



La Nomad House

POLICY PAPER

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Authors: Shannon Damery, Elsa Mescoli et Marco Martiniello, CEDEM – Université de Liège ; Martina Lo Cascio – Université de Padoue (chapter 6) ; Hassan Boubakri – Université de Sousse (chapter 7).

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1. INTRODUCTION

La Nomad House project (2023-2024, Creative Europe) is an artistic creation program coordinated by La Compagnie des Nouveaux Disparus and carried out in six countries: Belgium, Italy, France, Germany, Tunisia and Greece. It addresses the issue of migration and aims, through workshops organized in each of these countries, to create and present an original play based on Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream". The project includes the collection of testimonies, creative expression workshops, conferences and an exhibition. The aim of the project is to highlight the life stories of migrants and counter the stigmatization and discrimination they suffer, by facilitating spaces for expression and dialogue. In addition, through the conferences that accompany the tour of the play, the project enables us to reflect on the practice of the arts in culturally diverse contexts and with people from different backgrounds, and to address the specific issues and themes that emerge in each context.

Within this framework, a scientific team made up of researchers from three universities (University of Liège - coordination -, University of Padua, University of Sousse) oversaw the development of the various phases of the project. In particular, 1. the researchers took part in the creative workshops in the countries in question and collected ethnographic materials (notes and audio-visual materials) which were presented to the partners; 2. they discussed the first versions of the play and observed the stage work, 3. they took part in the organization of the conferences.

Conference content was defined according to the theme chosen by each country, highlighting local issues. The chosen theme was reflected firstly in the academic session, including presentations by research speakers, and then in the round table, where it was developed with more cross-cutting issues and with local players in the field. The issues addressed also included the challenges and opportunities of artistic projects developed with migrants, taking into account various aspects such as: artistic processes, the training of those involved, language barriers, the question of participation, gender dynamics, their age and status, their aspirations, mental health, tensions, displacement, sociability, inclusion, representations, sustainability, the local context and the role of researchers.

The content of this policy paper is the product of the reflections arising from these activities and the analysis of the materials collected, enriched by subsequent exchanges with all the partners. It is divided into several sections. Firstly, particular attention is paid to the content of the conferences organized in each partner country, highlighting the specific issues and debates that took place there (while also taking into account the materials collected during prior observation activities).

This makes it possible to identify contextual and cross-cutting priorities, which are then taken into account in the development and presentation of recommendations aimed at improving the management of migration-related issues, focusing on the situations and life experiences of migrants, as well as on artistic and cultural practices that can contribute to this improvement.

2. CONTEXT

In this report, we focus on what the various players, the groups involved in the project and the migrants themselves consider to be the most important realities and obstacles to the integration of migrants into local socio-cultural life, as well as the possibilities for improving their situation. Their integration faces many obstacles, many of which are common to La Nomad House project countries. Migration is a highly politicized subject, and misinformation, misunderstandings and alarmism are omnipresent in discussions and debates on the subject.

Security is often the main consideration behind governments preventing people from entering their territory, or excluding them from certain aspects of social and political life. Migrants are often criminalized in the media and political discourse, further alienating them from local populations who become fearful of what is presented as a criminal element in their country(1). In terms of safety and security, however, it is the migrants themselves who run a high risk of becoming victims of criminal acts, even though not all international migration is linked to insecurity, lack of security or stability(2).

As the number of international migrants and refugees increases, so does politicization and public fear. Since 2015, there has been a sharp increase in immigration to Greece and the EU, along with striking images that have fed the collective imagination: shipwrecks, precarious boats, loss of life. This period was dubbed the "migration crisis", a term largely conveyed by the media, who played a central role in constructing this narrative through their choice of words and lexicon. Since then, and due to factors such as climate change and the outbreak of war (notably Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the war in Gaza), migration has continued to be seen as a crisis, but now we speak of crises in the plural.

At the time of the IOM report in 2000, there were 150 million international migrants in the world, a figure that has risen to 281 million in 2020(3). There were 14 million refugees at the time of the report's publication in 2000, rising to 35.3 million in 2020. Despite these increases, international migrants still represent only 3.6% of the world's population, showing that international migration remains the exception rather than the norm. Moreover, although they make up only a small fraction of the population, research indicates that migrants are making a significant contribution to active and energetic development on a global scale, particularly in the fields of innovation, science, start-ups and the arts(4).

