INTEGRATING MIGRANT CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES - THE MALTESE CONTEXT

Mary Anne Gauci
Foundation for Social Welfare Services Malta
October 2017
Malta’s/National Foundation for Social Welfare Services’ (FSWS) efforts towards Integration-past and present

- FSWS’s Agency, Appogg’s Community Services (Qawra, Valletta, B’kara 2009, Msida 2012):
  Social Workers and Community Workers in the community, support migrants and jointly run projects bringing migrants and local citizens together to enhance integration.
  Efforts so far have been *ad hoc*.
- Equal Project 2004-2006:
  ‘Integration of Asylum Seekers into Maltese Society’.
- Draft Integration Policy 2015 (Malta):
  to be implemented in December, 2017.
National Statistics

SOURCE: NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE 2017

- EU Total
- Males
- Females
- Column2
- Non EU Total
- Males2
- Females2
Arrivals from Italy
Relocations from Italy and Greece

Application for Asylum

Acceptance for accommodation at the Initial Reception Centre (IRC)

AWAS social workers - Initial and Vulnerability assessment

Referral to mainstream services as required

Assess for trauma Compulsory Medical Test

They spend up to a year in an Open Centre before moving into the community

Once cleared, they are moved to an Open Centre
Statistics-foreign population by town of Appogg Agency’s Community Services

Foreign population by selected towns: As at end 2016
Source: National Statistics Office, Malta

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valletta</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottonera</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birkirkara</td>
<td>918</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Msida</td>
<td>1,913</td>
<td>1,029</td>
<td>884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Paul’s Bay</td>
<td>5,160</td>
<td>2,841</td>
<td>2,319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information Session - Qawra
Community services’ projects contributing to Integration

Qawra (St Paul’s Bay) Community service:

- **Information Sessions**: Joint project with NGOs

- **Summer and Winter projects for children**: Social skills/recreational activities with educational theme, including homework support.

- **Project “Pass Pass”, for mothers and fathers (immigrants and local parents) with children 0-3yrs**: Professionals deliver talks on various themes.

- **Mapping exercise**: Workers meeting refugees/immigrants, getting to know their needs.

- **Social work service**: Support immigrant individuals and families with problems-to overcome barriers to integration.
Progett Kuluri
Community Services’ projects contributing to Integration continued...

**B’Kara/Msida Community Service :**

- **Migrants project 2015-2016:**
  - Create awareness/understanding of cultural diversity between different nationalities through a Forum. Questionnaire distributed- 3 main areas of concern.

- **Intercultural event 2017:**
  - Focus-integration within the community. NGOs and representatives from different communities participated through traditional music and food displays.
Community Services’ projects contributing to Integration continued..


- Children from different nationalities helped by trained volunteers with their homework. Immigrant children involved with local children through this activity.

  Celebrating Diversity Family Day (2018):

  Collaboration with local Primary School. Diversity will be celebrated through traditional games/ story telling from different cultures. Children and parents will be involved.

  Regular mapping exercise
Malta’s Integration Policy

- Integration Unit set up-Human Rights and Integration Directorate, within Ministry of Equality and European Affairs.
- Unit will receive ‘Integration requests’ from Third Country Nationals (TCN’s).
- Courses offered-information sessions on services; language, Maltese (compulsory) and English, trade skills, and culture. Several hours weekly-60 hour course. Certificates awarded on completion.
- TCN’s will be allocated a caseworker to monitor progress.
- Once approved by Cabinet in December, 2017, the service will be delivered from January, 2018.
- Detailed Action Plan will be implemented by 2020-will include awareness raising from early school years to embrace diversity.
- National Strategy will be adopted by all entities-to give messages of zero tolerance to racial discrimination and ‘everyone belongs’.
Case Study - Hannah and her family
Lessons learnt

- Undiagnosed psychological and/or medical conditions are barriers.
- Lack of knowledge of host country’s language is barrier.
- Not ALL professionals knowledgeable about migrant issues;
- Lack of access to Interpreters and Cultural mediators—enormous barrier to communication, and in turn to integration.
- Isolation is a barrier to integration.
- Financial difficulties/poverty—barriers.
- Difficulties in accessing, and equal access to decent accommodation, employment, child care, health and other mainstream services are a barrier to integration.
- Feedback from migrants—lack of information regarding services and rights; and certain personnel not helpful in disseminating this information.
Overcoming barriers

- Continuous awareness raising campaigns - address racism. Media on board.

- Easily accessible information on main services, in many languages. Train personnel disseminating information.

- FSWS - created intensive number of training opportunities for staff on Migrant issues, including conferences with foreign speakers. Workers more sensitized.

- Regular activities between local nationals and immigrants exposing diversity - breaking down ignorance/fear - major barriers to integration.

- Easier access to regularized employment, child care, educational courses, medical care, and legal services, among others.

- Require eligibility to social security in the interim of gaining employment, or if can’t gain work or retain it due to disability/injury issues.

- Political will/policies on family re-unification.

- Integrated services/Integrated National Data-base (guide policy)
Thank You for your Attention