



urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

## GREEN PAPER

### **Migrant Women Integration Initiatives:**

### **The Case of Urban Agricultural Labs (UALs) within Municipalities**



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### **URBAGRI4WOMEN**

Innovative practices and joint urban initiatives

To foster the integration of migrant women in the receiving society  
within urban agriculture practices



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The Case of Urban Agricultural Labs (UALs) within Municipalities**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>1. Introduction to the Present Green Paper</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1. About this Green Paper.....	3
1.2. About the Public Consultation .....	4
1.3. Key Questions/ Areas of Contribution .....	5
<b>2. Migrant Women Integration Initiatives</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2.1. Migrant Women Integration Initiatives in the EU.....	7
2.2. About the Project <i>Urbagri4women</i> .....	7
2.2.1. The Consortium.....	8
2.2.2. Project Philosophy .....	9
2.2.3. Project Aims and Objectives .....	9
2.2.4. Outputs and Deliverables.....	9
<b>3. The Case of Urban Agricultural Labs as a Good Practice in Women Migration Integration</b> .....	<b>11</b>
3.1. Urban Agricultural Labs in the Context of <i>Urbagri4women</i> .....	11
3.2. Types of Urban Agricultural Labs Implemented .....	11
3.3. Strengths .....	11
3.4. Weaknesses and Barriers .....	13
3.5. Opportunities .....	14
3.6. Threats .....	16
<b>4. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>19</b>



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[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

## 1. Introduction to the Present Green Paper

### 1.1. About this Green Paper

This Green Paper is a policy paper written for the purposes of *deliverable 4.2* of the AMIF funded project *Urbagri4women* [Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098] that aims to enhance women migration integration through urban agricultural practices on an EU level. The present Green Paper forms a report of proposals on a municipality level on urban agricultural practices as an innovative means to support women migration integration in the host/ receiving societies based on a SWOT Analysis conducted by all *Urbagri4women* partner countries, where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were stated in an attempt to critically review the criticalities, the barriers and the potentials of the Urban Agricultural Labs (UALs) and the project in general.

Between September 2018 and October 2018, Urbagri4women Consortium releases this Green Paper with the intention to stimulate debate and launch a process of consultation on an EU level, within municipalities and governments. The Green Paper consultation is open to the public online and all interested parties (e.g., migration integration stakeholders, associations and bodies, trainers and social workers; adult educators; urban agriculture stakeholders; environmental stakeholders; etc.) are invited to contribute with views and information, as well as provide feedback and share their comments on the policies and processes. With this public consultation the Urbagri4women consortium aims at an evidence-based assessment of local approaches to the policies of (women) migrants' integration. To be more specific, it aims at collecting views on:

- a) the level of awareness of migrant integration challenges in general and knowledge of EU/National/local provisions for migrants integration, in particular; and
- b) the coherence between the implemented policy and governance in the partners contexts in the EU with wider EU policy and evolving international obligations of the EU.

This Green Papers focuses on:

- best practices in the local management of migrants;
- barriers of women migration integration in the host/ receiving societies;
- success elements of UALs implementation;
- inputs for local policies coming from transferable actions of women migrants integration in local communities from UALs;
- transferable actions of women migrants integration in local communities;
- policy proposal for Municipalities/Regions to integrate migrants in urban equitable and sustainable development of cities; and



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urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

- list of possible policy measures to be integrated in local/regional regulation for social and migrants management

Following this Green Paper and the discussion it is anticipate to provoke, the Urbagri4women consortium will proceed to a Manifesto, a published verbal declaration of the intentions, motives, and views of contributors of the SWOT analysis and the other processes of the project, that will be signed by stakeholders and interested parties.

## 1.2. About the Public Consultation

The Urbagri4women partnership gives top priority to consulting social partners locally and nationally in the EU and globally on migration integration initiatives aiming at involving women in in the equitable and sustainable development of cities. This online consultation will give a wide range of interested parties (e.g., migration integration stakeholders, associations and bodies, trainers and social workers; adult educators; urban agriculture stakeholders; environmental stakeholders; etc.) the opportunity to submit their views and contribute to setting the agenda for economic relations between the various actors in the field of urban management and social integration directly involving migrant women in the equitable and sustainable development of cities, introducing inputs that move forward the opportunity to develop a common Union approach to asylum and immigration foreseeing migrant women integration actions into Municipalities.

