

YOUMIG - Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation
in order to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration
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WP5 Improved Local Services

Output 5.3 Local pilots for better services & inventory

MUNICIPALITY: BURGAS

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Introduction

In the YOUMIG project: Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration in the Danube region; 19 partners from 8 countries are working together to support the local governments of Maribor (Slovenia), Graz (Austria), Kanjiža (Serbia), the borough of Rača, Bratislava (Slovakia), Szeged (Hungary), Sfântu Gheorghe (Romania), and Burgas (Bulgaria), in exploiting the developmental potential of youth migration, leading to a better-governed and more competitive Danube region.

The YOUMIG project is aiming to boost their institutional capacities to enhance the scarce local evidence on youth migration, contributing to improved policymaking with a focus on human capital. Statistical offices & academic organisations are teaming up with local governments in a complex and tailored transnational cooperation to create local developmental strategies based on improved impact indicators of youth migration. They are also working together to introduce transnationally-tested tools to manage local challenges.

To address the challenges, obstacles, and benefits of youth migration in sending/receiving communities, a [Local Status Quo Analysis](#) (LSQA)¹ has been prepared, providing an overview of trends in youth migration and of related social phenomena, respectively. The study was based on policy-oriented research. The first objective was to synthesise the findings of the YOUMIG research activities with regard to youth migration. In this respect, the municipalities were characterised and typified according to the migration trends they experienced. The second objective was to understand the effects of youth migration, and to identify policy challenges related to it. Through applied research, a screening of responses provided by local authorities to challenges related to in- and out-migration of young people was performed. A related goal was to identify management and capacity gaps in institutional mechanisms of local authorities, with the aim of addressing youth migration and related phenomena.

To support the development of services on a local level that will assist local governments in coping with the inward, outward, and return migration of young people, a [European and global good practice collection](#) of relevant services and actions linked to youth migration² was prepared. This was the first step towards tailor-made solutions aimed at improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration at the local level. Based on the challenges and needs revealed in the LSQA and on collected good practices, the local partners prepared tailor-made solutions that assisted them in coping with immigrants, emigrants or returning youth migrants on the local level.

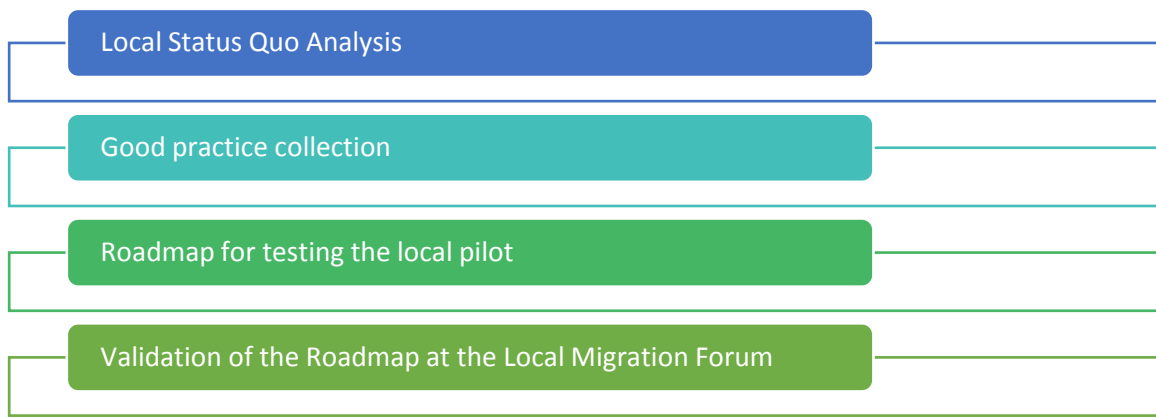
Reflecting on the local challenges and administrative capacity gaps identified and measured in the YOUMIG project, each local partner elaborated a roadmap, adapting existing practices and/or designing new ones. Different aspects were addressed, including challenges such as brain drain and care drain in the sending areas, immigrants' deskilling ("brain waste"), and difficulties accessing public services in the receiving areas. Subsequently, local pilot actions were designed and implemented in the

