

RIAC – Regional Integration Accelerators

Interim Report

Overview of the implementation process of RIAC activities



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Content

Executive Summary	2
Overall findings	
Project Coordination	3
Implementation of activities	4
Recruiting of project staff and selection of participants	5
Recruiting of suitable project staff	5
Selection of participating refugees	6
Cooperation with employers	7
Perspective of RIAC partners.....	7
Perspective of employers (Employer readiness)	8
Specific findings	
Alisei Coop, Italy.....	11
RIAC 1: Women.....	12
RIAC 2: Industrial sector	13
Cidis Onlus, Italy	14
RIAC 1: Hotel/Restaurant/Catering/Kitchen	15
RIAC 2: Agriculture	16
RIAC 3: Textile sector	16
Habitat, Turkey.....	17
RIAC 1: Self-employment.....	17
IGAM, Turkey	18
RIAC 1: Services (1)	19
RIAC 2: Services (2)	19
Esbjerg Kommune, Denmark.....	20
RIAC 1: Woman.....	21
RIAC 2: Construction	21
KIZ, Germany	22
RIAC 2: Logistics	22
Outlook	23

Executive Summary

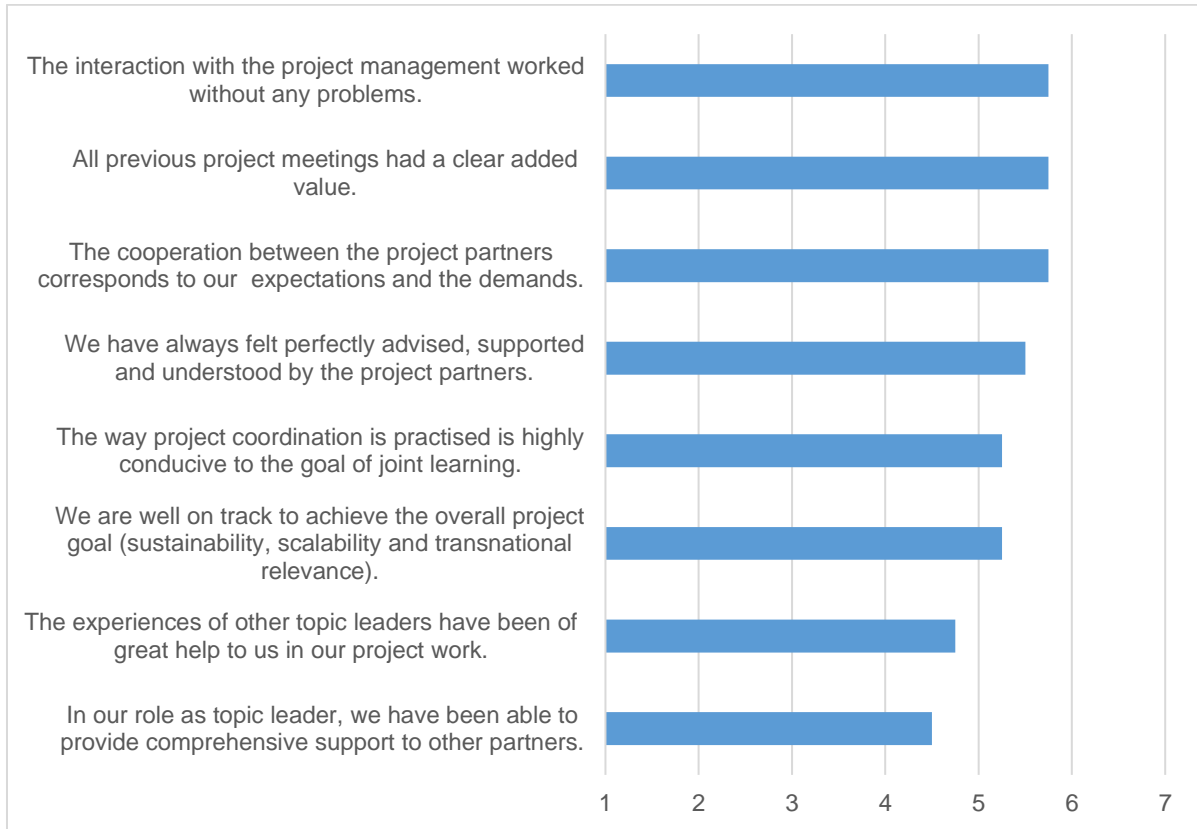
The aim of the RIAC sub-project is to monitor and evaluate critical success factors of RIAC implementation and provide feedback to the project partners. This interim report gives a first overview of the implementation process and contains information about project progression, challenges related to the RIAC activities, good practices as well as ideas for further improvement. The report is based on two evaluation instruments. The interim evaluation survey was electronically available for all RIAC partners between November 2018 and January 2019 and is used to evaluate the status of the RIAC implementation. It allows to identify drivers and inhibitors of project implementation. All partners provided (at least partial) information for this report. The second instrument, the employer readiness survey, had to be filled out by participating employers at the beginning of each RIAC. It allows to better understand how employers are prepared for the integration of refugees and which barriers need to be addressed for a successful integration. So far, seven employers provided data for the report. The inclusion of additional employers will increase the validity of the findings.

