

**“CRISCO: Crossroad of the Regions – fostering involvement of all
citizens in local life to Improve Social Cohesion”**

Europe for Citizens Program 2014-2020
Networks of Towns
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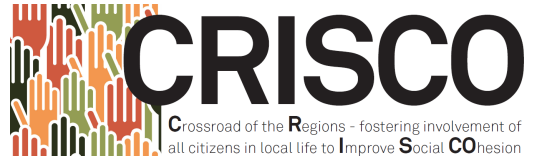
***Transnational Event January 21st-23rd 2019
Vejle, Denmark***

“CRISCO: Language Barriers to Social Cohesion”

REPORT



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Participants:

Introduction:

The third transnational event of the CRISCO project took place in Vejle, Denmark from January 21st to 23rd 2019. The topic of the days in Vejle was “Language Barriers to social cohesion” and the focus on discussions were on not only national language, but on all types of language barriers that can be a barrier to engage in society. The meeting was organised by VIFIN, (Resource Centre for Integration), Vejle Municipality.

Agenda:

Monday 21st January 2019

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 15.30 – 16.15 | Different kinds of ice-breakers – related to the topic of language barriers |
| 16.15 – 17.30 | Put & Take - Mini best practice workshops (Public session) |
| 18.00 | Dinner in private homes of citizens in Vejle |

Tuesday 22nd January 2019

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 09.00 – 12.30 | First part of public conference: Official speeches, presentations, etc. |
| 12.30 – 13.30 | Lunch |
| 13.30 – 16.00 | Second part of public conference: Workshops on different challenges – meeting people with language barriers and hearing their stories and discuss with them. |
| 18.00 - | Dinner for international participants at Spinderihallerne |

Wednesday 23rd January 2019

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 8.00 – 9.30 | CRISCO Steering Committee (for project coordinators) |
| 10.00 – 12.00 | Creating recommendations based on learning from the conference and wrapping up the meeting |
| 12.00 – 13.00 | Social Cohesion walk in Vejle. Looking onward to the 4rd international event |



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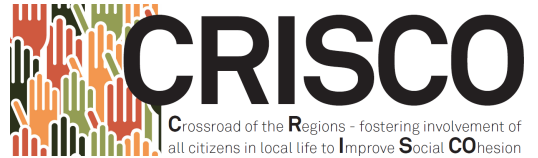
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Monday January 21st 2019, Icebreakers

The international participants were introduced to each other through some simple language lessons on how to greet people in Danish. They had to practice on each other and got a sense of how it is to be thrown into a new society or a language class.



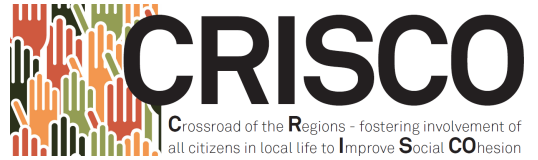
Monday January 21st 2019, Put and take – best practice workshops

During this session, each country partner had a chance to present a best practice from their city in relation to language and overcoming language barriers. The session was divided into two sections, where each section had 5 countries represented. Each country had 1 minute to pitch/present their practice, and after that the 5 countries had parallel workshops, where participants could visit the practice they were most interested in. These 5 workshops were repeated 3 times in total, meaning that each participant could visit





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and hear about 3 different countries. This model was then repeated with the 5 other countries of the partnership in the same way.

Some of the practice presented were: writing workshops (Belgium), Exercise with chairs to find things in common (Estonia), Language teaching (France) and dance practice (Italy).





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Monday 21st, Dinner in private homes

In the evening the participants were invited to private citizens houses for dinner. VIFIN as the hosting organisation had found 16 hosts, who each had 2-3 international guest visiting them. The host had prepared a dinner of their own choice to welcome the participants to Denmark and Vejle. The dinners were a large success with both hosts and guests.



