

INSPIRE

Presentation and analysis of 201 interviews, focus groups and engagements with target groups from Belgium, Türkiye, Ireland, Croatia and Ukraine

- Target Group 1: Interview with people in refugee like situations
- Target Group 2: NGOs
- Target Group3: Educators and SMEs



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Contents

Tables.....	3
Figures	3
Report Contributors	4
Acknowledgments	6
Executive Summary	7
Project Summary	8
Methodology and Methods.....	10
Interview Design.....	10
Sampling	11
Transcription and Translation	11
Ethics	11
Findings	12
Demographics/ quantitative summaries.....	12
Target Group 1: Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).....	14
Target Group 2: NGOs	14
Target Group 3: Educators and SMEs.....	15
Key Opportunities for Refugee Entrepreneurs in Tourism:	15
What business ideas did the participants have?.....	16
Cultural and Culinary Tourism:.....	16
Help Tourism and Social Enterprise:	17



Tables

Table 1: Key Engagement Data 12
Table 2: Engagement Location 13

Figures

Figure 1: Engagement Target Groups 12



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Executive Summary

This report summarises 201 engagements held three target groups (TG), namely TG1 People in Refugee Like Situations, TG2 NGOs and TG3 SMEs and Educators. The aim of the state-of-the-art phase was to discover from the TGs their views on post-conflict tourism entrepreneurship among refugees. This data was gathered to support the next phase of our project, which involves designing resources to support this diverse population with business start-ups.

The report should be read in conjunction with *the Inspire WP2 State of the Art Report (Literature Review)* document which focuses on government policy, NGO documents, grey literature and academic literature related to the topic.

This report analyses 201 engagements held with the three target groups across Ireland, Türkiye, Belgium, Croatia, Ukraine and a small number of other EU countries. Findings are categorised into Demographic and Quantitative Summaries, Key Opportunities for Refugee Entrepreneurs in Tourism, Barriers and Challenges, a PESTLE analysis, a SWOT analysis, and Business Ideas.

Project Summary

We are a consortium of seven higher education institutions and NGOs from Europe who are passionate about supporting post-conflict refugee tourism entrepreneurship. We are funded by an Erasmus Key Action 2 grant for 2023 - 2025 to develop training and education resources to support this unique population.

The INSPIRE project, led by Technological University of the Shannon (Ireland) supports the needs of refugee tourism entrepreneurs. The project started in late 2023 and will run for two years. During our partnership we will identify good practice case studies, barriers to success case studies, and lessons applicable across the partner countries, to support the integration and economic self-sufficiency of people in refugee like situations.

The countries participating in the project are affected by the situation with refugees in Europe in different ways. These impacts inspired us to write the project, and while the motivations are too varied to list entirely, it is worth noting a brief sample of how our countries intersect with war, refugees, tourism, integration and entrepreneurship. Croatia, for example, is now 30 years post-conflict, and has a deep cultural understanding of displacement. Ireland, similarly, post the 1998 Good Friday agreement, has recent and ongoing legacy issues around conflict, with a strong tourism industry showcasing peace and conflict in the border regions. Ukraine has currently millions of internally displaced people, and millions of refugees dispersed around Europe and abroad. The geographical situation of Türkiye means that the country is a cross-road for refugees trying to get to Europe, with millions in refugee camps from Syria, for example. Belgium, too, has a story, with asylum seekers facing a challenging reception, due to accommodation shortages, similarly to Ireland. It is against this rich backdrop that we decided to conduct this study.

Our project will produce a detailed report conducted from primary and secondary fieldwork in Ireland, Belgium, Croatia, Türkiye, & Ukraine. We will create a good practice user guide for refugee tourism entrepreneurs which will be supported by course materials, a website and mobile application. A final resource will be the publication of a searchable databank of supports for refugee tourism entrepreneurs, including education and training supports, finance options, networking and business supports.

Partners include Businet, KHNU and DVA (Ukraine), DEU (Türkiye), PAR (Croatia) and PXL (Belgium).

The project will run Nov 2023 – Nov 2025 and is funded by Erasmus Key Action 2.

