

# Evaluation report for the EULAMP project

## 1. Background: the EULAMP project

The EU Latin Americans Mobile and Participating Project (EULAMP) is a partnership project funded by the European Commission's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme for two years from February 2018<sup>1</sup> with its overall aim to

“foster the successful inclusion and participation of European citizens in their host EU country's civic and political life”

The project initially involved five partners:

- The Law Centres Network, the coordinating body for law centres in the UK who managed the project
- Lambeth Law Centre which unfortunately folded in June 2019
- Southwark Law Centre, a specialist legal advice, casework and representation charity based in south London
- The IndoAmerican Refugee and Migrant Organisation (IRMO) a community organisation run by Latinxs providing advice and community development, also based in south London
- EDUGEP an education provider based in Setubal, Portugal (EDUGEP stopped project activities in 2019)

As described in the grant application

“The project will consist of a two-pronged approach: preparing people before their mobility to the UK, and providing support and advice on accessing rights and participating in British society after their mobility. Activities will include: pre-departure training covering four core aspects of life in the UK; survival English classes; one-stop shop advice on arrival in the UK supported by further follow up case work; and voter registration campaign in run up to UK local elections in 2018. Activities will also include training for staff delivering front-line advice and dissemination activities in the UK, Spain and Portugal.”

A proposed Spanish partner for the project dropped out before the grant application was finalised.

The project initially set out four outcomes, evidenced by indicators, which it expected to achieve:

1. 170 EU-Latin Americans have an increased understanding of the practicalities of life in the UK and are better equipped to access information and services on arrival to the UK
  1. Indicator 1: Number of EU-Latin Americans that report feeling increased sense of preparedness following pre-departure courses in Portugal
    - Measured through an evaluation questionnaire
  2. Indicator 2: Level of English obtained on completion of 50-hour intensive ESOL (A1) course in Portugal
    - Measured through a test
2. 476 EU-Latin Americans are supported on arrival to the UK
  1. Indicator 1: Number of EU-Latin Americans that access services at IRMO, Southwark and Lambeth Law Centres within first 6 months in the UK

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<sup>1</sup> Later extended for a further three months

- Measured through a sign-in sheet
- 2. Indicator 2: Number of EU-Latin Americans that are referred to access other services in the UK
  - Measured through referral forms/case files
- 3. 150 EU-Latin Americans increase their civic participation in the UK
  1. Indicator 1: Number of EU-Latin Americans that register to vote in the 2018 local elections
    - Measured through a campaign registration form
- 4. 190 individuals across three countries increase their knowledge about the opportunities provided and lessons learned through cross-border collaboration in the context of supporting vulnerable migrant
  1. Indicator 1: Number of individuals that attend the 'Lessons Learnt' seminars in the UK, Portugal and Spain
    - Measured through an attendance sheet at the seminars
  2. Indicator 2: Number of briefings of lessons learned distributed to interested individuals, organisations and parties
    - LCN and all partners to distribute the briefings, via email or in print form

These were to be achieved by activities:

- 300 pre-departure survival English classes;
- 5 pre-departure workshops covering four core aspects of life in the UK;
- 69 one-stop shop advice sessions on arrival in the UK supported by further follow up case work;
- 9 drop-in sessions to resolve complex cases;
- 1 training workshop for professionals working with EU-LAs;
- A voter registration campaign in run up to UK local elections in 2018;
- 3 seminars to share learning.

Over the course of the project some of these figures (for activities and indicators) were changed by agreement with the funder.

## 2. Background: the evaluation

The evaluation was designed as a light touch, formative evaluation, working alongside the project as a “critical friend”. It is important to emphasise that the “product” of the evaluation is not just this report: it is principally the work done throughout the two years to support, inform, challenge and guide the project itself.

At the interim stage, findings were produced in order to inform further development, and this report incorporates material from these. In February 2020, the evaluator, project participants, researchers and other practitioners participated in a day long briefing on “When Brexit is ‘Done’, how can we support Latin Americans with EU Rights?” which also informs this final report.

At the outset, the evaluator also worked with project partners to ensure that data collection and monitoring produced information that met project monitoring requirements, input usefully into management information systems and contributed to the evaluation.