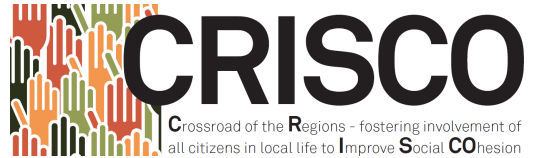
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Tuesday 22nd 2019, Conference, part 1

The public conference was a full day event held at the local library in Vejle with a mix of international and local participants. 42 international and 50 local participants were part of the day.

The day was initiated with a mix of official welcomes and speeches, followed by key notes on the topic of language barriers. The project manager of CRISCO, *Jean-Francois Maljean*, from the Municipality of Etterbeek, shortly outlined the purpose and activities of the project.

The mayor of Vejle, *Jens Ejner Christensen*, spoke about the importance of social resiliens in a society, so the population can withstand any challenges that may arise. The chief resilient officer of Vejle, *Ulla Varneskov*, spoke of social cohesion in a time of urbanization and what consequences this has for our society.



The key notes all

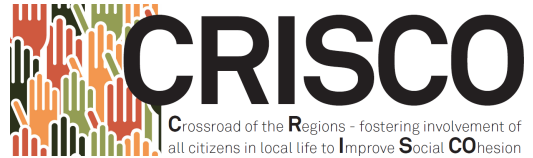
focused on different aspects of language barriers to social cohesion. The first speaker, *Amira Saric*, from Vejle Language Centre, underlined that language is a bridge, not a barrier, and spoke of some of the theoretical aspects of language, e.g. language as systems of meaning. She also drew on her own experiences as bi-cultural to highlight some of the cultural aspects of using language, for example how loud you are and how you use body language.



Eva Sommer Hansen, from Spinderihallerne, which is an innovation and start-up environment in Vejle, with special attention and activities for expats, presented their initiatives on International Salons, where they gather to talk about life and existential subjects. The salons are a historical concept and in this case, they are used to create a community where you can share feelings that are equal.



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Our third presenter, *Mette Breinholdt* from Hermes Interaktion, spoke about the use of interpreters, specifically in the health sector. She discussed some of the challenges in using both professional and relatives as interpreters, and what some of the consequences might be for the patient, if we are in the health sector.



Finally, *Marion Tirsgaard and Lisbeth Roed* from Vejle Libraries, presented a project they recently implemented for dyslexic and weak readers, to make it easier for this group to use the library. They highlighted some of the challenges people with reading problems have, when entering a library (or any other public service) where there are a lot of text and signs. In the project they worked with pictograms and signing, and making materials that are easily understood for this target group.



Together these presentations covered some of the many challenges there can be regarding language, not only the spoken national language, but also body language, interpretation, dyslexia, etc.

To make the participants feel how challenges can arise on their own body, we conducted a short exercise. In groups of 8, the participants had to choose one, who was blind and one who was mute. These two people got to feel/see an object, and then had to communicate it to the rest of the group, who then had to draw it. This exercise proved how difficult it can be to understand each other and how frustrating it can be not to be understood properly. But it is also exemplified how eager people are to understand and help each other, when put in an situation where it is needed.



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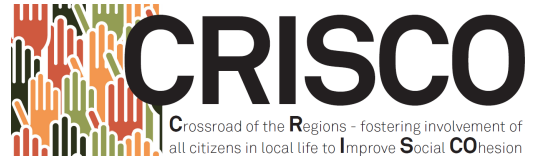


