Changing Realities in the West Midlands

Towards the important legacies of the MiFriendly Cities project

Author: Peter Wolkowinski

EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund

Région
Hauts-de-France

Key concepts: results, theory of change, monitoring, evaluation, communication, creating communities, living together, employment, innovation, learning English, impact…

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1   Executive Summary

A friendly city is one where the residents feel at home, safe and in a good relationship with their surroundings. Where the park is not too far, the shops are close and most important of all the neighbours are really pleasant nice people with whom there are good relations. Journal 2 underlined the overarching importance of relations between neighbours; "talking time", being the strongest 'social glue'. Jobs are available and support structures for creating companies or associations are open to all.

A friendly city is also one where newcomers are openly welcomed, are helped to get to know how the city functions. Somewhere where the residents and newcomers create a new community together.
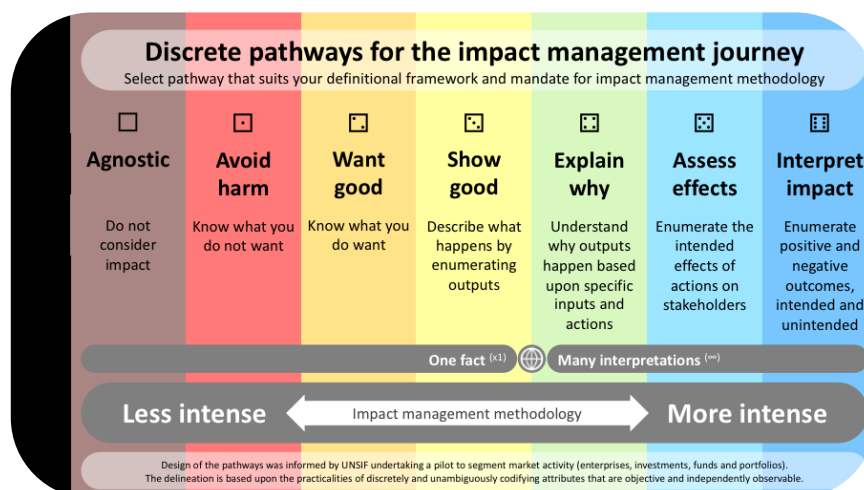
The MiFriendly Cities project has the ambition to achieve as many of the above-mentioned results as possible, through the financing of the European Commission, (Urban Innovative Action (UIA) secretariat) by producing impact in these areas. The project has 40+ staff, 31 actions, 11 partner organisations, 3 cities and 3 years of time. All the persons and institutions involved share the passion of easing migrants and refugees into the local communities as best they can, which, they all agree and underline, is **a two-way process**.

At the mid-term point of the project, the partner organisations are already working on the legacies the project will leave, when it will finish. They are also reflecting on the most difficult element: **how to allow the existing communities to become more welcoming, more knowledgeable about the newcomers, creating the networks and links that make communities function in harmony**. These social aspects are a key to the development of any territory, guaranteeing its economic, social and environmental equilibrium.

The aim of the Zoom-in 2 is to tell the story of the evolution of the part of the project concerned with showing the results. This means analysing the process of change in the area which has been accomplished through the work of Migration Work and Coventry University, so as to help the project partners in their work of increased efficiency and building up of the legacy of the actions which will be sustainable.

2   Impact Measurement and Management

The United Nations (UN) has established the 17 Sustainable Development Goals on which many countries, regions and cities are working to achieve. It is now working hard on how to measure the impact of these efforts in a common way for the whole planet.

Discrete pathways for the impact management journey
Select pathway that suits your definitional framework and mandate for impact management methodology

Agnostic	Avoid harm	Want good	Show good	Explain why	Assess effects	Interpret impact
Do not consider impact	Know what you do not want	Know what you do want	Describe what happens by enumerating outputs	Understand why outputs happen based upon specific inputs and actions	Enumerate the intended effects of actions on stakeholders	Enumerate positive and negative outcomes, intended and unintended

One fact (x1)   Many interpretations (∞)

Less intense ← Impact management methodology → More intense

Design of the pathways was informed by UNSIF undertaking a pilot to segment market activity (enterprises, investments, funds and portfolios). The delineation is based upon the practicalities of discretely and unambiguously codifying attributes that are objective and independently observable.