Overall findings:

- The evaluation of the project coordination shows highly efficient cooperation between partners. Only the role of topic leaders is not entirely clear yet.
- All activities could be implemented without serious problems.
- Experiences with project staff, participants and employers
 - The recruiting of project staff has been difficult for some positions. While project coordinators and speed managers could be found easily, mentors (voluntary and paid) were hard to find.
 - Experiences with participants are very positive. There were no problems with the selection of participating refugees and the acceptance of the selection process.
 - The acquisition of employers has caused problems in some RIACs. In some RIACs the main challenge was to find enough suitable employers. In some cases it was difficult to convince them of the advantages of a participation. Maybe partners can benefit from each other's experiences in this domain, since some partners had no problems acquiring employers.
- We assess the employer readiness to complement the results of the partner survey. Readiness is a measure of how employers perceive their own preparedness for the integration of refugees. Aspects of readiness are overcoming integration barriers, availability of resources and cooperation within the company.
 - Important challenges for employers are: Language barriers, the acquisition of professional competences, prejudice among the workforce, adaptation to social requirements and identification with social values and norms.
 - Challenges that are mostly overcome are: The adoption of operational procedures, family obligations, the creation of work motivation and lack of information on competences and qualifications.
 - The overall amount of available resources was relatively low (3.83 on a 7 point scale).

Project Coordination

There is high satisfaction with the project management. Project meetings are perceived as valuable and the cooperation between project partners is efficient. However, statements also indicate that the individual contribution of each partner as topic leader for the overall project is not defined clearly enough.

