

WP2 - D 2.2

VADE-MECUM FOR EFFECTIVE MIGRANTS' SOCIAL INCLUSION PATHS

GRANT AGREEMENT - Project 101173505



Co-funded by
the European Union





Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
The scope of this guide	4
Definition of social inclusion	5
The intersection of social inclusion and tailoring	7
Target audience of the guide	9
BEST PRACTICES	11
Sustainable practices that benefit underserved communities	11
Free education for all	12
Flexibility and adaptation to the needs	13
Inclusive participation & assessment	14
Cultural sensitivity in training and employment	16
Exit path	17
Create awareness	19
EXAMPLES - CASE STUDIES	21
ANKAA Project: a training path that links education with employability	21
FARSI PROSSIMO	25
ESPERO FRANCE	29
Worldwide examples that foster social innovation within the tailoring sector	31
PRACTICAL ADVICE - HOW TO	33
Community engagement	34
Supportive environment	35
Open access tools and materials	37
Accessibility	39
Language and communication	40
Modular training	41
Cultural sensitivity	41
Challenges	43
Measuring Impact	44
Checklist for facilitators	45
Checklist for employers in the tailoring industry	46
CONCLUSION	47



INTRODUCTION

The scope of this guide

This document, together with the Needs Assessment Report is a deliverable of Work Package 2 “Exchange of Best Practices and Mutual Learning Activities” within the EU project “texTALES” co-financed by the European Commission through the CREA CULT programme under the CREA-CULT-2024-COOP call for proposals. Building on the findings outlined in the **Needs Assessment Report**, this document continues the process of identifying and addressing the key challenges and opportunities related to the inclusion of displaced individuals through social inclusion tailoring labs. While the Needs Assessment Report highlighted the specific needs, gaps, and potential solutions for empowering migrant and refugee communities, this document presents practical guidelines, strategies, and a comprehensive checklist for facilitators. The **Needs Assessment Report** laid the groundwork by providing insights into the demographic, cultural, and socio-economic factors influencing the integration of displaced persons. It focused on understanding their challenges in the context of employment, personal development, and social inclusion. A big gap outlined in the Needs assessment report was the training of trainers and staff on matters of social inclusion, thus it was important to create a document that would be very practical for anyone that is working on the field. These tools are designed to create a conducive environment for the effective implementation of social inclusion activities through tailoring, which is central to the success of the texTALES project.

It contains practical and theoretical advice from experts on social inclusion within the tailoring sector. Based on the know-how of the following 3 partners: the ANKAA Project, Farsi Prossimo and Espero France, a hands-on guidebook was created with the aim to assist other organisations that tackle the issue of social exclusion of migrants through practical activities and crafts. Starting from the theoretical background around inclusion and then exploring very practical day to day issues, it aims to offer transferable answers that can be adapted to any region.

The geopolitical context of migration is very complex and changes constantly. A practical guide cannot tackle or even address all the complexities faced by communities experiencing a sudden increase in new arrivals, as systems may lack the flexibility to adapt to a wide range of needs. Instead, it can give inspiration and guidance to fieldworkers to use their skills in a way that can foster inclusion and to create opportunities for people to grow. Our aim is to share our expertise, the lessons learned through the years and open a dialogue for an ongoing exchange of practices. We believe in free education, open-source training material and in the exchange of knowledge. This collaboration started among the four different countries and aims to be developed further and bring new insights for our work.



Definition of social inclusion

'Social inclusion' and 'migration' are very broad terms; thus, we need to define how we use them in this guide and what the limitations of this research are. This manual is based on the examples of organisations active in Greece, Italy and France, better reflecting the needs of European Mediterranean countries that historically served as the 'gate' to Europe due to their big coastline. Throughout history, people have been coming from the African and Asian continents for economic reasons, e.g. to find a job or to participate in trade, due to climate change or because of wars and political changes in their home countries. But in the last ten years there has been a sudden influx of forcibly displaced populations mainly from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Ukraine that draw the attention of this phenomenon globally. According to the [Eurostat Database on Migration and Asylum](#) in 2023 27.3 million residents in the EU are non-EU citizens.

The United Nations [defines international migration](#) as *"the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence and across an international border to a country of which they are not nationals"*. This includes all migrants, regardless of their legal status, or the nature, or motive of their movement. The term 'refugee' describes any person that was forced to flee their own country due to fear of persecution as a result of who they are, what they believe in or say, or because of armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder. For the purposes of this study, we use the broader term of migration as we don't examine the reason why somebody left their country, but focus on the inclusion of anyone that chose to live in another country and has difficulty adapting to the new context. It is remarkable to add that even locals very often phase exclusion due to health difficulties, homelessness, economic and social reasons, but the focus will be on displaced people.

The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) recognises the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development. The agenda's core principle is to "leave no one behind," which includes migrants. Many of the Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contain targets and indicators which are relevant to migrants or migration and there are a lot of European actions around the topic that try to cover basic needs such as temporary housing, economic aid, healthcare and other services, but inclusion is a very long process that expands beyond the first needs.

In fact, 'inclusion' is described as *"the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society"* and *"the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society"* (World Bank, 2013, pp. 3-4). Similarly, the Commission of the European Communities defines it as: *"Social inclusion is a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have greater*



participation in decision making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights" (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, p. 9).

On the contrary, *"Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to most people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole"* (Levitas and others, 2007, p. 9).



From these definitions it is understood that migration is a very broad and complicated situation that needs cross-sector solutions that don't have to do only with the cover of basic needs, but with a cultivation of culture from both sides (the newcomers and the host communities). Inclusion is a process and thus it needs to be seen as a long-term plan that affects the mindset and attitude of people. Stereotypes need to be broken for people to be recognised for their personal characteristics and not to be judged by their nationality, religion, age, colour, language or culture. At the same time the newcomers also need to



open to the new perspective and customs of the new society. It is a two-sided process that needs the alliance of various actors in society: policy makers, state agencies, educational centres, civil society movements, academics, activists, business leaders and individuals. The numbers of migrants worldwide show that “inclusion matters”.

The intersection of social inclusion and tailoring

And what does tailoring have to do with inclusion? Among the various daily issues that an excluded person faces from housing to healthcare, communication, labour discrimination and others, how can tailoring give a gateway?

The usual main pillars of exclusion have to do with lack of credit, housing, labour, access to health services and education. All these elements are interconnected and influenced by each country's systems in place and bureaucracy as well as the market. At first sight tailoring might seem irrelevant to matters of housing and healthcare, but textile manufacturing is one of the biggest industries worldwide with a revenue of \$1.49 trillion in 2022 (Global Apparel Manufacturing Market Summary, Competitive Analysis and Forecast), thus providing opportunities of labour and income in various countries including the European Mediterranean countries. Clothes manufacturing includes jobs in sewing, cutting, pattern making, handicrafts, textile manufacturing, designing, weaving, printing, machine operators and logistics. Most of the job opportunities are manual labour jobs and have to do with practical skills that are very similar worldwide. Thus, tailoring can provide opportunities of labour, steady income, skills development and hence stability in one's life in terms of economy, house and basic needs.

For this to be done in a sustainable way the labour market needs to comply with the latest labour laws and rights. These include among others a safe working environment, healthcare, fair salaries, keeping of maximum work hours per week and rest periods, work life balance and respect of human rights. If these pillars are respected, then a stable job can be a catalyst in one's well-being, growth and inclusion in a society as it provides economic sufficiency and a social environment. Apart from the economic benefits, the work environment can assist in the creation of a network and in the mingling of migrants with the locals. It fosters communication, trust and exchange of cultures through daily collaboration.

Tailoring is not only an income generating activity, but also a motive for makers to meet, socialise and exchange skills. Our clothes and accessories often carry craftsmanship and creative elements that keep the cultural heritage alive. The exchange of skills and showcasing of craft objects can be the motive of bringing different cultures together, as well as part of advocacy campaigns. These objects can be the medium that sends messages from the excluded part of society to the host communities and vice versa. Tailoring and textile crafts can create art pieces that break stereotypes and sentiments of apathy and fear and give a voice to those that are marginalised.



At the same time, handicrafts have been known to be therapeutic. Sewing and creating garments is an activity that needs focus, patience, practice and creativity. It gives the satisfaction of creation and completion and can help to ease one's mind, forget current troubles and get joy from the activity. A lot of migrants suffer from post-traumatic disorders and anxiety that could be alleviated through the slow and repetitive process of sewing, weaving or mending. Especially when these activities are done within a group and with a mentor, the feeling of belonging and sharing can enrich the experience. Thus, creating training circles with tailoring activities can foster inclusion as it gives opportunities for socialisation and the creation of a network within a safe environment, developing one's skills, securing for better jobs, advocating through crafts, relaxing and building confidence.





Target audience of the guide

The aim of this guide is to give inspiration to anyone who wants to contribute to the inclusion of migrants using tailoring as a skill. Since the state actions and European provisions cannot cover the spectrum of inclusion, extra effort needs to be taken from individuals and organisations that work in the humanitarian sector.

