



ICT ENABLED PUBLIC SERVICES FOR MIGRATION

Project Newsletter (January - April 2020)

COVID-19 and Migration in Cyprus

A brief status report from the MIICT partner CARITAS Cyprus

In Cyprus, the COVID19 crisis has served to underscore shortcomings in the asylum and welfare system, which has been struggling to keep up with the increased number of asylum seeker arrivals since 2018. Some of the latest reactions and policies of the authorities to try to deter new arrivals have been surprising, if not unlawful; to illustrate, the Republic of Cyprus has unofficially stopped accepting asylum claims; pushed back a boat carrying 175 Syrian refugees (including 69 children); and turned a temporary Reception Center meant to host newcomers for three days into a closed camp without the necessary infrastructure (electricity, toilets, etc.) to keep the 600 people inside safe and healthy.

Overall, marginalized groups suffer from a lack of information and access to essential services, including the clinics handling potential COVID cases; this is made all the worse by language barriers. Restrictions on movement and crowding have left migrants especially exposed to fines and other difficulties securing their benefits. Already at or below the poverty line, many categories of migrants (asylum seekers, refugees, students, domestic and agricultural workers) have lost their jobs and with them their housing and food security. Homeless people cannot stay home and the poor cannot self-isolate or stay healthy.

Local governments, NGOs and spontaneous citizen initiatives are responding within their means and ability, but the risks associated with movement and contact create practical obstacles to service provision. Most worrisome, the fear brought on by COVID19 has exacerbated negative attitudes towards asylum seekers and foreigners—something that fuels prejudice and racism and allows harsh and indiscriminate measures to pass with little or no scrutiny or reaction from the public.



The COVID-19 outbreak has not only reached most of the countries in the world and has also crucial impacts on the problematic situation of refugees in camps and asylum centres.

See also the reports from other MIICT partners in our new Blog Entry: [COVID-19 on Migrants in Italy, Greece, Bulgaria and in the Republic of North Macedonia](#)

New Project Video

The MIICT recently launched a video about the project. It highlights the research conducted in MIICT. Furthermore, it offers a glance on the upcoming IMMERSE platform. The video can be accessed [HERE](#)



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