(1) PICUM (2024). Cases of Criminalisation of Migration and Solidarity in the EU in 2023.

(2) McAuliffe, M. and L.A. Oucho (eds.), 2024. World Migration Report 2024. International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva: 28

(3) idem, page 20

(4) idem, page 22

Indeed, the intersection of the arts, migration, integration and politics constitutes a vast and important field of study. Many artistic practices are widely accessible and offer migrants a way to participate in local socio-cultural life, as well as a means of expressing their political voice. Attention to the role of artistic practices in the integration process of migrants goes beyond mere health aspects and embraces a variety of dimensions. Specifically, it involves conceiving the arts and creativity as tools used by individuals living in situations of precariousness and marginalization to "exist socially, assert their presence and even claim rights and status"(5). It is therefore relevant to also examine the role of the arts in refugee solidarity movements in European cities and beyond, as well as the journeys of refugee artists and their strategies for positioning themselves in their new societies and art scenes. This becomes problematic, however, when migrant artists simply wish to make art for art's sake and not be categorized as a migrant artist(6), or be seen as a representative or spokesperson for a group(7).

Moreover, in many countries, culture is the subject of public policies that vary according to the context and the priority given to culture in each society. Specific policies may target the participation of minorities in the cultural sector, both as consumers and producers of culture. Attention to these policies also makes it possible to assess whether they effectively encourage the participation of migrants, whether they respond to their needs and the difficulties they encounter, whether they trigger processes of inclusion or perpetuate processes of exclusion(8).

These issues were a major theme that emerged from the fieldwork carried out during La Nomad House project, as well as from the academic conferences that followed. With the support of the academic team, local experts in each country were given the freedom to choose their conference topics to ensure that the content of each conference focused on what was considered important locally.

In conclusion, these testimonies and discussions highlight the unique challenges faced by migrant artists in Belgium, underlining the crucial importance of fully recognizing and supporting their dynamic contribution to the art scene, while promoting an authentic and diverse representation of migrant experiences in contemporary artistic practices.

(5) Martiniello, Marco, and Elsa Mescoli (2018). L'art pour exister, l'art d'exister. In Voix Solidaires: L'Expertise Universitaire au Service du Développement Durable. Liège: UniverSud Liège, p. 13.

(6) Rotas, A. (2011). From 'Asylum-Seeker' to 'British Artist': How Refugee Artists are Redefining British Art. *Immigrants & Minorities*, 30(2-3), 211-238.

(7) Damery, Shannon, and Elsa Mescoli. 2019. Harnessing visibility and invisibility through arts practices: Ethnographic case studies with migrant performers in Belgium. *Arts* 8: 49.

(8) Martiniello, M., & Mescoli, E. (2024, February). Arts and Refugees: Multidisciplinary Perspectives (Vol. 2). In *Arts* (Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 40). MDPI.

3. BELGIUM:

REPRESENTATIONS OF MIGRANTS AND MIGRATION IN ARTISTIC PRACTICES

The Brussels conference, co-organized by the University of Liège's Centre d'Études de l'Ethnicité et des Migrations (CEDEM) and Les Nouveaux Disparus, offered an immersion into the heart of migration studies research, enriched by the concrete experience of field workers, institutions and artists.

Although no fieldwork or workshops took place in Brussels, this city is home to the theater group "Les Nouveaux Disparus", and the play created as part of La Nomad House project was also presented there. To offer a full and rich program on the theme of "Representations of Migrants and Migration in Artistic Practices", conference participants came from a variety of backgrounds and interests in their work and presentations. Among the participants were academics from Belgian and French universities, representatives of civil society organizations, local artists, "newcomer" migrant artists, as well as the director of the Migration Museum and an NGO focusing on cultural issues.

Artistic practices play a significant role in the lives of individuals and represent a means by which migrants act in various contexts to achieve certain goals. Art has a therapeutic dimension, helping to deal with the traumas associated with the migratory experience, particularly among refugees. Music and dance are particularly recognized as means of expressing feelings of exile and nostalgia within both migrants and refugees. Art is the channel through which migrants can make their voices heard. Artistic representations of migrants' own experiences can have a transformative impact, providing a vehicle for recognition and enabling migrants to represent themselves.