Personal motivation and responsibility can drive individuals to take action towards promoting equity. Social inclusion can begin in our everyday lives, starting with our neighborhoods and communities. Given the growing number of migrants worldwide, it's likely that marginalized groups are nearby, in need of connection. Even simple conversations and interactions with each other can help foster social inclusion and enlighten locals on the needs and aspirations of people that initially might look different to them.





In the context of tailoring, the advice shared could be more useful to training centres (private or public), vocational training centres and non-for-profit organisations, teachers of sewing and crafts, employees and business leaders in the manufacturing sector, tailors from any country, facilitators in the humanitarian context, activists, fashion designers and any actor of the textile supply chain. Having foreign populations in mind when thinking of processes can drastically change the manufacturing steps. A fabric supplier could be interested in importing goods from another region, a fashion designer might be curious to embed a unique handicraft process in their designs and a factory owner might search for more hands. The design sector usually doesn't include a humanitarian perspective. Incorporating social training in the design field would change the mindset and then the procedures in a very drastic way.

Nevertheless, these chapters were made in the mindset of how somebody that wants to offer a training of tailoring could do it with an inclusive mindset, thus thinking of different educational needs but also linking the training to the actual working environment and the context of the society. Hence, it will help especially those that facilitate such activities and can have an impact in the syllabus and the structure of services offered. Additionally, individuals working in the humanitarian sector can apply the insights they gain to other skill development opportunities, as the principles of inclusion can be relevant to any practical skill across various industries.

There are some limitations and challenges to be taken in mind when following these steps. The impact of social inclusion efforts on individuals or communities in the tailoring industry can be difficult to measure quantitatively. The effects might be long-term, subtle, or multidimensional, making it hard to track specific outcomes, so during an evaluation it would be advisable to also qualitatively track the progress made. Of course, in different countries or regions the population and their needs will vary, as well as the local societies characteristics. Somebody might focus for example on subgroups, such as women, older people, individuals with disabilities, or people coming from very different original countries with very specific cultural customs that constraint them. Local economic constraints or political barriers can also limit the scope of research, especially because social inclusion efforts in tailoring are influenced by external factors such as government policies, economic crises, or changing labor market conditions. These limits highlight the complexities of researching social inclusion in tailoring and underscore the need for careful planning, stakeholder engagement, and a nuanced approach to studying the issue.



BEST PRACTICES

Sustainable practices that benefit underserved communities

Sustainability goes hand in hand with inclusion and the prosperity of people. Looking at the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>) we can see '1 No poverty', '4 Quality education', '8 Decent work and economic growth' and '10 Reduced inequalities' are highlighted. All these are interconnected and can lead to the inclusion of underserved people into society. Any practice that has 'human' at its core and aims to support groups of marginalized people can only lead to a more sustainable society. The fashion industry and its educational background have a critical role to play in advancing the UN's SDGs. By shifting toward more sustainable, ethical, and inclusive practices, the sector can contribute to achieving these global goals while reducing its negative impact on people and the planet.

Starting from the European guidelines, policies, and frameworks that align with the SDGs and emphasize the inclusion of migrants, the basic principles are apparent. Adopted in 2015, the European Agenda on Migration is a comprehensive framework that includes migration management and the integration of migrants. It encourages European countries to create inclusive policies that ensure migrants' access to education, healthcare, employment, and social services. It also promotes equal treatment and protection of migrants, aligning with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

These efforts that focus on integrating migrants into the social, economic, and cultural fabric of European societies stress the importance of education and employability. Everyone has the right to access free and qualitative education and to fair employment. Through this guide we aim to provide high quality educational activities for underserved populations, which is closely linked to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). At the same time, it is understood that the rest of the society should be included in this equation in order to bridge the gap. No matter how many opportunities we create for vulnerable people, if we keep treating them as a separate entity, they will never be included in any group. On the contrary, 'different' groups need to be brought together, work together, collaborate, meet each other and have daily exchanges. This can happen by creating these opportunities or 'meeting points', but also through creating awareness on this topic and advocating through various means.

In this chapter we will see a general methodology to enhance inclusion in the fashion field, but also what can be done from the opposite side and the locals' and employers' consciousness. We will analyse the process of improving the terms of participation of students through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights. The context of work will be discussed briefly and most of the general practices can be adapted to align with SDG 8 (Decent Work).



Free education for all

In relation to SDG 4, inclusive and equitable quality education is the most important element to ensure the inclusion of marginalized people. It is highly important to offer the opportunity to study and to excel at a skill to people that struggle economically. It is very common to see newcomers as well locals with a low status in different European countries to spend all of their time working in any low paid job they find in order to make a living and abandoning forever their initial skills as well as the learning of the local language and doing activities for their well-being. On the contrary, wealthier people have the privilege to study and educate themselves throughout their lives, since they can afford it economically and they are not so time restricted.

Letting people train their skills and offering a high level of education with no cost is maybe one of the most democratic ways to equalise humans with diverse background, potentials and conditions. Yet millions of people worldwide continue to be excluded from education for reasons which might include gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or social origin, language, religion, nationality, economic condition or ability. Inclusive education works to identify all barriers to education and remove them and covers everything from curricula to pedagogy and teaching.

It is important to speak not only about free education, but most of all of 'high quality' education that gives exactly the same opportunities as someone would get from a private institute. The quality has to do with the teacher, the update of the curriculum to the recent market, the address of basic skills needed in a thorough way, the will to be understood by a diverse audience, the creation of visual or audio material needed for the comprehension. The character of the teacher of course plays a major role there, but an organised system in place and clear curriculum linked to actual needs, can be the basis of an educational plan.

Specifically, within the tailoring system, which is a manual skill requiring long hours of practice, it would be recommended to offer not only training, but also tools and machines for people to train. Having professional guidance is a very important aspect, but it is also a skill that requires a vast amount of practicing hours to excel at it and most of the new students cannot afford to buy sewing machines and the necessary tools and materials. When everyone has access to the same tools, regardless of their socio-economic status, it ensures that the quality of education doesn't depend on one's ability to afford expensive resources, making education more equitable. With the practice they gain valuable hands-on experience that will build their skills and confidence. This combination of free tools and education can be transformative, giving them the skills to create their own products or even start their own small businesses.



Flexibility and adaptation to the needs

The participatory nature of the training seminars suggested here requires the trainer to play a facilitatory role that encourages learn-by-doing rather than by simply listening. Clearly, trainers will need to have the necessary ability and attitude to play this role, as well as experience in the actual methodology and approach. A facilitator needs to create a flexible and relaxed environment in which participants can share control over the training and contribute to the learning themselves. The kinds of capabilities and attributes needed to be a trainer and facilitator within the humanitarian include:

- ◆ a warm personality, with an ability to show approval and acceptance of trainees.
- ◆ good social and leadership skills, especially an ability to bring the group together and exercise control without overpowering the process.
- ◆ a way of teaching that generates and uses the ideas and skills of the participants.
- ◆ a careful organizer so that resource materials are clearly presented, and logistics are smoothly handled.
- ◆ skill in noticing and resolving participants' problems.
- ◆ enthusiasm for the subject and capacity to convey information in an interesting way.
- ◆ flexibility in responding to participants' needs.

Equity is a process that begins with divergent thinking. It recognizes the imbalance and requires a commitment to necessary goals, resources, respect, continual action, and evaluation of progress. Empathy, the ability to perceive and comprehend the emotions of others, allows us to understand and recognize different perspectives and worldviews. As we understand more ways of thinking, we can create spaces that intentionally allow for a plurality of approaches to thrive.

No matter what the context of the course is there will always be space for some collective decision-making moments. In a typical course everything is pre-decided by the teachers, but in a flexible course, there are opportunities to change the process and the result depending on the students' will. Generating ideas through a collaborative divergent thinking session can help determine participants' needs which can then be used as a springboard to determine possible solutions. Such sessions that give voice to different considerations help to put biases aside and to bring the team together by fostering stronger bonds. Problem solving together with the participants is the only way to tune everything to their mindset, to empower them and to be able to adapt to them and not to personal assumptions.



Inclusive participation & assessment

The previous step will naturally lead to an inclusive participation. When a teacher listens to the students and adapts to their needs, the course is already done in an inclusive manner. There are some ways to ensure if indeed everyone is heard. Betts and Bloom (2013) argue that the humanitarian system has historically had 'two worlds of innovation': one that focuses on process generating 'top-down solutions' to improve organisational responses to challenges; and another, 'bottom-up', that focuses on community participation, harnessing the skills and talents of the beneficiaries' organisations are working with. The second model can be adapted to educational opportunities within a community to create social change. The 'bottom-up' process emphasizes on participants' intuition and encounters them as innovators and not as mere students. The existing structures and policies that both the government and market use, are usually outdated and ignore the new technological, communication means and the capabilities that arise from cross-disciplinary collaborations. On the contrary, small organisations and communities can adapt faster to change if they are willing to try new methods of working and learning.