The above schema[1] shows how the intensity of the impact management methodology can vary, depending on how far the measurement can and needs to be taken.
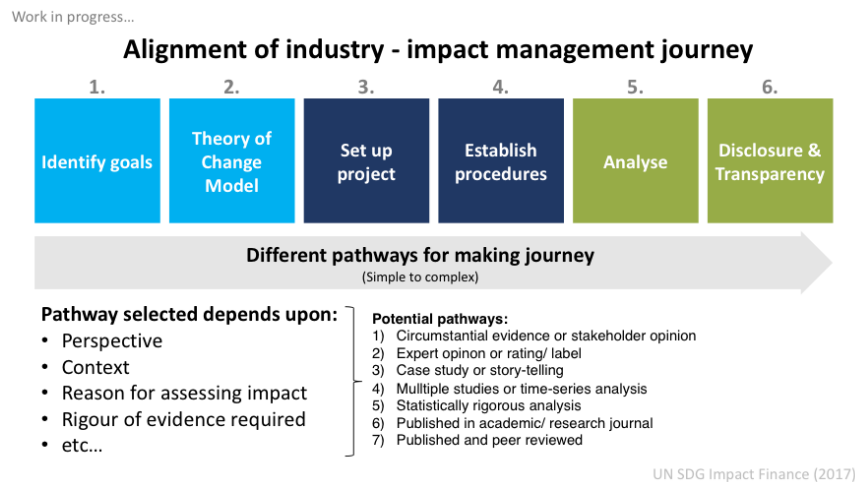
Whereas the above table clearly indicates the six levels needed to accomplish an efficient impact journey, with very different levels of complexity to be analysed. The pathways which are mentioned allow the organiser of the impact measurement to reflect upon the level of information and evidence which is needed in each particular case. As is well known in the question of migration, statistical evidence does not carry the same weight as "what the neighbour said" and therefore there is a lot of work to be done to see what level of exact knowledge will allow an appropriate level of communication (please see table on next page).

The seventh level in the impact journey has to be underlined, as it creates the loop, which allows the information to be reformulated, regarding the end user, but also the target of the actions analysed, thereby giving scope to influencing decision making.

These commons have yet to become universal, but along the way to creating them there are several points which have become very important:

1) The reflexion on measuring impacts must rely on a **common theory of change**, to be worked through by those who are going to be producing the information,

2) To be able to build up a common theory of change, the **meanings of words and their values** must be discussed, not only from the point of view of the final recipient of the impact measurement, but also and above all, of the beneficiary,

3) In evaluation processes, the tendency is to want to know everything. This is a false hypothesis. It is vital to **select only certain zones**,

4) The choice of what to measure and manage, has to be made, depending on the knowledge of the producers of the impact. It is above all interesting to **obtain impact knowledge on things we do not know**, rather than those which are well known.

5) Impact measurement has to be linked to impact management. Therefore, the group producing the information has to establish **for whom** the impact measurement is for, **what is the reason** why the impact work is needed, and **how to communicate** it efficiently.

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[1] These elements have been worked through under the leadership of Karl Richter, for the Boosting Social Innovation URBACT network, who was Head of Knowledge and Finance for the UN SDG's (UNDP Impact Finance).

Impact Management (for Dummies) Rubric

Functional requirements rubric - for accounting and valuation of stocks and flows relating to intangible assets and capital