Hala El Moussawi talked about her work on housing Syrian refugees and questions of representation. For Sophie Lacombe, the question of representations takes on a particular aspect, as she is interested in the way exiles forge theatrical practices within refugee camps. So, there's a double aspect: the external representations of migrants and the internal representations they create through their artistic practices. Sophie Lacombe pointed out that theater, like the media, can serve a variety of purposes, such as deconstructing narratives, informing and raising awareness. However, despite artists' laudable intentions, there is a risk of reproducing clichés and stereotypes. She believes that this trend towards homogenization needs to be challenged, including in deconstruction efforts. Ophelie Mercier continued to elaborate on this point and on how migrant artists reject certain representations of themselves. Importantly, these artists refuse to be categorized as mere migrants or foreign artists.

Ophélie Mercier stressed the importance of migrants' expectations and representations of themselves, proposing to explore beyond their personal histories by integrating fiction and research. She insisted on the broader dimension of the emotions expressed, beyond their individual stories. Marco Martiniello warned against an idealized vision of immigration, addressing extractivist practices and the ultra-aesthetization of migratory realities. He called for in-depth reflection on the impact of our work and its influence on migration policies.

The growing complexity of the representation of migrants and migrant artists continued in the round-table discussions. The importance of deconstructing stereotypes was emphasized, as was the usefulness of social contextualization, artistic representation and community collaboration to improve understanding and integration of migrants.

Discussions focused on the day-to-day challenges encountered in artistic practices involving migrants. Coline Billen shared an experience where a member of a theater production had to leave the territory due to his official migration status. Hassen Boubakri highlighted the many uncertainties that migrant artists face in Belgium, highlighting the major financial challenges they encounter. Loredana Marchi pointed out that despite the changing context, finding migrant artists willing to commit themselves fully to quality artistic projects often remains difficult, requiring a substantial investment in terms of time, energy and financial resources. These testimonials highlight the unique challenges faced by migrant artists, underlining the importance of fully recognizing and supporting their contribution to the art scene.

4. GERMANY:

FORMS OF RESISTANCE AGAINST CEAS IN GERMANY

The conference focused on migration and refugee rights, addressing crucial issues concerning current challenges and opportunities for activists and civil society. The speakers' interventions aimed to shed light on various aspects of migration policies in Europe, and to propose ways of improving them.

There was a report on past and future protests against the proposed law in Germany and the rightward shift in the political landscape. Opportunities and challenges for engaging with this framework were also discussed, examining the dominant narrative and ways to change it (Tarek Alaows). Next, it was explained how the new migration procedures compromise human rights standards and violate human dignity, seeing the reform as an abolition of the right to asylum. Several German civil society protests have risen up against these severe restrictions (Berenice Böhlo). Sultana Sediqi shared her experience as an anti-racism activist. The conference was moderated by Daniela Sepehri, a German-Iranian slam poet active on social networks on topics relating to feminism, anti-racism, migration and Iran.

The conference also highlighted several key messages of importance to the local team and the La Nomad project. Firstly, it was emphasized that borders are not inherently natural or dangerous; movement is an integral part of human history. Empathy and solidarity are fundamental human rights that belong to everyone, regardless of their origin or situation. Europe's borders are becoming increasingly militarized to keep out people who are not immediately needed in the labor market, or for political calculations. Instead, we need to focus on the root causes of flight and migration, and pursue a policy of empathy and solidarity.

Furthermore, the term "pull factor" is a misleading political buzzword that obscures the true motivations of people on the move and fuels fears. People don't migrate to receive social benefits, but to build a new, self-determined life. Exclusion and marginalization occur not only at borders, but also within the European Union. Even when people overcome external borders, they are often further marginalized, manifesting themselves in everyday racism, discrimination and the rise of extreme right-wing violence. Exclusion is therefore a societal problem that goes far beyond migration policy.

It was stressed that migration is not a threat, but an enrichment for our societies, fostering diversity, economic impetus and intercultural exchange. Politicians, not just right-wing extremists, stir up fears of migration to win votes, making migrants scapegoats. The real threat is exclusion, lack of solidarity and lack of empathy.

