Refival.org

"Refugee Support: an Inclusion Sourcing based Incubator Approach"

12 Pillars for Generating Solutions

(PowerPoint Presentation Handout)

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Refugee Support: an Inclusion Sourcing based Incubator Approach; 12 Pillars for Generating Solutions

Introduction

In the past, the agriculture based rural economy was job/skills-wise, nearly fully separated from the trade and crafts driven urban economy. Over time, due to mechanization, the number of agricultural jobs declined and many people living in rural areas have left and moved to cities.

Cities are efficient; they are hubs of human interaction and optimized specialization. But meanwhile our economy has dominantly become services driven and there are many tasks, which can be fulfilled remotely via Internet without any physical interaction with others. This can address a serious drawback of cities, namely that they easily become overpopulated, resulting in high living cost. More symmetry could be beneficial: reducing overcrowding whilst improving sustainability for the rural or deprived areas.

Worldwide, 58% of the people now live in increasingly big cities. This majority no longer represent the interests of less urbanized communities, which are consequently deteriorating. Without measures, a growing division between advantaged and disadvantaged people is evident. To reverse this development Refival proposes to put a policy named "inclusion sourcing" in place.

Inclusion Sourcing

Inclusion means that economically privileged areas take responsibility for disadvantaged ones by making them an integrated part of their workforce. Whereas "rural" areas are not as specialized and offer less human interaction, they offer more space and lower living cost. This enables nature versus city lifestyle or larger family versus expert type career choices. The two profiles are equally valuable complements.

Sourcing means in this case to use the Internet for redistribution of work and education facilities. Aiming inclusion, government and business process tasks that do not need the urban type of specialized human interaction are actively relocated to deprived areas. Such, more proper, division of duties leads to a personal preference based, fluid, bi-directional migration between urban and rural zones.

Inclusion sourcing reduces cost and generates a lower threshold for self-sustainability of vulnerable groups like unemployed or refugees. This brings them better chances to be involved and integrate. Demographically, the availability of more living space and lower living cost could mend the currently too low birthrates faced in cities. Finally, less deprivation will lead to upward social mobility for many.

Rural Revitalization

Having lost a great part of their population, villages must attract people to settle there again. But until deprived areas are revitalized it is unlikely that those who have previously left will return. However, for more vulnerable groups like unemployed or especially for refugees (who are not settled yet) the choice between urban and rural is a different one. If proper conditions are met, rural settlement can be attractive.

Two main issues have to be addressed though. First, while availability of jobs can change the perception of "rural" being primitive or lower-class, it is important that in practice people can freely migrate between rural-urban and vice versa and do not get stuck. Second, rural cost benefits must be used to reduce the deficits vulnerable groups face; deprived areas can in that case become personal development incubators.

In order to create fluid bi-directional migration, Refival functionally connects the privileged and disadvantaged areas. Its economic development model is divided into two orientations: inbound versus outbound; both directions emphasize the inclusion relationship rather than separation or isolation.

Inbound versus Outbound Orientation

In the "inbound oriented" direction, refugees or unemployed are invited to migrate to rural areas by being offered startup employment and work-experience based on labor cost advantage. In combination with a strong focus on education, this increases their potential for social mobility; something that due to high cost and requirement levels in an urban setting very likely would not be achieved in cities.

In the "outbound oriented" direction, the rural community houses people cost effectively but their activities are servicing urban customers instead of local ones. People directly address people outside of their rural setting. Such connectivity can lead to smooth rural-urban "job change" related migration.

Finally, there are hybrid options. For example a general medical practitioner can supplement his or her rural practice with urban patient targeting tele-medicine services; thus reestablishing rural economic sustainability for medical services.

Refugee Incubation

Fully understandable, currently, refugees target prosperous European cities and exclusively want to move there; especially if there is already a social network of compatriots present. However, this forces governments to spend large amounts of money on welfare at high subsistence-cost locations; this without any integration benefits compensating it. As a result, many refugees face long-term unemployment.

Urban interaction is also more anonymous; population density causes people to be selective and often hinders cultural integration. This frequently results in immigrants ending-up living in parallel societies. Smaller communities may seem more restricted in their interaction potential, but at the same time they tend to generate an intense exposure to inhabitants' social differences.

In a rural setting, rebuilding refugees' lives from scratch faces lower economic and social thresholds, thus it might be a better option to invest in people rather than to allocate large budgets for their survival needs at expensive urban locations. In contrast to cities, rural villages offer ample low priced clean and safe room. As a result, at no extra cost, a budget to educate and support refugees can be made available.