Impact [intensity/ methodological/ maturity] Pathways **

Select Pathway	G — Agnostic	F — Negative Screen	E — Positive Screen	D — Outputs	C — Causal Theory	B — Outcomes	A — Net impact
	Don't consider impact	Know what you don't want	Know what you want	Describe what happens	Explain why outputs happen based upon specific inputs and actions	Enumerate the intended effects of actions on stakeholders	Enumerate positive and negative outcomes, both intended and unintended
1 Establish Intent	- .	- Select criteria/ sectors/ themes that must be excluded.	- Select criteria/ sectors/ themes that are desirable.	- Select criteria/ sectors/ themes that are desirable.	- Select criteria/ sectors/ themes that are desirable. stakeholders who will be affected/ targetted.	- Select criteria/ sectors/ themes that are desirable. stakeholders who will be affected/ targetted.	- Select criteria/ sectors/ themes that are desirable. stakeholders who will be affected/ targetted. stakeholders who might be also be affected.
2 Identify Objectives, Metrics & Indicators	- .	- .	- Select principles that need to be adhered to.	- Select principles that need to be adhered to. indicators that correspond with intent.	- Select principles that need to be adhered to. indicators that correspond with intent. Theory of Change/ Logic Model.	- Select principles that need to be adhered to. indicators that correspond with intent. Theory of Change/ Logic Model. stakeholders/ beneficiaries and align indicators.	- Select principles that need to be adhered to. indicators that correspond with intent. Theory of Change/ Logic Model. stakeholders/ beneficiaries and align indicators.
3 Define Targets & Select Strategies	- .	- .	- Identify benchmarks.	- Identify benchmarks. timing of measurement. targets in format that enables accurate assessment of results. required. measurement.	- Identify benchmarks. timing of measurement. targets in format that enables accurate assessment of results. required. measurement.	- Identify benchmarks. timing of measurement. targets in format that enables accurate assessment of results. required. measurement.	- Identify benchmarks. timing of measurement. targets in format that enables accurate assessment of results. required. measurement.
4 Measure, Collect & Validate Data	- .	- .	- .	- Identify measurement techniques and methodologies. self, independent expert, audited. standardised form and data structure. collection.	- Identify measurement techniques and methodologies. self, independent expert, audited. standardised form and data structure. collection. as appropriate.	- Identify measurement techniques and methodologies. self, independent expert, audited. standardised form and data structure. collection. as appropriate.	- Identify measurement techniques and methodologies. self, independent expert, audited. standardised form and data structure. collection. as appropriate.
5 Analyse & Evaluate Data	- .	- .	- .	- .	- .	- Capture atribution, displacement, deadweight, drop-off.. confidence level. assign pecuniary valuation to outcomes.	- Capture atribution, displacement, deadweight, drop-off.. confidence level. assign pecuniary valuation to outcomes. normalise, and optimise the data.
6 Report & Disclose Results	- .	- .	- .	- Prepare reports. with independent data aggregators.	- Prepare reports. with independent data aggregators.	- Prepare reports according to industry standard/ norms. with independent data aggregators.	- Prepare reports according to industry standard/ norms. with independent data aggregators.
7 Use Results to Inform Decision-Making	- .	- .	- .	- Results form part of primary information actively used by management/ executive team.	- Results form part of primary information actively used by management/ executive team.	- Results form part of primary information actively used by management/ executive team. behaviour change as a result of impact management.	- Results form part of primary information actively used by management/ executive team. behaviour change as a result of impact management.

*Stages of Common Impact Management Journey ***

3 The MiFriendly Cities Approach

The MiFriendly Cities project was conceived and written in 2017/18 well before Brexit. The authors of the project (Coventry City Council and Coventry University) put a lot of work into filling in the UIA application form, and ensuring that the three cities involved (Coventry, Birmingham and Wolverhampton) will win the project and obtain the substantial financing and support. The work package (WP) on monitoring and evaluation described many facets of the project that were going to be analysed and developed a complex structure of obtaining data, treating it and drawing out the conclusions.

The evaluation reviews both the implementation process and the impact of MiFriendly Cities:

- Coventry University (CU) are conducting **qualitative interviews** with project partner staff and a wider stakeholder group to review the process of establishing the project activities on an ongoing basis, with the aim of helping implementation.
- The evaluation of impact will be conducted by the evaluation lead partner, CU with the assistance of **30 Citizen Social Scientists (CSS) from refugee and migrant backgrounds**.
- We will conduct an impact evaluation to explore what the MiFriendly Cities programme and its multiple activities have achieved.
- We will use a **mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) approach**.
- For instance, we will conduct **quantitative surveys of employers and of residents** within Coventry, Birmingham and Wolverhampton as well running **qualitative focus groups with refugees and migrants**, and semi-structured qualitative interviews with project participants.

Methods include:

- **Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, learning journals, visual methods**.
- Partners will self-evaluate their activities with the support of CU.
- Through the recruitment of Citizen Social Scientists and ongoing collation of visual and oral data, and in line with the programme objectives to be bottom up, we will ensure there is a participatory component to the evaluation.

The authors of the project indicated that the objectives of the monitoring and evaluation plan are to assess and demonstrate the effectiveness of MiFriendly Cities (MIFC) in achieving its objectives and/or impacts on people's lives; to improve learning and decision making about project design, to know how the group operates, and implements i.e. about success factors, barriers, which approaches work/ don't work, etc.; to ensure engagement with key stakeholders; to influence government policy; to share learning with other communities and the wider movement; to empower and motivate project participants; to contribute to the evidence base about migration and integration.