Finally, La Nomad House project links protection and freedom of movement. The caravan crosses the Mediterranean three times, first from Greece to Sicily, then to Tunisia and finally to France, showing just how enriching and "beautiful" the Mediterranean cultural space can be, and the possible existence of solidarity with all those who cross these shores.

5. GREECE:

UNDERSTANDING MIGRATION AND BORDER REFUGEES: CONTEXTUALIZING HISTORICAL NARRATIVES, LEGAL FRAMEWORKS, BORDER REALITIES, CAMP EXPERIENCE AND GENDER DYNAMICS

Thanks to the contribution of several researchers, the conference explored European migration policy, focusing on the recent period marked by "Fortress Europe" and "closed" Greece. Borders, symbols of state sovereignty, have played a central role in this policy, particularly for southern European countries such as Greece. These border regions have become "containment zones" to limit the entry of refugees and migrants, a policy reinforced by the EU-Turkey agreement and the Dublin regulations.

The militarization of borders, the establishment of detention camps and deterrence are accompanied by racist representations associating refugees with radical Islam and terrorism. These hegemonic discourses of cultural incompatibility have contributed to the proliferation of camps and the legitimization of exponential deaths at land and sea borders. The induced moral panic has justified the increased militarization of borders and the rise in migrant deaths, which reflect neoliberal governance that has led to the generalization of detention camps and the legalization of policies of death (Georgios Tsimouris).

Focus was put on the crisis at the Greek-Turkish border in February 2020. At that time, the Turkish president announced that Turkey would no longer prevent refugees from attempting to reach Europe. This declaration led to massive misinformation of refugees in Turkey and their forced or manipulated transport to the Evros border. As a result, thousands of refugees gathered at this border and on the Turkish coast.

Greece and the EU have denounced this situation as an "instrumentalization" of refugees, portraying them as both victims and potential threats to public order and national security. The Greek response was marked by increased militarization of the borders, violent repatriations, suspension of the right to seek asylum and mass arrests. Refugees who managed to enter Greece were often subjected to problematic criminal proceedings and harsh penalties, usually resulting in prison sentences. This situation illustrated a "double instrumentalization" of refugees, used for economic and geopolitical purposes by Turkey, Greece and the EU, while pursuing strict anti-immigration policies (Dimitris Koros).

Within this framework, gender, cultural and colonial stereotypes create new, impassable frontiers for refugees, hindering their access to rights and services as well as their integration. These stereotypes perpetuate a violence that constantly stigmatizes refugees, trapping them in fixed identities. This violent essentialization constructs refugees either as victims, or as threats to an imagined cultural uniformity. The process of de-historicizing and depoliticizing refugees conceals the investment of power in social trauma, even when integration programs and other initiatives attempt to heal the wounds inflicted. Refugee experiences bring into crisis not only the subjects themselves, but also the methodology and language used to frame the refugee "problem" and the solutions proposed (Eirini Avramopoulou).

Regarding living conditions in the refugee camps in Greece, over the past two years the accommodation centers have been transformed into "closed centers" with new surveillance and entry/exit control systems. Since the Greek state took over management of these centers, living conditions have become increasingly difficult for asylum seekers and recognized refugees. The public services provided are not focused on human needs, but on claims processing. Food distribution is limited to asylum seekers, leaving recognized refugees and those whose applications have been rejected without access to food, dependent on the solidarity of their neighbors. The infrastructure of the centers is often dilapidated, and necessary repairs are not carried out properly. The lack of blankets and basic supplies worsens living conditions, particularly in winter.

In addition, state personnel replacing qualified agencies lack the training and experience to provide adequate protection. The cases of vulnerable populations are not properly treated due to the high volume of residents and the lack of staff. The inability to provide basic medicines and the distance from health centers exacerbate the situation, as does the lack of adequate psychological support. Structural reforms are urgently needed to guarantee a decent standard of living in shelters, while respecting human dignity and fundamental rights (Eleftheria Dodi).

Non-formal learning and arts activities in refugee camps play a crucial role in enhancing the resilience and empowerment of refugees, helping to alleviate the many challenges they face both inside and outside the camps. These activities are essential in a context marked by uncertainty, insecurity and poor living conditions, which pose physical, emotional and psychological challenges for refugees. Non-formal education and the arts not only ensure the transmission of knowledge and the development of skills, but also contribute to building individual resilience, reducing vulnerability and encouraging social inclusion. Integrating the arts into these activities enhances their impact by overcoming language barriers and providing a common basis for communication. Through visual arts, music and theater, refugees find a way to communicate their stories, aspirations and struggles (Stefanos Katsoulis).