Hence, Refival proposes to implement an "inclusion sourcing" based "rural incubator" approach for refugees, similar to a "business incubator" approach used for start-up companies. Target is (by investing in and mentoring refugees) to create, grow and optimize bonds with their host countries.

Refugee Incubator Levels

The incubator approach is based on integrally addressing three levels:

-1- (individual) identity development level.

-2- (community) relationship development level.

-3- (optimized contribution to) society development level.

For all the development levels general conditions must be met first, after which also refugee specific issues can be properly addressed. Only by handling both, a successful refugee growth-path can be initiated:

● Individual refugee skills development via education is essential; however, in order to benefit from such development, past personal traumatic experiences must be processed.

● Inclusion via employment is an indispensable step for "refugee relationship building", but next to this, social integration must take place to make refugees "equal" society members.

● Finally, host societies must offer open economic/social mobility instead of cultural isolation to refugees; religious dialogues can then increase "oneness".

Six Integral Incubators

In order to achieve the above integral result, Refival proposes to use six incubators:

-1- Education Incubator (general development).

-2- Mental Incubator (mostly refugee specific).

-3- Employment Incubator (general development).

-4- Integration Incubator (mostly refugee specific).

-5- Mobility Incubator (general development).

-6- Spiritual Incubator (mostly refugee specific).

Refugee Segments

Roughly there are three segments of refugees:

Group one are the 10-15% relatively well educated refugees. This group needs only limited help to integrate but it currently receives most attention. Many initiatives focus on them; therefore Refival does not.

Group two are the 35-40% of refugees with some education but not enough to connect without extensive mentoring. This is the main target group for Refival.

Group three are the 50% uneducated refugees for whom it will take years to integrate. Refival does not focus on them; however, it expects to create chances for some of them as a spin-off.

Twelve Pillars

Based on the incubator implementation and the two described inclusion orientations, Refival envisions twelve pillars for refugee support. To illustrate each pillar, a potential sample project will be sketched:

-1- "Rural, Multi-Lingual, Computer-Assisted Schools for Refugees" (Education Incubator Inbound, Target: Skills Improvement)

Starting point for revitalization of deprived areas is education. As part of designing "the economically sustainable village of the future", Refival envisions, state of the art, Internet assisted schools. Other than in the past, qualification demands are higher and much more dynamic. Rapid technological change leads to a need for life-long learning in order to remain connected with one's ever changing job environment.

Life-long learning also has a strong impact on the role of teachers. Whereas up till now teachers mainly focused on a one-time instruction, their role is rather becoming one of mentoring and stimulating pupils to autonomously learn by themselves instead of distributing their subject knowledge to them.

Mentoring instead of teaching is based on individualized education/development progress paths for students. By implementing computer assistance, the main added value of schools compared to following distance learning or Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) from home, becomes the monitoring of individual progress, direct personal assistance and teaching of social skills to groups or classes.

Although currently limited to primary (single language) education, the Stevejobsschool approach as it has been implemented in The Netherlands since 2013, is a good example of how a computer assisted school approach can look like. However, for Refival some elements from this model are extra relevant in a rural and refugee incubator setting and will need more emphasis than in the Dutch situation.

An important element is age group clustering. Reducing the number of groups via age clustering allows running smaller schools. Assuming the Stevejobsschool to include secondary education, Refival envisions rebuilding rural schools based on four age groups (3-5, 6-9, 10-13 and 14-17). In case of refugees with an interrupted education, the clustering can be extended with groups aged 18-21 and 22+.

Being a highly individualized education scheme, a Stevejobsschool setup would allow refugees from different origin to study many subjects in their native language. Of course this must not distract them from the necessity to learn the local language as good and as soon as possible. But using a multi-lingual approach creates a better connection to people's past. It can be a faster way for them to complete studies.

Beyond formal secondary education level, there are many personal development options, ranging from classical education and distance learning or MOOC participation to job integrated vocational training.

-2- "Distance Teaching Network and Educational Content Production" (Education Incubator Outbound, Target: Skills Improvement)

A good example of an individualized distance learning content producer is Khanacademy, which offers free lessons at many levels and in many languages. However, there will always be a need for specific content creation and for regular updating of the materials, depending on the school's curriculum.

Looking at the nationalities of the current refugees there is little educational material readily available and substantial efforts will be required to adapt existing content and create new computer based lessons.