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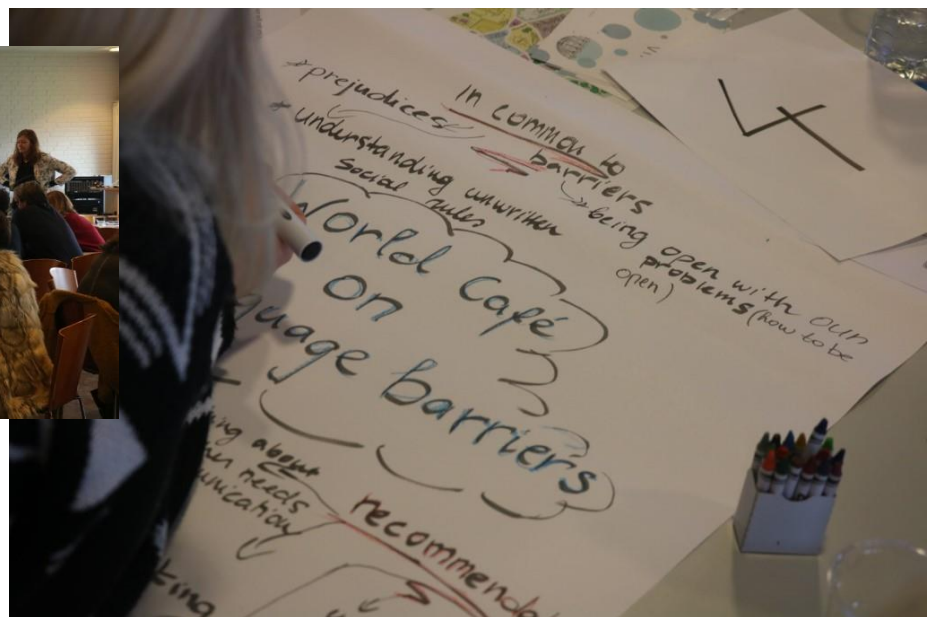
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Tuesday 22nd 2019, Conference, part 2

After lunch, the conference continued with a 'world café', where in groups, the participants in turn had a 10 minute 'visit' from a person with an experience in language barriers. We had 5 people who shared their experience; a woman with a hearing disability (accompanied by her husband), a woman from Greenland now settled in Denmark, a former teacher at social health school who has many years experience in teaching people with another ethnic background, a woman originally from Hungary, first resettled in Australia, then UK, then to Denmark with her husband and children, and a Danish woman who lived in France for many years and now returned to Denmark. All of these had their own experience with barriers they faced regarding language in these situations, and all had meet challenges in their life. They shared how they dealt with them and started a discussion with participants on what can be done to overcome such barriers. After each visit, the group had 10 minutes to sum up and give recommendations on the case, before they had a visit from the next person. Each group had a chance to talk to 3 persons during this café.

At the end of the day there was a short evaluation session with a chance to reflect on the individual learning of the day.

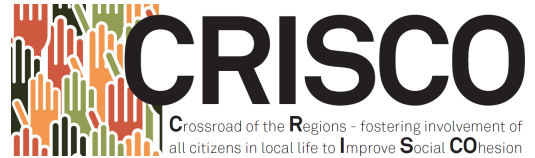


The day was concluded by a dinner in Spinderihallernes Café.





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Wednesday 23rd 2019, Steering Committee meeting (project managers only)

Tour the table – local activities

Albania, Vlora: Have had the third meeting in Vlora – do not have many migrants in Vlora, but focused on the returnees. Participation of the University of Vlora, Italians and Greeks staying in Vlora, and returnees from those countries. Special classes in school in the afternoon for the children of these people, because they need to catch up.

Informs that for the next meeting in Etterbeek, Jeton will not attend, but Iona will.

Added value of Crisco: more attention in the municipality of the issues, they are speaking more of it and creating dialogue. Contact with the national strategy of returnees, the project has created contacts and meetings.

Denmark, Vejle: Held the meeting in October, the topic was to plan the international event and get input from the local panel. The program had debriefing from Strasbourg, a general presentation on language, exercises and discussions. Group consists of municipality, NGOs/associations, citizens. Helped with ideas for the conference – the input is visible, eg. they wanted to know about the organisations of the international participants, and the idea of private dinners.

We will share the methodology about the dinners, etc.

Have had quite a lot of media attention of the event and the group visiting.