At the table involving people working in refugee camps, it was stressed that, although access to the labor market for refugee and migrant populations is perhaps the most crucial element in their social integration, there are still major gaps and a lack of coherent policies to support employability. Their goal of stability and economic independence remains elusive, which also affects their sense of belonging. Obstacles include lack of necessary documentation, language barriers, discrimination and closure of relevant integration programs. This has an impact on both finding a job and keeping it.

It is important to emphasize that all this is happening in a country considered to be a transit country, which also makes it difficult for migrants to invest mentally in their stay and integration efforts. Guidelines for improving employability should include training, skills development, links between employers and candidate workers, as well as special attention and provision for vulnerable groups such as single women/single mothers. A prerequisite for all this is the provision of shelter, security and food.

6. ITALY:

ROOTED SCIENCE AND THEATER. MUTUALISM AND RESISTANCE THROUGH SELF-MANAGED WORK, AGROECOLOGY, ECOLOGY AND POLITICAL PEDAGOGY

The title of the conference organized in Italy invites a methodological exercise aimed at deconstructing the often-widespread idea that science and art are the prerogative of professionals and experts, the latter confining themselves at most to dealing with committed and social issues. The local scientific committee has entitled the conference "Science and theater rooted", because it believes that science and theater should be based on the recognition of each individual as an actor in a science and theater rooted in the processes of everyday life.

The conference in Italy is part of a two-year process, with even deeper roots going back to the struggles in Sicily in the 1950s and 1960s for organic development, water and peace in Vietnam, as well as the peasant movements in Brazil. It also finds its strength in the theatrical creation born in Brussels with the company "Les Nouveaux Disparus", which arrived in Partinico on June 6, 2024. The conference was held at the Real Cantina Borbonica and on the slopes of the Cesarò hill.

"La Songe", the theatrical creation resulting from the La Nomad House project, is the source of inspiration for this conference, as it symbolizes the collective "dream" of self-determination of bodies, peoples and territories. Participants are invited to breathe and co-breathe together, feeling the roots of the struggles for emancipation from the mafias, against the compulsion of southern emigration, oppression, and restrictions on the freedom of movement of every migrant, while expressing solidarity with each individual's right to life, existence and resistance.

Methodological reflections were central to the project work and the preparation of the conference. The aim was to mobilize the means to ensure equal, collective and cross-disciplinary discussion between the academic world and the realities in motion.

The aim of the conference was to understand how science and theater can be useful to practices of social transformation in Sicily, fostering mutualism and resistance through self-managed labor, agroecology, ecology and political pedagogy. The local scientific committee invited artists, farmers, scientists, activists, land workers, migrants and educators to "explore" several issues and understand how science and theater can be tools for social change. They suggested two common starting points for the participants:

1. Recognition of each individual as a player in a science and theater rooted in everyday processes;
2. The practices of contributors, in particular those of the Partinico Solidale and Contadinazioni-FuoriMercato associations, in pedagogy and political ecology, agroecology and self-managed work.

Through thematic tables on three areas - artistic and food production and distribution between exploitation and self-management, pedagogy and educational methods for self-determination, and knowledge production - practical operational points were elaborated for the development and sustainability of social change practices.

Accessibility emerged as a central issue, both as a field for cross-cutting demands and as a starting point for building solidarity links between different worlds. The need for dialogue and recognition by institutions was underlined, and it is necessary for bottom-up practices to be recognized as a form of public welfare. Pending such recognition, or in the face of its difficulties, it is essential to share resources and organizational perspectives, particularly between the food, land-working and art sectors.

The role of research and theater is fundamental to opening up spaces for the oppressed to express themselves, and to building a path of territorial self-determination that meets the needs of the community. Communities must recognize the role of science and theater and feel involved in the processes of knowledge production.

7. TUNISIA:

ARTS AND INTERCULTURALITY, OR HOW DO THE ARTS EXPRESS AND DRAW INSPIRATION FROM THE MEETING OF CULTURES?