¹Local Status Quo Analysis can be obtained at:<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/youmig/outputs>

²The YOUMIG Good Practice Collection can be found here: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/youmig/outputs>

identified topics. In the case of already existing practices, actions were adapted to local context. The pilot actions were accompanied by local Migration Forums, which involve relevant stakeholders linked to the pilot area receiving immediate feedback and general local supervision. In addition, partners peer reviewed each other’s pilot actions as part of a study visit to increase knowledge sharing linked to the piloting, and in order to assess its transferability. The pilots were evaluated based on a common methodology.

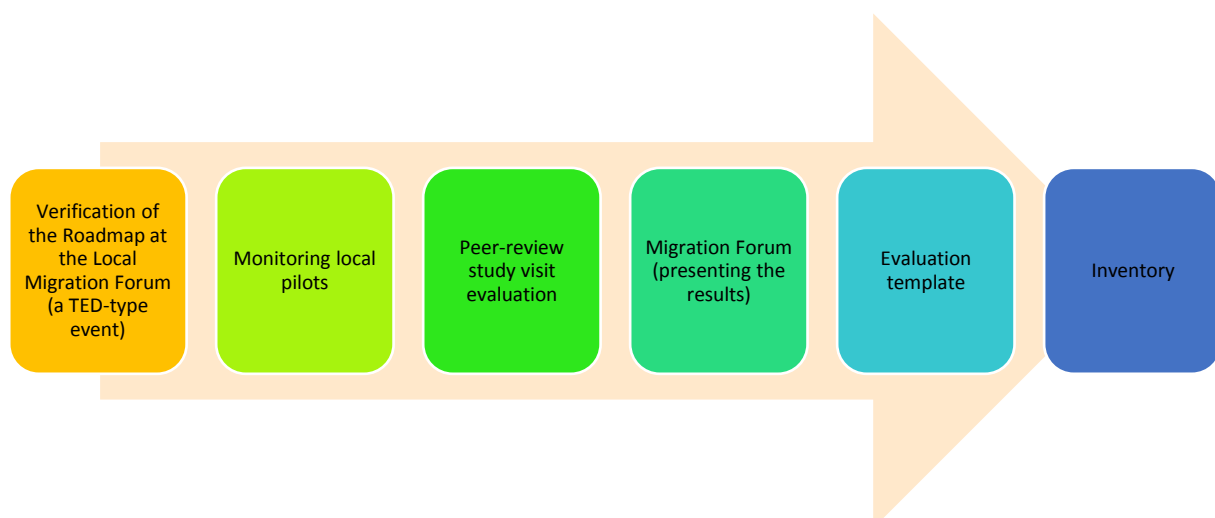
Fig. 1: Preparation of the local pilot



The local pilot’s testing phase incorporated several activities: implementation - accompanied by the monitoring-activities and presentation of the results to all 19 partners, as well as peer-review study visits in which local partners not only visited each other, but also capitalised on the lessons learned during the pilot project’s implementation.

In the figure below, the entire process of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the local pilots is documented.

Fig. 2: Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the local pilots



With each of the local partners basing their pilot actions on field research and LSQA, the individual action plans are naturally distinct.