Methodology and Methods

The aim of the data collection phase was to discover from three target groups, namely TG1 People in Refugee Like Situations, TG2 NGOs and TG3 SMEs and Educators, their views on post-conflict tourism entrepreneurship among refugees. This data was gathered to support the next phases of our project, which include designing resources to support this diverse population with business start-ups.

This study adopted an inductive, exploratory, and interpretivist approach, aiming to gain a deep understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), NGOs, educators, and SMEs in the tourism sector. By using inductive reasoning, the study sought to generate insights directly from the data rather than testing predefined hypotheses – i.e. our main aim was to find out directly from interviewees what post-conflict tourism entrepreneurship supports they need, what business ideas they have and what barriers they have encountered. The exploratory nature of the research allowed for the investigation of complex, nuanced social dynamics that are not yet well understood – these included big themes like integration, exclusion, language barriers, resilience, inter-cultural relationships. As an interpretivist study, we emphasised the subjective experiences and meanings that participants attach to their situations; for example, we interviewed Syrian refugees in Türkiye, NGOs in Ireland, IDPs in Ukraine, and academics in Belgium. This diverse range of stakeholders naturally held broad perspectives on the topic at hand.

Data was collected through a combination of qualitative methods, including interviews, focus groups, and open-ended written survey questions to facilitate anonymity, which provide rich, detailed accounts of participants' perspectives, facilitating a comprehensive interpretation of the social realities surrounding refugee integration and entrepreneurship in tourism.

Interview Design

The study utilised a variety of data collection methods, each tailored to elicit rich, detailed responses from participants. Open-ended and unstructured interviews allowed for an in-depth exploration of personal experiences and insights, enabling participants to express their perspectives freely. Surveys featured three short open-ended questions, designed to capture key themes and nuanced opinions succinctly while allowing the participants to remain anonymous. Focus groups varied depending on the personnel involved, facilitating dynamic discussions and the exchange of diverse viewpoints. Notably, some individuals participated across two or more target groups (TGs), providing a broader context and deeper understanding of the issues at hand. This multi-method approach helped to

capture a comprehensive range of perspectives and experiences, contributing to the study's inductive and exploratory objectives.

Sampling

The study employed a convenience sampling method, selecting participants based on their availability and accessibility to the researcher. This approach facilitated the efficient collection of data from key stakeholders, including refugees, IDPs, NGO representatives, educators, and SMEs who were directly involved or impacted by the issues under investigation. Although convenience sampling did not provide a fully representative sample of the broader population, it enabled the exploration of relevant experiences and insights that were crucial to the study's inductive, exploratory, and interpretivist nature. This sampling strategy was particularly suited to exploratory research, where the goal was to gain initial understanding and generate hypotheses rather than generalise findings to a larger population.

Transcription and Translation

Interviews were conducted in English, Ukrainian, Turkish, Dutch, Croatian, Arabic. Following the interviews, those which were recorded were transcribed. All interviews were anonymised. Rather than translating the entire interview, the interviewers then summarised the discussion, translating relevant quotes for the other team members and final consolidation in the report.

Ethics

Ethical considerations were paramount in this study, given the sensitive nature of engaging with refugees, IDPs, and other vulnerable groups. The research prioritised informed consent, ensuring that all participants were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously maintained to protect participants' identities, particularly given the potential risks associated with sharing personal experiences and challenges. The study also sought to minimise any potential harm or distress by providing a supportive environment during interviews and focus groups, ensuring that questions were posed sensitively and respectfully. Ethical approval was granted by TUS, and the research adhered to ethical standards for data handling, ensuring that information was securely stored and used solely for the purposes of the study. By upholding these ethical principles, the study aimed to respect and protect the rights and well-being of all participants.

Findings

The raw data is presented below, including some basic demographic and quantitative data to help the reader with an overview of the participants of the study, before moving to qualitative analysis.

Demographics/ quantitative summaries

The interviews were, where possible, recorded and transcribed. Not all interviews were recorded, either for practical reasons (such as background noise) or privacy reasons where the interviewee did not wish it to be recorded.