In addition, computer assisted learning does require extensive monitoring and live-student-support on the topics covered by the educational program. In case the education is partly provided in the native language of the refugee, it is especially important that there is proper live support available in that language because most likely the school teacher will not know all mother tongues of his or her students.

If one develops a rural multi-lingual teacher's team, such team is able to service both the rural as well as the urban distance learning students and can assist both school and individual study environments. Cost-wise the lower rural living-expenses would be beneficial here.

-3- "Rural Trauma Recovery and PTSD Treatment Centers" (Mental Incubator Inbound, Target: Identity Healing)

Most refugees have experienced events that impact their mental condition and far from all are able to independently process these impressions. Many thus remain traumatized. Mental health issues often block the capability to learn, work or otherwise optimally function; they also impact the refugee's social life. It implies that psychological support is a requisite for their future personal development and integration.

Although artificial intelligence based tools like Karim are meanwhile available and tele-counseling can be used to remotely get access to mental health professionals, there is at the same time frequently a need for personal encounters or group based therapies which more intensively help people to cope with their past.

Rural areas, offering less interaction pressure and more space, are often very suitable as a location for such programs. Refival therefore proposes to setup rural trauma recovery and PTSD treatment centers to address the mental health problems as a substantial amount of refugees face them.

-4- "Internet Based Helpdesk for Psychological Counseling" (Mental Incubator Outbound, Target: Identity Healing)

Besides personal meeting based help sessions in mental health centers or private clinics and next to AI based solutions, there are many personal counseling services which can be offered remotely via Internet. With most psychologists currently located in cities, many remote areas are meanwhile serviced this way.

Tele-counseling via live phone or video sessions with mental health professionals is in many cases a proven and efficient way to effectively supply psychological support. But looking at the amount of refugees who need such treatment and the cost involved, the lower rural living-cost-expenses would be beneficial if one could locate the mental health professionals there.

Therefore Refival proposes that rurally located professionals serve the urban areas via phone and video. This implies a reverse of today's situation where mostly urban mental health specialists serve rural areas.

Their tele-activities can likely be combined with tasks at rural trauma recovery and PTSD treatment centers; it means that practitioners could face a mix between live encounters and supplying telecommunication based health services.

-5- "Outsourcing via Internet: From Microwork to Entrepreneurship" (Employment Incubator Inbound, Target: Work Experience)

Inclusion Sourcing is depending on the outsourcing of as many as possible fully Internet based tasks to deprived areas. Government and business process tasks which do not require an urban type of specialized human interaction will have to be actively relocated to deprived areas in order to revitalize them.

Potential tasks to be outsourced start at a relatively simple human verification level as this can be found as impact sourcing for third-world countries at for example Samasource or with a wider task offer spectrum at the commercial environment of Amazon Mechanical Turk.

On a next higher level, regular Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) can be found. For example in Budapest 50.000 people already work in shared services centers for major international companies. However, though not requiring specialized human interaction, many of these Internet jobs assume high level language and subject knowledge skills and are not suitable for the majority of the refugees Refival wants to address. Still there remain many administrative and native language BPO tasks that could fit.

At the highest Internet job level there are counseling, consulting and teaching tasks. Especially in the "refugees for refugees" aid segment Refival envisions to be able to employ those educated refugees who possess subject knowledge but no foreign language skills. The Internet does, besides of BPO, also offer entrepreneurial chances and Refival expects to support refugees' business initiatives in this direction.

Important to realize is that with robotization and artificial intelligence increasingly taking over tasks from humans, there will a raising incentive to reorganize jobs and restructure tasks accordingly. In this process there is an important third category for reorganization namely, whether someone else can do a task more efficiently than the person currently responsible for it.

It is to be expected that many tasks can be outsourced this way, also because automation for the time being is not always cost effective. Although many human tasks technically can be automated, there is still competition between robots and humans.

-6- "The Apprentice - Internet Assisted Vocational Training on Demand" (Employment Incubator Outbound, Target: Work Experience)

Refival envisions a life-time learning based development path for its refugees. Based on the requirements urban companies have, it expects to be able to, on demand, educate refugees as future employees for them.

If one looks at microworking and microlearning there is actually no longer much of a difference between the two. At a higher skills requirement level it is likely that a significant part of people's job will become to learn new tasks and to continuously update their knowledge. In respect to BPO related tasks this is something that can be easily integrated in Refival's inclusion sourcing practice.

