

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) or Jenny (jenny@lawcentres.org.uk).

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