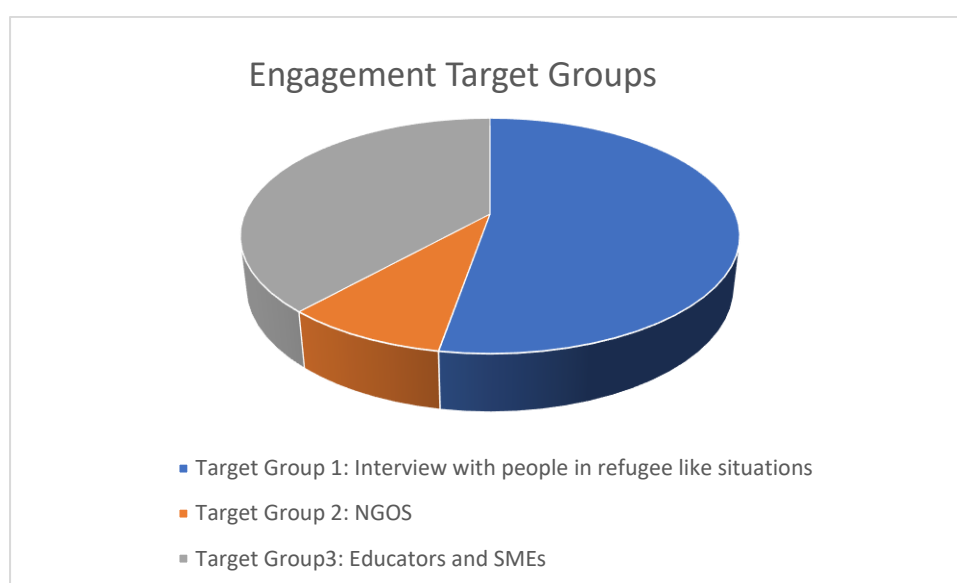


Figure 1: Engagement Target Groups

Average Interview length	34 minutes
Average word count	1,801
Number of engagements with females	60
Number of engagements with males	69
Number of engagements anonymous	72

Table 1: Key Engagement Data

The average interview length was 34 minutes and the average word count for the transcribed interviews was 1,801 words. 69 engagements were with males, 60 were with females and 72 were anonymous (surveys). 24 engagements were recorded in Belgium (PXL), 20 engagements were

recorded in Croatia (PAR), 61 engagements were recorded in Ukraine (DVA & KHNU), 40 engagements were recorded in Ireland (TUS) and 30 engagements were recorded in Türkiye (DEU). The remainder of the engagements (26) were conducted in other EU countries by Businet and the above partners.