The core evaluation methodology was mixed, collating material from

- An initial scoping meeting and various subsequent meetings

- A review of data, documentation and other resources
- Data collection and analysis
- Fieldwork, principally interviews and observation
- Presentation and discussion of interim findings in mid 2019
- Further data collection and analysis<sup>2</sup>
- Further fieldwork
- Presentation of draft evaluation findings at briefing in February 2020 and further discussion
- Final report

At the outset partners believed that a key to understanding project impact would be to compare the “levels of knowledge and confidence in upholding rights and accessing services between the EU South Americans who have benefited from pre-departure sessions and those who have not.” In the event, this proved to be impossible.

So the evaluation sought to find the answers to three interrelated questions:

- Did the project model work?
- What are the barriers faced by Latin American origin EU citizens in the UK and what are the most effective ways of overcoming them?
- What are the achievements of the project?

It is important to note that, as a formative evaluation, quite a lot of the work is done in the process, in meetings, at the interim stage etc. The evaluator also presented findings to the session in February 2020. This paper thus includes much material that has already been shared, and, indeed, used.

### 3. The project in context

#### 3.1. Latinx migrants from Spain and Portugal

“London without Latinxs would be filthy”<sup>3</sup>

Latin Americans in the UK are often described as invisible communities. There is, however, a long history. From the 1960s onwards, refugees arrived, often suffering significant downward mobility in the process. IRMO itself was set up originally in the early 80s as an organisation of Chilean refugees. By the 1970s, London had significant populations of Chileans, Brazilians and Colombians, but the increase in new migration since 2000 has largely been via what was perceived as onward migration from Europe, and specifically Spain, Portugal and Italy. From 2008 the pace quickened as a result of the economic crisis, and although hard data is difficult to come by an estimated 145,000 Latinxs now live in London, with people born in Colombia and Brazil the two largest groups. Research has shown that communities are focused particularly on south London, specifically the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. There are more women than men, it is largely a younger, well educated (60% to tertiary level), working age population with high employment rates and limited welfare claims. A third of the community have British passports and 22% are EU citizens. New arrivals especially tend to work in precarious jobs, often cleaning, unlike the work they had in their country of birth or in Spain. In London they face anti-social hours, discrimination and exploitation: one survey found 75%

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<sup>2</sup> While not part of the evaluation, the evaluator participated in a short project to look at data on EU citizens and applications for settled status which incorporated data from EULAMP, the conclusions of which also inform this evaluation.

<sup>3</sup> From Professor Cathy McIlwaine’s talk at the briefing in February 2020. Some other insights here are also from this and the talks by Dr Helia Lopez and Dr Helen McCarthy.

earned less than the London living wage. 20% reported they had problems speaking or writing English. Small businesses represent a way out of these conditions and clusters in Tottenham and Elephant and Castle are well known, but under threat. Housing is also a problem: 70 - 75% rent privately, but almost half share accommodation with another family and one third are overcrowded. In one survey half of those renting had no lease or contract, which then caused difficulty in proving their address for benefit and other claims. There was often disrepair and 13% described their landlords as abusive. There are many families with children who face further problems with finding accommodation, and also report difficulty in placing their children in school. Brexit is a further cause of stress: irregular work and accommodation situations make it difficult to provide proof for settled status applications.

The large numbers of people born in Latin America with Spanish citizenship who arrived in the UK mainly did so in response to the "crisis" as it hit post 2008. Many had arrived in Spain knowing that they could regularise their status through work (and as Latin Americans would then have a shorter path to citizenship) but intended to stay in Spain. The crisis, which was particularly savage in Spain in the first years, wrecked those plans and so they looked elsewhere in Europe to live and work, and many came to the UK, along with many Spanish born citizens (but possibly driven faster and more intensely because they were more likely to be in low grade precarious work and renting). Most commentators say that flow has slowed, attributing that to the stabilising of the Spanish economy and the ongoing destabilisation of the British economy to which uncertainties about Brexit are contributing.

