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Europe's Civic University Alliance

## CIVIS Open Labs

**Supporting access and participation  
to lifelong learning for disadvantaged migrants**

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## 1. Context & Short Description

Across CIVIS universities, there is growing awareness of the need to support **ongoing participation, belonging, and recognition**, especially for learners from migrant and refugee backgrounds. The overarching aim is to **strengthen inclusive practices for migrant and refugee learners in higher and continuing education** by fostering collaboration between universities, municipalities, NGOs, and affected communities themselves.

We propose to achieve this overarching aim through four specific objectives:

- O1. Create a multi-stakeholder network** across the participating universities;
- O2. Map and critically analyse institutional approaches** to access, integration, and retention of students from migrant and refugee backgrounds, including formal policies, informal practices, and the attitudes of staff and educational communities;
- O3. Identify and document the needs of migrant and refugee learners** in each partner context;
- O4. Co-develop and disseminate** creative outputs to advocate for institutional change and public policy, and to generate new opportunities for inclusive, participatory learning.

## 2. Partners

| Partner Name         | Type  | Bio (2-3 lines)  | Photo/Logo  |
|----------------------|---|--|---|
| Léa Moreau Shmatenko | CIVIS Research advisor / Head of project UNIR at UNIL                                     | After her PhD in migration studies, Léa Moreau joined the UNIL CIVIS team as a Research advisor. She is also responsible for the project UNIR, aiming at developing integration programmes at UNIL dedicated to refugees   |  |
| Silvia Arias         | Head of the Office for Solidarity Action and Cooperation at UAM (Civic Engagement Office) | After her PhD, Silvia Arias joined the Civic Engagement Office at Autonoma University of Madrid. She is the author of several publications and research on the role of the university as an entity with social responsibility. She was the former coordinator of the Civic Engagement Expert Group at CIVIS. Currently, she is the coordinator of CIVIS Microcredential in Civic Engagement. |  |

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| Maria Grazia Imperiale   | Lecturer in Adult Education, University of Glasgow  | Grazia works on language and intercultural education, specifically in refugee contexts. She has worked in refugee education in emergency contexts (Palestine, Lebanon, Ethiopia etc.) and her work is grounded in a participatory ethos that centres refugees' voice and agency.  |    |
| Liliana Dumitracache   | Professor, Head of the Department of Human and Economic Geography, University of Bucharest.   | Her current academic activity is focused on Geography of Health and HealthCare with a particular interest in access of disadvantaged groups as refugees, migrants or homeless individuals to essentials services (healthcare and education). She is the co-chair of International Geographic Union Commission on Health and Environment and the Editor in Chief of an international indexed journal-Human Geographies |    |
| Camil Pârvu<br><a href="https://fsp.uni-buc.ro/camil-parvu/">https://fsp.uni-buc.ro/camil-parvu/</a> | Associate Professor, University of Bucharest  | Camil has published extensively on the political theory of cosmopolitanism and on migrant protests, on social movements and on the political representation beyond electoral processes.   |  |
| Philia Issari  | Professor of Counseling Psychology, Director, Laboratory for Qualitative Research in Psychology and Psychosocial Wellbeing, Department of Psychology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) | Her teaching, research and counseling work focuses on multicultural, social justice, narrative, constructionist, dialogic and collaborative ideas. She is the author of many publications and conducted extensive research related to refugee and immigrant issues. She is NKUA representative in CIVIS Stream 1 and member of the Civic Engagement expert group  |  |

|                  |   |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| Angelo Petre     | PhD Student<br>Assistant Professor,<br>University of<br>Bucharest | <p>He is a human geographer and PhD student in human geography at the University of Bucharest, specializing in geodemography and the geography of education. His research focuses on spatial accessibility to education and services, and urban-rural inequalities, using advanced GIS and statistical modeling.</p>                  |    |
| Alexandra Cioclu | PhD Student<br>Assistant Professor,<br>University of<br>Bucharest | <p>Alexandra Cioclu has recently submitted her PhD thesis at the Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, Romania. Her main focus is on the geography of health. She is also a teaching assistant and works on various research projects in the field of human geography.</p>   |    |
| Alina Mareci     | Lecturer, PhD,<br>University of<br>Bucharest                      | <p>Her research and teaching interests focus on geography of health, and her publications cover topics including vulnerable populations, population health, and mental health research. For the last 5 years, she has been actively involved in CIVIS projects with an emphasis on migrants' and refugees' experiences and needs.</p> |  |

### 3. Main Beneficiaries & Social Impact

#### A. Main Beneficiaries

For prospective students, university administrative staff, public authorities

#### B. Social Impact

Through learning opportunities and advocacy towards the university administrations

### 4. Core Methodology

- 1) **Document and policy analysis** at partner institutions to identify how policies and strategies facilitate or constrain migrant/refugee access and participation
- 2) **Participatory fieldwork** involving interviews, focus groups, and workshops with learners, staff, and community actors to map lived experiences and identify unmet needs.

### 5. Events in the Project

| Event Name               | Date(s)    | Location  | Description (purpose, audience)   |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|---|
| Mid-Project team meeting | April 2026 | UNIL      | This in-person meeting will be a crucial point for collective reflection, sharing of emerging preliminary findings, and alignment of the next phase of the project, including creative outputs and local policy dialogues   |
| Final event              | June 2026  | Bucharest | The final event will showcase key findings, creative and policy outputs, and provide space for dialogue among universities, city stakeholders, and civil society actors across Europe. It will also function as a platform for dissemination and future collaboration. It could also be linked with a dissemination session during the CIVIS Days at Bucharest. |

## 6. Deliverables & Resources

| Deliverable / Resource                             | Type (report, video, toolkit...) |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 full project report, highlighting best practices | Report                           |
| Policy briefs for each context                     | Policy brief                     |
| A toolkit for advocacy                             | Toolkit                          |

## 7. Contact Point

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Institution / Role: University of Lausanne / CIVIS Research advisor