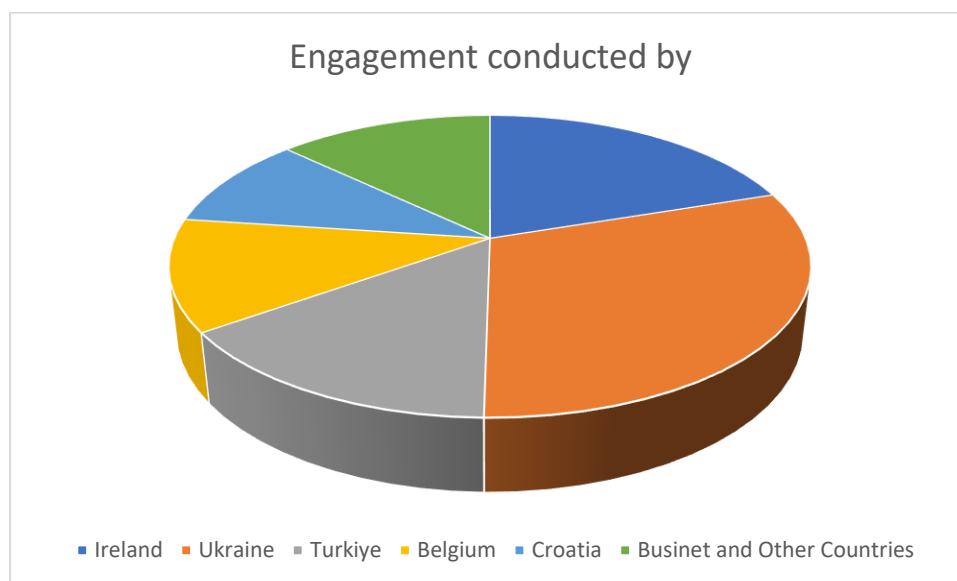


Table 2: Engagement Location

Participants' nationalities were varied, coming from 26 different countries, ranging from Afghanistan to Syria to Democratic Republic of the Congo among TG1, to Belgium, Türkiye and Ukraine (TG2), to Ireland, Poland, Portugal (TG3). The majority of TG1 participants were from Ukraine considering the role of both KHNU and DVA in the project and their access to internally displaced persons (IDPS). Interview languages included English, Dutch, Turkish, Ukrainian, Croatian, reflecting the language diversity of the project partners, and we also conducted a small number in Arabic, with the help of a **native** student to interpret. / [translate?](#)

Target Group 1: Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Refugees and IDPs face various challenges when starting businesses, including economic instability, communication issues, and limited resources. Despite these challenges, there is significant potential in tourism for fostering self-sufficiency and peacebuilding. Many refugee entrepreneurs are interested in establishing tourism businesses, highlighting the need for financial support, market knowledge, and local networks. Refugees bring unique products and innovations to the market, offering diversification and new cultural experiences. However, they need guidance on long-term business viability, legal and regulatory compliance, and cultural adaptation to their new environments.

Refugees and IDPs face significant challenges, including psychological trauma, emotional stress, language barriers, and financial instability. Despite these issues, IDPs, especially students, have shown strong adaptability and engagement in their new environments, often participating actively in the tourism sector. Psychological and practical skills training, including language and cultural awareness, are critical for their successful integration. Older refugees tend to face more profound psychological hurdles compared to younger individuals, who adapt more easily and have been positively received by employers in tourism.

It was interesting to hear from many people in refugee like situations that they entered the tourism entrepreneurship field due to their inability to find employment. One interviewee for example noted:

‘I didn't have a job. I was trying to have a job, but now I couldn't get one. So that's when I was planning to start my own thing.’

TG1 Participant 1

This sentiment was repeated many times by TG1 interviewees, who were both pushed into tourism by virtue of not finding work, but also pulled into it as an outlet for their own skills.

Target Group 2: NGOs

NGOs play a critical role in supporting refugee entrepreneurs through training, educational programs, and financial assistance. Organisations like Microstart provide microloans and advisory services to help refugees develop business plans and test feasibility. Other NGOs focus on integrating IDPs into local communities, offering psychological support, language courses, and cooperation with local authorities. Despite facing financial constraints and resource limitations,

NGOs collaborate with international organisations and local partners to promote social entrepreneurship and support refugee-led businesses.

Educational institutions and NGOs provide essential support for refugees, focusing on training in psychological resilience, language skills, and professional development. Universities support IDPs by facilitating engagement with local communities and providing access to training programs that help bridge cultural differences and improve job readiness. Programs at institutions like the Goncharenko Center in Dnipro focus on providing psychological and educational services to help refugees cope with their displacement. SMEs and educators emphasise the importance of ongoing psychological support and the need for better government assistance.

Target Group 3: Educators and SMEs

Educators and small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) support refugee integration through tailored training, tourism management courses, and psychological support programs. They help refugees overcome initial language and cultural barriers, facilitating smoother transitions into the workforce and business environments. SMEs often employ refugees, providing practical training and opportunities to apply skills in tourism. The tourism sector is seen as crucial for peacebuilding and social integration, with refugee-led businesses contributing to cultural exchange and community cohesion.

SMEs generally do not have significant concerns about employing refugees; however, there are worries about staff turnover and the long-term commitment of IDPs. Refugees bring valuable soft skills to the workforce, including language proficiency, teamwork, and psychological insight, enhancing community cohesion and cultural exchange. While SMEs appreciate the contributions of refugees, they often require additional training to address challenges such as language barriers and cultural adaptation.

Key Opportunities for Refugee Entrepreneurs in Tourism:

Overall, the integration of refugees into the tourism sector appears to be viewed as presenting significant opportunity for economic empowerment, social inclusion, and cultural exchange, with the right support systems in place. This was evident in our interviews as participants noted the following supports being available.

- **Financial Support:** Access to grants, loans, and microfinance is crucial for starting businesses.
- **State and Local Support Programs:** Government initiatives aid in navigating bureaucratic processes.

