Empowering Young Migrants and Refugees: A Transformative Initiative in Leeds

**Currently Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund**

In the bustling city of Leeds, a transformative project is making significant strides in reshaping the lives of young people with refugee and migrant background. Our journey began with a pilot project in collaboration with SIRIUS European Policy Network for Migrant Education. This initial phase saw two participants receiving policy and advocacy training in Malaga, organised by the North South Centre of the Council of Europe. Buoyed by this success, we expanded our reach to include 15 young people in our sessions. This brought to life through the support of RETAS Leeds and Near Neighbours expanding phase, the project has now gained momentum with the backing of the National Lottery Community Fund for its current stage. This initiative is not just about integration; it's about empowering these young individuals to embark on a transformative journey.

**Vision: Elevating Beyond Integration**

"Young Migrants Achieving Change" stands as a beacon of empowerment for young migrants and refugees. It's dedicated to imparting crucial skills and confidence, enabling them to drive meaningful change in their communities. This initiative prioritizes Active Citizenship and Human Rights, with a strong focus on education, awareness, and tackling mental health issues – all essential for a thriving community life.

**Approach: Empowerment Through Engagement**

The project actively involves 15 young leaders in participatory activities such as group discussions, role-playing, and goal-setting, with the curriculum developed based on input from the participants themselves. Building upon the success of the pilot project, it employs a community-driven approach to strengthen social cohesion, enhance family and community environments, and empower youth in their decision-making processes.

**Session Highlights: A Journey of Growth and Discovery**

Session One: Introduction to Citizenship and Human Rights, with interactive presentations, group discussions, and role-play exercises. Participants are tasked with interviewing citizens from migrant backgrounds about their community engagement.

Session Two: Focuses on the application of these rights in everyday life. Participants share their interview findings and engage in workshops to deepen their understanding of civic participation in Leeds.

Session Three: Participants transform their findings into actionable plans for community involvement, culminating in a community discussion forum.

**Continued Engagement: Workshops and Networking**

The journey doesn't end with these sessions. The project extends its impact through a series of practical participation in communities to further engage families and neighbours in the conversation. These workshops serve as platforms for continued learning, discussion, and practical application of the skills and knowledge acquired.

**Wrapping Up with a Networking Event**

The culmination of this phase of the project is marked by a networking event, anticipated to bring together 40-50 people. This event is not only a celebration of the achievements and growth of the participants but also an opportunity for meaningful connections. It's a chance for participants, their families, and community members to network, share experiences, and foster a sense of unity and collective purpose.

**Impact: Building Bridges, Changing Lives**

This initiative goes beyond personal growth, fostering a sense of belonging and cross-cultural understanding, thereby contributing to a cohesive, inclusive, and resilient community. Participants gain invaluable experience in civic engagement, benefiting their personal development and the wider community.

**Community Involvement: The Heartbeat of the Mission**

Developed through consultations with young migrants, refugees, and community groups, our project is a true reflection of the community's needs and aspirations. We engage diverse perspectives to ensure that our initiative remains responsive and relevant.

**Conclusion: Join Our Transformative Movement**

Our unwavering commitment is to empower, engage, and elevate the lives of young people with refugee and migrant background in Leeds. Through dedicated efforts and collaborations, we're making a significant impact.

Join us in this transformative journey as we strive to build a more inclusive, empowered, and cohesive society. Stay updated and get involved as we continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of young migrants and refugees.

For more information, updates, and ways to get involved, follow our journey.