The Tunisian adventure of the La Nomad House (LNH) program has spanned almost two years, with stages building to a crescendo since the spring of 2023. In Tunisia, We Love Sousse (WLS), the Tunisian partner of the project, has also mobilized a dynamic team of young people from all walks of life to implement the project and facilitate the various tasks and missions associated with the program. Before touring Tunisia and presenting the show "Songe" from June 21 to 26, 2024 in Sousse, WLS hosted artistic workshops over a four-month period from May to September 2023, led by CND members.

As one of the final and culminating moments of the project, the aim of this conference is to question the relationship between the arts and interculturality: how the arts integrate and express the interculturalities and solidarities forged in connection with the mobility, presence and experience of individuals, groups and communities from different and varied races, ethnicities, cultures and identities. A second question is how the cultural traits of migrant populations, and those on the move in general, nourish and resource artistic expression and production.

The conference was organized around three key moments. An opening session where the floor was given to the stakeholders who hosted, supported or organized the La Nomad House project. The Institut Supérieur des Beaux-Arts (ISBA) at the University of Sousse hosted the conference in its premises, a stone's throw from the LNH Village, on the Place des villes jumelées and the Corniche de Sousse.

Moderated by a professor of Anthropology (Adelina Miranda/Université de Poitiers, France), a plenary session entitled "Arts et Interculturelles, ou comment les arts expriment et se ressource de la rencontre entre cultures?" presented academic work by two senior researchers from the University of Sousse (Tunisia) and two young researchers (Doctoral students), one from the University of Amsterdam (Netherlands) and the other from the University of Genoa (Italy). Topics covered included "La diaspora du Jazz: rencontres et dialogues interculturels. Cas de la Tunisie" (Foued Belghouthi/University of Sousse); "Le rôle du théâtre dans la promotion de l'interculturalité" (Nefissa Ayachi/University of Sousse); "L'expression artistique des formes de solidarité sur les routes migratoires" (Nadia Chaouch/University of Genoa); "Le théâtre comme moyen de recherche ethnographique sur la Migration" (Yentl De Langue/University of Amsterdam).

A round-table discussion around the screening of a documentary film ("Emirs aux pays des merveilles") directed by Ahmed Jlassi (Filmmaker/University of Sousse) brought the conference to a close, with a debate between the audience and the author on what the irregular migration of young Tunisians (or hargra) expresses, exile, nostalgia, the illusions of the European Eldorado, and the irruption of identity in mobility and encounters with others.

While the conference marked a high point in the Soussian phase of La Nomad House project, the intense cultural and artistic activity that accompanied the show should also be highlighted: music, dance, exhibitions, workshops, media broadcasts (cf. the WLS Facebook page), with an average of three major activities every day.

Last but not least, the relationship with street audiences and the people of Sousse. The village itself, as well as the events surrounding it, aroused interest, support and participation of a wide cross-section of these audiences, made up of families, children, young and old, and tourists.

8. FRANCE:

WOMEN IN MOTION: MIGRATORY JOURNEYS AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

The Paris conference began with a presentation by Camille Schmoll, a specialist in the study of female migration, who outlined certain aspects of the feminization of contemporary migration. It was emphasized that women account for a growing proportion of migrants, a phenomenon that is both accentuating and diversifying. Some illustrations drawn from field research highlighted the different trajectories taken by migrant women, highlighting their specificities and the unique challenges, including different forms of violence, they face.

Next, the research perspective, particularly the feminist one, was examined. This perspective brings a crucial perspective to thinking about exile, highlighting gender dimensions often neglected in migration studies. It was shown how feminism enables us to understand migration not only as a movement of populations, but also as a process profoundly influenced by power structures and gender dynamics.

The link between gender issues and migration policies was then explored. Based on research carried out with the "Damned of the Sea", the presentation highlighted the continuum of violence against migrant women. It was shown that violence often begins in countries of origin and continues throughout the migratory journey, exacerbated by the restrictive policies of destination countries. The Ukrainian exile, described as an unprecedented female exile, was discussed to illustrate the specificities of recent migrations. The consequences of this female exile were analyzed, revealing profound impacts on both the women themselves and the host societies.