Table 1: Overview of YOUMIG pilot activity by local partners

Local partner	Name of pilot activity	Brief description of the pilot activity
Graz	M-GIST-HUB Engaging migrant girls from the Danube region in natural science and technology	<p>The city of Graz is currently witnessing a trend: its youth lack interest in obtaining an education in natural science and technology, which is especially typical of young women with a migration background. It has been found that in many cases there is little awareness of which skill sets are required or what job opportunities exist in obtaining such an education.</p> <p>The M-GIST-HUB is therefore concerned primarily with raising awareness among the target group, and above all, including family members of the target group, since young people rarely make such important decisions independently; therefore the influence of family members(who may also lack awareness of educational possibilities), is also one of the decisive factors.</p> <p>Ultimately, raising awareness of the opportunities available to the target group has an impact on their integration into society.</p>
Kanjiža	Stay, work, be happy!	<p>The Municipality of Kanjiža has opened a co-working space, providing its youth with the opportunity to gain business and language competences to further their opportunities in the Serbian labour market, since overall cooperation with the established national structures was inadequate for the specific situation of the municipality.</p> <p>Through the municipality-owned centre, the target group of young potential emigrants has been offered advice and support, thereby influencing their decision to migrate abroad or not.</p> <p>By means of this activity, the local partner is tackling the issue of youth emigration from the municipality to neighbouring Hungary, especially since the majority of the population is part of the Hungarian minority and has better language competencies in Hungarian than in the national language (Serbian).</p>

Local partner	Name of pilot activity	Brief description of the pilot activity
Maribor	CWMB YOUMIG (Co-Working Maribor)	<p>Maribor is a city facing both immigration and emigration. Therefore, the CWMB YOUMIG programme is targeting young people with a migration background or intention to migrate, as well as offering a supportive environment for return migrants.</p> <p>The co-working centre is offering support for young people on their path to self-employment, by offering free desk sharing in a stimulating environment with access to key support organizations within the city (including national SPOT points, a science park, and consultations available at the regional development agency), as well as linguistic support in the case of language barriers for migrants.</p> <p>By offering such support, CWMB YOUMIG provides a hub, staying in touch with its members even in the event of their emigration from the city. It also forms a supportive network for immigrants integrating into society through self-employment.</p> <p>During the pilot period, CWMB attracted 3 immigrants and 12 potential emigrants.</p>
Szeged	Sensitization and multicultural training (SAMU)	<p>The Municipality of Szeged identified an opportunity to facilitate the social integration of young migrants with nursery-school children (ages 3-6), through a programme provided by public pre-school childcare providers.</p> <p>Trainings on sensitisation and multiculturalism were conducted among public pre-school childcare providers and with municipal staff in order to break down the potential communication barriers between public service providers and immigrants.</p> <p>The pilot activities contributed positively to public service providers (municipality and nursery school), above all, by raising staff competencies in dealing with the issues of immigrants (mostly young parents) who do not share the same cultural background and command of the language as their native peers.</p> <p>The trainings proved successful, and provided staff with tools that could also be applied outside their immediate field of work.</p>

2. Local pilot identity card: VIRTUAL BUSINESS INCUBATOR, Burgas Municipality

Title	VIRTUAL BUSINESS INCUBATOR for supporting entrepreneurship among return migrants and immigrants
Starting Date	01 June 2018
Duration	01 June 2018 – 31 March 2019
Local pilot holder	Burgas Municipality, business incubator, Burgas
Number of municipal staff involved in the implementation of the local pilot	2-4 municipal staff, 2 persons from the Incubator
Target Group	Return migrants, potential emigrants, young people with secondary education, the inactive, the unemployed, immigrants
Stakeholders (list)	Local businesses, NGOs, schools, the local authority
Costs (as per AF)	€4,000
Transferred Good Practice (ref. to the Roadmap)	Similar to the Gothenburg entrepreneurial hub, but presenting practice outside of the collection due to the character of Burgas as a migrant-sending city

3. Summary of the local pilot

The pilot action provides support for entrepreneurs starting a business, in the form of online self-learning resources, video lessons (video tutorials), inspirational talks with successful professionals, online consultations, lessons and presentations.

The local pilot of Burgas is a virtual space, containing a library of English e-books (freely available) on entrepreneurship: <http://www.business-burgas.com/виртуален-инкубатор/виртуална-библиотека/>

Successful professionals are available on a voluntary basis to provide mentoring for young people looking to start their own businesses. Mentors either have a migratory background or have worked in an international environment, and have their own successful business or start-up in Bulgaria – more specifically, in Burgas. They are ready to give advice for any young person who is hesitating over starting a business in Burgas or considering leaving the town and country. A video featuring a discussion on personal development opportunities in Burgas is uploaded on the virtual incubator – the video contains inspirational talks with successful professionals in the fields of education, business and banking.