Practically, this requires assessments that can be held even from the very beginning when the course is being planned in order to make sure that the basic needs are covered and that it fulfills its purpose. Pilot projects and focus groups can be very helpful to give a clear insight of what is going well and what is going wrong. If the time is not enough to conduct trials, at least a questionnaire to potential participants can also determine if the content and methods are interesting to students.

The goal of researching beforehand is not to design a course in order to cover every single need, because this is usually impossible. But it is to grasp the general consensus and understand if what you plan is needed and where you deviate from the actual needs. The various opinions will also give a hint on where flexibility is needed in order to bring the group together and warn of challenges that might arise.

During a course it is also recommended to have regular checkup questions and allow the students to express their difficulties. If the course is done in a way where dialogue is always open, this comes naturally. On the contrary, in the traditional hierarchy of teaching where the teacher explains and students only follow, it is highly rare for them to express their opinion. Creative and hands-on skills give so many opportunities for inclusive participation. Especially as the participants grow their skills and they start to experiment and find their own way of making something, it is very common that they will share their enthusiasm and process with others and one can start teaching the other. It is then up to the facilitators to enhance this co-teaching experience and engage people even more, not only to practice, but also to collaborate as a team and exchange feedback. Phrases such as 'this is wrong' do not assist this process. For people to become active participants, they need to feel that there is a non-judgemental atmosphere, and that the teacher is there to assist them to do the best that they can. This doesn't mean that one shouldn't correct them. On the contrary, the high standards should not be compromised. But the emphasis should be on how something can be better and not on being wrong. Especially in creative arts we need to be



open minded to many different styles and let people experiment without cutting their personal wit.

Inclusive courses need to start with a very clear briefing with simple language that will allow the participants to react on the initial questions/tasks as well as allow some time for reflection at the end of each session, where the group can come together again and comment. Clear instructions, brainstorming time and reflection are indispensable to create the ground for people to express themselves and maybe to participate for the first time in their lives in a course where they are not only listeners. Lastly, some feedback sessions at the end of each cycle are useful to determine if the outcome was successful as a content, how people feel, if the environment felt safe for them and what would they change. In participatory courses there is always space for change for future activities and lots to be learned from including more and more voices.

Cultural sensitivity in training and employment

An aspect that is not to be forgotten especially when we talk about migrant inclusion is cultural sensitivity both in the educational and in the professional environment. To make somebody feel included, first presupposes the creation of an environment of respect where people are safe. There might be cultural barriers within a team that have to do with language, religion, culture, the social norm, food habits. If there is awareness of diversity it is easier to handle uncomfortable situations in a group dynamic.

A non-judgemental environment that treats with respect any need is fundamental. This might seem challenging when there is a language barrier that can cause miscommunication, frustration, doubts. For this reason, it is significant not to base a course on words, but rather on visual material, demonstrations and videos that can be understood easily by anyone. Within the tailor section we often give language material with specific sector vocabulary to slowly build basic communication that will further assist people in their career. Safeguarding the feeling of respect is important not only in the classroom but throughout the whole experience of a service provided and within a space.

Apart from the language, very often religion and ethics seems to be an apparent obstacle even if it seems irrelevant. There have been many women for example that couldn't go out of their home, they were afraid, they had to ask their husbands permission, they would feel uncomfortable being in the same space with men, they would suddenly go out of a course to pray or were very shy to speak. All these habits might look strange to a European eye and can very easily cause polarisation between people. The answer there is not to change anyone's mind, but both sides to understand each other and the reason behind the act. Most often everything can be clarified with a simple talk and slowly if the environment is welcoming people will become more at ease, let go off their guard and come out of their shy shell.



In a working environment there are very often strict rules and regulations that do not accommodate different needs, especially if they clash with productivity. For a working environment to be inclusive it would be good to be more flexible on different customs and needs. What if somebody needs to pray during their working hours for example? Or what if a woman wears a hijab? These are some common questions that arise, and opinion varies on what are the limits of acceptance.

At this point not only understanding a different culture is enough, but decisions and actions need to be taken in any environment that determines the inclusion or not. Most materials and research about cultural competence mirror the four factors of cultural intelligence by urging people to not only know information about other cultures (knowledge), but to be confident in how to engage with others (strategy), to be willing to learn more (drive) (Brislin, 1993), and finally to act (action). In other words, it is not enough to have knowledge about other cultures; if you are not willing to engage and develop relationships with others, you will not be successful.

Exit path



All the above strategies can benefit people, but very often there is the risk of institutionalising them instead of helping them to interact with the local society if there is no exit path. For migrants with post-traumatic stress and social difficulties it is highly likely that when they feel comfortable in one place, they might not want to leave again to an unknown place with new people. In our projects we have seen quite often very talented people to be



very afraid to work for example in big tailoring factories or even in smaller businesses and lose their social skills in the new context and all the progress that they have made. Some intermediate stages between an educational centre and a real life working environment are necessary to bridge this gap. An exit path can vary significantly depending on the people, the characteristics of the region, the country, the specific NGO, the working environment, and the legal and immigration policies in place.

Some NGOs that offer tailoring classes also partner with local businesses or social enterprises to help migrants transition into the workforce. After completing the training, they may help them find employment in the fashion industry, in garment manufacturing, or with companies in need of skilled workers. Establishing links with the local stakeholders as a training centre is easier than each individual needing to search on his/her own without the language, connections and knowledge of the processes. Specifically in the Greek environment, ANKAA does this in two different ways. One is the establishment of a network with other NGOs that work in the field of migrants employability and organise job fairs and interviews. And the second and very important way is through the preparation of each beneficiary specifically for the Greek market. For example in the Greek context it is highly complicated to navigate the bureaucratic steps needed for somebody to get the permission and official documents to work in a legal way. This is why in most cases foreign people that don't have a supportive network end up working in unofficial jobs without health insurance and other basic rights. To fight this, informative sessions are needed to verify that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities, as well as personal counselling to build their CVs. One very helpful process used in ANKAA Project was a roleplay game that simulated the interview for the job as well as some uncomfortable conversations or situations that may arise in the working environment. The participants felt uncomfortable at first, but after the first trial got familiar with the conversation and the feeling of exposure and at the end understood the importance of soft skills development alongside the practical ones.

Tailoring skills can also empower migrants to start their own small businesses, such as opening a tailoring shop, offering custom clothing services, or working as freelance seamstresses. In this case, it would be very helpful to offer business development programs to help with the entrepreneurial process that might vary a lot from country to country and depending on the items made. Sales could happen in an actual space or fairs, but also virtually by creating a website, eshop and by using social media. Explaining the differences, the economic burdens, taxes, marketing strategies and daily work that is required can be challenging for someone that has never done it before and knows only the practical part of making something. But especially for people that have extensive experience in tailoring, this can be a great opportunity to showcase their talent, become known and attract more orders and customers. A training centre could also be a hub where various makers meet each other from different contexts with the aim to foster a collaboration. In some countries it is easier to create within a group a social enterprise or cooperatives where migrants can work collectively. In these environments, migrants who have learned tailoring can work alongside others to produce goods (such as clothing or home textiles), and the profits are often reinvested into the community or used to support the participants. This could also be done in collaboration with local designers, fair trade networks or ethical fashion initiatives, allowing them to sell their work in international markets under ethical conditions. The more



people are involved, the more opportunities arise for the participants to gain new experiences, learn new methods of working, practice their technical and soft skills, get new ideas and have new visions for their future. The collaborations and the expansion of the network also provides a stronger voice in society and the chance to catch people's attention.

Applying for a new job or venturing into a personal business can be difficult also because of communication differences. There might be other NGOs or public services that offer comprehensive integration programs that go beyond just vocational training. These programs can include language classes, cultural orientation, legal advice, and social support. Tailoring classes might serve as a part of a broader program aimed at helping migrants integrate into society. In general, tackling this issue is a cross-sector collaboration that requires different specialisations in order to have high quality results and not a narrow thinking limited within the practical tailoring aspect.

Create awareness



'Cut from the same cloth'

This phrase has been in use for centuries and is believed to have originated in England in the 16th century, to signify that people might seem different but are made of the same "stuff," sharing essential characteristics, in a similar way to how different clothes are made from the same kind of fabric. Especially for neighbouring countries very often there are economic and political disputes and rivalries while in reality people share the same essential characteristics. But through the observation of history, it is very clear that there is a constant change of borders, political states, languages and cultures as well as exchanges of citizens and customs.



The last part of inclusion strategies in any sector focuses on the consciousness of the other side of a society: locals and how we can shift their perspective, provide a vehicle of communication and participatory experiences through which migrants can have a voice within the local society, show their talents and feel included as esteemed members. Breaking stereotypes is a very long process. It entails the normalisation of messages and acts that at the beginning might provoke and irritate the old mindset that are negatively inclined towards the 'different'.

How can we change the narrative?