Beyond this level, Refival expects to be able to, on demand, educate and prepare refugees for more specialized tasks in urban environments. Target here is to cost-effectively match the development path of the refugee with the demand of the employer and to this way generate upward social mobility chances.

With both rural schools and rural employment being fully Internet based there is a unique chance to develop integrated, on demand, education for companies. Of course there are limits to this; there are crafts and non-intellectual skills which can only be acquired in a more specialized urban environment.

-7- "Mentoring Program for Intercultural Communication and Interaction" (Integration Incubator Inbound, Target: Cultural Interaction)

Smaller communities may seem more restricted in their interaction potential, but at the same time they tend to generate an intense exposure to inhabitants' social differences. This implies that it could be beneficial for refugees to start their cultural integration path in incubator villages instead of in cities.

But many refugees are already located in cities and will remain there. As a result, they often need more formal integration courses to explain to them what to expect from others and what is expected from them. Especially for those urban refugees who in their surroundings almost exclusively encounter other refugees and few locals, this can be a necessity.

It does not mean that the target should become to fully assimilate refugees. In a European context there is plenty of space for cultural differences as long as the basic common European values are respected. For many refugees it will nevertheless be tough to adapt to these shared rules of individual freedom and responsibility. For example, Europeans possess the freedom to eat pork or drink alcohol and neither drinking nor abstinence can be forbidden or enforced. It is a personal choice to follow traditions or not.

Refival proposes to setup intercultural communication and interaction training centers as part of its incubator program; refugees living in urban areas can be mentored this way. Locating these centers in rural areas instead of in cities will likely generate an optimal cost-benefit balance.

-8- "Internet Based Counseling/Helpdesk for Intercultural Communication" (Integration Incubator Outbound, Target: Cultural Interaction)

Founded on the knowledge base of the mentoring program for intercultural communication and next to the many available Internet based information sources, Refival expects it to be necessary to create additional, more in-depth, personal services for intercultural assistance.

In daily life refugees will encounter many aspects of European life they will not immediately understand. This can easily lead to miscommunication without much possibility to ask for clarification, especially in the more specialized urban areas with often limited interaction levels between refugees and locals.

To reduce uncertainty and to stimulate participation in the host country's culture, it could therefore be very useful to setup a helpdesk and personal counseling services for intercultural issues. This is from a structural point of view very similar to the mental health counseling setup as previously proposed.

These tele-activities can likely be combined with the rural intercultural communication program; it means that practitioners could face a mix between live group-education and supplying telecommunication based individual intercultural communication consulting services to urban refugees.

The professional intercultural consultants needed for offering such service can be located in rural areas.

-9- "Returning Home: Preparing Refugees for Frictionless Resettlement" (Mobility Incubator Inbound, Target: Migration Fluidity)

Looking at their expected (long) length of stay, refugees must anyway integrate. But regardless whether refugees are well educated, somewhat educated or non-educated, a major question is if the target should be to prepare them to stay and contribute to their host country's economy or to return home. In Europe there is often a fundamental conflict of interest between the hosts' demographic demand for (young) people and the need of war damaged countries for refugees to return after regaining peace and stability.

Refival's 35-40% target group requires substantial investment before they can fully integrate and start to financially contribute to their host's economy. For those who wish to return it may therefore be better to direct such investment towards a future in their home country instead of in Europe. Such investment can still be beneficial for both sides because of economical and cultural ties established this way.

Especially for lower or non-educated refugees, who face difficulties to enter the European labor market, it makes sense to prepare them for returning home. Supplying customized education and work-experience in a cost effective rural setting is a good alternative to (welfare based) waiting in expensive cities.

However, to be avoided is that rural areas become the welfare cost savings based "waiting alternative" for more expensive urban areas. This could degrade rural areas to second class and without potential. Refival tries to exactly change this in the current perception. Returning home therefore means actively preparing oneself and can only be implemented if there is an approximate planning for an actual return.

-10- "Refugee Mobility: Seamless Migration between Rural &Urban Areas" (Mobility Incubator Outbound, Target: Migration Fluidity)

Rural incubation is a structural process. Refival tries to optimize the social mobility of its participants via qualification. By focusing on the connection between rural and urban and by following an inbound and outbound relationship approach it should become possible to fluidly migrate between rural and urban after incubation. In return, people who leave will be replaced by attracting urban unemployed or refugees.