### Period and duration of consultation

The public consultation will remain open for 4 weeks, i.e. from 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 until 20<sup>th</sup> October 2018. All stakeholders interested are invited to give their inputs in the public consultation webpage.

### Language of consultation

The public consultation issue paper is available in English.

### Results of consultation, processing received contributions and follow up

In view of the Urbagri4women final conference between 8-9 November 2018, in Lisbon, Portugal, it is anticipated that the *Urbagri4women Public Consultation Report* will be published by early November 2018 on Urbagri4women project website: <https://www.urbagri4women.com/>. This report will provide a consolidated analysis of the input received during the public consultation, with reference to every single question. Where relevant, reference shall be made to the contributor.



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urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

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[http://ec.europa.eu/geninfo/legal\\_notices\\_en.htm#personaldata](http://ec.europa.eu/geninfo/legal_notices_en.htm#personaldata)

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### Technical problems

If you encounter any problems while filling in or validating your contribution, please contact: [elena.xeni@cardet.org](mailto:elena.xeni@cardet.org) for further assistance.

### Contact details

Responsible service: Urbagri4women consortium, <https://www.urbagri4women.com/>

E-mail: [elena.xeni@cardet.org](mailto:elena.xeni@cardet.org)

## **1.3. Key Questions/ Areas of Contribution**

Urbanagri4women consortium feels that it would be valuable to undertake a consultation with municipality and governmental authorities as well as interested parties (e.g., migration integration stakeholders, associations and bodies, trainers and social workers; adult educators; urban agriculture stakeholders; environmental stakeholders; etc.) about Migrant Women Integration Initiatives: The Case of Urban Agricultural Labs within Municipalities and invite them to make their views known about the topic in question.

Respondents to this public consultation are invited to use the following key questions/ areas of consultation as a guide when making their contributions:



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urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

## Key questions/ areas of consultation

### **A. The policy challenge**

1. What are the important policy challenges related to social integration directly involving migrant women in the equitable and sustainable development of cities? In addition to those identified in this paper, are there others that should be taken into account?

### **B. The policy response**

2. What are the appropriate policy responses to these challenges? Are there other policies and approaches beyond those listed in this paper as best practices that should be taken into account?

### **C. The role of the European Union**

3. What actions could be undertaken via European Programmes and EU policies to impact positively on migrant women integration actions into Municipalities?

### **D. The role of the Municipalities**

4. What actions could be undertaken via Municipalities to impact positively on social integration directly involving migrant women in the equitable and sustainable development of cities?

### **E. Best practices in involving migrant women in the sustainable development of cities.**

5. Can you list some best practices in involving migrant women in the sustainable development of cities that you are aware of?



urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

## 2. Migrant Women Integration Initiatives

In what follows women migration integration initiatives in general will be briefly reviewed and the project Urbagri4women, which forms the context of the present Green Paper and Public Consultation, will be visited as a good practice in the field of women migration integration initiatives on an EU level.

### 2.1. Migrant Women Integration Initiatives in the EU

In comparison to migrant men, migrant women often suffer from lower integration rates, as they face additional discriminations and challenges in accessing education and the labour market in the receiving/ host country. In the absence of effective EU and national migration integration policy, successful measures for migrants' integration are needed and effective initiatives and approaches in the framework of migrant women integration best practices are required. These may pave the way for future effective policies and practices that will give local governments a central role in promoting intercultural dialogue and a culture of welcoming communities.

In recent years, although the limited integration initiatives in the EU have been addressing all categories of migrants, i.e. women, men, children, elderly people, etc., a very small number of initiatives that refer particularly to women migrants are mainly initiated by non-profit organisations, private institutions/ organisations and voluntary groups, and some of these are funded by the European Union (e.g., *INTEGR8 – Harnessing the potential of migrant women as integration experts*, <http://integrateproject.eu/en/>; *Engage – Supporting Migrant Women as Integration Leaders*, <http://engageproject.eu/en/>; *SMART Volunteering for Female Migrants*; etc.). Such initiatives, i.e. funded or voluntary projects, programmes, actions, campaigns and other actions mainly aim to foster the harmonious and smooth adjustment and integration of migrants in general and migrant women in particular in the hosting societies.