Migration from Portugal, however, has been different. While Brazilians may constitute the largest Latin American nationality/country of birth in the UK (or at least in London), many of them are long settled in the UK, and it is not obvious that so many are secondary migrants who came via Portugal. Which is not to say that many do not have Portuguese citizenship: anecdotally many do, but many may also have acquired it post hoc via ancestry-based applications (and actually many have got other EU citizenships via that route, tracing Italian, German etc ancestors)

So secondary migration from Portugal was actually focused more on people from the former colonial states in Africa like Angola and Mozambique. But that is not a recent phenomenon: many of those arrived in the first years of this century, and again the common view is that this has slowed. Of course, for both countries other migratory flows are also important. For a couple of years after the "crisis" it was certainly true that more people left the Iberian peninsula to go to Africa and Latin America than arrived in it from those places. Portugal also entered a period of significant economic stability at this time as well, so economic emigration, especially of those at the lower end of the labour market slowed.

So the project idea was based on a slowing migration from Spain and a rather small migration from Portugal (where difficulties with obtaining citizenship also mean that more recent arrivals looking to migrate on are more likely to focus on intra-Schengen Europe where their residency documents allow them to live and work rather than the UK which offers that only to those who have acquired EEA citizenship and their families).

It is not clear that in designing the project much of the available research and data about migration from Spain and Portugal to the UK was consulted. However, in fairness, data on secondary migration is often difficult to pin down because of differences in how migrants are identified and because the UK in particular has few reliable sources that combine country of birth and citizenship.

### 3.2. The UK context

The last two years have been interesting times in the UK: the continuing saga of Brexit, political upsets, changes of government, elections called suddenly and cancelled, and now the crisis caused by Coronavirus. So, a huge amount of policy turbulence and also stasis caused by the focus on Brexit. Among other certainties that have been lost is the role that migration plays in the national imagination. Overall, in this time, the British public moved from perceiving immigration to have negative effects on the economy and culture to believing, by a small margin, that it has a positive effect. Immigration also decreased in salience, in other words, its importance in determining how people vote in elections. Political scientists are still arguing over what this means, whether it represents a long term trend, and how it might play out in future.

One might assume that politicians would therefore look for other scapegoats, but the emerging “Windrush scandal” that saw off a serving Home Secretary is evidence of the persistence of a trend in British politics that relies on othering and exclusion as a *modus operandi*. For EU Latin Americans this has particular implications as they grapple with the twists and turns of Brexit and how it may affect their future in the UK. The two year period covered by the project saw the development and rolling out of the schemes to allow EU citizens to remain in the UK after Brexit, and many of those who were advised by the project also got help with those. There remains significant concern that many, especially those who have arrived more recently, speak less English or have problems with digital literacy will fail to register for settled or “pre-settled” status in time: the deadline is June 2021. They and others face further problems because of their precarious housing and employment: the applications for settled and pre settled status demand proof of actual presence in the UK and this can be difficult if working cash in hand and staying in a friend’s tenancy. Many EU Latinx families are also “mixed”: spouses and children may not themselves have EU citizenships and applications for them are more complicated. There is growing evidence that many such “third country national” family members are being refused the relevant status and then have to go through an appeal or make new applications. There is widespread concern that people will still be “stuck” in such processes when the deadlines (end of 2020 for some, June 2021 for others) pass.

EU citizens had the right to vote in local elections, and IRMO conducted a successful campaign to register many to do so in 2018. In 2019 it participated in a wider campaign to mobilise the migrant vote during the General Election<sup>4</sup> and then geared up to register more EU citizens in the London mayoral and London Assembly elections. These, however, were cancelled due to Coronavirus.

### 3.3. Advice in the UK

Four organisations in the project were involved in advice provision in the UK: two Law Centres, the national organisation coordinating Law Centres and IRMO, an organisation based firmly within Latin American communities in the UK. By the end of the projects one of the law centres had closed, reflecting a national trend. Funding for legal advice from local authorities has been savagely cut, funding from charitable sources is often short term and project based, and the systems for paying legal aid involve risk and delay.

Community based organisation like IRMO are also threatened. The Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK which coordinates Latin American representation in the UK lost 6 of its 16 organisations in the last four years.

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<sup>4</sup> Migrant citizens of Commonwealth countries have the right to vote in all UK elections, children of settled migrants in the UK have the right to vote because they are British citizens, and of course many migrants naturalise as British.

So Latin Americans in London, facing so many issues and barriers to full participation: housing, employment, hate crime, immigration, EU rights, access to English language classes, health, access to schooling, discrimination etc, may find it difficult to get that advice in an accessible form, or get the level of specialist assistance they need to be able to understand and exercise their rights. This in turn has created a market in often exploitative and sometimes illegal paid for help. Those who succeed in getting help from IRMO are often understandably thrilled.