Six themes were chosen to allow a deeper understanding of the whole process:

1) Citizenship/ rights
2) Communication
3) Jobs/ skills
4) Social enterprise
5) Health
6) Skills/ community

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 idea was to show how each activity matches the project objectives, outcomes, and indicators. In essence the monitoring and evaluation WP was planned so that initial data, and data collected at the end of the project, could be compared in order to see if, for example, the approach of the resident community to migrants and refugees had evolved. The methods to be used were based on far-reaching monitoring of all the actions, supported by questionnaires, in depth interviews as well as information coming from inside the

migrant and refugee communities, from people trained in different aspects related to everyday life: health, communication, DIY or the newly trained Citizen Social Scientists.

4 The Reality on the Ground

The monitoring and evaluation machine created a need for many meetings of the different WP and the collection of an enormous amount of data and evidence. This put the managing authority, Coventry City Council (CCC) into the difficult role, of collector of all these elements, which put the pressure on the different partners and made them concentrate on the data, and less on the actual activities they were doing, says S. Ouillon, from Coventry University (CU).

The implementation of the actions was a complex and rather long process due to the time needed to employ staff, the complexity of some actions, the opening up of a new domain of action for some partners and the constraints of the project itself.

The first months soon showed that there were distances between what had been planned and what the real needs of the migrants and refugees transpired to be. The second new element was the result of the employer's questionnaire, which was, in some ways the first indicator that the residents of the West Midlands area need to gain more knowledge, confidence and capacities to be able to employ migrants and refugees, especially those coming from outside the EU. The results of the questionnaire showed that the large majority of employers were wary if not worse about employing migrants and refugees.

Sinead Ouillon

Sinead Ouillon (CU) cites UN sources to underline that the most important element allowing for the integration of migrants is getting a job, in which they can have an incredible capacity to enrich the professional tissue. She adds that the employer's questionnaire shows, that:
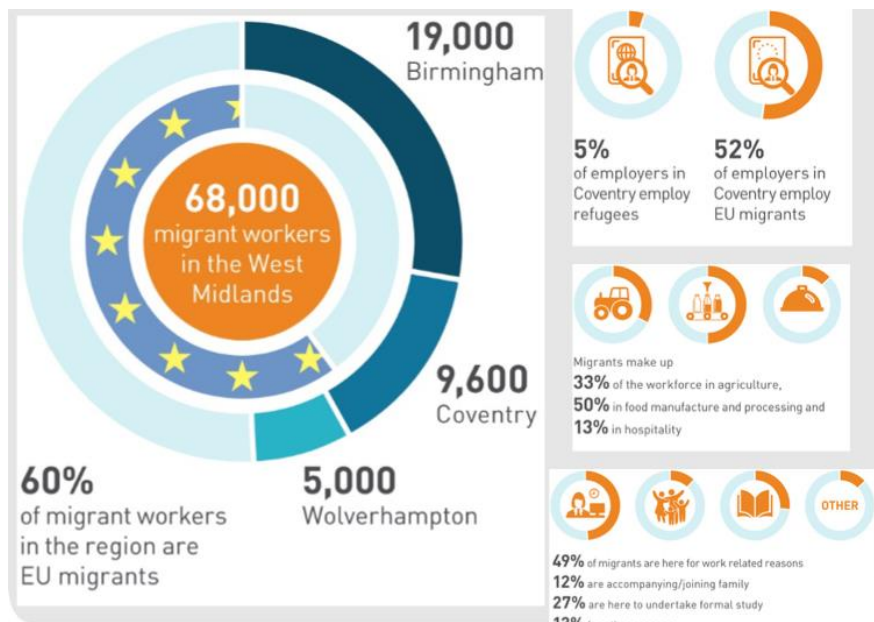

- Over 80% of employers in Coventry who responded to this survey told us they are currently experiencing vacancies that are hard to fill.
- Less than 5% of respondents currently employs refugees / former refugees.
- However, 34% reported not seeing any barriers to them employing refugees in the future.

- That said, almost a third of respondents (27%) had not considered employing refugees.
- Almost all (96.1%) of respondents reported that they lacked confidence in employing migrants (including refugees) from outside the EU as they had not received training on the validity of documents which tell them who has the right to work.
- Over half (52.2%) of respondents reported that they would like more information about who has the legal right to work.