Though this gives hope to begin with, a lot needs to be done for women migration integration initiatives to be implemented as success stories and good practices. Both, women migrants and interested parties need to make the implementation of these initiatives possible. A culture of confidence and determination need to be cultivated in order for such endeavours to succeed in present and future terms.

### 2.2. About the Project Urbagri4women

*Urbagri4Women* is a two-years-funded European project which aims to foster the integration of migrant women, including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in the host society, enabling them to develop innovative and self-sufficient agricultural initiatives that contributes to urban rehabilitation. An overview of the Consortium, the aims



urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

and objectives, the philosophy, the outputs and deliverables of *Urbagri4women* may be found below.

### 2.2.1. The Consortium

Co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the European Commission, involves 7 Organizations of 7 UE countries, namely:

Tamat, Italy, <a href="https://www.tamat.org/">https://www.tamat.org/</a> [LEADING ORGANISATION]	
Aidglobal, Polrtugal, <a href="https://www.aidglobal.org/">https://www.aidglobal.org/</a>	
Amsed, France, <a href="http://www.amsed.fr/">http://www.amsed.fr/</a>	
iED, Greece, <a href="http://www.ied.eu">www.ied.eu</a>	
CARDET, Cyprus, <a href="https://www.cardet.org/">https://www.cardet.org/</a>	
Sudwind, Austria, <a href="https://www.suedwind.at/">https://www.suedwind.at/</a>	
GYROS, UK, <a href="http://www.gyros.org.uk/">http://www.gyros.org.uk/</a>	



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urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

### 2.2.2. Project Philosophy

*Urbagri4women* aims at supporting the exchange of good practices, transferring and implementing creative and innovative practices and joint initiatives that foster the integration of migrant women, including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, in the receiving society within Urban Agriculture Labs (UALs), through educational and recreational activities, vocational training, help with accessing the labour market, anti-discrimination and cultural initiatives that promote intercultural dialogue, and a culture of welcoming communities, with the involvement of public administrations, social partners, migrant organisations and other relevant stakeholders.

### 2.2.3. Project Aims and Objectives

In the absence of an effective policy of inclusion of migrants in the EU, the project aspires to implement several initiatives promoting the integration of migrant women. To this extent, all 7 organisations from 7 EU countries will promote social inclusion and female empowerment through the rehabilitation of urban outskirts, currently in a situation of abandonment or decay, where the practice of urban agriculture is applied through practical laboratories that aim to foster intercultural dialogue and more sustainable cities and communities.

### 2.2.4. Outputs and Deliverables

In line with the project's philosophy and aims and objectives, in terms of outputs and deliverables having direct impact on local stakeholders, the project has completed/ will complete the following:

- 7 Communities of Practice formalized;
- 21 focus groups with the Communities of practice;
- 1 Transnational network for knowledge sharing and capacity building;
- 1 ICT tool supporting transnational knowledge sharing and capacity building;
- 1 Transnational reflective learning process/1 transnational virtual mentoring approach;
- 1 Transnational workshop;
- 1 Transnational study visit;
- 1 distance e-learning material;
- 1 catalogue of good practices;
- 7 Lists of identified empty spaces and "non-places" of involved cities;
- 7 Urban Agriculture Labs established;
- 7 project works;
- 7 vocational training programmes and materials;
- 1 guideline for SWOT analysis form UALs/1 online public consultation template/7 SWOT Analysis form UALs;
- 1 Green Paper elaborated/1 Online public consultation; and
- 1 Migrant woman integration Manifesto signed



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urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

As noted on the list above, three (3) policy papers are anticipated to be produced for the purposes of *Urbagri4women* project Work Package 4 (WP4) which forms the framework of this Green Paper and Public Consultation: SWOT analysis, a green paper and a public consultation (the present document), as well as a migrant women Manifesto, following the green paper and public consultation completion and analysis of results, giving rise to a number of policy recommendations included as guide for local officials and European and State policy makers to better understand the issues, solve the problems and make decisions.



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urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

## 3. The Case of Urban Agricultural Labs as a Good Practice in Women Migration Integration

### 3.1. Urban Agricultural Labs in the Context of *Urbagri4women*

A main objective of the project was to identify the empty spaces and “non-places” of cities for activating Urban Agriculture Labs (UALs) fostering the integration of migrant women by urban regeneration and social recovery initiatives, engaging various agents of the host community, including immigrant individuals and organizations, culture-based organizations, education organisations, the business sector, and establishing key partnerships regarding immigrant integration programs.

