



Vitality Interventions for Migrants

vitalityintervention.eu

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Who is VIM?

VIM stands for Vitality Interventions for Migrants and is a 24-month project that aims to promote information on a healthy lifestyle among migrants and increase their confidence in using the health system of the receiving country. By this, the project aims to increase the European integration of migrants. Staying in good health, adopting healthy life styles and being informed about the health system of the host country as well as having confidence to make use of it are pre-requisites for successful integration of refugees and newly arrived migrants into their European host societies.

Final Conference – Health Literacy as a key to integration



This was the motto of the final conference hosted by our Greek partner KMOP on 10th of October, 2019.

More than 50 people from different countries and contexts took part in the conference. Their background ranged from health professionals and trainers to health project developers.

Apart from presenting the main outcomes and lessons learnt in terms of implementing the easy-to use activities and information units for health promotion in our training offers, there was room for discussions, exchanges, workshops, and networking, so that all participants could become part of the conference processes.

The question of whether health literacy is a key to integration has been repeatedly addressed and, not least, discussed in a panel discussion. This question was also a recurring theme in the workshops.

There was general agreement that health is essential for successful access to care and use of services, self-care of health conditions, and maintenance of health and wellness. Health literacy is fundamental to healthcare that requires individuals to have a more active role in decisions and management. In this respect, VIM materials can contribute to informing migrants and refugees about a healthy lifestyle, in general, and about the health system of the country they live in so that they can benefit from it. They can also learn to communicate more effectively with health system representatives and understand that the perception of what health/illness means is culturally determined.

Lessons learnt in the piloting phase



In the context of the VIM project, all partners tested the VIM training offer consisting of small activities on health topics – these are interactive and involve migrants and refugees in all kind of playful, discovery oriented and holistic activities to enhance their health literacy.

More specifically, workshops with professionals working with migrants and refugees were organised in all countries, in order to present the training activities and explain to the educators the methodology, relevance and scope of the activities. The participants of these workshops in turn piloted a variety of activities in their respective

classes with migrants and refugees. Each partner then collected the feedback from their pilot tests in terms of main findings, obstacles, challenges, and lessons learned.

All in all, 55 educators and 500 migrants and refugees were involved in the pilots in the partner countries. The feedback of educators was very positive and has shown that:

- ♥ The activities are relevant and practical. They can be used flexibly and are easily adaptable to different language levels.
- ♥ The activities can also enhance language skills and can be implemented in language courses to train health related terms and vocabulary.
- ♥ The impact of the activities can be increased through their adaptability to the relevant context.
- ♥ The activities can be used by various organisations and individuals for different purposes and contribute to making the integration of migrants and refugees in Europe easier and their way of living better.
- ♥ The materials cover a wide range of health topics, so that educators can choose those topics that fit best to their context and target groups – not all topics are relevant for all groups of learners.
- ♥ The activities provide information on the health system that can be very relevant for newcomers that have arrived in the host country rather recently.
- ♥ The overall broad categories of the material give good inspiration for the teaching.

The feedback from the learners was also positive and can be summarised as follows:

- ♥ The learners showed interest for the topics presented in the units.
- ♥ The learners got new knowledge with regard to health issues.
- ♥ The learners extended their vocabulary.
- ♥ The learners gained insight in the national health system and in society in general.
- ♥ The quizzes gave the opportunity for a good laugh.
- ♥ The material raised awareness of health issues. Some of the learners started actually to reflect on health issues – and seemed to change attitudes. This might indicate that they will change things in their life – But that doesn't happen overnight. The VIM material can be one element, among others, that can induce behavioural change in relation to health.
- ♥ Some “silent” learners started to speak.
- ♥ Thinking about a healthy lifestyle was not one of the main priorities in many of the pilot settings, but some of the activities made the learners reflect about their way of living and the connection of the influence of mental and physical health on their employability.

The learning activities are available on the VIM Hub: <https://vitalityintervention.eu>.

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Project Partners



Coordinator
BUPNET GmbH,
Göttingen, Germany

www.bupnet.de



die Berater
Vienna, Austria

www.dieberater.com



CESIE
Palermo, Italy

www.cesie.org



KMOP
Athens, Greece

www.kmop.eu



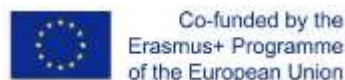
Magenta
Gijón, Asturias, Spain

www.magentaconsultoria.com



SOSU Østjylland
Aarhus, Denmark

www.sosuoj.dk



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Website

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