Lithuania, Jonava: Decided on the theme of migrant integration, because they have a local refugee center. Wanted to show the history of the region, so showed movie with subtitles for the refugees. Afterwards discussion about how we used to live and how it is now, and how it is in their countries now, which they are running from. Problem of refugees leaving the country when they get their permit – wanted to show them reasons to stay. Underlining the need to know the language.

Was a moving experience – some of the participants were crying after the movie. After they felt more free to share. Challenge to get enough participants. The people who came was asking for more activities. Learned from other countries experiences that it is good to have food 😊

Latvia, Rzekne: Focusing on the groups that have problems with integration, who are Russians and people without citizenship. Returnees – are in practice newcomers. People with problems of physical kind - deaf, blind.

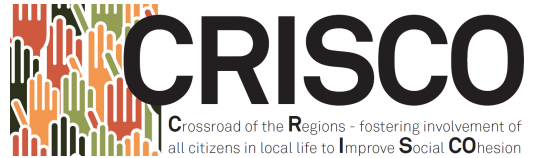
Changed the media (social) to try and get a new and younger target group. The role of social media in the integration was the topic of the workshop – had a lot of young people, working in municipality or business, students, and working in rural area – 35 in total. Had a speaker who could talk about the social media and the topic. How it can help people feel integrated in the local community.

Project has been successful – have changed the local people and they know that there are other problems in the world and given them perspective. Influenced peoples mind and way of thinking.





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Estonia, Tartu: Local event took place on January 10th – introducing solutions to the local people (international house, language possibility). Was difficult to reach the target group (wanted to have the Russian speaking population). But had a good discussion about what could be done in Tartu.

Have good ideas on how to plan the next event. Have an internet network where they have discussions on the theme.

Slovenia, Novo Mesto: Working with two groups – major population and migrants/refugees. Had 4 events. Living library, blue eyes/brown eyes are the two methodologies. Focusing on language barriers. Roma population is the most excluded group in Slovenia – many stereotypes and prejudice. The children don't speak Slovenian when they start school. Means they have problems in school all the way through – often drop out, then later go to adult education to finish primary school. Tried to raise awareness of the issues – in three cities, cooperating with schools (primary/secondary). Brought a refugee from Syria to the schools also who talked about how it was to come, and how it is important to integrate.

Problem: the number of hours language lessons refugees get are not enough to learn. Anything more are on NGO level. Problem that there are no cultural mediators who can connect migrants with local population and society.

Belgium, Etterbeek: Focused on expats – many cultures and 'ghettos' in the area. Take action with activities. Tina – writer and expat- shared her personal experience with other expats. Made 9 writing workshops, most important thing is to get people together and discuss about culture and language. Made an event on bread – had people from different countries and types of bread – each showed how to cook and prepare from their country.

Italy, Bassano del Grappa: Two local meetings – one reporting from Strasbourg, to plan something permanent that could live after the Crisco project. Make a handbook and focus on making the events accessible to everyone- enough things are happening, but you have to make sure people can get there, come in, etc.

Project about mixed media, history and culture. For refugees – to make it easier to tell the history they want. They will make some sort of report of their story.

Two public meetings: about language and making the Crisco project more known. To create awareness about what are available of aids for migrants like help for homework.

France, Strasbourg: Worked with Plurielle. Workshop with migrant women who don't know French. Focused on their capacity of communicating without much language. Also about human rights. Used drawings to describe situations where they had language problems.

Netherlands, Delft: Two tracks: working group on discrimination and employment – didn't have any meeting since last, turned out to be a sensitive issue.

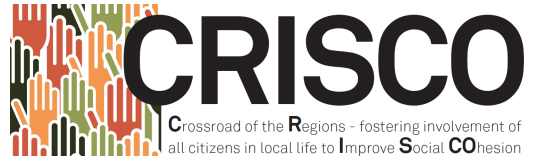
Problem with low literacy among population that cannot do digital communication or participate fully – more focus on this lately, but it is still a challenge to get to the people because they do not want to admit their problem. Had a good presenter on the topic, and the plan is to do something with rolemodels who can serve as good examples of showing how you can manage around your challenges. Meeting been postponed to February.