Each partner identified at least one empty space that functioned as a context that enabled migrant women integration in the receiving countries, through their involvement in urban regeneration and social recovery initiatives in Urban Agriculture Labs in innovative and creative ways. These are presented in the following section (3.2.).

### 3.2. Types of Urban Agricultural Labs Implemented

Interestingly the project hosted a variety of UALs in the course of its implementation in 7 different EU countries. Sharing the same philosophy of aiming at women migration integration through targeted urban agriculture actions, the 7 partner-countries gave flesh and blood to the project in different ways in their own countries. The variety that characterised the implementation of *Urbagri4women* UALs task is displayed in the sections below.

### 3.3. Strengths

From the SWOT analysis the following strengths concerning the UALs derived:

1. The Community of Practice played a crucial role in the success of the project.
2. The Stakeholders supported the project all the way through (e.g. the Headschool teachers in Cyprus made everything possible for the project to be smoothly implemented: from approaching migrant mothers, to replacing classrooms when needed; the City of Strasbourg replaced gardening material each time they were stolen, for the project not to have gaps and pauses; the partnership with the City Hall of Loures, in Portugal, allowed minimizing costs, e.g. for water, fences, space rental, etc.; the Municipality of Larissa in Greece was actively involved in approaching migrant woman of Larissa; etc.).
3. The availability of the partner organisations and willingness to make things work effectively.



urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

4. Engagement and participation of migrant women. What motivated them mostly were the following facts:
  - Partners shared the project objectives from the outset, clarifying the working context
  - Partners decided together with the migrant women about the development of the project work. Tasks were not given and set in advance but negotiated and co-decided.
  - Training was linked, in most cases (IT, CY, GR, PT) with the Urban Agriculture Laboratory and the development of the project work. This strategy allowed the beneficiaries to have a common goal to pursue that went beyond simple training activities.
  - Tailor made training: the partners didn't propose a standard training but designed it to fit the needs of the women in terms, of knowledge, competences, times, approaches, methodologies, etc.
  - Training was enriched with study-visits and inspirational talks (CY, IT, GR), so as to enhance participation and having fun. Furthermore, they supported the reciprocal knowledge and integration with local organizations and farmers.
  - In most cases men supported the project (IT, CY, ...) and the project works helping women out to move on with the project tasks
  - Discussing on sustainability practices/ actions, e.g. the launching of a beneficiaries' association (IT), the establishment of the aromatics café that would give women the opportunity to host inspirational talks and discussion on happy and healthy life (CY), , the development of a sound business canvas for future entrepreneurial activities (GR), etc., not only maintained engagement but it made it possible to increase the participation of women not interested in taking part to practical agricultural activities.
  - Choosing a venue close to the migrant women houses or the city centre reduced dropouts (GR, CY, PT).
  - The 'bring your child to school and join our classes' approach worked very well for the migrant women (migrant mothers) learners. Morning classes turned to be an exciting way to start your day! (CY).
  - By joining the project and by participating in the various dissemination activities organised, beneficiaries make a step forward in their integration process, practicing at the same time useful skills and having new experiences (ALL).
  - Flexibility that allowed taking over every new starter in the group (ALL).
  
5. Processes and results were observable and immediately sharable with the public via social media.



urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

6. The variety of topics chosen for the lab work display the dynamic role/ impact of the project in societies:
- Italy, typical African agri-food production
  - France, growing fruits and vegetables
  - Austria, ornament and decoration of urban gardens
  - Cyprus, planting and growing aromatics/ creating an outdoors aromatics café
  - Greece, working with dried herbs
  - Portugal, planting and growing herbs and vegetables from their home countries (mainly African).