## 4. So what happened?

By the time the interim report was delivered and discussed in the summer of 2019, quite a lot had happened! In fact the project met many of its individual advice targets by then. However, at that stage, problems appeared with two partners. The project's final weeks also coincided with lockdown as a result of coronavirus, and this prevented some targets being met.

### 4.1. Project delivery

By summer 2019, the Portuguese partner, EDUGEP, was, in their own words, "all set for take off but with no passengers". Course materials were prepared, extensive outreach had attempted to find people who fitted the project criteria to attend the courses, but there were few available. Many Portuguese born people, often with higher level qualifications, expressed interest in the course which would have served this more internationally mobile group well. However, people born outside Portugal failed to appear, even when the criteria were extended to cover those born in Africa. So, by this stage, negotiations were in progress to reorganise the project and exclude this element.

Apart from the pre departure activities, the project hit all its interim targets in terms of "front line" beneficiaries (people advised, voters registered). This was a real success story: 159 voters were registered and there was high demand for the advice sessions. Observations in IRMO were that the centre was always crowded, and users were sometime frustrated at the difficulties caused by so much demand. But user satisfaction was very high, and conversations also pointed to a strong sense of involvement and pride in the organisation.

The project produced the full range of printed materials planned, although the interim discussion questioned whether it might be more effective to put this information online, where it is easier to update.

Secondary advice, to be provided by the two Law Centres, was more problematic. Lambeth Law Centre was facing severe financial and related difficulties, and although they were able to deploy staff to support IRMO with complex cases, they did not engage with the evaluation, and closed soon after the interim report was produced. Referrals from IRMO to Southwark Law Centre (SLC) were initially problematic, although by the end of the project the high quality and effective legal advice and action they offered was much appreciated. Initial problems included

- Inadequate preparation and knowledge on the part of IRMO (addressed by workshop sessions with Southwark Law Centre)
- Difficulties with the spread of people, since it makes little sense for clients to cross London to go to one particular law centre (although the distance between the two offices was not great, many of IRMO's users came from all over London)
- Problems with language since Southwark do not have Spanish speaking staff and a limited budget for interpreting unless legal aid is secured

- People often approach as emergencies and the Law Centre may not always have capacity for that

As a result of discussions about this, the project moved over to a model whereby Southwark Law Centre offered workshop sessions for IRMO staff to increase expertise and transfer knowledge. This worked very well and both IRMO and SLC reported excellent relationships developed during the project which they believed would continue after the end.

Once the budget had been reorganised, some resources were released to allow more ESOL classes at IRMO. These were appreciated by those who attended them<sup>5</sup>, who often found other classes less accessible. They reinforced the model of holistic services offered by IRMO. The face to face advice that constituted the core of IRMO's services was praised by all users, many saying they had referred friends because it was so good.

As a result of the project reorganisation in mid-2019, and with the aim of keeping some focus on pre departure work, the project organised a small conference in Madrid in January 2020. They met Amigos Mira and Ruminahui, both small scale NGOs working with Latin American Migrants and the Office for Migrants Information in Madrid South, a local authority department. They also met Voluntarios por Madrid, a flagship department of the City Council which mobilises 15,000 volunteers, many of them migrants, in 60 projects across the city. This exchange of ideas and information stimulated lots of thoughts about possible development (e.g. of a joint volunteer programme) but did not shed much light on options for pre departure work.

In February 2020, the project organised a one-day conference in London which looked at "When Brexit is 'Done', how can we support Latin Americans with EU Rights?". Drawing on research insights from three academics, the event also discussed the evaluation findings, developments in advice work and public legal education, good practice and the future. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive: 93% found it useful or very useful.

Finally, EULAMP partners produced a short briefing paper "to communicate project highlights and lessons learnt from EULAMP. It is addressed to professionals working with EU nationals and/or Latin Americans, advice agencies, grassroots organisations, policy-makers, and others". The paper drew extensively on insights from the evaluation. Going out on a note of innovation, it was publicised particularly on social media, using a video of very brief Zoom presentations of the key themes. By then, of course, lockdown had made other forms of meeting or publicity impossible.