Furthermore the partnership discussed the bilateral meetings and the options to visit other partners, and was briefed about the first thoughts on the next transnational meeting in Etterbeek June 25th-28th 2019.





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Wednesday 23rd 2019, Recommendations

During the morning session the international participants worked on developing the experiences and input from the day before into concrete recommendations. These are as below:

General recommendations

Support (strengthen their role/position/visibility) persons for administrative work support. Top-down approach.

- Support awareness activities
- Give financial support to facilitate the communication with different disabled people (dyslexia etc.)
- Raise awareness
 - Bring attention of the larger public
 - Public campaigns on different disabilities
 - Political level/Public campaigns (supported by the government)
 - Instructions on different behaviors
 - Educational programs

As an organizer/trainer of multi-ethnic/cultural/language group: TAKE TIME to get to know each other by activities that do not require much language (food, dance, sports). Taking it slowly in the beginning pays off.

Personal recommendations

Be open and speak up about any special needs - without that nobody can try to meet your needs.

- E.g.: I am a beginner, be patient)
- I am a beginner, please speak slowly
- I have a hearing disability – please sit in the light, so I can more easily read your lips and body language

Target group: everyone (especially people with special needs)

Location: everywhere

Accept and try to adapt to the fundamental social and cultural rules

Target group: Migrants

Situation: No specific

Make sure the scene is set – on both sides. Ask for special needs, but also declare special needs and the level of command for the language.

Target audience: disabled and newcomers

Situation: conversation, appointments, events etc.

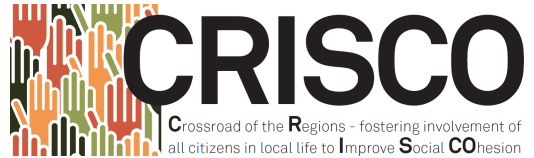


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Build and maintain motivation on both sides

Target audience: Migrants and newcomers.

Location: No specific situation.

Other:

Be prepared to get out of your comfort zone



Recommendations regarding information

Broad communication (all media/social/telephone) about all services and possibilities to find assistance and information (tourist information for non-tourists)

Target group: newcomers

Location: Municipalities (+ services)

Organizations or associations organize free courses

Target group: Foreigners and teachers. Teachers may not be able to communicate at all with foreigners (barrier for teaching) Use apps (automatic translator)

Organizations, associations, schools.

Facilitate access to information to people with special needs (establishing a centre, where people can come and get information and promote information about it in public places e.g. at schools)

Visual representation of information to enable people who can not read/hear to understand the message.

Establish social programs, in terms of which social workers can accompany people with special needs to specific places (doctor, school etc.) and translate for them.

Other

Give instructions on different behaviours for communicating with people with different barriers

Educational programmes for larger public

Educate/inform people with disabilities about opportunities





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Recommendations regarding activities

Organize collaborative activities around passions (movie, cooking, music....)

Target groups: Gather people who are native (or without disabilities) and people with language issues, or different foreigner communities.

Organisations and associations (cultural sites, movies,of associations.

Welcome newcomers – teamwork as a society (everybody is involved)

Target group: Government, individuals, employees, colleagues, local community

Other

Have dinner together after private activities.

Bring people together – “private” activities – sports, dance, music, art, cooking. Bring youngsters and adults together.

Besides these we have gathered the following advice or points of attention from the activities:

- Talk a lot (despite mistakes)
- Consider the reality of your thoughts (Believe that you can, instead of starting out having doubts in yourself).
- Speak slowly
- Make natural breaks in your speech
- Select important words
- Use smartphone apps
- People with hearing disabilities need a well-lit room in order to read lips/body language
- Name the person, when you start talking to them
- Be aware of your cultural norms/biases
- Be clear about “rules” – what are you supposed to do (for instance accept local social and cultural rules)
- Articulate
- Look people in the eyes as you speak



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