### 3.4. Weaknesses and Barriers

In identifying the weaknesses and barriers partners encountered when implementing the Urbagri4women UALs in the partner countries, the following list emerges. The weaknesses and barriers identifying below are accompanied by the consortium suggestions for improvement (in green):

1. Poor language skills make it difficult to execute the training modules as planned. On several occasions the trainer had to serve as a translator/ interpreter, this being time-consuming and energy-consuming as well. In other occasions extra costs were reported as a translator/ interpreter had to be appointed (e.g. Arabic language)

(The role of an interpreter/ translator is critical in these cases)

2. Some migrants are reluctant to join training programmes due to bad prior experience with national programmes' daily training (IT)

(It is considered critical for migration integration training and programmes being tailor-made, designed and delivered based on migrants' actual needs. This is one of the first steps towards engagement and participation)

3. Certain weather conditions may hinder the project's goals and the training endeavours. Project works are subject to weather conditions; on certain cases (IT, CY, etc.), actions needed to be repeated or paused due to bad/ unexpected weather conditions (e.g. atmospheric air dust, humidity, too hot days, too cold days, too rainy days, too windy days, etc.)

(Considering that the agriculture activities depend on climate conditions, it is necessary to plan activities accordingly to the seasons and to foresee a recovery plan in case of any kind of natural and climate variation incur.)



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[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

4. Consisting of activities that do not bring an immediate economic benefit to participants or beneficiaries (that are mostly in unstable socio-economical situations), such projects are often judged as not very concrete and of little interest and this migrant women are discouraged to participate.

(A turn to projects and initiatives that may bring or even ensure an immediate economic benefit is considered critical; but it is possible to plan activities that can directly and immediately give an added value to the beneficiaries like for example the production of national food they like or obtain a plant or ingredient that they usually have in their daily life).

5. Women were very reluctant in growing fruits, vegetables, etc., this is why men's role emerged as critical in order to keep the project works running smoothly

(Considering that not all the women are addressed or addicted to agricultural activities, the plan should be tailored to the women expertise whose interest should be cached by further action for explaining the successful and fruitful potentialities of agricultural activities).

### 3.5. Opportunities

A number of opportunities were provided in the course of this initiative. These are listed below:

1. Beneficiaries are excited by the idea and impact of the project that adds to sustainability. For example,
  - In Italy migrant women are enthusiastically working on the idea of creating an association and experiment the production of African food
  - In Austria, migrant women may sell their products
  - In Greece, migrant women discussed the possibility of a women's collective
  - In Cyprus, migrant women plan to organize inspirational talks on living happily and healthy
  - In Portugal, the Municipality of Loures will have community gardens to the local residents and the project participants/migrant women will have priority in having one of these spaces. Also, women will produce a recipes book inspired by the herbs and vegetables cultivated in the garden created during the project labs.
  - In France, an informal collective to begin with will be held, which will lead to the creation of an association.
2. The project implementations and experimentations, opened new pathways for:
  - Sustainable actions: From the early days or as time went by, a need for sustainability/ sustainable actions emerged and was reported by many partner-





urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

countries (e.g. IT, CY, ...) (please view the APPENDICES for the individual SWOT analysis)

- Collaboration and Joint actions: With women and men working towards urban agriculture initiatives; and with migrant and local people and associations to collaborate.
- Personal development: On various occasions, women started thinking about independent work, e.g. opening a firm (FR), opening a traditional Syrian shop (CY), opening a healthy breakfast café (CY), etc.
- Professional development: the project creates a genuine potential for people to become economically active, thanks to a very specific vocational training, focused also on business and management matter and to the engagement of the women in the elaboration of a concrete sustainable project work. A joint commitment of the project both on integration and professional side.
- New knowledge:
  - In all partner countries the material that was created in the framework of the project, was deemed very interesting and useful by the women who are keen to study it.
  - In the UK a need emerged for a pre-ESOL programme. As there was no such programme offered in the area this need created a big opportunity for the organisation and interested parties.
  - In Portugal migrant women were highly interested in the cooking module offering opportunities for learning healthy alternatives to traditional food.
- New skills and competences:
  - networking: Migrant women created new relationships with co-learners and with some local authorities and association representatives, which enlarges their network and improves their networking skills.
  - collaboration: Migrant women created new relationships with co-learners and collaborated with them for the purposes of the vocational training and other activities.
  - evaluation: Evaluation of the production of okra and processed products deriving from this cultivation/ evaluation of an innovative economic activity, fostering evaluation, critical and reviewing skills (IT).
- New learning contexts/ methods:
  - study visits, fostering observation and reflection skills (CY)
  - inspirational talks, talks about living happily and eating healthy, enhancing well-being (CY, IT, PT)



urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

- Life-long learning:  
Some women detected the advantages that they would have by attending similar training experiences and they discussed about getting more involved in relevant actions in the future.
- Other benefits:  
As noted above, by the end of the year, the City of Hall of Loures will have community gardens to the local residents and the project participants will have priority in having one of these.

