



# Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund



Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund Project is part-financed by the European Union  
Co-financing rate: 75% EU Funds; 25% Beneficiary Funds  
Sustainable Management of Migration Flows





**IMPROVING THE CULTURAL COMPETENCE  
OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS**

# THE PROJECT TEAM



**Alec** (Project Leader)



**Hedwig**  
(Project Manager)



PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR YOUTH,  
SPORT AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

**Nele**  
(Red Cross  
Volunteer)



**Juniper**  
(Cultural Orientation Teacher)



**Intesar** (Liaison Officer)



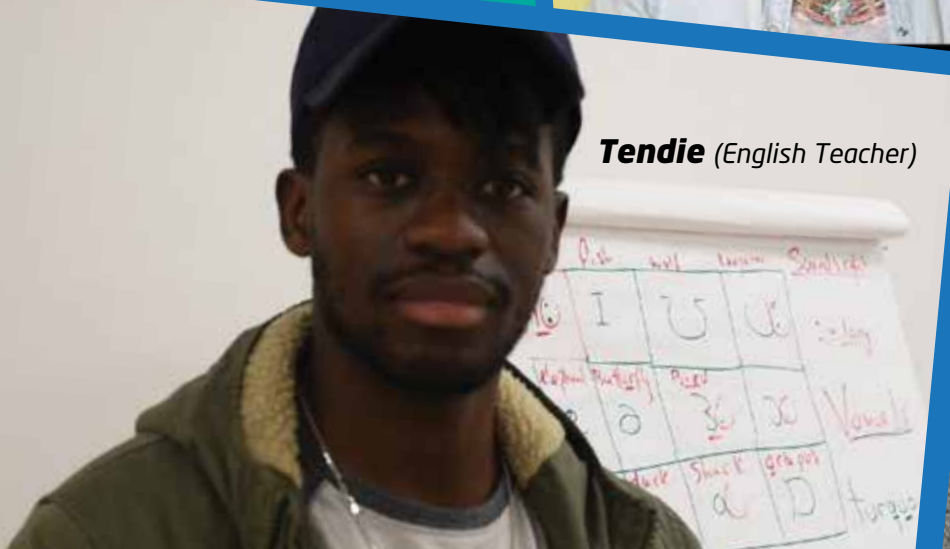
**Maria**  
(Cultural  
Orientation  
Teacher)



**Regine** (Media Officer)



**Tendie** (English Teacher)



**Karla**  
(Red Cross  
Volunteer)



Hello everyone.

It is our great pleasure to welcome you and share with you this moment of joy and celebration. It all started when we acknowledged the crucial importance of the language in the process of integration of any immigrant in a new country.

As an organisation which is committed to work towards enhancing cross-cultural communication within and across communities, we decided to play our part in this vital process, so we applied for funds offered by Malta's National Programme for Asylum Migration Integration Fund (AMIF). We went the extra mile and sought for further support, and so the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE), together with the Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Sport and Voluntary Organisations co funded the project.

Improving The Cultural Competence of Third Country Nationals (ITCCTCN) was born.

Throughout the life of the project, we organised diverse activities related to cultural maltese events, but more importantly, we built two training courses, English and Cultural Orientation both at the Elementary and Intermediate levels.

The aim was to promote the integration of Third Country Nationals (TCNs) and refugees within Maltese society and prepare them to positively contribute to its wellbeing.

Malta is a big player when it comes to promoting cultural and language capacities.

In fact, the following statement can be read in Malta's National Programme for AMIF: "One of the main issues which hampers integration of TCNs is their linguistic ability to communicate with the local population and which restrains their participation in the labour market". The importance of providing knowledge of Maltese history, culture and politics is also mentioned in the same document.

This project was then built for the benefit of Third Country Nationals (TCNs) and refugees residing in Malta, in order for them to be equipped with the linguistic and cultural training to improve their integration within the Maltese society.