This analysis has resulted in an increase in the initiatives to provide employers with the right information, to make them more confident about the employment procedures, by creating opportunities to meet and exchange practices.

That employment is a key to integration, and to the success of the MiFriendly Cities project was also strengthened by the work done by CU with Survation on the residents' survey (2,000 residents, received 1555 responses, 74% of respondents were UK born, and 26% were born outside the UK. In short this has shown that:
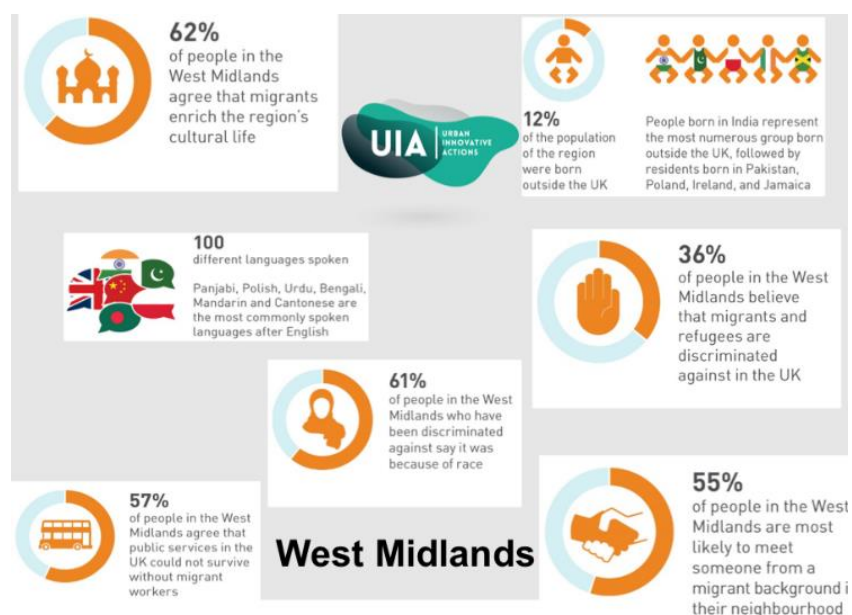
- 92% of people in the UK agree that asylum seekers should be able to work.
- 70% of people in the West Midlands would not challenge someone else's prejudice towards migrants, refugee and asylum seekers.
- 62% of people in the West Midlands agree that migrants enrich the region's cultural life.
- 57% of people agree that public services in the UK could not survive without migrant workers
- Migrants, who are mostly young, use the NHS less than the ageing native population. Furthermore, migrants are healthier, on average, than the UK born. In 2018, 26% of the foreign-born population said that they had a long-lasting health problem; compared to 41% of UK born[2]. This contravenes perceptions, particularly those portrayed in the media, about migrants being a drain on public resources.
- Of people born in the UK within the residents' survey, 41% say that less than half of their friends or people they chat with are from migrant, refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds

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[2] https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/the-health-of-migrants-in-the-uk/

However, the process of getting migrants and refugees closer to the employment market has shown that the planned actions of the project do not always correspond to the needs of the beneficiaries. An example is the very creative adaptation of the FabLab training in new technologies, during which business mentoring was to take place. This was rendered impossible due to the insufficient level of linguistic competence of the participants, which did not enable them to profit from mentoring proposed by the business sector. On the other hand, the needs of these persons in the area of their rights was much stronger. This created the need to use the competences of partner institutions in other sectors, to satisfy the needs: the Central England Law Centre gave advice to the participants, and more English language classes were made available to those participants who needed it.

This type of change process has marked the whole project. In several other activities structures from different WP's were invited to intervene. The monitoring and evaluation team observed that the planned monitoring and evaluation was not only too wide, but will not transmit to the participating partners' ways to improve the efficiency of their actions, mainly due to the fact that objectives were too global and not measurable. At the same time, the existing well-confirmed added values of the actions would not be made visible.

5 The Change Process

Ceri Hutton

"All projects are about carving out time" says Ceri Hutton (MigrationWork), basing this on conclusions from the work done by Eurocities. For the project, says Hutton, the first evaluation plan was based on the application form, which created a situation where the excessively broad data needs did not allow a vision of what was really being done in the activities.