Finally, the presentation concluded on the burning political issue of migration. The fantasy of a world without migration, and without immigrant women, was criticized as a dangerous utopia. It was argued that migration, and women's migration in particular, is an inescapable and necessarily enriching reality for modern societies. The presentation thus offered an overview of contemporary female migration, enriched by feminist perspectives and field studies, while underlining the importance of inclusive, gender-sensitive migration policies.

Elsa Mescoli then analyzed the experience of migrant women as part of La Nomad House project. Dance, circus and theater sessions were organized in collaboration with Terre d'Asile in three different locations (Paris, Créteil and Clichy), welcoming women with different profiles in terms of age, origin, social status and migratory journey. Artistic experiences in the context of migration, such as these workshops, offer a means of transforming and communicating the experience of exile through artistic works.

It is important to emphasize the aesthetic value of these creations, as well as the messages they convey. Art facilitates intercultural exchange and the discovery and encounter of others. It also serves to highlight people's life experiences and the inequalities they face, while providing spaces to speak out. Corporality, sensoriality and cultural codes play a predominant role in these artistic expressions, sometimes even before and in parallel with the use of speech. Finally, these artistic practices often take on a political dimension, initiating a dialogue on social and political issues linked to migration.

The women taking part in the workshops navigate between a deep-seated motivation and the challenges they face on a daily basis. They appropriate an intimate space where their body, voice, imagination and emotions take center stage. In their interactions with others, they experiment with physical contact, gaze, empathic perception of others, support and mutual aid. They dare to confront art, setting themselves personal challenges. These include staging one's own story, juggling between what is clearly expressed and what remains implicit.

Observations of these workshops reveal a group dynamic marked by constant composition and recomposition, influenced by the participants' daily constraints. The fluctuating presence of the women, often dictated by the needs of their children, influenced the management of the workshop. Interruptions to pick up or breastfeed the children were frequent, making the children's presence visible. However, despite these "distractions", the participants managed to maintain a notable level of engagement and enjoyment in the proposed activities. This observation underlines the adaptability and flexibility of the group, which was able to integrate family constraints without compromising active participation and interaction within the exercises. It also illustrates the importance of taking into account the daily realities of the participants in the design and management of the workshops.

Artistic workshops enable women to explore their ability to express themselves and activate their imagination, which is a key process in empowering them and reclaiming their bodies. Migratory journeys (often fraught with violence), asylum-seeking situations and other immigration procedures impose a loss of control over one's own body and freedom, and consequently a diminished capacity to act. This creates a dynamic where women often participate in workshops seeking to do well what is asked of them, not out of personal appropriation, but out of conformity to external expectations. The aim of the workshops is to counter this dynamic by helping participants regain control of their bodies and reassert their autonomy and personal freedom.

Artistic workshops also provide an opportunity for women to share their experiences and the difficulties they encounter on a daily basis. In particular, housing is a central concern for the women interviewed. These women live in precarious and often temporary conditions, either in shared apartments or in "first-class" hotels. Life in these hotels is described in very negative terms, marked by strict restrictions and the absence of basic amenities, such as a functional kitchen.

This situation forces the women to buy pre-prepared food, which can be financially and logically restrictive. Access to accommodation, particularly in hotels, is heavily dependent on the welfare system symbolized by the "115", a social emergency service in France. The need to renew their accommodation every month by calling this number adds a further layer of stress and uncertainty. Difficulties in communicating with the service, such as long telephone waits and the absence of physical offices, exacerbate the women's precarious situation. Furthermore, obtaining stable housing seems to be an arduous process, often inaccessible without considerable insistence and perseverance. Once the administrative documents have been obtained, the services supposed to help in the search for housing are not always efficient nor proactive. These factors underline a systemic flaw in assistance to vulnerable people, where help is present but insufficient or poorly adapted to the real needs of beneficiaries.

Despite these challenges, the women demonstrate solidarity and resilience. For example, by demonstrating community involvement through mutual aid, which testifies to the deep understanding and empathy between the women who also meet and reconnect through art workshops, an empathy reinforced by their shared experiences of precariousness.

9) RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations aim to improve migration management by taking into account the experiences lived by migrants and integrating artistic and cultural practices to strengthen resilience and social inclusion. They have been developed based on experiences in local contexts, while ensuring their adaptability to other environments, and are divided into two sections.

