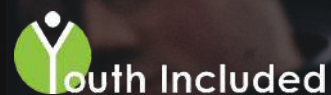




NOT ALONE

MIGRANT SUPPORT
IN THE CZECH
REPUBLIC



Co-funded by the
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The foreigners who decide to settle in the Czech Republic are able to use legal, social, crisis and job counselling and many other types of support free of charge.

The Czech Republic has become an important country of immigration within the last decades. According to the Czech Statistical Office by 30.06.2019 the population reached 10 668 641 people, of which 564 365 were foreigners with a residence permit due to their employment, entrepreneurship, family or study reasons.

Even though the migrant legislation in the Czech Republic is quite strict, there are constant improvements in the area of integration. Great news is that when a foreigner comes to the Czech Republic he is not left alone. Like that, the Ministry of Interior itself is focused on promotion of awareness of foreigners and majority, developing intercultural dialogue, support of active participation of foreigners in public life and increasing intercultural competences of public administration employees. All these activities are provided on both regional and local levels.

Integration measures at regional level are carried out mainly through the regional network of centres supporting the integration of third-country nationals, operated by non-governmental organizations or regional authority. Meanwhile, integration policy at local level is a long-term priority of the Ministry of Interior. The main objective is to engage local governments and respective stakeholders in integration efforts, and to create suitable conditions for co-existence and prospering diversity.

The most popular services among migrants are legal and social individual counselling with professionals specializing in migrant integration: questions concerning prolongation of visa or employee card, solution of residence issues, kindergarten, school and university applying procedure etc. All in all, the whole scope of issues and questions, which might appear in the course of integration, can be worked out with qualified advisors.¹

Besides meeting the basic needs of the newcomers in the last few years, there have started to appear interesting initiatives enabling foreigners to utilize their skills and knowledge in the labor market and to be aware of its legal framework. Matertera² is one of such projects, since its founders conduct coaching sessions with clients to reveal their passions and strong points. The main idea is to get rid of the possible fears which obstructed them from following their dreams.

One of the co-founders, Anna Darashenka, being a migrant herself, has worked in local NGOs, dealing with integration, for many years. With each of her clients Anna has been practicing empowerment and encouragement to enable their self-

¹ The list of the main stakeholders is available on the website of Prague City Hall:

<https://metropolevsech.eu/en/sluzby-pro-migranty/nevladni-neziskove-organizace/>

² <http://matertera.cz/>



confidence and self-realization in the new home. When opening Matertera, she brought this idea on board. She sincerely believes that in integration services it is crucial to have people who are empathetic and truly care about people.

Integration of foreigners is a long and complicated process, but as long as there are genuine professionals who heartily try to help the newcomers, it is manageable and bound to succeed.