According to Tasha L. Lewis, associate professor at Cornell University, 'Probably the most important deterrent to user engagement is lack of information'. Especially in the case of areas where nationalism rises and the public media only share one specific point of view, it is logical that the average person will be unfamiliar with the concept of expatriation. In this case fashion can be political. Again, through collaboration and cross disciplinary efforts, one voice can become stronger. Building a network and collaborating with local entrepreneurs, designers, teachers, suppliers and even public authorities will multiply these voices and might reach a different audience.

Investing time in campaigns, promotional material and advertisement through social media of social inclusion in fashion is as important as actually doing it. There is not enough awareness and information on the topic of migration. Many Europeans ignore what this entails and consider it a very distant topic. A more personal narrative can attract their interest. Apart from written material, that is necessary, lived experiences can be uplifting for both sides. It is very possible that even in a small city migrants form their own communities, shops, restaurants and go into specific public places, while locals might inhabit different neighbours, thus not really having any contact. Creating occasions where they can meet and interact is crucial. Crafts and fashion can be part of that. Facilitating open training activities, bringing locals into the training centre or offering handicraft activities out in the city where migrants can share their skills with anyone out of their network can change the perspective. When people do something practical together it is easier to forget titles, they can create a unique bond and trust through the process. One can admire the other for their skills and personal talent and understand that they might have something in common.

Social media plays a major role in the creation of relationships and the spread of news and information. They can enhance these experiences and play a pivotal role for spreading positive messages. But also, in the case of young entrepreneurs, they help promote their products, build the image of their brand, spread their personal message and create a unique storytelling to accompany their products. The focus of campaigns on socially conscious brands is not on the mere product, but on the makers, the process of creation, the methods and materials employed, in all of the journey of this item that gives it an added value and creates an emotional attachment. By becoming more extroverted, one can gain a voice in society, share with more people their skills and their talents to finally attract a larger audience.

A close example to that is the creation of Fashion Revolution in 2014. It has prompted a worldwide campaign in 90 countries on the human rights of workers in fashion that



motivated end users, brands, labour unions, universities and other organisations to rethink the supply chain and the way they dress (Gwilt, A., 2019). By holding various events, they created awareness among people with different backgrounds and urged them to participate in various activities. The goal of these events was to inform people of the social aspects of fashion such as social inclusion, labour and human rights, cultural appreciation, diversity and equity. After this massive effort, more social networks were created and the #whomademyclothes hashtag became viral. This had a significant impact on society becoming informed on the supply chain and the transparency through traditional media or social networks. The importance of such activities lies in the normalisation of the new messages that they carry. By spreading more and more often social messages in different forms and means, more experiences around the messages are created. The medium can be a conversation, an exhibition, a t-shirt, a protest, an advertisement on a bus, a podcast, an interview in a famous tv show, a fashion event or a party, a conversation with a friend that shared his experiences. All of these can act as an agent of change.

What is important is that the new social messages interfere with the everyday life of consumers, in a way that slowly will become the norm. In the established hierarchy of the fashion industry, there is a 'void between those who wear the garment and those actors who produce it.' (Fletcher, K. and Grose, L., 2012).

EXAMPLES - CASE STUDIES

ANKAA Project: a training path that links education with employability

ANKAA Project has been a training centre in Athens since 2017. It has hosted more than 1600 students for courses of Greek, English, IT, culinary art, sewing, wood and metal work, beekeeping, screen printing and other practical skills. It is dedicated to offer free training to anyone in need but initially started as a vocational training centre for migrants that were arriving in Greece. After 3 years of providing a big range of open workshops the focus turned in tailoring and Greek since there was a need in the sewing industry and Greek was the main gap detected between the Greek society and the newcomers.

All of the operations in ANKAA have a humanitarian aspect, always trying to respect each person for their personal value, their skills, their will and dreams. The activities link education and employability opportunities through specific curriculum adapted to the market needs, counselling and internships in the tailoring sector. ANKAA hosts an ethical tailor lab where upcycled products are manufactured from old inflatable boats and others are made with local materials or combination of those.



The sewing courses offered are divided in three different levels from beginners to professionals guiding the students in their development as tailors. Starting from zero to the perfection of this practical skill, the training is accompanied with mentorship and soft skills advice that will assist them to adapt in the Greek context of manufacturing. Specifically with the 'Crafting Careers' program that launched in 2024 the goal is that at the end of each course, graduates get the assistance they need to find a job within the tailoring sector. For this reason, an internship is offered upon completion of the training. It will give many of them an opportunity to set foot in this sector. It is an opportunity to gain professional experience, but also a proof for future employers that they have the skills to be hired. The interns are reimbursed for their work, learn practical and soft skills, have their CV made and get used in claiming better jobs.

In Greece specifically, one of the biggest challenges to employability includes the navigation to a very complicated bureaucratic system that for many foreigners has been the main obstacle to obtaining a formal job. The ANKAA staff spends a lot of time explaining and accompanying students to the public offices needed for them to get the adequate papers and translating for them, a service that for example is not provided by any body of the state. This is an added service that ANKAA decided to offer as it was observed through the years that there was a very big gap for people that were very talented and had all the other criteria to get a job, but because of this were forced to work without an official contract, health insurance and other benefits.

Human rights within the tailoring system are violated in many countries. Thus, very early in the project the need to create informative sessions with the tailoring students came up. Apart from this, many other topics are covered within the courses and the internships at ANKAA. These include the specific vocabulary in Greek and English for a tailor and the



'habits' of the Greek working environment. The courses emphasise the respect from both ways of the space, tidiness, clear communication, being on time and working in a group and collaborating.



The economic and social benefit from the activities is that the students have a specialised training with which they can find remunerative work paying more than low skill professions. The personal benefits are that they become self-reliant and confident. They understand their rights for fair wages and conditions of working. Moreover, the old students serve as role models that help to enlarge this community and spread the message. Because of their positive experiences they have taken the role of influencers and encouraged more people to join. In the long term, what this program has achieved is to bring out the autonomy of people while offering professional working experience. Some of the students are hired in the internal social business, others find a job in exterior production while some of the oldest students have ventured to start their own business.



General aim

Enhance social inclusion, equal opportunities and strengthen the unemployed community in Athens in multifaceted ways through various educational initiatives and ethical manufacturing practices.



Target beneficiaries

Vulnerable groups such as asylum-seekers, refugees, migrants, and those seeking employment in Athens.



Activities

Greek language classes, tailoring classes for all levels, employability support, ethical manufacturing internships and design classes.



How participants join the programme

Participants learn about the programs through word of mouth and register at our space directly.



Success story!

Stanley joined ANKAA's tailoring courses in 2021, without prior sewing knowledge. Determined to learn the craft, Stanley applied himself, and with his motivation and dedication after graduating in 2022 he became a part of the tailoring team. Since 2024 he is also teaching the Intermediate level course.



Why tailoring?

After launching its ethical manufacturing lab and producing thousands of reusable face masks during Covid-19, ANKAA streamline its focus to Greek language education and tailoring, ensuring sustainable impact.



Community engagement

Film screenings, school visits, urban gardening workshops and co-housing with other community organisations.



Employability support

ANKAA's tailoring lab offers internships to graduates. We also support students by scoping and securing jobs in the fashion industry.



Number of participants

From 50 to 70 students per year



Impact evaluation

We track some indicators (number of students, attendance rates, students securing an internship an/or job, hours of classes delivered etc.) and conduct student satisfaction surveys every trimester.





FARSI PROSSIMO

The direct beneficiaries of the texTALES project are the women and young women already involved in the Dress Again tailoring workshop by Farsi Prossimo ODV. They are primarily between the ages of 25 and 40, mostly mothers with young children, who have little to no prior professional experience but possess some basic sewing skills. Many are foreign seeking asylum or holding residence permits for family reunification, while others are Italian residents of Faenza.

Participants in Dress Again primarily join through our close network with local social services, cooperatives, social organizations, and Caritas in Faenza. Based on their referrals, we meet with potential candidates to assess whether the program aligns with their availability, interest in learning the tailoring trade, future aspirations, and personal needs.

Each participant is then provided with an internship agreement and a tailored training plan. Internships last up to two years, with most participants staying for at least one year. This period allows them to integrate smoothly into the work environment and develop both professional and interpersonal skills.





The internship programs we offer serve two main purposes:

The first is professional integration—providing participants with the opportunity to re-enter the workforce after having been forced to step away for various reasons or, in some cases, to enter it for the first time. In a supportive environment, they regain a professional routine and learn the craft of tailoring. For foreign participants, the program is especially valuable in helping them understand the Italian job market, familiarize themselves with local tailoring techniques, and enhance their skill set.

The second purpose is social development. Through internships and hands-on work experience, participants improve their interpersonal and language skills, learn to respect schedules, and gain confidence in navigating multicultural work environments.

The choice of tailoring as a means of social inclusion for Dress Again was a natural one. The initiative originally began as a second-hand and vintage shop, fueled by surplus clothing donations from the Faenza community. The proceeds were used to support inclusion programs for asylum seekers through Farsi Prossimo ODV.