#### 4.2. Project organisation

EULAMP is an example of a project that overcame significant organisational difficulties to deliver excellent results. By the end, the three organisations still involved in active delivery had formed a solid partnership built on the strengths of each: IRMO's reach within and understanding of Latinxs in London, SLC's legal expertise and LCN's management and policy nous. It is worth looking briefly at how those difficulties emerged and were overcome.

- At the outset partners identified risks of poor communication and lack of clarity on expectations and roles. At the interim stage some partners felt that insufficient time had been spent together at the start of the project to plan the project's progress and map it out into timelines, expectations, etc. The focus instead had been on training partners in the arcane EU procedures, forms etc. The partners then used the interim report to re-evaluate

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<sup>5</sup> And by those who could not: some users were waiting anxiously for more places to become available.



what each needed to do to fulfil the project's aims, reconfigured services, communications and internal reporting and delivered

- Law Centres Network, the lead partner, responsible for coordinating the project, reporting and monitoring, had some significant problems with staff turnover. Other partners described this as a brief period when management was sometimes chaotic and sometimes absent. This slowed reactions to problems (like the lack of beneficiaries in Portugal noted above) and impeded key project actions (like the evaluation, which was commissioned but then not actioned). Partners felt the impact of that, and some of the other problems relating to referrals etc were also attributed to the lack of central coordination, which those involved felt might have enabled useful conversations to take place earlier to sort out the problems that emerged. LCN took remedial action, employing two staff to catch up on outstanding work and all partners quickly expressed a lot more confidence in the coordination. In fact there was praise for the agility, flexibility and creativity from LCN in the last period of the project.
- In this earlier period of disorganisation, partners thus experienced the project essentially as a set of rather arbitrary targets rather than one focused on outcomes to benefit the communities involved. Indeed, as the various problems emerged (in relation to pre departure work, the content of materials, referrals) there appeared to be no mechanism for reviewing the project's outcomes, outputs and organisation in relation to its central purpose. Luckily, the evaluation itself offered that opportunity, and then all three remaining active partners were able to work to meaningful targets and deliver.
- By the summer of 2019, it was obvious that the project was not going to be able to deliver any pre departure preparation in Portugal. EDUGEP did propose to refocus this work on any prospective Portuguese migrants, but this was not acceptable. The budgets for the activities were reallocated, and effectively EDUGEP then ceased any further work on the project. The remaining partners expressed appreciation for the contributions made by EDUGEP, and said that they had found it useful working with them to design the workshops and publications, which made them think about rights and information from a different perspective.
- The problems with Lambeth Law Centre, however, were not resolvable. Throughout the early stages of the project, although the Centre had deployed staff to provide advice at IRMO there had been lack of engagement in project management and evaluation, attributed to staff changes and other difficulties. However, in July 2019 they announced their closure with immediate effect. Southwark Law Centre, however, were able to pick up all the consequent slack and the project, by then actively managed by LCN, moved on quite smoothly.

Looking at project organisation over time, it is clear that the start was inauspicious, and that the project was really put at risk by a combination of initial staffing problems at the lead partner, a resultant temporary failure in planning and coordination, a misjudgement about the focus on Portuguese migrants and finally the closure of one key partner. But it survived all of these, and the final activities, especially the London conference, the briefing and the associated video give a true impression of a vibrant, focused and effective partnership doing crucial work with communities that need it desperately.

## 5. How and why did the project deliver?

The frontline of the project was IRMO, and they delivered:

- 635 advice sessions (target 490)



- 126 people who attended ESOL classes, of whom 57 attended at least 70% of the classes and 58 provided feedback forms (target 48)
- 120 people attended workshops on Brexit, 67 of whom filled in feedback forms (target 66)
- 29 people attended workshops on housing rights and access to education and completed 22 feedback forms (no target for this)
- 165 people were registered to vote in local elections, however the 2020 voter registration campaign was cancelled because the elections for London Mayor and Assembly were cancelled due to corona (target 230)<sup>6</sup>

Southwark and Lambeth Law Centres also over-delivered on their targets for specialist advice on referral (target 18, 37 delivered!) and achieved the workshops and training targets.

The project's users often expressed real enthusiasm for their experiences of IRMO as supported mainly by SLC.