It is a well known fact that due to the lack of linguistic and cultural competence, a considerable number of TCNs in Malta are vulnerable target groups as they are left out from a wide variety of employment opportunities, and so creating the conditions for social exclusion and marginalisation within society. Limitation of employment opportunities also places them at risk of poverty.

Classes were held every Saturday at MCAST Campus in Paola.

The project duration was 20 months and all the training material is available online here: [www.ccif.org](http://www.ccif.org)  
We wish you a pleasant moment and we invite you to follow our social media platforms for upcoming projects.

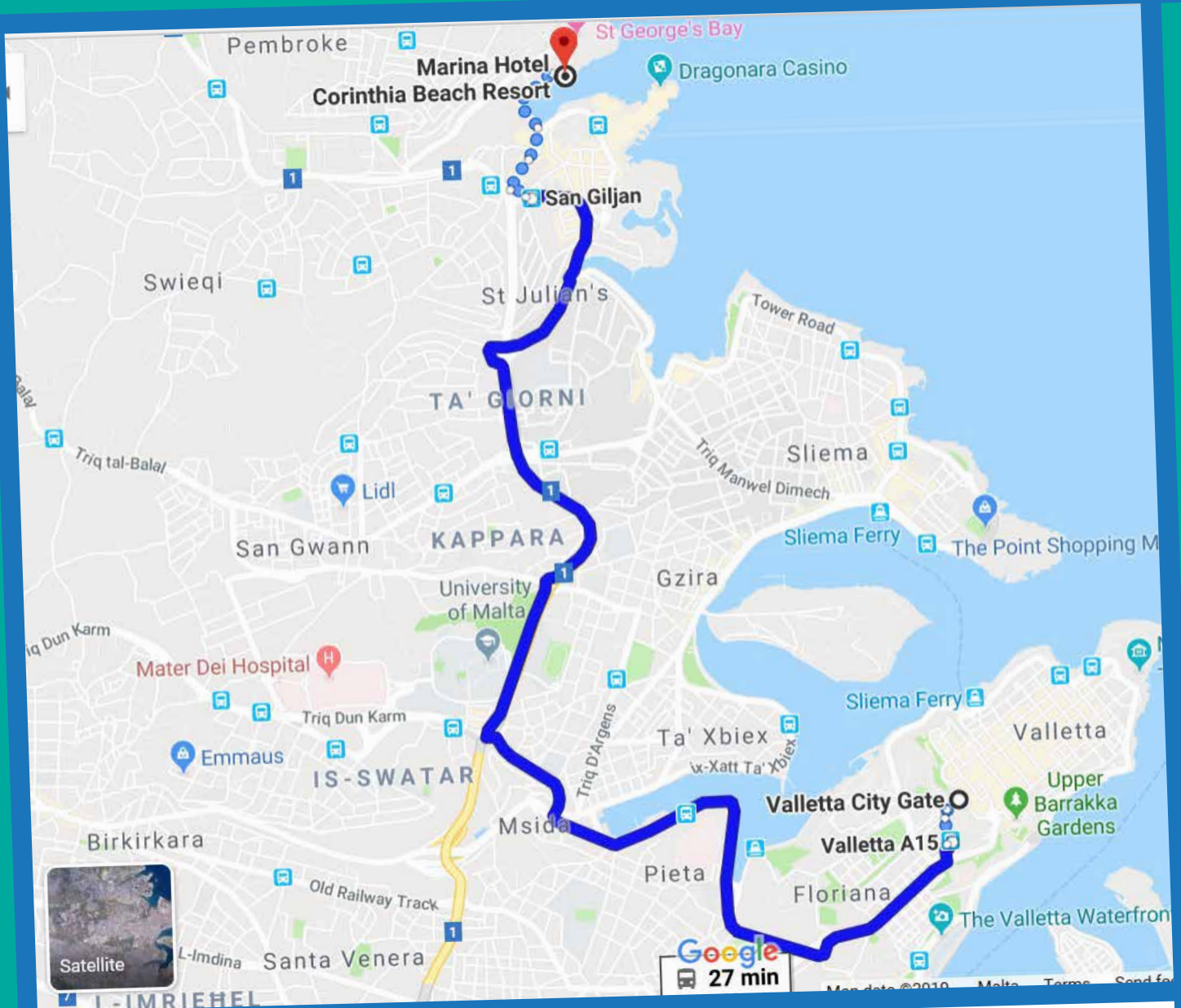
### **About CCIF Malta**

Cross Culture International Foundation (CCIF Malta) established in 2012, works toward the prevention and elimination of trafficking in persons through awareness raising, rescuing victims, restoring lives, direct service co-ordination for victims, capacity building and collaboration with key stakeholders. We also work with people coming from diverse backgrounds, and endeavour to meet the needs of our communities through voluntary activities. By promoting inclusion, acceptance, understanding and mutual respect, our programs make a vital contribution to peace and sustainable development.

## IMPROVING THE CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

*Saturday 3rd August 2019*

09:30 - 10:30	Arrival and Registration with Live Music
10:30 - 10:35	Opening and welcome remarks by <b>Alec</b> ( <i>Project Leader</i> )
10:35 - 10:40	Summary of Project by <b>Heddy</b> ( <i>Project Manager</i> )
10:40 - 10:50	Video Highlights of the Project by <b>Regine</b> ( <i>Media Office</i> )
10:50 - 11:05	Address by the Head of MEUSAC <b>Ms. Mandy Falzon</b>
11:05 - 11:20	Address by Head of Secretariat, Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Sport & Voluntary Organisations <b>Mr. Ryan Borg</b> .
11:20 - 11:35	Address by the Parliamentary Secretary for EU Funds and Social Dialogue <b>Hon. Dr Aaron Farrugia</b>
11:35 - 11:40	Presentation of Awards to best selected Participants by <b>Hon. Dr Aaron Farrugia</b>
11:40 - 12:15	Certificate Awards by the Parliamentary Secretary for EU Funds and Social Dialogue <b>Hon. Dr Aaron Farrugia</b>
12:15 - 12:20	Speeches by 2 selected Participants
12:20	Closing remarks by <b>Alec</b>
12:25	Lunch