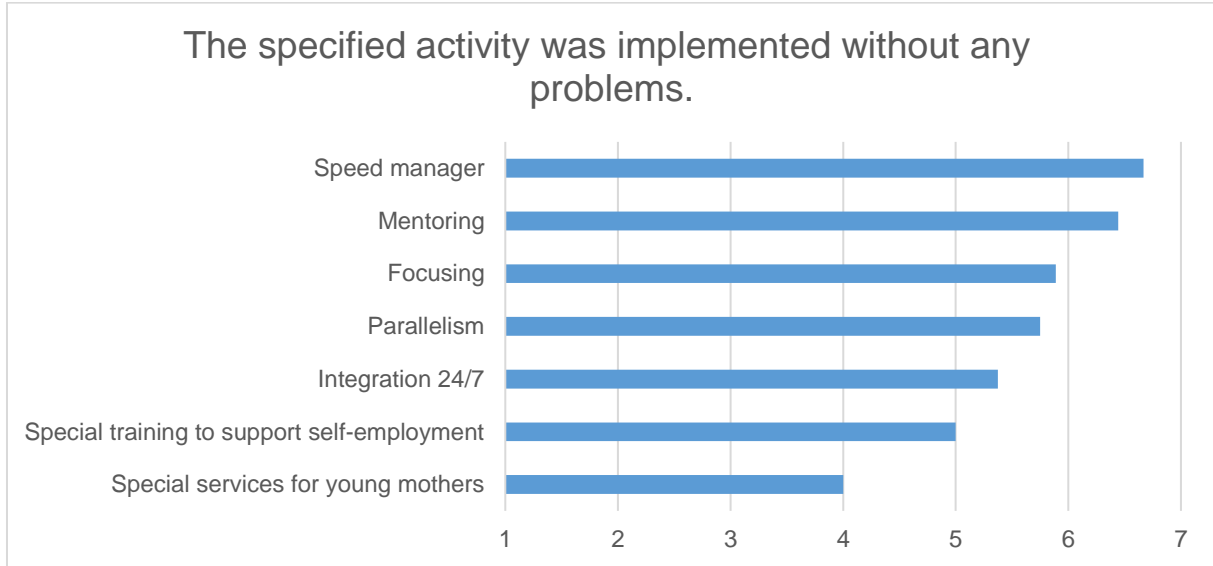


Average over all partners: 5.31, N = 4 from 6

Insights from open statements: In addition to more clearly defined roles of the topic leader, partners expressed the wish for an intensified cooperation between partners beyond project meetings. Moreover, according to the partners' feedback it needs to be discussed whether experiences in Denmark, Germany and Italy can be transferred to Turkey because of different context factors.

Implementation of activities

All RIAC activities could be implemented without problems. The implementation of Speed manager and Mentoring caused the fewest problems.



Average over all RIACs: 5.59, N = 10 from 12

Note: For activity *Special training to support self-employment* and *Special services for young mothers* the results are based on only one respondent.

Insights from open statements: The *Special services for young mothers* in Italy encountered specific problems due to gender issues and missing help for the young mothers from their families and friends.

Recruiting of project staff and selection of participants

Recruiting of suitable project staff

Project staff could be recruited without problems, especially project coordinators and speed managers. The recruiting of mentors was more difficult, even though these results have to be regarded with caution (see note under the figure).