- Incubators and Accelerators: These platforms provide structured support and mentorship.
- Online Marketplaces: Digital platforms expand market reach and sales opportunities.
- Community Cooperation: Collaborations with local communities enhance business sustainability.
- Support from Public and Charitable Organisations: Non-profits and international donors play a vital role in supporting refugee entrepreneurs.
- Vocational training programmes run by NGOs as a starting point for future business possibilities? We heard about Barista Classes run by a local association, which led many Syrians to work in cafes and encouraged them to consider opening their own business

What business ideas did the participants have?

The participants shared various innovative ideas for post-conflict tourism businesses, reflecting the potential for leveraging cultural diversity, economic opportunities, and social integration. These ideas can be integrated into a Higher Education (HE) program to foster students' entrepreneurial spirit, focusing on tourism, cultural heritage, and service sectors.

Below is an analysis of the key themes and potential integration strategies:

Cultural and Culinary Tourism:

Participants highlighted opportunities in cultural tourism, leveraging diverse cultural backgrounds to offer authentic experiences. This includes food festivals, traditional cooking classes, and cultural exchange events.

Gastronomic tourism, such as wine tours, healthy eating cafes, and unique culinary experiences, was noted as a significant niche. For example, a participant from Iran (TG1, participant 11) expressed interest in wine tourism, connecting their cultural heritage with the tourism industry. Another participant noted the surprise experienced by Ukrainians in Ireland that there are relatively little seafood restaurants.

‘With so many fish, why seafood is not very popular? For many Ukrainians, it was a shock. Is surrounded by the sea. By the ocean!’

(TG1, Participant 2)

Help Tourism and Social Enterprise:

"Help tourism" was frequently mentioned, especially in the context of post-conflict Ukraine. This involves tourists participating in rebuilding efforts or engaging with local communities, providing a unique tourism experience that combines leisure with meaningful contributions.

Entrepreneurship driven by social impact, such as employing refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) in local businesses (e.g., sewing workshops, small-scale food production), aligns with this theme.

Necessity Entrepreneurship:

Many refugees are pushed into entrepreneurship due to strict labour markets in host countries. Participants discussed starting small service-oriented businesses, like restaurants, hairdressing salons, and repair shops, to circumvent formal employment barriers.

This necessity-driven entrepreneurship highlights the importance of flexible support systems, including vocational training and small business grants, tailored to the specific needs of refugees.

Tourism as a Tool for Social Cohesion:

The potential of tourism to foster cross-cultural understanding and economic resilience was frequently noted. Participants emphasised the role of tourism in integrating refugees into their new communities and supporting economic growth.

Initiatives like community-based tourism projects, rural green tourism, and ecotourism were proposed to involve local populations and IDPs in creating sustainable tourism businesses.

Interviewee 1, for example, had experience of working in safari tourism from their home country, interviewee 7 mentioned rural beauty, agriculture and soil quality, while interviewee 15 highlighted the rural development opportunities in nature tourism which the Ukrainian population in Ireland could capitalise on due to their national dispersal to rural regions.

E-commerce and Digital Tourism:

Digital platforms, such as e-tourism agencies, offer significant potential, especially for refugees who may face mobility restrictions. Participants suggested leveraging digital tools to market tourism products, book services, and manage businesses online. Participant 6, for example, discussed their knowledge of booking systems and considered how they could apply them to a start up in their new country (Ireland). This kind of remote work models also present cost advantages for refugees as public transport in Ireland is poor and many are dispersed in small regional towns. Remote working

also allows businesses to hire across borders, as highlighted by a participant who employs Iranian workers remotely due to lower labour costs.

Barriers and Needs

Participants identified key barriers to starting a tourism business, such as lack of financial support, bureaucratic hurdles, language barriers, and limited recognition of their professional skills in host countries. Needs include access to education and training, psychological and legal support, and community integration initiatives. It's also crucial that educators facilitate recognition that those with additional needs may sometimes go under the radar. One participant, from TG3, for example noted that there was no formal mechanism in place to do that in her university and she only knew about individual needs through chance.

