

Local Welcoming Policies for EU mobile Citizens

Wednesday, 18 May 2016

Workshop 1: Welcome Information (City of Dublin)

Moderator: Brendan Doggett

General aim of the workshop: develop and discuss recommendations with regards to Welcome Information at the local, national and European levels.

Exercise about communication and understanding language barriers - Line Up: participants line up in order of shoe size. How does it feel not to speak the language?

Presentation 1: Welcome information online platform provided by the City of Dublin

Speaker: Brendan Doggett

- City of Dublin's online information platform is presented: www.dublin.ie;
- The website was launched in March 2016 and it is an outcome of the project's Work stream 1 activity ('Lessons Learned' Dublin research study);
- City of Dublin has a classic information website with no target aims. It was previously developed in mid-2000s with no target and service reinsertion;
- Recently, a development of the brand took place and a lot of work has been done concerning core areas: Living | Working | Learning | etc;
- Our purpose is to feed in to the existing site;
- Promoting the website: It went live a week or two weeks ago and it has 2659 visitors in two weeks so far. It targets people before they arrive in Dublin, it includes key words and the information is only in English. English translation in google in any language wanted is not working yet. Most sought and pressed key word is 'jobs in Dublin';
- It is not a standalone site. If one wants to start their own business in Dublin, the site sends its visitors to another website. Its aim is not to keep visitors in and, before, there was no emphasis on that;
- The information is there, but the question is how to get it there in a trusted voice;
- Each language needs a specific campaign. Are key words in different languages (e.g. Latvian or Bulgarian) a solution?;
- People look for information in their own language and within their own network;
- You cannot break down information in several languages on the website;
- One must have digital skills to search for information online. Vulnerable groups face challenges and the city needs to provide other means of information as well. If higher skilled people are the target audience, a website is fine, but high skilled workers are just a few in the higher top of the pyramid.

Comments:

- Amsterdam has a different group of EU mobile citizens, often higher educated than Amsterdam citizens themselves. The city organizes welcoming events for them because that is the largest group coming to the Netherlands.
- It's general information for EU citizens who want to come to Dublin. Making sure that people know where they want to go. Our aim is to come up with general recommendations, national policies.

Presentation 2: Marlous Dompeling, Amsterdam student at the InHolland University presenting the Amazing Amsterdam concept:

There are a lot of web pages that provide information, but EU mobile citizens cannot find them. When they are still in Romania, for example, they cannot find it via google because of google settings. With regards to the EHIC cards (European Health Insurance Cards), the mobile citizens can ask for information from one of the health insurance companies because they can provide the cards, but EU mobile citizens don't know this. Do migrants find the Amsterdam website? In the Netherlands there are many health insurance companies, it is difficult to choose from. Migrants ask each other instead of the City of Amsterdam.

The city often communicates with letters in Dutch. EU citizens lose the letter, or put it aside and forget about it.

Migrants want to find aggregated information and a collective instrument where they can find everything they need.

Amsterdam does have the website, but it is not perfect. You need to have a trusted face, but how do you bring it to migrants?

Comments

- There are a lot of Facebook pages for EU mobile citizens groups. They only talk to each other, help each other but maybe not with the right information.
- A circle of knowledge is important. You try to find key players, who represent the target group that you can provide with information that they can spread. Churches, community centres, stores, hairdressers etcetera.

The participants are searching for the Facebook page for Polish people in Rotterdam.

Concept Amazing Amsterdam: EU mobile citizens need different information for different phases.

Phase 1: *Almost in Amsterdam* – one searches information before moving to a new city;

Phase 2: *Arrived in Amsterdam* – all necessary steps you need to take;

Phase 3: *Already in Amsterdam* – all you need to know about living in Amsterdam, for example, a brochure that you can download with aggregated information;

Phase 4: *Adore Amsterdam* – make EU citizens feel at home in Amsterdam and integrate in the society, for example, an online forum/ chat page where they can meet because they feel alone, start topics of discussions, ask questions and advice etc.