4. Challenges addressed in the local pilot

Major local challenges and opportunities related to youth migration, identified by the Local Status Quo Analysis (Activity 3.2) and addressed in the local pilot

According to the findings of the Status Quo Analysis for Burgas, there is a constant demand for both qualified and unqualified workers in the local economy. However, incomes are rather low, which has a demotivating effect on young people, resulting in their emigration. As elsewhere in Bulgaria, the population of Burgas Municipality is aging due to the decline in birth rates and emigration to the capital city and abroad.

Since 2013, when a positive change in the population was reported: +229 due to internal and international immigration, there has been a constant trend of steady population decline: -731 in 2014; -1420 in 2015; and -282 in 2016.

In terms of positive change, interviewed young people place their hope in the economy rather than in the local government: only accelerated economic growth and higher incomes might reverse the trend and encourage Bulgarian emigrants to return.

The Local Status Quo Analysis produced enough evidence to suggest a course of action for Burgas municipality in terms of controlling the emigration of educated young people and re-attracting those who have already left. Based on the analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn on the situation in the city of Burgas:

- An ageing population
- Brain drain
- Chronic lack of high-qualified specialists for the local economy
- Lack of entrepreneurship
- Insufficient opportunities for higher education in the town

Keeping in mind the serious gap between the level of prices and wages in the city – resulting in the continuous closure of shops, and emigration to the capital and abroad – the best opportunity for economic development of Burgas is the creation of a favourable environment for entrepreneurship, including the support of family businesses and self-employment.

Interrelated policies relevant to this challenging task are:

1. Developing **preventive policies**: engaging young return migrants and encouraging them to share their experiences with potential young emigrants. The young returnees can respond to potential emigrants' questions, thereby helping them to make informed choices regarding such an important life decision.

2. A clear demand for **training in entrepreneurship and the introduction of career guidance classes in schools** emerged from the meeting with local stakeholders. In the discussions that followed, a lack of entrepreneurial spirit among youth was confirmed: in general, young people prefer to be employed and exchange their high-level qualifications and skills for good remuneration and career opportunities, rather than take the initiative in starting their own business.

This observation led to the planning and designing of **the pilot action: the Virtual Business Incubator for supporting entrepreneurship among young returning migrants and immigrants**. The action is intended to attract young migrants to the city and assist them with the identified local challenges.

5. LogFrame of the local pilot

PILOT SUMMARY	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	RISKS / ASSUMPTIONS
OBJECTIVE	Contributing to the socio-economic development of the city by supporting entrepreneurship and self-employment among young return migrants	Number of young migrants with improved entrepreneurial skills Current: 0 Target: 50	Developed local small start-ups and businesses that can contribute to the development of the local economy
AIM	Developing measures that support the self-employment of young migrants – including start-ups (focusing on return migrants)	Number of young people visiting the virtual pilot location Current: 0 Target: 50 (Target set for the initial implementation period.)	
RESULTS	Functioning pilot service	Number of individual consultations provided Current: 0 Target: 10	Potential risk is the limited number of potential mentors
ACTIVITIES	1. Pilot action preparation, 2. Implementation, 3. Evaluation.	Developed pilot action virtual service Current: 0 Target: 1	Sustainable pilot service that continues to exist beyond the project's end
			Pre-conditions: motivated staff and wide publicity for the provided services

The Logical Framework Approach was used for the preparation and validation of the pilot activities within the Local Migration Forum with the involvement of the stakeholders.

6. Indicators, linked to the local pilot

Monitoring: indicators planned and achieved within the pilot project are presented in the table below.

