

REACH OUT

Category

ERRIN Facility

Timeline

October 2019 - December 2020

Countries of implementation

Belgium, France

Project lead

Fedasil

Reach Out aims at increasing knowledge about voluntary return amongs “unreachable” groups - stranded migrants and migrants in transit. It targets cities willing to develop a comprehensive approach to counselling people who find themselves “outside” any procedures or outside official reception facilities, and develop a sustainable community of practice around issues of counselling and return for undocumented migrants. The project is implemented by Fedasil - Belgian Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers, in cooperation with the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) and Eurocities.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Return counselling, a key aspect of the return process, is **much more than just informing a person about the possibility of return**. It requires building a relationship of trust, engaging in a dialogue on return and supporting an individual throughout a process of decision making. Migrants can only consciously choose to voluntarily return to their home countries if they are well aware that such an option exists - and can access reliable information about the process.

Fedasil and OFII have jointly deployed **a multinational outreach team who approaches undocumented migrants** to raise their awareness about existing legal options, including the possibility of voluntary return. The team is currently operating in Brussels, Calais and Grande-Synthe (Dunkirk). Their activities target both **undocumented migrants “in transit”** - people who aim to reach the UK, while temporarily residing in Belgium or France - and **stranded migrants**, individuals who have either never really tried to obtain a legal residence permit, or who have exhausted all procedures and now live undocumented in urban settings, fearing deportation. Outreach to these groups is particularly challenging, given the public surroundings they dwell in and low trust levels towards governments and social workers. It is also challenging to ensure that the message is transferred in the best way possible given the existing time limitations, stress and lack of privacy.

Reach Out brings together six European cities with the aim of creating a sustainable community of practice. The participating cities are actively involved in reaching out to stranded migrants through their stakeholder networks, including NGOs, refugee organisations and diaspora representatives. This goes far beyond the traditional approach of providing information, including active follow-up and counselling sessions.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Outreach team: developing **counselling links** with **50 migrants per week**.

Creation of a **“community of practice”** around the issues of counselling and return for undocumented migrants, with active involvement of local organisations.

Mapping of existing stakeholder networks and outreach practices.

Developing a **“blueprint” for best practices** on counselling and return at the local level.

Development of an **outreach method targeting “unreachable” groups**.

ABOUT ERRIN

The European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN) is a joint initiative of 15 EU Member States and Schengen countries, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the European Commission. The International Centre for Migration Policy Development supports the programme as an implementing partner. ERRIN enhances European cooperation to improve both the return process, and the quality of support offered to migrants.

ABOUT ERRIN FACILITY

Beyond the core activity of facilitating post-arrival support to returnees, ERRIN Facility offers its Members a unique space and funding for developing projects that address return-related challenges. With a budget of €2 million, ERRIN encourages its Members to test innovative approaches towards reintegration, foster cooperation between EU and third country governments, improve counselling, or look into integrated return management.