Bus 14 from Valletta drop off at the last bus stop called Profs.



*Maltese Bus*

## **How does one accurately define a country's culture? Is it through their history, language or food – or simply through the shared understandings we have about us 'being Maltese'?**

A country's culture is certainly that which makes it unique through its activities, rituals, and the goods it produces, as well as the beliefs and values of a people and the way they understand the world and their own lives.

Perhaps such an example is the Maltese festa, an integral part of Maltese life and culture – from the band clubs to the food stalls, fireworks and decorations... would the Maltese be who they are without their festa, their rivalries, their saint worship, and church culture?

But step out of Malta, and discover a world in which our festas are alien to other cultures. And that is where the challenge lies for the growing population of new Maltese who are trying to get to grips with Maltese culture.

At MCAST's Student House, the Cross Culture International Foundation (CCIF) is attempting to do just that through cultural orientation classes, aimed at improve students' English, while teaching them all about Maltese culture.

Sessions take place every Saturday and bring together individuals from across the world, both young and old, notably from the middle-eastern, and south American regions. The project is co-financed by the European Union, under the Asylum Migration Integration Fund and the Ministry for Education and Employment.

"Depending from where you are coming from, cultures are different, and people are used to certain ways of life, but they have to acclimatise and get used to the way things are done here in Malta so that they stay within the confines of the law," said CCIF project co-ordinator, Hedwig Bvumburah.

The government is also running a similar scheme, under the Migrant Integration Strategy & Action Plan – the project is run by the Human Rights and Integration Directorate under the Ministry for European Affairs and Equality. The scheme currently has 600 registered individuals.

Alex Tortell, Head of the Integration Unit, said that language learning and cultural orientation are two tangible and practical skills which can improve day-to-day communication. "There is more to integration, but communication and a basis of shared understandings such as equality, is a basic essential point of departure," he said.