Over time, the focus shifted to directly involving the asylum seekers housed in our centers. This led to the first tailoring workshops, centered around creatively repurposing donated garments and incorporating fabrics from their home countries. As the tailoring program grew, it expanded beyond the initial group, opening up to the wider community and developing into a structured pathway for social and professional inclusion.

The training method we provide is primarily based on a "learning by doing" approach. Starting with small tasks, we assess each participant's skills and abilities, gradually progressing to more complex activities. The training is often conducted in a one-on-one or small group setting. We aim to avoid overlapping internship schedules too much to prevent confusion and ensure better quality of learning.

The training is led by a professional seamstress, with occasional support from a few volunteers. On the other hand, the management of the social aspects—including participant selection, coordination with social services and other involved parties, work shifts, and administrative tasks—falls under the responsibility of the project coordinator.



In addition to their tailoring activities, the interns are often invited to participate in the markets organized by Dress Again, where they may cover sales shifts, assist with setup, or work as dressers during the year-end fashion show. For some, these extra activities can be challenging to manage due to the responsibility of caring for their children, often on their own. This is why the internship is so important—it provides them with a space where, for those few hours, they are not just mothers or migrants, but can rediscover their identity and themselves.

Three to four times a year, Dress Again organizes a marketplace in the city center, featuring over 60 exhibitors from the local area—including our own tailoring workshop. The event promotes creative reuse, sustainability through vintage and second-hand fashion, and local artistry. Attendance is strong, with around 2,000 visitors per event.

These markets are often held in collaboration with other major events, such as the Independent Label Music Festival. Additionally, we participate as exhibitors in various regional events about 5–6 times a year.

A highlight of our calendar is the annual Dress Again celebration, which features a spectacular fashion show with over 40 models, 120 vintage or handmade looks, and an audience of 400 people.



General aim

Professional integration (providing participants with the opportunity to re-enter the workforce) and social development



Target beneficiaries

Women and young women, mostly mothers with young children, who have little to no prior professional experience but possess some basic sewing skills



Number of participants

Around 9 women per year



How participants join the programme

Referral system through our close network with local social services, cooperatives, social organizations, and Caritas in Faenza



Activities

One-to-one trainings led by a professional seamstress, markets organized by Dress Again, participation to year-end fashion shows



Why tailoring?

We created a second-hand and vintage shop, whose proceeds were used to support inclusion programs for asylum seekers through Farsi Prossimo ODV. Over time, the focus shifted to directly involving the asylum seekers housed in our centers. This led to the first tailoring workshops.



Employability support

We deliver paid internships, provide CV-building help, and assist with registration at the public employment center and with private recruitment agencies.



Success story!

A. is a 30-year-old woman who was an intern with Dress Again for two years, from 2021 to 2023. Before joining the program, A. was battling with financial dependency and different forms of abuse. She began the internship pathway and learned the craft of tailoring, the Italian language, and built self-confidence. Eventually, A. secured a job which enabled her to escape the situation she was in.





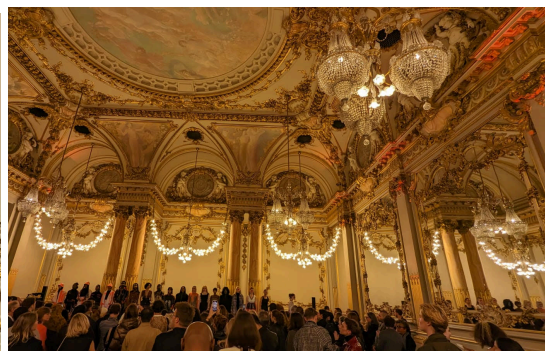
ESPERO FRANCE

Espero was created in 2016 in Paris to enable the social integration of individuals in precarious situations while carrying out awareness-raising actions on environmental issues. While it started with beekeeping training, soon one of the main pillars became the sewing industry. The switch to the sewing industry happened because they found that many of the migrants had skills and experience as tailors while at the same time there was a demand for tailors in Paris. Currently, they host 2 ateliers in which they train around 30 people per year and from which several tailors have found jobs in some of the biggest luxury fashion houses in the world.

Espero's commitment is social and environmental at the same time. It is both to allow the beneficiaries to promote their skills, or to practice professions practiced in the country of origin, but also to promote ecological practices and fight against waste. They work in good intelligence with a varied ecosystem of associative, private and institutional partners involved in the integration of people far from employment.

Their beneficiaries can be anyone living in Paris and being chronically unemployed. The training and internships offered are done in collaboration with France Travail, the State job placement agency whose goal is to assist people far from employment to be hired. The objective is to employ individuals from 6 months to 2 years while assisting them in any barrier they face in relation to their employability such as learning the French language, access to housing, administrative problems. For this reason Espero offers French courses next to the sewing training. The sewing training also includes pattern making and weaving courses.

One of the biggest achievements of Espero is the annual fashion show hosted at *Musee D'Orsay* in collaboration with a different renowned fashion designer every time. Such a big event helps them to create awareness over the topic of migration and sustainability, while it gives to the beneficiaries the opportunity to collaborate with pioneers of the field and to gain confidence and experience. Espero has many successful collaborations in their CV and has built a reputation in Paris for upcycling in fashion, working constantly with dead stock of some of the biggest luxury houses of the city. So far they have upcycled 400 rolls of fabric in their atelier for their shows, but also as manufacturer of clothes and accessories.





General aim

Employ individuals (6 months - 2 years) while working to overcome barriers to employment by learning the French language, building tailoring skills, accessing housing and overcoming administrative problems.



Target beneficiaries

Chronically unemployed people in the Paris area



Activities

Sewing, pattern-making, weaving, French classes, counseling, cultural outings (all employees have a free pass to the Musée D'Orsay)



How participants join the programme

State-run job placement agency



Success story!

Akhtar from Afghanistan had a temporary contract in construction when we met him. He spoke very little French and lived in a housing shelter. We employed him for 2 years and today he has a long term contract at Hermes.



Why tailoring?

We discovered that many migrants had skills in sewing prior to coming to France.



Community engagement

We organize fashion shows, go to art exhibitions and celebrate Christmas and Eid together.



Employability support

Through our network, we have been able to help several of our former employees find jobs at some of the biggest luxury fashion houses in the world.



Number of participants

Around 30 per year



Impact evaluation

Our main impact indicators are: the number of people finding employment and the number of people who access long-term housing after our programme,



ESPERO
FRANCE



Worldwide examples that foster social innovation within the tailoring sector

In the last few years, there are more and more examples of social projects in the fashion industry that have incorporated social innovation within the core of the system of fashion. There are numerous young entrepreneurs worldwide or even established brands like Gucci that have approached small communities of artisans or marginalised groups with specific interests and skills and aided them to strengthen their potential, gain new opportunities, revive their cultural inheritance and raise their living standards. Each of them forms a unique business model, some focusing on the training, other on the employment using different tools.

These are all examples of the design thinking approach employed in a social critical issue and using clothes design as the medium to provide social opportunities. Instead of promoting their creations, the designers became entrepreneurs that researched how to broaden their network, share their knowledge and collaborate with people that are marginalized. On some occasions they created an incubator that urges people in desperate situations to find their talents and personality through a creative process. These examples showcase that those migrants do not need first aid help or supplies, but tools and opportunities to use them on their own.

MasterG is a combination of a non profit organisation in Delhi that trains women in tailoring and a business factory that employs them and receives orders from exterior brands as well as from their own brand. Gayatru Jolly, the founder, is a young fashion designer that started this venture to motivate women from low-income communities to leave their homes and take initiatives that were forbidden to take until then. For this reason she started in 2015 the non profit organisation MasterG that provides them with a free one year course and certificate and an internship upon program completion at their brand, Heimat. This approach gives students the opportunity to practice their skills in real projects but within a safe environment and labour laws compliant to factory space and wages. The educational offer has a market driven approach, thus focusing on tailoring and pattern making, but there are complementary courses of design as well as mentorship and consultancy for graduates on their careers. Some of the students are hired after the completion of the course in the MasterG studio to be professionally trained while being fairly paid. Each of them has a holistic view of the garment production from the design to the finishing and even in their factory the tasks are not distributed traditionally but each of them completes a whole garment from scratch to finish, in order to get the satisfaction of completion. Gayatri Jolly designed the curriculum of the MasterG advanced program after having the experience of training women on the basic skills of sewing for many years. After her experience she understood that something more was missing. She needed to urge them to be independent, get a voice within their community, and take back their power. For this reason she started mentorship sessions with women and follow-up consultations where they discuss their progress and new ventures. As she has said, even when she designs clothes for Heimat, she is thinking of patterns and processes that would be easy to handle. Her whole



mindset has been shifted from product oriented to makers oriented - and how to facilitate their job. Even the distribution of tasks in the factory is organised in order to put people first and create for them the feeling of ownership.

