

## • CORNER OF INSPIRATION •

\* Photos were taken from the organizational websites with the approval of authors.

### **MIGRATION HUB NETWORK**, Germany

<http://migrationhub.network>

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In 2014/2015, an unprecedented number of refugees entered Germany after fleeing conflict in the Middle East, in particular in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Due to the relative unpreparedness of the German public sector, including political and humanitarian entities, civil society stepped up by developing small-scale projects and initiatives to cover refugees' most basic needs that weren't sufficiently being met by traditional actors. Due to the high



demand, many of those initiatives soon turned into fully-fledged organisations with an acute need to professionalise in order to survive in the German bureaucratic jungle and continue to finance their operations, and grassroots activists saw themselves becoming entrepreneurs.

However, given the lack of a connecting entity, all those initiatives worked isolated from each other. Without one body to maintain an overview over all the on-the-ground grassroots activity, chaos ensued, human and financial resources were being wasted. Further, it was indispensable for those initiatives to receive training in such basic matters as business modelling, strategizing, budgeting, etc., if they were due to remain functional as professional organisations. The absence of such a support system caused many otherwise great initiatives to crumble.



The Migration Hub opened its doors in September 2015 initially as a co-working space for social entrepreneurs in the field of migration. This idea was then developed by today's CEO Ana Maria Álvarez Monge, who quickly realized that there was more potential than just a co-working space. When she was handed the keys in April 2016, she turned the project Migration Hub into the company Migration Hub Network gGmbH. Since then, the goal has been to tackle the aforementioned challenges and build a connecting support system for all actors engaged in the field of migration and refugee support. Migration Hub Network now offers not only a room for initiatives to connect face-to-face and pursue their daily activities, but also a Europe-wide network of stakeholders, including migrant entrepreneurs, private sector actors, and regional governments. A mentorship program targeting the needs of new entrepreneurs is currently being developed. For Migration Hub Network, the key to a functioning system lies in diversity, and in allowing individuals to reach their full potential in a stimulating, inclusive environment.



Socio-economic emancipation starts with being financially sustainable and not to depend on allowances. However, upon arrival, many refugees and migrants don't know the language of the host country, making it difficult to find jobs. This leads to an over proportional representation of migrants in the entrepreneurship and start-ups sector. Setting up a business is difficult, even for locals who are fluent in the dominant language of the country they live in. For refugees who have fled war and persecution, who do not speak the language and don't know the bureaucracy of their host country, it is even harder. Migrant entrepreneurs need tailor-made peer consulting, a physical space where they can mingle with other social entrepreneurs who work in the field of migration and share knowledge and best practices, regular events gathering people from different sectors, and finally a community they can be part of, that can help them for their projects' growth.



At Migration Hub Network, we try to provide migrant entrepreneurs with an environment in which they can thrive. We aim to be the connecting entity that has been missing for all those initiatives that should be working together instead of against each other. We want our headquarters in Berlin to become a place where events and discussions around the topic of migration happen. We hope that in the future there will be a Migration Hub in every major city, empowering migrant entrepreneurs all over the world and transforming the challenges that arise with migration into opportunities for all.