Integration into an HE Program:

From the interviews we determined a number of needs based on the feedback from the three target groups. These are listed below:

- Develop courses that teach students how to create tourism businesses with social impact, focusing on leveraging cultural heritage, local traditions, and culinary arts – this social contribution came through strongly from TG1 in particular, who exhibited kindness, empathy and a desire to give back to the host countries.
- Include practical workshops on developing business plans, marketing strategies, and digital entrepreneurship, tailored to the tourism sector – a major barrier for TG1 which came up repeatedly in interviews was the need to plan and understand the bureaucracy.
- Facilitate internships and project-based learning opportunities in collaboration with local tourism businesses, NGOs, and social enterprises working with refugees and IDPs – this will be particularly important for mentoring and networking.
- Establish business incubation hubs within the university to support students' start-up ideas, providing mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to micro-credits or seed funding – interestingly many of the incubation and entrepreneurship hubs already provide many of the resources we are discussing in this project, but rarely in the context of refugees or specifically in tourism.
- Incorporate modules on cross-cultural communication, social integration strategies, and managing diversity within the tourism sector – this suggestion came through from TG1 and TG3 business owners who had experience of the diverse needs of these staff

- Emphasise the value of intercultural exchange and the role of tourism in peacebuilding and community cohesion, drawing on real-world case studies from Ukraine and other conflict-affected areas
- Offer specialised courses on digital tourism marketing, e-commerce platforms, and remote business management to equip students with the skills needed for modern tourism entrepreneurship.
- Teach the use of digital tools to overcome traditional business barriers, such as reaching global customers, managing online bookings, and employing virtual assistants.
- Establish support services that provide legal advice, grant application assistance, and psychological support tailored to refugee entrepreneurs and students from diverse backgrounds.
- Create networking opportunities with successful entrepreneurs, industry experts, and international organisations like UNHCR and IOM that support refugee-led businesses.
- Focus on sustainable tourism practices, including ecotourism, green tourism, and community-based tourism projects that emphasise environmental responsibility and local empowerment.
- Encourage students to develop business models that not only generate economic benefits but also contribute to the social and cultural fabric of their communities.

The integration of these ideas into our short training courses will help empower students to explore entrepreneurial pathways in post-conflict tourism, support their business start-ups, cultural exchange, and economic resilience. Our course will focus solely on practical skills, supportive environments, and socially impactful business models, i.e. the intention is for our programme to help students navigate the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the evolving tourism landscape.

Barriers to Refugee Entrepreneurship Highlighted by the 3 Target Groups

Language Barriers:

- Issue: Refugees highlighted in the interviews they often face difficulties with local language skills, which impacts their ability to integrate, find employment, and start businesses.
- How to Address: Implement language training programs, including basic and advanced courses tailored to different needs. Encourage local governments and organisations to provide accessible language education resources.

Legal and Regulatory Challenges:

- Issue: Refugees may struggle with understanding and navigating local laws, regulations, and requirements, such as those related to starting a business or obtaining a driving license. This was repeated many times and is probably the single biggest barrier in some countries.
- How to Address: Offer workshops and resources that provide clear information about legal requirements. Simplify administrative procedures and provide dedicated support for navigating regulatory frameworks.

Financial Support and Initial Investment:

- Issue: Lack of financial resources and start-up capital is a significant barrier for refugees looking to start their own businesses. Many of the refugees are in extreme poverty. This creates a huge barrier from day one.
- How to Address: Increase access to microloans and financial grants. Provide mentorship and specialised courses on financial management. Develop support programs for securing investment and funding.

Accommodation Costs:

- Issue: High housing costs in tourist areas or urban centres can be a barrier for refugees seeking affordable accommodation.
- How to Address: Explore partnerships with local authorities and organisations to provide affordable housing solutions. Consider temporary housing options or subsidies for refugees.

Employment and Skills Training:

- Issue: Refugees often face difficulties finding suitable employment due to a lack of experience, inadequate skills, or language barriers.
- How to Address: Develop job training and placement programs focused on skills development. Offer internships and work experience opportunities. Provide specialised training for educators to better support refugee students.