- **I have friends who have paid dearly for not coming to IRMO.** They pay an adviser or lawyer £20 a time when they get help, it costs them a lot. Now they come to IRMO and get better advice for free.
- I had a friend whose husband needed to sort out his papers and went and got bad advice and it was a disaster. Now he goes to Nelson and there he gets **a proper explanation of everything and help.**
- If you get to IRMO first you are in luck, others have had some terrible experiences. Because they didn't know about things and didn't come here
- We have a lot of needs when we arrive, every document needs translating and explaining, even the electricity bill.
- They **treat people well here, as they should be treated, not like animals, they don't take advantage**
- I always recommend it to friends.
- They cannot see everyone who comes they need more staff because **what you get here is good, that's why more and more come here.** The immigration worker does it all on her own. They need to have more people so they can open longer hours. Run more activities. They have a project for children for three months after they arrive to orientate them for school etc its great they get more confident and go into school, but they still need more help and support with language, the exams, help with managing school
- Irmo is awesome. **I recommend all my co-workers come here,** I tell people all the time "got to the website, turn up, they have such goodwill to help people". I want to volunteer here.
- **I am delighted and surprised every time**
- What they tell me it is good. I like **the diversity of areas they help with,** a variety to help migrants
- I don't want to change anything: **they give us confidence and we trust them**

The project is a set of relationships between the three remaining organisations, and, after the initial problems were resolved it is clear that these relationships were very focused on making things work and work well. Each partner does what they are good at and uses the others to increase their skills. Collaboration worked for all partners: EDUGEP, although it eventually ceased activity, appreciated working with IRMO on producing information booklets, which were seen as useful, even if not for their intended audience. Eventually Southwark Law Centre edited these and updated the legal

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<sup>6</sup> These were the revised targets after EDUGEP activities and budgets were redistributed.

content, then IRMO translated the content into accessible Spanish and Portuguese, and LCN have made it available online.

The overall picture for EU Latin Americans is one of a community often unaware of their rights and so exploited in different areas, and glad to not just sort out problems but also achieve agency through their contact with the project. The place of IRMO within the community is the key to this, coupled with the other, non-project activities that build self-confidence and participation. Lawyers (both in the law centre itself and as represented in the national network) value this, although the relationship may demand extra work. The focus on making things work plus the ability to adapt flexibly has made it possible to resolve those difficulties effectively, and appears to have built lasting relationships.

The UK based work has extended the network, knowledge and reach of all three organisations. The targets met (noted above) represent real gains for users who are better able to manage their lives, integrate, influence and participate.

The longer term results of the project are that IRMO has become more skilled and knowledgeable, Southwark Law Centre has extended its reach, and the Latin American community in London has benefited from the increased visibility and understanding offered by the Law Centres Network's capacity to influence.

I would like to highlight the success in voter registration in particular, because UK based organisations and local authorities have noted the difficulties in getting EU citizens registered to vote. Given the views expressed by users it is likely that IRMO will continue to increase civic participation across the board for this community.

## 6. What did we learn?

EULAMP was in part a project dedicated to learning: IRMO learning about legal rights, SLC learning about Latinx communities, the UK based organisations learning about drivers for Latin American migration from Europe to the UK, everyone learning (rather too late) about the patterns of such migration, EDUGEP learning about what pre departure information is useful, a range of organisations and agencies learning about Latin Americans in London. And importantly project users learned not only about their rights and options but also about their own value and how they could become agents in their new lives in London, and IRMO learns from its users. Many of those interviewed articulated well the interrelationship of rights and participation: that it is easier to learn about those rights from an organisation that values you, and sees your value in much more than economic terms. And once you embody that sense of your own value, you participate and your participation may then enhance and enforce your rights.

Partners certainly learned about how complex migration flows are and how difficult it is to plan around them! In fairness this is something that local and national government, with considerably more resources, often get wrong. EDUGEP learned a lot about Portuguese migration to the UK which was not of direct value to EULAMP but will guide future work for them.

The direct learning from the project was that the pre-departure preparation did not work but the support and advice in the UK did. In part this may have been due to the absence of a Spanish partner, given the different patterns of migration from Spain and Portugal. However, the discussions in Madrid did point to the fact that all pre-departure work is complicated and difficult.