On the other side of the world, the Social Outfit is an Australian label that trains and employs refugees throughout the different stages of production and retail of the clothes in collaboration with various designers. It is an ethical trading social enterprise launched in 2013 that has a two sided plan. This includes a part of training and a production line where they employ refugees and new migrants in Melbourne. They own a boutique that is literally manufacturing on site artisanal products made by refugees. The Newtown-based sustainable label provides sewing training to new migrants and refugees from more than 30 countries, including Iraq, Syria, Myanmar and Africa. The result of the label's partnerships with organisations such as the Asylum Seekers Centre, the Community Migrant Resource Centre and the Red Cross has been the production of high-end garments and regular collaborations with influential Australian designers. For each collection, they partner with one Australian designer and one textile artist to design the patterns and the prints. Jackie, the founder, based the model of her business on the notion that many migrants in Australia possess a rich culture of craftsmanship and tailoring that is unused due to the lack of certificates and formal documents. Thus, their training and employment focuses on the implementation of existing skills within the local community. As she states, 'Starting a new life in an unknown environment needs some familiar acts in order to get some confidence and to feel that you can contribute'. As she adds 'One of the interesting things about sewing, of course, is that it's a skill with your hands – you don't necessarily have to have necessarily English language ability. So again, it's one of those things where we are able to show and tell each other things and co-exist in a space while people settle and build up their confidence, and we don't always have to use English to do that.' It is implied here the use of design and handicrafts is a medium of communication that overcomes the language barriers and creates a new way of learning. The educational program includes not only tailoring but also clothing design, retail and marketing that shows their holistic approach and emphasis on inclusion of students in all the steps from manufacturing to selling. Most importantly, it offers a broad network of local fashion designers and other partners that demonstrate more skills to the makers and professional work experience.



PRACTICAL ADVICE - HOW TO

This guide acknowledges that tailoring can be linked to current social issues, such as the global issue of displacement of people, and aims to give multidisciplinary solutions towards inclusion. The end goal of providing new opportunities can be broken down into 3 sub-goals. The first is to use sewing as the medium to empower migrants and refugees, emphasize on their potential and encourage them to use their intuition and creativity. The second is linked to the perfection of practical skills. And the last one is the involvement of the rest of society and the social and cultural appreciation of different communities. Ultimately the purpose is to create opportunities of employment and personal growth as well as to generate awareness of the local society and create pathways of communication and interaction. There are various methods and tools towards this goal and in this section, we will propose some simplified ways that can be applied in any context with some adaptations.

By achieving these sub-goals, we can create meaningful opportunities for employment, personal development, and intercultural communication. Additionally, this approach serves to raise awareness about the challenges displaced individuals face while contributing to local society's growth.

In this section, we will outline practical methods and tools that can be adapted to various contexts, ensuring that the solutions are flexible, scalable, and accessible to all involved. The key is to adapt these techniques to local needs and capacities while keeping the focus on the empowerment and inclusion of displaced people.



Community engagement

Facilitating community engagement of migrants through sewing activities can be both a creative and impactful way to foster social inclusion, build skills, and create a sense of belonging. For each project it would be very useful to know through past activities, surveys or interviews what are the characteristics of this specific migrant community, what are their needs, goals and their educational experiences, because this can serve as the basis to adapt the curriculum and plan to be useful in this specific audience. This information is detrimental to their participation and commitment to it. It is highly important to take into consideration their daily obligations as well as longer plans and what hours serve them better.

If the activities planned are related to their needs and to their educational background and capabilities it is logical that they would be interested in participating. But then what makes them engage actively? This is an extra element that makes a training center a 'home' for



people that feel like strangers in a city. Starting from the adaptation of the curriculum, creating clothing or accessories that cater to the needs of the local community (e.g., making items with cultural significance, such as traditional garments or modern adaptations) helps them feel connected to both their heritage and the new community.

From past experience and through interactions with various other organizations, we observed that the feeling of ownership of a space helps people to start feeling comfortable, suggesting to their friends and network to come as well, to participate more actively to courses, and even to help organise community events such as small festivals linked to what they learn. A friendly atmosphere is built with the participation of everyone and can bring very strong practical results especially when talking about creative activities such as tailoring. Building trust takes time, but is the tool to break cultural differences in a class or in an open venue. A sewing circle or craft group can create an inclusive environment where people from different backgrounds work together, share their cultural knowledge, and forge friendships. Involving both experienced and novice sewers at the same time can bring different groups together. Those with sewing experience can mentor others, building a sense of community and encouraging leadership within the group. Peer support can also help with overcoming any language or cultural barriers and make people feel at ease faster.

In the case of more advanced skills there are a lot of entrepreneurial opportunities and cooperative models. The formation of small sewing cooperatives, where migrants can work together to produce goods, manage finances, and create business plans can create sustainable livelihoods while strengthening the migrant community and creating more links. In all these proposals a critical question is how to sustain the momentum and keep participants engaged over time. This is a personal question very often, but working in groups on projects with a collective goal can often help people surpass their initial difficulties. In a cooperative model, participants share ownership and decision-making power. This autonomy enhances their sense of agency, allowing them to have a stake in their community's development and economic opportunities, which can be empowering, especially for those who may feel marginalized. A cooperative or social project can play a vital role in fostering community engagement for migrants by providing economic, social, and emotional support. They not only help migrants become more self-sufficient but also create opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and mutual understanding, promoting solidarity and social cohesion. By combining practical skill-building with a supportive community structure, sewing cooperatives can help migrants build new lives and contribute positively to their new communities.

Supportive environment

That said, it is highly important to establish a supportive environment where people feel safe to ask questions. This part is dependent on individuals' initiative and personal traits as it involves communication skills. But in practical terms a 'code of conduct' and training of



the staff in soft skills can determine the approach of the organisation. Usually, people that work in the social services sector already have an understanding and training around vulnerable groups, the difficult situations that might arise and non-verbal ways of communication. But, in the tailoring field it is not common to have such training or experience.

It is advised to always have in mind that the participants are people that might carry post traumatic stress disorders, difficulties to follow the language and the norms of this environment and daily obstacles of great significance for their life. Thus, a gentle tone and slow pace is for example a very basic necessity in the communication or in the course. Each person has very different needs. It is possible that they even have health issues for which they are not aware but they block them from performing tasks. For example, there have been some participants with eyesight or hearing problems that they neglected and then couldn't follow a course. If a teacher or staff have these elements in mind, they will react kindlier and maybe try to assist in addressing some issues. For this reason it is helpful to create a network of other service providers to offer specialised support where needed such as medical or psychological support.

Apart from the teacher, the tailor colleagues, or other staff that are in the space should be accustomed into a common behavioural conduct. The basis of this conduct should be common values around the dignity and worth of every person. The aim of this is to ensure responding and acting with respect, compassion, tolerance, confidentiality and discretion even in stressful situations and requests that are out of the normal services of the space. It is very challenging to find a balance between meeting people's expectations and supporting within the frame of a specific project. It is not advised for the staff to carry in their personal life the matters that come to work as it will very quickly lead to mental exhaustion. Not all of the problems arising can be handled by them. But, working in a tailor lab that works with vulnerable communities is quite different from working in a fashion business where people are usually seen only for their practical skills.

Some general advice that can be applied to different countries and to different contexts is the respect of human values and not the mere prioritisation of productivity. In the context of the lesson this would mean taking the time to observe each student, what learning difficulties they have, try to address them in a way that won't make them feel bad about themselves and make them feel comfortable to express questions and request time or more explanations. It is needless to say that everybody should be treated equally with no distinction, something that especially in the working environment is always neglected even between different genders in terms of salary, tasks and professional development. Lastly, consider avoiding behaving in ways that are not acceptable in a particular cultural context.



Open access tools and materials

It is very common for people to have skills that they want to practice and cannot due to lack of access to the necessary tools, resources to buy them, space and guidance, especially in a new context. In terms of tailoring in order to do professional work, someone would need an industrial sewing machine, fabrics, scissors, threads, a cutting space, iron and basic knowledge of repairing the machine. The cost of these could be significant for a person arriving in a new country, not having a home, job or network. Or in the case of people that have settled, very often they don't have the space, the knowledge to maintain the machine or the know-how of sewing alone at home.

For these reasons providing the opportunity to them to go in a space where everything is set up and there is even guidance of trained staff on the use and maintenance of the tools could open up new doors for them. Especially for highly skilled tailors this allows them to start practicing again their skill, that otherwise might have been abandoned, that could create job opportunities. While for beginner tailors this is convenient for practicing and developing their skills faster, for advanced it might even create entrepreneurial opportunities. No matter what the level of users is, they can all benefit and be given the time to express their creativity and explore what they want to make in the context of a structured course.

Of course living in a digital era could prove useful even in tailoring, which is a practical skill. Another helpful tool is the creation of online databases where tailors could find compact guides of sewing steps and guidance around the art of tailoring. In this way tailors that do have their personal home studio could benefit from open access sewing courses, but also the students that don't have a machine at home can use them to remember the process or as a guide when they use a tailor lab. Online tools could be also shared at a transnational level, translated and readapted in a way that fits many different regions, which could constitute the need of a teacher in remote places.