Psychological and Emotional Support:

- Issue: The emotional impact of displacement, including stress and anxiety, affects refugees' ability to integrate and succeed in new environments.
- How to Address: Provide psychological support and counselling services. Offer stress management and emotional resilience training. Develop programs to help refugees cope with the trauma of displacement.

Cultural Integration:

- Issue: Differences in cultural norms and expectations can create challenges for refugees in adapting to their new environment.
- How to Address: Facilitate cultural orientation programs and community integration initiatives. Promote intercultural dialogue and understanding through local events and workshops.

Barriers to Entrepreneurship:

- Issue: Refugees looking to start their own businesses face challenges such as lack of capital, market knowledge, and access to networks.
- How to Address: Create entrepreneurial support programs including mentorship, business incubators, and networking opportunities. Provide guidance on market research and business planning.

Regulatory and Bureaucratic Obstacles:

- Issue: Complex regulatory requirements and bureaucratic processes can hinder business development and integration efforts.
- How to Address: Streamline bureaucratic procedures and provide clear, accessible information about regulatory requirements. Establish one-stop-shop services for business registration and compliance.

Integration into the Local Community:

- Issue: Refugees often experience difficulty in integrating into local communities due to social perception and lack of trust.
- How to Address: Foster community outreach programs and initiatives aimed at building trust and mutual understanding. Encourage local businesses and organisations to actively engage with refugee communities.

Specialised Training for Educators:

- Issue: Educators may lack the training needed to address the specific needs of refugee students, including psychological and cultural sensitivities.
- How to Address: Develop and implement training programs for educators focusing on trauma-informed care, cultural sensitivity, and effective communication with refugee students.

Infrastructure and Logistical Challenges:

- Issue: Inadequate infrastructure, such as poor transportation options and insufficient accommodation facilities, can impact business operations and tourism development.
- How to Address: Advocate for improvements in local infrastructure and support the development of logistical solutions. Collaborate with local authorities to address infrastructure gaps.

Government and Institutional Support:

- Issue: Limited financial and institutional support for refugees can hinder their ability to start businesses and integrate into the workforce.
- How to Address: Increase government funding and support programs specifically targeted at refugees. Ensure that support systems are adequately resourced and accessible.

Driving Licenses and Transportation:

- Issue: Obtaining a driving license and navigating local transportation systems can be challenging for refugees. In Ireland in particular this is an issue as there is regional dispersal of refugees into small rural towns with poor public transport.
- How to Address: Provide guidance and support for acquiring driving licenses. Help with transportation options, especially in areas with limited public transport.

By addressing the above barriers as documented by TG1, TG2 and TG3 participants, with targeted strategies and support mechanisms, the hope would be that refugees can better integrate into their new environments and overcome the barriers they face in entrepreneurship and employment. These findings are taken forward into our training programmes and resources for the Inspire project.

PESTLE Analysis

The following section maps the responses from the three target groups against a PESTLE analysis. PESTLE analyses focus on political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors. While there are many such tools used in management reporting, we selected this structure as it allowed us to simplify the broad parameters of this study – namely tourism being such a wide discipline, the 201 engagements we made during the study and the breadth of issues faced by each country.

Political

Regulatory Environment: Refugees and IDPs often face complex and restrictive legal frameworks when starting businesses, including immigration laws, work permits, and local business regulations. Different countries have varied policies on refugee integration, and these policies significantly impact the ease with which refugees can start and sustain businesses.

Governmental Support and Initiatives: There is a growing trend among governments and international organisations, such as the EU, to fund initiatives that support refugee entrepreneurship. For example, the Erasmus Key Action 2 grant provides financial support for projects like the INSPIRE project. However, access to these funds can be inconsistent and heavily dependent on the political climate of the host country.

Economic Factors

Financial Barriers and Instability: Refugees and IDPs face significant economic instability, lacking access to financial resources, credit, and capital to start businesses. Many are unable to secure loans due to a lack of credit history or collateral, making initial investment in tourism ventures particularly challenging.

Tourism as a Potential Market: Despite these barriers, tourism presents a viable economic opportunity for fostering self-sufficiency and peacebuilding. Refugee entrepreneurs bring unique cultural products and experiences that diversify local tourism markets. However, there is a need for financial support, access to local networks, and training in market knowledge to help them succeed.