Using the theory of change methodology and basing the work on the strategy, she looked at the impact and worked backwards to see what the changes were composed of. It became evident, says Hutton, that some impact areas had activity in them, while others not so much. Often, underlines C. Hutton, the activities are much more specific, that the planned programme outcomes. For example, the outcomes planned for the Central England Law Centre, about "understanding rights" or "understanding rights better" were much too broad to be measured. On the other hand, there is a lot of interesting material in the detailed work being done, such as the Rights Health Checks.

The planned outcomes and indicators were difficult to produce and some indicators impossible to count. In addition, the political and social contexts are changing very rapidly.

MigrationWork (MW) together with Coventry University (CU) undertook a fundamental revision of the monitoring and evaluation WP. This work was presented to the partnership in January 2019 and was positively received by the partner organisations. It has encouraged partners to furnish the right information, as the loop of monitoring and evaluation became clearer and the actions were producing first results and improvements were being made across the board.

MigrationWork proposes a new approach to the evaluation process, relying on the overriding statement that the "West Midlands becomes a better place for refugees and migrants to live and work and society benefits from their increased involvement and contribution". This overview originates from several of the fundamental documents of the project and has allowed six impacts (longer term change) of this process to be defined. They are:
1) **Employment** (Increased economic prospects through employment and social enterprise) (Focus on increasing rates of employment, skills + accreditation, quality of jobs, employer attitudes)

2) **Health** (Improved health of migrants and refugees through increased awareness and service take up) (Focus on increased awareness and service take up re screening, GP registration)
3) **Social Cohesion** (Solidarity and understanding between communities is built and there is a reduction in hostility with changed public attitudes)
4) **Active citizenship** (Migrants and refugees know and assert their rights and actively participate in local communities)
5) **Learning and innovation** (Programme generates new insights into effective methods)
6) **Sustainability** (System change: practice and public policy influenced both inside region and more widely; Ideas and learning noticed and gain traction)

The above-mentioned impacts (**in bold**) are the long-term, sustainable changes which MiFriendly Cities is trying to achieve. They are mainly based on the top-level priorities in the original application form. These six impacts listed above, form the basis for analysing and sorting the activities and their indicators / outcomes.

In addition, Coventry University has added new indicators to help in showing what each activity is achieving as the aim of the monitoring and evaluation is to allow progress and reflective change, which will improve the services rendered to the migrant and refugee populations.

For example, in the **employment theme** the following indicators have been added by CU:
* Better quality jobs (added indicator).
* Through mobile employment clinics in deprived areas of the cities, under-employed communities increase rate of engagement in training, education and employment, especially in shortage sectors (added indicator).
* Social enterprises are self-sustaining (added indicator).
* Refugee and migrant groups feel like they can have a say / influence in their communities / make a difference (added indicator).

This approach shows the real effects of, for example the mobile employment clinics, which can reach populations, which initially will never get to a job centre in the centre of a city.

The transport hiccups!

It is vital to note, that the capacity to be mobile within a city is in fact very much reduced for migrants and refugees. The question of paying for the public transport is a real challenge. The access of these populations to certain services is very limited due to lack of funds. This has influenced the planning and execution of several actions. In addition, certain professionals have covered transport costs from their own pockets as the formal reimbursement is too long, too complex, and sometimes not even planned or formalised.

Another example comes from the **Active Citizenship** theme:
* More young people/ children receive citizenship (added indicator),
* Migrants feel empowered to speak for themselves to the media and produce own content (added indicator)

These new indicators clearly show that the project has raised concern over person's rights to citizenship – many migrants and refugees, especially younger ones do not realise that not getting the right paperwork done at the right time may limit their rights: for example, will not allow them to get into further education. The second indicator underlines the need for these persons to be able to speak for themselves, to be able to explain their stories at first hand and this is not just a by-product of the

project, but a major step forward, influencing the opinions, of those who may not understand the stories behind migrants and refugees.

6 Learning from Other Cities

Professor Mike Hardy

"This is a Project which redefines expectations, responsibilities and contributions – it is a project that we are fortunate to have in our neighbourhood!" said Professor Mike Hardy (Director of Coventry University Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations) in his forward to the Mid Term evaluation of the MiFriendly Cities project.

