



Embrace

Embrace Project

Press-release n° 2

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The Embrace project is 1 year old!

The Embrace Project officially started in January 2022. Over the first 5 months, the project partners engaged in different activities, **aimed at gathering insights on newcomers' political participation through focus groups and desk research.**

In July, all 10 organizations met in person for the first time. The meeting was hosted by Second Tree in the beautiful city of Ioannina. Each partner had a chance to explain its activities to be carried out in the framework of the project, but also to address the strengths, the opportunities and the critical aspects that such an ambitious project brings with it. The second part of the week saw the participation of the local trainers in charge of training, from next September on, the newcomers and the local decision-makers who will cooperate to design new integration policies. The training of the trainers was focused on unpacking the different activities embodied in the training models, using a participatory approach as well as taking into account the territorial differences.

In order to start engaging with policymakers, we organized at least one **Circles of Conversation** per implementation territory. These moments aimed to create trusting relationships between the partners and the policymakers involved in the project, to entrench their willingness to collaborate in this initiative.

From September on, Embrace project got to its heart with the **implementation of the training.**

The training was delivered by the selected local trainers – two per each implementing territories – and were based on Second Tree's Refugees are People Policy and Training Pathway. Newcomers were trained to activate their engagement in the socio-political life of their new community and to become strong interlocutors in the face of institutions that are often unprepared and unwilling to listen. Decision-makers were trained to learn best practices in working with newcomers in an honest, consistent, and caring manner and to reflect on their preconceptions. The training pathway consisted of a four-workshop cycle, held approximately once a week.

Since October 2022, the **Emerging Leaders Training Program**, developed and held by our French partner Place Network, has officially started. The training is a learning journey to develop the vision of newcomers on how they want to contribute to strategic networks and leading organizations. They have been learning to apply best practices in the public leadership sector in practical, real-world situations. The Emerging Leaders program foresees also a study visit in Paris, to be held in June 2023, and the chance, for the participants, to join an internship in a public entity, located where they live.

From November to the end of 2023, we organized **Listening Sessions** to gather inputs and recommendations from newcomers. The findings and the process will be systematized in the **Toolkit for Active Migrant Participation**, which contains the European Booklet.

Listening sessions are focus groups organized with different groups of newcomers with the goal of accessing their experience and recommendations regarding the procedures of hosting and integration in their new country. The methodology applied to this activity is designed by our Portuguese partner ComParte.