

A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR EUROPE

SIRACUSA 11-12 APRIL 2016



A brighter future for Europe: Innovation, integration and the migrant crisis

11 – 12 April 2016 in Siracusa, Sicily, Italy

**A Social Innovation Europe event, funded by the European Commission
and organised in partnership with Impact Hub Siracusa, Italy**

The unprecedented flows of migrants approaching Europe is confronting the European Union and its Member States with a series of complex challenges. It raises fundamental questions about the social and cultural fabric of European societies. Ingenuity, vision, as well as political will and an efficient use of resources are required if we are to find ways to deal with this on going, unabated crisis.

The closing of borders and the rise of populism are the result of a public debate that has framed migration in negative terms, questioning the fundamental values that characterise Europe. Migration has been an engine for development throughout history, and Europe is a region with a long history of defending human rights and helping migrants integrate.

Beyond public rhetoric, communities are reacting to contemporary population movements spontaneously in creative and constructive ways. Several innovations are emerging, tackling immediate needs, raising awareness, welcoming new populations of refugees and migrants, and transforming them into long term opportunities. Understanding these responses is essential in shaping new policies that help integration, and allow the European society benefit from their arrival.

Public policy has an essential role to play in tackling this challenge, and will greatly benefit from the support of these innovative initiatives. From migrant entrepreneurship, new approaches to housing, food making and sharing, schooling and education, several models combine policy-led and bottom-up approaches across Europe that could serve as a blueprint for other communities to adapt and adopt over the coming years.

Social Innovation Europe has already begun looking at some of these examples through the 'Beyond Crisis: Innovative Approaches to Migrant Integration' collection. Building on this, we are hosting a two-day gathering bringing together approximately 60 - 80 policymakers, foundations, academics, social entrepreneurs, and local communities.

This event will offer insights into a variety of initiatives that can help change the narrative around refugees and migrants. In particular, we will bring together projects around Europe that have the potential to improving the longer term, sustainable integration of migrants across European communities. Through the sharing of innovative practices, citizen and community-based experiences, the event will also provide opportunities to explore collaboration and innovative policy development.

In addition to learning and sharing, this event is also a call to action. Projections are steady for increasing flows of migrants toward Europe, so we need to work together to co-create a brighter future.

Join us from 11 – 12 April 2016 in Siracusa (Sicily), one of the main arrival points for thousands of migrants into Europe and a town whose citizens have come together to find innovative solutions to the crisis.