	Planned (March-April 2018)	Achieved (March 2019)
Indicator 1	Number of young people using the services	The number of visits on the virtual incubator site reached 288
Definition	Number of young people using the virtual pilot services	
Baseline	0	
Target	50	
Data collection (by whom and how)	Business Incubator – Burgas, via a web counter on the admin profile	
	Planned (March-April 2018)	
Indicator 2	Young people consulted	The number of young people who used the service in March: 24 people
Definition	Young people who benefited from the consultations and events with the mentors	
Baseline	0	
Target	10	
Data collection (by whom and how)	Business Incubator – Burgas, and Burgas Municipality	

7. Planned and implemented activities

The pilot action is planned to develop over time, requiring few resources to function and to be updated. It has the potential for the development of additional services, and will be supported by the mentors and staff of the Business Incubator – Burgas, and the municipal staff.

The virtual library contains books in pdf format (free to download) on topics such as developing entrepreneurial skills, starting a business, making a business plan – there are 32 books in total.

An inspirational discussion (in video format) is published on the virtual incubator: in the video, successful professionals with a migration background discuss the potential for personal development and careers among young people in Bulgaria and, in particular, in Burgas.

Three persons, who have established their own business, give helpful advice (on a voluntary basis) for young people who need support in developing their entrepreneurial ideas.

The library has been operating since October 2018, receiving a number of visits in this period. An initial idea that allowed the downloading of content only after registration – in order to count the number of downloads – was abandoned; since practice showed that a request for registration had the effect of putting off potential users.

As expected, finding the mentors was a more difficult part of the pilot since young professionals were being asked to take part in the activities on a voluntary basis. Finally, the three selected mentors embraced the idea of helping young people find their respective professional paths. The mentors have

been available to respond to young person's queries in this regard since January 2019. However, no requests to meet the mentors have been made (at least, within the first three months of the pilot being in operation). This might be explained by the fact that people in Burgas prefer to visit a pre-organised thematic event of their interest than to initiate one. Therefore, a different approach was taken, and a joint meeting with young people and a debate was organised on 8 March 2019.

The following events were carried out within the pilot action implementation process:

21-22 February 2018 – TED with local stakeholders for designing the pilot action's content

27 June 2018 – Joint forum and presentation of the project pilot action in the business incubator – Burgas, with the participation of representatives of the Ministry of Interior, the local administration, and the Balkan Institute for Labour and Social Policy.

27 September 2018 – Forum to discuss the pilot action

29 October 2018 – Launch of the pilot action

02 January 2019 – Availability of mentors

08 March 2019 – Meeting and debate with mentors and young people

The next meeting is planned for July 2019, when young emigrants return to the city.

8. Evaluation of the local pilot

8.1. Problems and needs (Relevance)

Please state your opinion: were the selected (or invented) good practices that you transferred adequate for the specific needs of the youth I/E/R in your local community and how?

The most suitable practice for Burgas was identified as the Gothenburg entrepreneurial hub – only slightly modified: assisting young entrepreneurs who lack confidence, skills or knowledge in starting a business. From the pilot action's outset, there have been numerous hits on the virtual library web page, in fact, 288 visits, meaning that the target has been reached. Within the implementation process, better ties and cooperation among stakeholders were established: key actors in the areas of education, business, NGOs working with youth, and the local administration discussed possible measures to improve youth migration policies. There was broad consensus that facilitating communication among local stakeholders is crucial for the planning of improved and adequate policies.

8.2. Achievement of purpose (Effectiveness)

Please assess the effectiveness of the output level indicators. Were targets reached in this regard? (see the table of indicators in the Monitoring report as a reference point)

The virtual business incubator aimed to achieve two indicators:

1. **Number of young people using the virtual pilot services (target value 50)**
2. **Number of young people consulted (target value 10)**

Both indicators were reached – the virtual library page has been visited 288 times since its launch; and 21 young people participated in the organised meeting, which consisted of a discussion on entrepreneurship and the potential for career development in Burgas and abroad.