Workshop discussions:

- who's going to pay for this? How are you going to keep it alive? At some point somebody has to take over the business?
- The brochure of Amsterdam already existed. It can also be a digital copy which is easier and cheaper to maintain.
- 180 different cultures and different ways to express themselves can give a lot of problems. How did you integrate this fact to that in the brochure?
- It's the same stuff coming up in this workshop. These are easy systematic approaches, but you have to have different ways to reach out. The information is there. How do we get it there with a trusted voice, and with awful lot of money?
- It takes a lot of work and time to do and maintain it. The main issue is the task to run it, a huge net of different target groups. Who is giving reliable information? The trash that goes on there is quit big. Denmark: after two or three clicks you end up on a Danish website.

Presentation 3: Monitoring evaluation of the pilot project in Dublin with an emphasis on language acquisition

Speaker: Liam Coakley

The Dublin City Intercultural Language Centre is an umbrella project run in the North side of the city. It is a language acquisition project that is realistic in its approach. It's not about didactic language learning, but real word responses and situations that people find and recognise themselves in.

Dublin doesn't have history with immigration, rather with emigration. We are still trying to do it but find difficulties on city level. EU mobile citizens are deemed to be home and are not given access to language programs as other groups. The programs tend to be operating during the day. Because EU mobile workers were looking for support they never had before. The library services and a lot of part time NGOs are doing well, but also commercial services are offering language programs. Some for free, some paid, etc, but they do not contact each other. A lot of people in the suburban areas from Poland, Latvia, Romania etc. do not have access to the programs. So there is a need.

Welcome information: The information is there, but a migrant has to know where to go and how to find it. The fractured landscape of Dublin makes it difficult.

Naturalistic language training, real world events, not text books, not grammar. Language as a social system. It is a pilot project. Shopping, greeting the neighbours...

Liam Coakley:

- Voluntary teachers that are qualified work in the centre.
- The courses aim at inclusion at local level and community development.
- The pattern is very much structured into a logical progress. Social and cultural lives are its main focus. To create social patterns, a framework around the acquisition of language. So we've had tax forms used in the class. Language and job acquisition, language and administration.
- Taking the class out into the city. Field classes to build this social learning experience. Class sees itself as a social learning environment.
- Language portfolio, students work together in a file. That also provides a self-reflection tool as well. Students are encouraged to evaluate themselves. There are structured situations and exams, but the main core is social learning. This gets them in for quite a while because they can drop in after work, within two or three weeks. They know that they can come back in two weeks. There's no rules for percentage. Threshold is being stretched out. We call it a language class but it's not really. People who have never been in the centre make use of us. The courses are for free. There are 75 classes with 40 participants. A lot of migrants are sticking in those groups. Living that isolated life in suburbia, completely outside labour market. It is accepted that the students say they go to a language class, but if you sell it otherwise, they wouldn't come. There is a whole range of issues that come up during classes. Is it effective outreach? That is the question.

Workshop: Participants split up in smaller groups to reflect on the theme of the workshop and come up with practical recommendations at local, national and European levels.

Recommendations:

Local level:

- A lot of things have already been said. Like using existing spaces. Embassies, shops. Some migrants are afraid of the government and don't go to the embassies.
- How to work with different nationalities? That's up to us to decide. In Gothenburg the Romanians go to NGOs to try to get some coffee. The Bulgarians do not go there. They group together. One recommendation: Find a connection within your own group, even when it is not in your own city. Multiple spaces. Digital depends on the education. There is a new search on Facebook.
- Key figures are given key information to spread around the target group. In Gothenburg there are a lot of beggars. The problem is bringing all these groups together. There is not a single way

to bring them together in a structured way. The city of Amsterdam tries to reach out. What else? The Dublin way works for some groups; you need charismatic role models for some groups. But there are still huge gaps we don't know how to tap in. Information must be provided for those who want it.

National:

Do all the countries have an integration policy? EU mobile workers or migrants? Lots of countries don't have policies at all.

Embassies

Work together with work agencies, low skilled people, agriculture and seasonal workers. Recruiting agencies. A lot already do that. There are special agencies for groups like the Polish, Interpol etc.

Undocumented people: 12.000 in Ireland. It's always on the agenda. In the Netherlands there are probably 200.000 EU citizens we don't know anything about. One third of the migrants is not registered.

European level

A Dutch pilot is carried out that targets Polish, Romanian etc. for the purpose of providing them information.