## **What does the class entail?**

The class is split into 11 topics: customs, language, culture, behaviours, music, food, religion, faith, beliefs, attitude and rituals.

Juniper Francalanza, an American who teaches the cultural orientation portion of the class, told MaltaToday that the classes teach students basic English, while simultaneously teaching students the regulations and laws that are active in this part of Europe.

"We teach things like knowing their worker's rights, the constitution of Malta, cultural activities like the festivals, how the local councils are set up, how the elections are held, the role of the Church in Malta and the educational system... the things that are important for people to understand when they come to a new country and plan on staying and settling there," she said.

Bvumburah, who teaches the English language portion of the class, explained that he teaches students the skills to be able to communicate with those around them. "This is a project about integrating migrants who live here through a cultural and linguistic aspect of their everyday life. I teach English, and through this, I try and give them the skills to communicate at work and to be able to speak to the people around them," he said.

During one of the classes, Francalanza taught students about the healthcare system in Malta – defining the three tiers: hospitals' private and public, pharmacies, and polyclinics. To a Maltese person, this may seem redundant. However, to individuals, especially those who come from governmental structures radically different than those set up in Malta, the explanation may be needed – the polyclinic system isn't one that is practised globally.

The class also featured some Maltese history, including the construction of Valletta, with a brief mention of Jean Parisot de Valette.

Francalanza said that she has a unique viewpoint, as a foreigner with a Maltese partner and Maltese children: "Coming with outside eyes I know which things may need a bit of explanation and my background is also in Maltese history, so being able to explain some of the reasons behind certain norms and certain traditions because I've gone through the same process of wanting to know why something was done."

She said that Maltese people who grew up in Malta may not question why things are done in the same way, which, she said, can "sometimes be difficult... as I learnt from being on the receiving end of it when I first moved here.

## ***Where cultures meet!***

### ***How does culture affect our lives?***

“Our culture is our routine of sleeping, bathing, dressing, eating, and getting to work. It is our household chores and the actions we perform on the job; the way we buy goods and services, write and mail a letter, take a taxi or board a bus, make a telephone call, go to a movie, or attend church. It is the way we greet friends or address a stranger, the admonitions we give our children and the way we respond, what we consider good and bad manners, and even to a large extent what we consider right and wrong.

All these and thousands of other ways of thinking, feeling, and acting seem so natural and right that we may even wonder how else one could do it. But to millions of other people in the world every one of these acts would seem strange, awkward, incomprehensible, unnatural, or wrong. These people would perform many, if not all, of the same acts, but they would be done in different ways that to them would seem logical, natural, and right.”

–Ina Corinne Brown, *Understanding Other Cultures* (1963)

### ***Adapting foreign traditions to conform to and respect local Maltese culture***

Maltese culture is generally considered to be a mix of influences brought to the island of Malta by the various rulers it has seen come and go over many centuries. It is a fact that the Phoenicians, Romans and Arabs all left their stamp on the customs and traditions of the Maltese and Malta’s history.

However, age-old traditions have travelled through generations and have allowed the Maltese to retain their roots. A likely reason for the survival of originally Maltese traits is the drive to establish an own identity in the face of foreign rulers, and more certainly the reliance on maritime trade has helped to shape and conserve what we know now as being Maltese culture.

### ***A Culture of Opposites***

Malta is seen by many as being a nation of opposites and opposition. Whereas the Maltese people are generally friendly and welcoming, Mediterranean temperament comes forward in opposition of sides at many levels, but mainly in sports, politics and local band clubs. Opposition and choosing sides gives a sense of belonging and identity and this is something that is evident in Maltese culture, in which opposition sometimes flows into conflict. Followers of either side of the contrasting entities often lose touch with reality and conflict has at times escalated and become physical. This is not something that occurs regularly but temperament (and not aggression) is part and parcel of life in Malta, where something as subtle as whispering is a rare occurrence and where oral communication is often much louder than in Northern Europe.

<https://itcctcn.wixsite.com/website/cultural-competences>



# Some of our Intermediate Participants







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