- Funding is an issue: the “sending” country has no interest in equipping people to leave, and the “receiving” country may see pre-departure work as providing a pull factor it does not want. In fact, when the UK government has funded pre-departure work it is often focused specifically on discouraging migration to the UK, emphasising the difficulties involved.
- There is no doubt that prospective migrants would benefit from improving their English skills and that this could include learning about “the British system”. Arriving with this basic grounding would improve confidence, widen opportunities and reduce exploitation. However, the evidence from Portugal is that, to some extent, those who need it most are least likely to access it.
- The drivers for Latinx migration from Spain to the UK were generally economic, and people had often exhausted other options before leaving. The migration was thus often unplanned and under researched, partly because people also had one eye on possible return to Spain (especially because of the Brexit uncertainty) or even Latin America, or on circular migration depending on job and other opportunities.
- So it is quite possible that even if the project had succeeded in delivering effective pre departure work the take up might have been quite patchy. The discussions in Madrid in January 2020 touched on this problem but did not produce any obvious models of work.
- However, rights in relation to the UK and Europe are in a constant state of flux at present. This makes the creation of a good source of knowledge about this and of easy access to it especially important at present. The Commission has an interest in mobility throughout Europe and funds some work on this but could look at doing more. However, this may be of limited benefit to British based organisations and EU migrants in Britain in future.

The final project event in London enabled participants to share knowledge on Latinxs in London and their advice needs across the board. Some key points from this included

- The need for better data about this often invisible but fast growing community
- The centrality of employment issues and the need for all to work to promote decent, fairly paid work
- Housing is also a key to leading a dignified self sufficient life, achieving academically and exercising real choices
- Often complex family relationships, including not only breakdown but also extended relationships are poorly understood by those working with Latinxs
- Trusted community organisations are the key to working with these communities and they are trusted because they respect and value their users and accompany them on their journey to full participation in UK society

## 7. Conclusions

There were times in the story of this project when it seemed possible that it would fail on all terms: a central premise was flawed, one partner failed to deliver, another closed abruptly, the lead had internal problems. In the event it proved a resounding success. Why?

- Working together the remaining partners refocused on what needed to be done, developed working styles that were flexible agile and responsive and all shared a commitment to the fundamental interests of the end users
- The frontline organisation delivering the revised targets is a special sort of organisation, that focuses as much on participation and value as rights and information

- A common interest in and commitment to learning enabled that ability to reorganise and was facilitated to some extent by the formative evaluation process
- The national presence and reach of the lead partner enabled project learning to be disseminated much more widely.

The final briefing prepared by all involved encapsulates the core messages. It is attached as an appendix here.

Sue Lukes

May 2020

# EULAMP Briefing paper

Lessons learnt and  
recommendations



# Introduction

Brexit is 'done' but 2020 is the year we begin to see how things unfold. Many **EU nationals'** lives were precarious before Brexit but the UK's exit from the EU has aggravated the situation and created new issues, such as the risk of many EU nationals not having any legal immigration status after 30 June 2021.

**Latin Americans** as a community have become more visible lately but many issues persist, even a long time after migrating to the UK. The Latin American community has a significant group of dual nationals who have dual Latin American and EU nationality. In practice, because of systemic barriers, EU Latin Americans often don't get to exercise their EU rights in the UK even though they are legally entitled to them.

**The EULAMP project** has been set up to assist with this problem, through two frontline organisations and a project coordinator:

- **Indoamerican Refugee and Migrant Organisation (IRMO)**

A community-led organisation for Latin Americans, provided advice and support in communities, ESOL classes, referrals to specialist advice and voter registration campaigns.

- **Southwark Law Centre**

A specialist legal advice charity operating in Southwark, Lambeth and Lewisham, resolved complex cases, advised and trained professionals at IRMO and other agencies, wrote a booklet and delivered public legal education.

- **The Law Centres Network**

The membership organisation for Law Centres, coordinated the project and created opportunities to share learning and best practice from the project with other stakeholders (including this briefing paper).

This briefing paper seeks to communicate project highlights and lessons learnt from EULAMP. It is addressed to professionals working with EU nationals and/or Latin Americans, advice agencies, grassroots organisations, policy-makers, and others.



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# Top six lessons learnt



## 1 Organisations of Change

Community organisations are central agents of change. Relationships of trust built with target groups and deep understanding of people's lives and ways of accessing information are invaluable when trying to assist a community.

