to upscale (make a given service bigger, engage more persons, share it with others), is, at the time of great uncertainty (Brexit) difficult to really imagine for the management of the project.</p> <p>The management feels, that running the project, adapting it to the needs of the migrants and refugees, taking stock of the difficulties which, they face in regard to national legislation (waiting 13 years for the right to stay) leave little space for upscaling. However, as mentioned above, creating legacy and making sure that something of the project remains in everyday financing and reality, does appear as a much more realistic aim. There is knowledge that British government funding will allow certain actions to carry on, but as was seen with EOSL classes, the budgets on such questions have been severely cut by the central authorities, making things very difficult for local authorities, whose budgets have been reduced by over 60% in the last decade.</p>
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## 7. CONCLUSIONS – LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

MiFriendly Cities has been running for 18 months and to celebrate this interim juncture partners have been looking seriously towards the future and consideration of the legacy of the programme and of each of the 31 actions identified in the programme. Through this evaluation, partners are exploring how can each successful action be taken forward and supported by the local authorities or by another partner in a permanent and sustainable way.

This requires not only a coherent impact measurement but also identifying existing funding streams which can be accessed or bid to in order to carry on the legacy of this project, or trying to influence existing sources, including mainstream funding and adapting this to local needs.

What appears as the most important element to the partner structures is that they have learnt to work together, they communicate easily and can mutually support each other in different challenges that they face.

Each partner city is already working on the most important legacies and it will be in future journals and zoom in's that we will be able to observe what has really been conserved as the positive legacy of MiFriendly Cities. A clear unknown is the attitude of the national authorities and how they will facilitate the challenges of cities with their inhabitants, of which one important one is, how to start the integration process of migrants and refugees from day 1!

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 journal is a paper written by a UIA Expert that captures and disseminates the lessons learnt from the project implementation and the good practices identified. The journals will be structured around the main challenges of implementation identified and faced at local level by UIA projects. They will be published on a regular basis on the UIA website.



## Urban Innovative Actions

Les Arcuriales  
45D rue de Tournai  
F- 59000 Lille

**+33 (0)3 61 76 59 34**  
info@uia-initiative.eu  
**www.uia-initiative.eu**

Follow us on **twitter**  
@UIA\_Initiative  
and on **Facebook**.