Setting up a training website could be as tricky as setting up a real studio, but there are also alternatives such as using online channels such as youtube or even whatsapp to share faster material. Whatsapp is commonly used as both an information sharing and social interaction tool. Sometimes it might even be more practical for the users to use an application that they know well, rather than to promote the use of a new database. Before making a new tool it would be advised to make a survey among the users to understand what would be easier for them to handle.





Accessibility

Education and development of skills is a fundamental human right that even though for children is granted, for adults it can prove challenging. While non-EU minors have legal access to education, those over 18 can encounter restrictions in some countries. Independent career services and support for accessing vocational training or higher education is very limited, targeted interventions are lacking, and training opportunities for non-EU newcomers are few. Non-EU residents do not have the same access as locals to the necessary study grants, public employment services, and training.

There is a need for quality training to be provided in a systematic manner that can be accessed by the migrant community.

Quality training is most often private and costly, while it needs to be a universal human right that is offered free of charge. Giving access to free of cost consistent training and tools to everyone is the basis of inclusion in educational terms. Removing the economic barrier enables many to continue their personal growth that was disrupted by their migration, but also to pursue a better career in the future.

Subsequently to the economic factor there are multiple aspects that can render an educational service more or less accessible. Regardless of the country they have to do with the specific location, time, environment, prerequisites and language used. In many cases migrants are people that have lost their documents during their journey and face a lot of administrative obstacles to get European documents and residence permits. Which would mean that requiring official documents for the participation could already exclude a big number of people. For higher levels of training in many institutions they ask for certificates and degrees from previous schools which again can prove challenging. Thus, offering access to education without the need for prior certificates, through the provision of foundation or beginner level courses and practical tests that determine the level of students.

Additionally, depending on the city that this service takes place in, it would be advised to take into consideration the access of participants with the means of transport or on foot beforehand. Thus, research on the inhabitation of migrants within a city is very important whether they stay in a specific camp or spread around. The hours of the course could also be chosen in a way that different needs are taken into account. Some people might work during morning times, while single parents take care of their children after school. Either there should be courses offered at different times, or a provision of childcare.

Lastly, accessibility is tightly linked to actual accessibility in a building. In order to be more inclusive it would be preferable to think about mobility issues together with the location from the beginning or to offer alternative solutions and exit paths in order to accommodate them. Speaking about the digital world this could mean also offering the choice to follow a course remotely for those that cannot physically be present. Any provision to include minorities and hear their personal needs is a step closer to inclusion.



Language and communication

There are several specific strategies that a teacher can use to make the course more accessible to learners who may have limited proficiency in the course's language. These strategies focus on supporting learners' language needs, whether they are migrants, refugees, or non-native speakers. Since tailoring is a very practical and visual skill obviously a big part of the training can be hands-on but also supported by images and ready made examples. But still there is the need to use and teach a basic vocabulary that will expand as the course progresses. In fact, combining practical demonstrations with specific words can speed up the learning of the language.

In the example of ANKAA Project there was a pilot project where a Greek teacher was teaching Greek simultaneously while the tailor teacher was demonstrating practical skills. In a specific curriculum where tasks are repeated and the same words are used again and again this has proven to be very effective and helped many students that are struggling to follow theoretical courses to grasp some basic words that are necessary in a working environment of a tailoring studio. Thus the theory was linked with a very practical act and the goal to find a job. Providing a visual glossary with subject related terms, as well as audio vocabulary is a way to enhance this process. It helps learners build their language knowledge while also practising the practical skills needed.

In terms of teaching and communication when the visual aid cannot be applied, it is recommended to use plain language and to speak very clearly and slowly. Avoid idioms, slang and complicated phrases. Keep sentences short and to the point. This helps learners who may struggle with longer, more complex sentence structures. Provide clear, step-by-step instructions for each task or activity and again try to use images or simple sketches for those that have difficulty to understand the native language. Where possible, offer key course materials, instructions, and resources in multiple languages, especially the languages most common among your learners. Break the content into smaller, digestible pieces. This is helpful for learners who may struggle with information overload or who need time to process language. In the case of people that cannot follow the course due to language, encourage learners to use online translation tools (such as Google Translate).

Create a supportive, non-judgmental space for learners where repetition is not judged and language explanations are seen as part of the learning process. Be aware of the linguistic challenges learners may face, especially if they speak languages with different scripts, alphabets, or grammatical structures. This can affect how they approach learning a new language. By combining these language-specific strategies, you can ensure your course is more accessible and supportive for migrants, helping them to navigate the language barriers that they face.



Modular training

Modular training is a flexible, structured way to teach a skill, with each "module" or unit focusing on a specific topic or technique. This approach is especially effective for migrants, who may face various challenges such as language barriers, limited prior knowledge, or daily problems that might interrupt their attendance. Due to daily issues such as bureaucratic processes, hospital or other public service appointments, work, childcare and other, it is observed that very often their attendance is not consistent no matter how interested they are in the subject. Modular training allows learners to progress at their own pace, enabling them to balance their education with other obligations. Especially if the courses are also digital, then the participants can follow them online and make up on their own time for the courses missed. It is even more beneficial when there are distinct levels so that learners can start at any module that suits their existing skills and knowledge, making it easier for those with some background in sewing to jump into more advanced topics.

Practically this means that each module can focus on a specific technique, skill, or aspect of tailoring, such as sewing zippers, stitching a hem, taking the measurements, or designing the pattern of a skirt. This gradual, modular approach helps learners build their skills progressively, without feeling lost or overwhelmed. It allows the teacher to split the organisation of the course progressively, search for the materials needed and coordinate everything in this manner, having specific projects every time in their mind while being able to choose which are most beneficial for the specific group, so the course is adapted to the learners progress and needs.

Tailoring skills are highly transferable and can lead to employment or self-employment opportunities. Modular training can focus on practical skills that migrants can immediately apply in the workforce, whether they are seeking jobs in garment production, alteration services, or starting their own tailoring business. Each module adds another asset in their skill database that is linked to products that they can create. Tailoring modules can be also adapted to include garments, fabrics, and techniques that are culturally relevant to the migrants. For example, if a migrant comes from a culture where traditional garments are common, they could learn how to tailor these specific garments alongside more widely recognized clothing styles.

Completing each module and seeing tangible results (e.g. a finished garment or alteration) boosts learners' confidence and sense of accomplishment. This sense of achievement can motivate them to continue learning and applying their skills.

Cultural sensitivity

Making a tailoring course culturally appropriate for migrants is crucial to ensuring it resonates with them and meets their unique aspirations. It involves considering their cultural backgrounds, traditions, and preferences in both the content and the delivery of the course.



Starting from the context of the course, one can teach how to make or alter traditional garments from different cultures, such as saris, kimonos, dashikis, abayas, or kaftans. This will make the course more relatable and meaningful for students that very often feel homesick. While focusing on traditional garments, it's important to also introduce learners to the mainstream fashion of the region they are now living in. This gives them the flexibility to cater to both their own community and the broader society. Pattern making courses give the opportunity to play and experiment through different styles of clothing that with very small alterations can represent very different cultures. Having discussions on the meaning of colours in the different countries is also a very interesting and interactive game to share different thoughts and to observe as a team the plurality that exists. Teaching design skills that respect cultural preferences or specific color and fabric choices that hold cultural significance, can make the course more relevant and respectful while it can provoke a lot of participation. Use visual examples from both the local community and international settings to show how tailoring fits within various cultural contexts as well as climates.

Different cultures have unique handicraft techniques that can complement the sewing and be integrated into the course. For instance, embroidery techniques, hand-stitching styles from certain regions, patchwork, batik, dyeing methods like cyanotype or weaving could be an added part of the curriculum. These skills might not be linked to work usually, but bring out the creativity and individuality of participants while maintaining the cultures alive. If possible it is very interesting to involve instructors from diverse backgrounds or with knowledge of practices from different cultures. This can foster an environment of respect and mutual understanding while promoting inclusivity. Many migrants come from cultures with rich traditions in handicrafts. Encourage students to blend these traditional techniques (such as hand-weaving or embroidery) with modern tailoring techniques, making them adaptable to both cultural preservation and the local market. As seen above the students could also become teachers and share their cultural heritage and specific techniques that they learned from word of mouth. Give the space and time to students to share their cultural clothing styles and practices with one another. This promotes cultural exchange and enriches the learning experience, as they can learn from each other's traditions and approaches to tailoring. By incorporating culturally relevant garments, techniques, and considerations, such a course not only helps migrants feel more connected to the material



but also enables them to apply their new skills in ways that align with their cultural values and practical needs.

Challenges

All the general practices and specific tools shared can be applied to different countries with adaptations to the local needs. But no matter how specific an action plan is, there will always be unforeseen aspects that have to do with individual needs or even societal changes. Here are some common difficulties that might arise and would be good to take them into consideration.