Please rate the usefulness of the second local event and the migration forum for implementing the local pilot.

Both events proved the necessity of the pilot action as well as the need for communication and cooperation among local stakeholders to solve local issues. Key actors expressed their willingness to participate in the planning of any future actions and to contribute to the policy planning process by taking part in discussions and consultations.

How did the peer-review study visits influence the implementation of the local pilot?

The peer-review study visit was quite useful owing to the similar profiles of Burgas and Sfântu Gheorghe, especially the best practice exchange with the business incubator in Sfântu Gheorghe, although this did not affect the pilot action's implementation in Burgas.

How would you rate the involvement of the stakeholders?

All invited stakeholders were pro-active and highly engaged in the process of planning the pilot action from the beginning. The representatives of local businesses, education establishments and NGOs took part in the design of the pilot action – and the content and activities of the pilot are the result of the joint efforts of these actors. Overall, we learned that stakeholder engagement can be useful when organised in an appropriate way.

How well was the local pilot accepted by decision makers (e.g., the Mayor) in the municipality?

The municipality management accept the local pilot action as an additional local authority plan whose intention is to attract young people to the town and improve the living conditions of Burgas. The experience of the local pilot will be incorporated into the city's youth strategy.

What were the challenging factors in the implementation of the local pilot?

Initially, our expectations were for low with regard to stakeholder engagement due to previous negative experiences, however, they need not have been. A possible factor that determined eventual successful stakeholder engagement was the employment of a renowned national level expert in the process.

8.3. Sound management and value for money (Efficiency)

Please describe the efficiency of the local pilot regarding costs, staff engagement and time consumption. Were the results/objectives achieved within time and budget constraints?

In view of the small budget, the pilot action was planned and implemented to be cost effective and sustainable: low-cost measures with a large impact potential were sought and achieved in the implemented pilot action.

8.4. Achievement of wider effects (Impact)

Please describe the impacts of the local pilots on the young I/E/R in your local community. What difference would it have made if the local pilot had not been implemented?

The local pilot will not have an immediate effect, its real impact will be possible to measure in a couple of years. For now, the pilot action has led to a greater awareness for young people who use the services, in terms of the opportunities provided by their home town in comparison with other municipalities abroad. In the implementation process we discovered some weak spots in the education system, e.g. the lack of career guidance provision for young people, and the absence of training for budding entrepreneurs. A discussion was initiated regarding the introduction of such subjects into the curriculum.

8.5. Likely continuation of the achieved results (Sustainability)

Is there a need to expand or modify the pilot activities and to incorporate them within the long-standing provision of services at the local level?

The pilot action was designed from the outset to be a service that would be provided beyond the project's end: updating the library requires minimum effort, and the mentors were chosen (in part) based on their ability to provide assistance on a voluntary basis. Organising events with the mentors and updating the library are activities that align with the responsibilities of the Business Incubator staff.

8.6. The pilot's strengths/organisation

Please list the strengths of the local pilot's implementation (e.g., in terms of staff commitment, stakeholder participation, the support of the Mayor's Office, etc.)

The engagement of stakeholders and their participation in the planned activities guaranteed the success of the pilot. On the other hand, the local authority has always made clear its readiness to attract young people to the city and support any initiatives with the potential to do so.

8.7. Being proud of...

What are you especially proud of concerning the implementation of the local pilot?

The joint pilot planning and design process;

The stakeholders' engagement in the pilot and their pro-activeness;

The willingness of the mentors to take part in the pilot action.

8.8. Conclusions & recommendations

Summary of the conclusions and lessons learned during the local pilot's implementation.

We learnt a lot from the pilot action planning process, including:

1. The success of any strategic action depends on wide stakeholder engagement and the combined expertise of various stakeholders,
2. Providing a space for the interaction of stakeholders and engaging a renowned expert in the pilot can be a recipe for success,
3. A mentor should be a person who is successful in her/his field, but also open to new ideas and possessing a willingness to help.

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