Social Factors

Cultural Integration and Adaptation: Refugees and IDPs often struggle with cultural adaptation in their new environments, facing language barriers, psychological trauma, and emotional stress. Social

integration initiatives, such as language and cultural awareness training, are crucial for their successful entry into the tourism sector.

Psychological Support and Community Acceptance: The psychological impact of displacement affects refugees' ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Younger refugees tend to adapt more easily and have been positively received by employers in tourism, while older refugees may experience deeper psychological challenges. Community acceptance and inclusion are vital for fostering a supportive environment.

Technological Factors

Access to Digital Tools and Platforms: The use of digital platforms for marketing and networking is essential for modern businesses, including tourism. However, refugees often have limited access to technological resources, digital literacy, and online marketing skills, which can hinder their ability to reach broader audiences and operate efficiently.

Development of Digital Resources: Projects like INSPIRE aim to bridge this gap by providing digital resources, such as mobile applications and websites, to support refugee tourism entrepreneurs. These tools are designed to facilitate access to training, networking opportunities, and market information. Our online databank is available at

<https://www.inspireproject.eu/entrepreneurshipsupports>

Legal Factors

Compliance with Local Laws and Regulations: Refugees need guidance on navigating complex legal and regulatory environments in their host countries. This includes understanding local business laws, obtaining necessary permits, and ensuring compliance with tax regulations.

Rights and Protections: The legal status of refugees can significantly impact their ability to start businesses. In many cases, lack of clarity around legal rights, work permits, and residency status can create barriers to entrepreneurship.

Environmental Factors

Sustainability and Responsible Tourism: Refugee entrepreneurs often bring unique cultural perspectives and sustainable practices that align with the growing demand for responsible tourism. Leveraging these practices can enhance their market appeal, especially among tourists interested in authentic, eco-friendly experiences.

Impact of Geopolitical and Environmental Contexts: The geopolitical situation in regions like Ukraine, Türkiye, and other countries involved in the INSPIRE project, affects the flow of refugees and their ability to participate in tourism entrepreneurship. Natural resources, local environment, and the geopolitical landscape must be considered when planning and implementing tourism ventures.

Conclusion

Refugees and IDPs face a myriad of challenges in starting tourism businesses, including regulatory barriers, economic instability, and social integration issues. However, with proper support, such as access to financial resources, training in market knowledge, and technological tools, they hold the potential to contribute significantly to local economies through unique cultural offerings and innovative approaches. The intentions of our INSPIRE project is to bridge these gaps by providing tailored education, support, and resources to help refugee entrepreneurs achieve economic self-sufficiency and local integration in their communities.

Conclusions and Recommendations for WP3

Our next stage in the project is to design our training courses based on the information presented above. These courses will be delivered as in-person training workshops and also as an online digital badge. The content will be localised to consider specific national and regional issues, such as language, cultural issues, location, participant demographics etc.

The content of our course will include:

- An introduction to the geography, culture, and economy of the host country
- The major issues and opportunities facing world tourism
- Business language and terminology
- The challenges of being an entrepreneur - where to find emotional support/ networking and mentoring
- Inspirational case studies
- Business rules and regulations
- Finance and technical support

Appendix One

Consent to take part in research on INSPIRE Project conducted by the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) research study'

I, [_____], volunteer to participate in a research study conducted by [X] who is leading this research study.

I understand that the this research study will identify good practice case studies for tourism entrepreneurs across Europe from people in refugee like situations. Outcomes from the project will be a good practice user guide for refugee tourism entrepreneurs. This will be supported by course materials, a website and mobile application.

We are interested to interview people in refugees like situations who:

- Have started a tourism business;
- Are considering, or would consider, starting a tourism business;
- Are offering tourism related services in their host country;
- Have started businesses related to food/ hospitality.

Participation involves being interviewed, as an individual or as part of a focus group, and the interview will last approximately 20-30 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio recording of the interview will be made.

I will be one of approximately 30 people being interviewed for this research.

- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview/ focus group is being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I have been given a copy of this consent form.

My printed name and signature

Researcher printed name and signature

_____ Date

INSPIRE

For further information please visit
<https://www.inspireproject.eu/>



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