The Needs Assessment survey that was conducted by ANKAA Project, Espero and Farsi Prossimo, highlighted significant insights into the challenges, needs, and aspirations of both beneficiaries and staff members involved in these initiatives. Participants face challenges such as limited time for activities, understanding due to insufficient explanations, and significant language barriers. External factors like housing stability, health issues, and childcare responsibilities also pose barriers to the continuity of the programs. Losing the continuity of a program is very often also because of daily problems, dealing with bureaucratic procedures, spending long hours in public offices for documents and generally trying to navigate into a new city.

The lack of a common language is a barrier that comes up very often and affects various aspects of communication, participation, and understanding. If participants don't speak the same language as the instructor, they may not fully understand how to use equipment, follow steps, or avoid mistakes, potentially leading to frustration or even accidents. Having a positive attitude, smiling and using body language can always lead you way further than what you could imagine. But especially if the end goal is to help the participants to find a job, it is also very important to keep reminding them of the importance of language.

Usually in non for profit training actions there will be practical limits that are linked to funding, limited time of preparation, spatial constraints, lack of trained teachers and resources constraints. Creating a network of other organizations and local businesses that share similar goals can help you pool resources such as space, materials, or even trained instructors. Shared resources can help you overcome funding and spatial constraints. If this is not possible from the start, it is always better to start with a rather 'small' and specific goal that requires limited resources, space and time and slowly work on the expansion of the initial attempt.



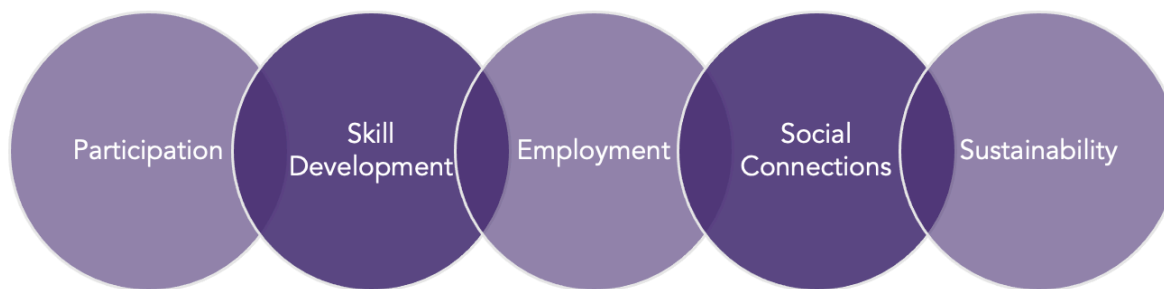
Measuring Impact

To make sure migrant inclusion initiatives in tailoring really work, we need to track their impact. Without clear ways to measure success, it's hard to know if programs are making a real difference in people's lives or leading to lasting inclusion. So what would it look like if we were to succeed in our efforts for social inclusion? It is vital to assess if the selected strategy is appropriate. Defining the success of an intervention can vary between countries, sectors and communities served. To help define it before starting you can consider the following questions:

- ◆ If our community outreach and engagement efforts are successful, what outcomes will we see?
- ◆ What specific goals are aiming to reach?
- ◆ How will we know if participants feel a sense of belonging and ownership in the space?
- ◆ Can we measure engagement through key indicators such as attendance, retention, or project completion?

To understand whether an intervention is working, we should be looking throughout the project life cycle to evaluate and adapt. This way we ensure the approach remains effective and relevant.

Evaluating can be done by using both quantitative and qualitative data, meaning both numbers as well as personal experiences. Useful indicators include participation levels—how many people join, how long they stay, and how often they attend—as well as skill development, tracking whether participants improve their sewing abilities over time. For example, early in the project, it would be valuable to assess how participants are adjusting to the course content and make adaptations if necessary. Midway through, checking on skills development and participant confidence can highlight whether the teaching methods are effective or need modification. Employment outcomes are another key measure, looking at how many people secure jobs, internships, or start their own businesses. Social connections matter too, as increased confidence and a stronger sense of belonging indicate success. Community engagement can be assessed by counting events, collaborations, and initiatives that emerge from the program. At the end, a final evaluation should assess the overall impact and help determine if long-term goals, like sustainable employment or community engagement, have been achieved. Lastly, sustainability is important—whether participants continue to use their skills and stay involved long after the program ends can show long-term impact.



To gather useful feedback, it's important to use a mix of different methods. Simple surveys and questionnaires before and after the program can help track progress by collecting measurable data on things like attendance, skill improvement and employment outcomes. Interviews and group discussions give participants a chance to talk about their experiences, share challenges, and highlight what has worked or not worked for them. Here again the safety of the environment created is important to ensure that feedback collected is honest and useful. Staff that will collect the info, whether in person or through online tools, should be trained in the methodology. This should aim to ensure that the quality is uniform, the terminology adopted is used in the same way and most importantly that staff can create a safe environment, are aware of confidentiality and can handle difficult answers.

Trainers can also observe participants as they go through the program, noting changes in confidence, teamwork, and skills. Finally, keeping in touch with past participants gives insight into how they're applying the skills they've learned and whether the program has helped them in the long run. Using all these methods together gives a fuller picture of how well the program is working and where improvements can be made.

Checklist for facilitators

This checklist aims to guide facilitators and teachers in creating an inclusive, empowering, and supportive environment for migrants, refugees, and other displaced individuals involved in tailoring activities. By following this checklist, facilitators can create an inclusive space helping people develop valuable skills while fostering a deeper connection with the local community.

- ◆ What are your specific training objectives?
- ◆ Can somebody that doesn't understand the local language participate?
- ◆ Have you adapted your schedule to the time and frequency when the participants can attend?
- ◆ Are the learning methods adapted to the perceptual abilities of students?
- ◆ Is the course updated and aligned with the recent market needs?



- ◆ Are there opportunities of employment or entrepreneurship linked to the end of this course?
- ◆ Is the context culturally diverse?
- ◆ Have you planned adequate time for questions from participants?
- ◆ Are the room and seating arrangements and equipment suitable for your session?
- ◆ Have you prepared visual translated material to the language of participants?
- ◆ Can somebody follow the course online or find useful guidance and examples to work at his/her own pace at home?
- ◆ Can somebody without a machine find a place and materials to practice?
- ◆ Have you planned an evaluation for your session or workshop?

Checklist for employers in the tailoring industry

This checklist is targeting employers in the Tailoring Industry to ensure inclusivity, safety, and fairness in the workplace. There are various stakeholders in the fashion industry that play a detrimental role to the working conditions such as business owners, large scale manufacturers, human resources managers, policy makers, government bodies, trades associations, consultants. By fostering an inclusive, respectful, and ethically responsible workplace, employers can create positive change while benefiting from a more engaged and diverse workforce.

- ◆ Does the workforce reflect the diversity of the community, including people from different ethnic backgrounds, genders, ages, and abilities?
- ◆ Do your employees feel respected and safe to express themselves without fear of discrimination or harassment?
- ◆ Is the workplace physically accessible for people with disabilities, such as wheelchair ramps, accessible restrooms, and adequate seating arrangements?
- ◆ Have you developed workplace policies that prohibit discrimination, harassment, and bias based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, etc?
- ◆ Have you ensured that instructions, training materials, and job-related documents are in clear, easy-to-understand language? Can you provide translation or interpretation services when necessary?
- ◆ Are you aware of cultural differences within your team?
- ◆ Do you consider job applicants based on their skills and experience, without discrimination?
- ◆ Is there equal access to professional growth opportunities for everyone, regardless of background, including training, promotions, and leadership positions?
- ◆ Can you ensure that there is a confidential and accessible way for employees to report discriminatory behaviour, harassment, or bias?
- ◆ Do you offer flexible hours that could accommodate caregivers?
- ◆ Do you research if your materials and fabrics are ethically sourced, particularly when working with international or migrant suppliers, and prioritize fair trade practices.?
- ◆ Is the working environment safe?



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this document, alongside the needs assessment, highlights the valuable insights and practical solutions derived from the "texTALES" project, which seeks to address the challenges of social inclusion within the tailoring sector. The geopolitical complexities of migration, with its ever-shifting dynamics, present significant hurdles—especially for communities experiencing sudden increases in new arrivals. These challenges are compounded by the limited flexibility of systems that often struggle to adapt to diverse and evolving needs.

While this guide cannot resolve all the complexities migrants face, it provides practical advice and inspiration to fieldworkers, empowering them to use their skills and creativity to foster inclusion and create opportunities for growth. Overcoming these challenges requires not just theoretical understanding but cross sector approaches that are adaptable to different contexts. By drawing on the collective knowledge and experience of our partners—the ANKAA Project, Farsi Prossimo, and Espero France—we have crafted a resource that offers tangible, transferable solutions to help organizations navigate these obstacles effectively.

We believe that the key to overcoming these challenges lies in open collaboration, the sharing of best practices, and the continuous exchange of knowledge. With free education, open-source training materials, and bottom up solutions, we can build more flexible and responsive systems that better meet the needs of migrant communities. While the journey ahead may be complex, we are confident that through collective effort and the resources shared in this guide, we can make significant strides toward overcoming these barriers and achieving greater social inclusion.