Recommendations for improving the journeys and reception of migrants:

- Structural Reforms and Fundamental Rights
 - Review border reinforcement policies to prevent deaths and guarantee the safety of people on the move, pursuing a policy of empathy and solidarity.
 - Implement structural reforms to guarantee a decent standard of living in shelters, respecting human dignity and fundamental rights.
 - Recognize and address the exclusion and marginalization that occur not only at borders, but also within the European Union, by fighting everyday racism, discrimination and violence.
 - Ensure the provision of shelter, security and food as prerequisites to any further integration measures.
 - Train and qualify staff to ensure adequate protection, especially for vulnerable asylum seekers.
- Gender Issues and Migrant Women's Experiences
 - Recognize and address the specific experiences and challenges faced by women in the migration process.
 - Integrate a gender dimension into migration management policies and practices.
- Housing
 - Revise emergency accommodation policies to better meet the needs of vulnerable people, especially women, who face multiple housing obstacles.
 - Improve social services to provide adequate support to vulnerable people.
- Health and Psychological Support
 - Improve access to basic medicines and healthcare, including psychological support, for migrants in accommodation centers.
 - Reduce the distance between shelters and health centers to facilitate access to care.
- Employment and Employability
 - Implement coherent policies to support the employability of migrants, including training and skills development programs.
 - Provide special attention and provisions for vulnerable groups such as single women and single mothers.

Recommendations concerning the role of artistic and cultural practices in improving the journeys and reception of migrants:

- Using the arts and non-formal education
 - Integrate non-formal learning activities and the arts into refugee camps to improve resilience and empower refugees.
 - Use artistic expression to overcome language barriers and provide a common basis for communication.
- Accessible and flexible workshops
 - Organize workshops that are flexible in terms of timing and composition, including spaces for children, and allow for mixed or homogeneous participation.
 - Ensure freedom and creativity in the proposed activities.
- Involvement of local players
 - Involve local social actors in the processes of knowledge production and development of social change practices.
 - Encourage accessible spaces for dialogue on themes such as food, employment and art.
- Recognition of Social Demands
 - Recognize and respond to social demands from local communities to build a path to self-determination "from below".
 - Integrate community needs into policies and initiatives.
- Science and theater as tools for social change
 - Change the dominant narrative that presents migration as a threat, by highlighting the benefits of migration for society, such as diversity, economic impetus and intercultural exchange.
 - Consider that science and theater are rooted in everyday processes and can be effective tools for social change.
 - Use these disciplines to counter essentialization processes and negative stereotypes of migrants.

10. CONCLUSIONS

La Nomad House project (2023-2024, Creative Europe) offered an essential new perspective on managing migration issues, using the arts and non-formal learning as tools for social transformation. By bringing together artists, researchers and migrants across six different countries, the project highlighted the realities experienced by migrant people on a daily basis, and confronted the stigma and discrimination they face.

The activities carried out as part of the project, such as the creative workshops, the collection of testimonies, the conferences, the play and the exhibition, not only facilitated expression and dialogue, but also contributed to a better understanding of the challenges and needs of migrants. The researchers involved played a crucial role in observing and analyzing the creative processes and actively participating in the discussions, enriching the reflections and recommendations formulated.

The recommendations resulting from this project are mainly aimed at improving migration management, with a focus on migrants' life experiences and the integration of artistic and cultural practices. They underline the need for structural reforms to ensure decent living conditions in accommodation centers, the importance of coherent policies to support employability and access to health services, and the urgent need for adequate training for staff assisting migrants. In addition, they highlight the crucial role of the arts in building resilience, reducing vulnerability and encouraging social inclusion.

The project demonstrated that the involvement of local social actors and the recognition of social demands coming from "below" are essential to building sustainable solutions adapted to the needs of migrant communities. Furthermore, the flexibility and accessibility of creative workshops, as well as the integration of a gender perspective, are key elements in ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of initiatives to support migrants.

In conclusion, La Nomad House has demonstrated that the arts and non-formal education can play a decisive role in improving the living conditions of migrants and promoting their social inclusion. The recommendations set out in this policy paper, based on local experience and applicable to different contexts, offer an important roadmap for decision-makers and practitioners seeking to improve the management of migration issues. They call for a more humane, inclusive and creative approach, recognizing migrants not only as beneficiaries of policies but also as active agents of social change.



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