## 2 Integrated Provision

Integrated provision of services, or assisting the client throughout their journey rather than sending them alone on it, is pivotal to having impact. Providing a holistic service helps people over the long term rather than simply solving one-off issues. This is because many people will only disclose more "hidden", deeper problems once a relationship of trust has been established.

## 3 Early intervention

Early intervention is only possible through opportunities to interact with people outside of problem-focused activities. For example, IRMO didn't just attend to people's needs in crisis, they created opportunities to be part of the life of the community through family groups, ESOL classes and awareness-raising sessions. Being geographically close, speaking community languages and operating in a simple, non-intimidating space also helped establish themselves as a friendly local organisation for Latin Americans.

## 4 Multi-agency Approach

We really need a multi-agency approach that enables us to do what we're best at *in collaboration*, to maximise impact. In our case, the delivery partners established a good symbiotic relationship which will last beyond the project's lifetime. Southwark Law Centre built IRMO's capacity through training on referrals and relevant legal topics such as Brexit, employment and housing. IRMO increased Southwark Law Centre's reach into the Latin American community. We see these new relationships as a sign of success and of long-term benefit.

## 5 Structural Change

A focus on structural change is essential, as many of the issues faced by Latin Americans are systemic. Hostile environment, low labour market regulation and resulting poor employment practices, bad quality housing and rogue landlords, or the inadequate public recognition of the community are a few examples. Some of these can be challenged, individually and structurally, by specialist legal organisations, like Southwark Law Centre.

Encouraging people to seek legal advice and see their problems as structural, fosters a critical understanding of their issues as part of a wider set of inequalities rather than individual problems. This can be empowering. Redress is also important.

## 6 Effective, responsive and flexible organisations

Another success factor, as obvious as it is, is the quality of the organisations involved and of the relationships between them. Effective, responsive and flexible organisations and individuals drive projects further amid challenges. We have come to realise that part of the success of the project is due to good relationship between partners. We shared values of solidarity, mutual help and respect, and commitment to social change rather than just individual help.

Frontline organisations' staff were experts by experience and well equipped to reach vulnerable people. The coordinating organisation listened to and advocated on behalf of partners to the funder, took feedback on board and adapted the support to fit partners' needs.



# Post Brexit challenges

EU Latin Americans are likely to be more vulnerable after Brexit which is likely to increase barriers for the group. Vulnerable EU citizens are at risk of becoming undocumented if they do not apply to the EU Settlement Scheme by the deadline. There are many barriers to getting them all registered within the given time frame.

The lack of physical documents make it more complicated for employers, landlords, banks and many others to check if someone has Pre-Settled Status or Settled Status. Also, many Latin Americans have complicated family situations with many people relying on one family member's status which makes them vulnerable.

Other challenges are everyday borders, hostile environment policies and changing rights.

## Recommendations

### 1 Communicate

Ensure we communicate with funders about the role of wrap around services and multi-agency work, and about the unique value of trusted grassroots organisations in supporting vulnerable groups. The latter are needed to reach out further than mainstream services are able to, however, they are worse funded than larger organisations and even more at risk now with Covid-19 affecting available funding.

### 2 Monitor

Ethnic monitoring should include a Latin American category, especially in areas with large Latin American populations. This would make the group more visible and support the production of better statistics and research.

### 3 Language classes

Flexible and affordable language classes are important. They should be a part of a holistic approach where language classes are provided by community organisations with routes into specialist advice.

### 4 Cooperation

A jointly framed multi-disciplinary cooperation between organisations has proven to be a successful model for supporting vulnerable migrants. Community organisations, specialist organisations and mainstream services all have a role to play but they can achieve more if they work together.

### 5 Enforcement

Enforcement of labour laws: many people using the project were stuck in exploitative employment. Laws against this exist but there are few resources for identifying and tackling these abuses.



## For further reflection

- How can organisations better communicate value-added to funders and local authorities?
- How to establish more meaningful engagement with public bodies?

Thank you for reading!



If you have any comments, questions or ideas, please get in touch with Laura ([laura@lawcentres.org.uk](mailto:laura@lawcentres.org.uk)) or Jenny ([jenny@lawcentres.org.uk](mailto:jenny@lawcentres.org.uk)).

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