He underlines that few subjects cause such divisions in society as does migration but that the MiFriendly Cities project is based on sharing and celebrating positives: "the enrichening of our culture, the strengthening of local skill sets and the positive contributions that are made… Through the project – says Professor Hardy – **we're seeking to redefine the way cities integrate newcomers by equipping migrants with the skills and knowledge they need to contribute to the economy and social wellbeing of the communities in which they live and finding ways for the whole city to play a part in the process**".

Changing the realities in the West Midlands constitutes a challenge, which MiFriendly Cities is addressing courageously, at a time, when the UK is leaving the European Union, when the next wave of migrants could come into existence at any time, when nervous national politicians in many countries seem to have forgotten the lessons of previous conflicts. As can be seen from the Mid Term review, prejudices and tolerance still must be shaven down to allow communities to grow together in strength. MiFriendly Cites, as says Prof. Hardy, is working every day to make communities stronger and more vibrant in the West Midlands, believing and proving that newcomers can enrich them in more ways than one.

The final impact measurements and management of the project, will serve to help decision makers integrate all these elements, allow the local actors to deliver very much needed services and perhaps what is most important, will have created a nucleus of ex-migrants, ex-asylum seekers and ex-refugees, who will have gained expert competences in health (Health Champions) in communication (Media Lab), in analysing what is happening in local communities (Citizen Social Scientists). All this will tomorrow seem "normal" as the legacy of the project will have fully entered the realities of the West Midlands communities! It is the difference between the "before" and the "after" of MiFriendly Cities which will have constituted its impact making it so much easier for a migrant, refugee or asylum seeker to lose these labels and just be a member of the local community.

Change matters. The social, economic and environmental realities which surround us are in constant movement. The city of Braga now has a director of resilience in their Human Power Hub – an incredible evolution in regard to the needs of the population and change. These evolutions put a strong question to all local, regional, national and EU authorities, as to why the most important department in any of them is not the **Department of Change**. The waves of migrants, which are also a constant element of our rich European realities, could also benefit from public institutions which will manage and give resources and time to **impact management**, allowing for a real appreciation of the added value of these newcomers. This in turn should allow them to feel, that **the common energy** which makes teams work (and requires a new form of management), like the MiFriendly Cities team, is vital to be able to make progress and keep up with the inevitable changes.

7 The Midterm Review of MiFriendly Cities

During the MiFriendly Cities Interim Event, a panel was held of migration experts from across Europe. They shared knowledge on challenges and potential opportunities.

The midterm analysis of the project was prepared for mid-November 2019 and was presented at the Global Peace Forum.

The undeniable successes of MiFriendly Cities, through the eyes of the report's author, Sinead Ouillon, presents a common vision of the project, allowing all the participating partners, as well as outside third parties to gain a vision of what work has been done. Many of the conclusions were presented by the participants of the project, while S. Ouillon went into the detailed analysis of the results. These are resumed in the following table:

However, in her conclusions Ouillon underlined that:

- Less than 5% of respondents of a survey of employers currently employs refugees/former refugees.
- 70% of people in the West Midlands would not challenge someone else's prejudice towards migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Social enterprises contribute £24 billion to the UK economy and employ 800,000 people.

- However, the sector has limited involvement from migrants and refugees.
- Lack of access to credit and funding alongside religious, gender and language barriers all contribute to the issue.
- Thus, opportunities for potentially high impact and community-focused enterprises and entrepreneurs are lost.

In terms of the processes of monitoring and evaluating, the **main lessons learnt** are:
- Initial plans on monitoring and evaluation should preview that they should/could be adapted to the needs of the actual actions put into place
- It is vital to identify what information about impact is lacking, in order to be able to concentrate on those aspects
- Attempts to evaluate everything are potentially dangerous to the whole strategy, as this is very difficult to do and can prove to be very costly
- Knowledge about impact is of great importance to the persons managing the actions, as it allows improvements, changes and greater efficiency
- Information about impact gives a lot of stimulation to the personnel doing the actions as they can observe the results of the undertaken initiatives
- Impact management should result in a direct approach to questions of legacy. In other words, what the project can leave behind in a sustainable way.

8   Towards Legacy

Over 140 people attended the MiFriendly Cities Interim Event

Over the remaining months of the project, MiFriendly Cities will be focusing on evaluating its impact and assessing how it can make activities that are making a difference sustainable in the region.

These activities will help create a legacy that MiFriendly Cites can leave behind – a more inclusive West Midlands with opportunities available to all.