3. The public opinion in most partner countries is in favor of the urban agriculture in general. That means that there is space to work out a project work with high possibilities of income.

4. Local policies in partner countries are placing more emphasis nowadays on migration integration and inclusion and there are opportunities for language courses to begin with.

5. Local policies in most partner countries are in favour of the creation of start-ups, which is an excellent point for our project work.

### 3.6. Threats

Urbagri4women consortium identified the following threats regarding the UALs in the framework of *Urbagri4women*. (Suggestions are made in green):

1. In some partner countries a number of the participants/ migrant women didn't know how to read/write, i.e. are facing functional illiteracy issues.

(It is suggested for pedagogic tools, methods and approaches to be adapted accordingly and for some ideas/topics that might be more difficult to communicate to be simplified).

2. Certain occasions force to slow down the project activities and even pause them:

- Bureaucracy implied (in getting a space, material, authorizations, etc.) may cause delays to the project's endeavours.
- Public and other holidays (Christmas holidays, Easter holidays, Ramadan, etc.), have created a gap in the project activities and endeavours, as pausing the activities in the working spaces/ places and the training was the only option.





urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

- Bad or unexpectedly challenging weather conditions slowed down the processes in the UALs.
- Non-ideal places/ spaces granted/ offered/ chosen, that might needed more attention and work or could – in the worst scenario – be replaced.
- In ‘sensitive’ neighbourhoods gardening material were constantly stolen and gardens degraded.
- The investment (time and resources) in specific spaces/ with specific local partners that haven’t taken place (PT).

3. Selling products on a big scale undergoes regulations that may be difficult for the beneficiaries.

(It is suggested to study the opportunities for selling stuffs on a big scale and see how municipalities may help out to find pathways and simplify the processes to make such tasks less difficult to happen/ realise).

4. Women migrants as a target group has a high drop-out risk due to several factors, including the following:

- becoming less interested/ motivated in the project as time went by for various reasons
- low self-esteem/ self-confidence
- language barriers
- need to find a job
- family and household responsibilities
- work responsibilities (for those who had a job)
- health issues (PT, CY)
- pregnancy (UK)
- stereotyping/ racism
- less interested in agriculture and urban agriculture (e.g. cultivating land, planting seeds, etc.)
- expiration of the residency permit application
- end of reception program
- less interested in pursuing future business endeavours. Most of them view entrepreneurial activity as something very challenging and risky especially due to the economic crisis that most EU countries (e.g. Greece, Italy, Cyprus) are going through, which has lead them to live in an even more uncertain situation; as a result not many are willing to risk steady jobs and income to pursue something that would potentially yield no results.



urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

(It is suggested for each factor to be examined/ studied in isolation, in order to find ways to facilitate women's participation and motivate women towards such initiatives).

5. The lack of a participant with a leader/ leading profile to ensure the project continuity/sustainability.

(It is suggested to foster the leading skills of women migrants who mainly share the profile of a low esteem person lacking self-confidence, and leading skills).



urbagri4women

[Project number: HOME\_2015\_AMIF\_AG\_INTE\_9098]

## 4. Conclusion

In the framework of *Urbagri4women*, a two-years-funded project by the Asylum and Migration Integration Funds of the EU (AMIF), local environmental framework conditions and socio-economic potentialities are considered as basic elements for setting up the Urban Agriculture Labs, one of the main outputs and deliverables of the project. Each partner has set up the Urban Agriculture Labs in chosen areas and, where possible, has succeeded in managing also all the formal procedures at Municipal level for activating, formally committed, pilot activities of urban regeneration and social recovery.

In summarising the results of the UALs in terms of economic relations between the various actors in the field of urban management and social integration directly involving migrant women in the equitable and sustainable development of cities, it can be said that *Urbagri4women* UALs as a creative and innovative initiative has succeeded in moving forward the opportunity to develop a common union approach to asylum and immigration, foreseeing migrant women integration actions into Municipalities.

This commitment aims at launching start-up immigrant integration support programmes for European Municipalities pushing migrants to become the actors in the management of the humanitarian crisis where they are involved, through urban agriculture practices, recovering the degradation of the urban outlying areas and also those destined to the refugees camps and shelters.



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