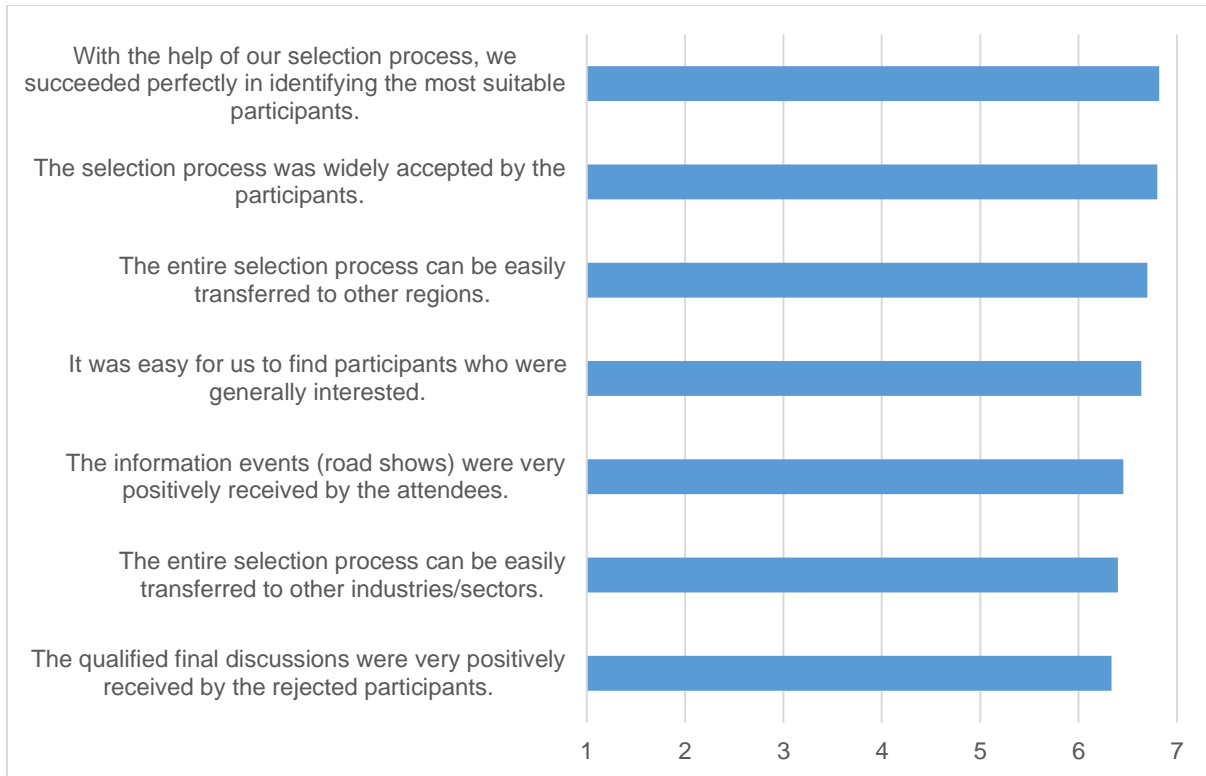


Average over all RIACs: 5.58, N = 10 from 12

Note: Many respondents checked 1 (does not apply at all) for mentors (paid and voluntary) and, in some instances, on-the-job trainer and language trainer. Our data interpretation is that the respondents want to indicate that these positions are not part of the particular RIAC instead of claiming severe problems while acquiring the mentioned position. The final questionnaire needs to be free from ambiguity in this regard.

Selection of participating refugees

The selection of participating refugees is efficient, is accepted by the refugees and can be applied easily to different industries and sectors.

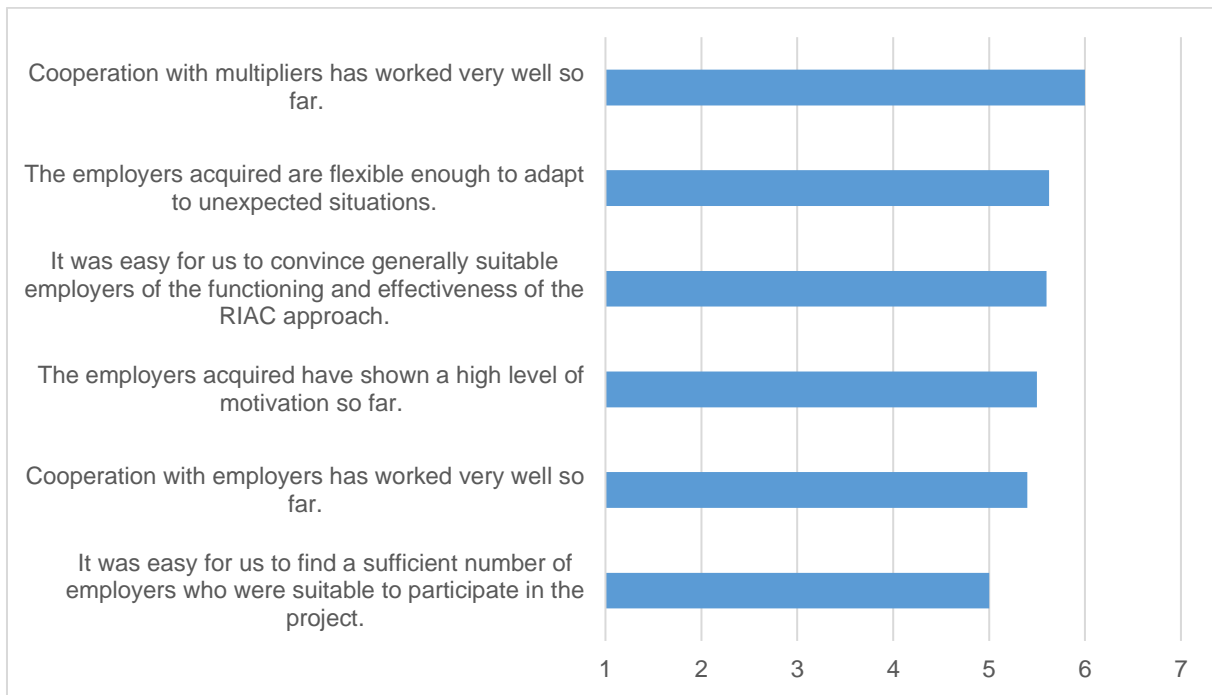


Average over all RIACs: 6.59, N = 11 from 12

Cooperation with employers

Perspective of RIAC partners

The overall experience with employers is positive. Nevertheless, there are differences between partners. The results suggest that cooperation with employers in Italy is more difficult than in other countries. For example, one activity (parallelism) could not start as planned because of a lack of participating employers (ALISEI, Italy).