If the population of deprived areas grows again and their economical sustainability is revitalized, it is to be expected that higher qualification level demanding local job and entrepreneurial opportunities will become available. This creates options for local social mobility, but these positions will not necessarily be fulfilled by people out of incubated vulnerable groups. Anyone may now choose to migrate to rural areas.

Refival's longer term target is to create a free choice between urban and rural lifestyles. For people with large families, a rural lifestyle is likely preferable. For specialized experts, probably urban interaction fits better. For retired people, a rural lifestyle can take urban stress away. For elderly in need of specialized medical care, an urban lifestyle suits better. Urban and rural lifestyles can become complements.

Rural revitalization does, at the other side of the spectrum, lead to a growth in demand of community support jobs, of which many do not require high education levels. Smaller communities are less efficient and less specialized than cities. Uneducated refugees or unemployed may become employed this way.

-11- "Rural Religious Retreat and Interfaith Dialogue Centers" (Spiritual Incubator Inbound, Target: Religious Tolerance)

Most refugees arriving to Europe are actively religious and profess their faith. This implies that there is a call from refugees to obtain individual and collective spiritual space from their hosts. Refival wants to contribute to this by founding rural retreat facilities, which enable reflection, contemplation and prayer.

The availability of ample space and silence in rural areas is of advantage to most spiritual practices and lower cost compared to cities means that more people can afford a longer period of religious retreat.

Although, within the basic European cultural rules of religious freedom, space is available to everyone, differences between one's and the other's religious practice are often misunderstood. This frequently leads to reciprocal distrust and conflicts between the various faith groups.

Still, compared with the 20% non-believers in Europe, religions share much more than what separates them. However, believers and clergy very often tend to fully concentrate on their own practice and focus in their relationship with other religious groups on differences rather than on what they have in common. Refival wants to address this lack of understanding by creating interfaith dialog centers in rural areas.

-12- "Internet Based Spiritual Guidance and Education Program
   (Spiritual Incubator Outbound, Target: Religious Tolerance)

Religious practice needs guidance. Although many faith centers are available in urban areas, a more individualized Internet based support service could be a useful addition. Especially in order to reach those who due to uncertainty and integration deficits may become susceptible to radicalization.

Individual freedom of religion in Europe does imply respect for other people's faith and there is no room for intolerance. On the one hand this implies that there is religious space for everyone, including for the religious practice of newcomer refugees, but on the other hand it means that various religions have to co-exist with each other and cannot practice traditions that conflict with common European cultural rules.

As a result, some religions will have to adapt their "cultural" traditions (not the faith itself) to co-existence. For their members this can result in a clear need for religious interpretation and guidance. Refival proposes to setup an Internet based spiritual guidance and counseling service to address this.

Its activities will dominantly address urban believers, but the clergy needed for offering this service can be located in rural areas. Their activities can be combined with those of the interfaith dialog centers.

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Refugee Support: an Integral Rural Incubator Approach, Total Overview

Outbound Spiritual Incubator, Target: Religious Tolerance. Project: "Internet Based Spiritual Guidance and Education Program".

Inbound Spiritual Incubator, Target: Religious Tolerance. Project: "Rural Religious Retreat and Interfaith Dialogue Center".

Outbound Mobility Incubator, Target: Migration Fluidity. Project: "Refugee Mobility: Seamless Migration between Rural and Urban Areas".

Inbound Mobility Incubator, Target: Migration Fluidity. Project: "Returning Home: Preparing Refugees for Frictionless Resettlement".

Outbound Integration Incubator, Target: Cultural Interaction. Project: "Internet Based Counseling and Helpdesk for Intercultural Communication".

Inbound Integration Incubator, Target: Cultural Interaction. Project: "Mentoring Program for Intercultural Communication and Interaction".

Inbound Education Incubator, Target: Skills Improvement. Project: "Rural, Multi-Lingual, Computer-Assisted Schools for Refugees".

Outbound Education Incubator, Target: Skills Improvement. Project: "Distance Teaching Network and Educational Content Production".

Inbound Mental Incubator, Target: Identity Healing. Project: "Rural Trauma Recovery and PTSD Treatment Centers".

Outbound Mental Incubator, Target: Identity Healing. Project: "Internet Based Helpdesk for Psychological Counseling".

Inbound Employment Incubator, Target: Work Experience. Project: "Outsourcing to Rural Areas via Internet: From Microwork to Entrepreneurship".

Outbound Employment Incubator, Target: Work Experience. Project: "The Apprentice - Internet Assisted Vocational Training on Demand".

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