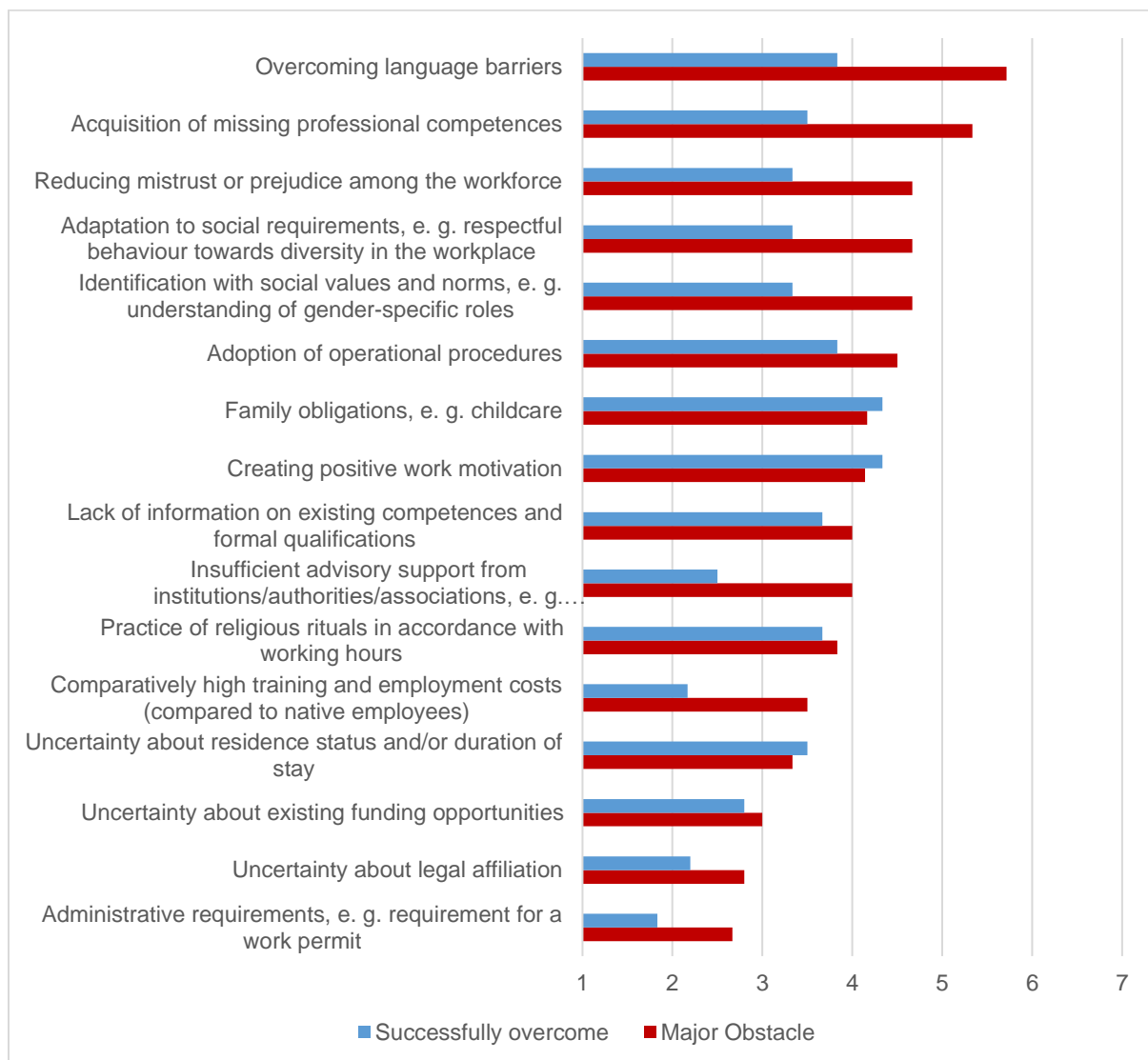
Average over all RIACs: 5.52, N = 10 from 12

Perspective of employers (Employer readiness)

The instrument for the assessment of employer readiness complements the interim survey by providing an employer-centric perspective on the integration process. This allows to draw conclusions with respect to adaptations within the RIACs or for additional supporting activities.

Challenges and Barriers

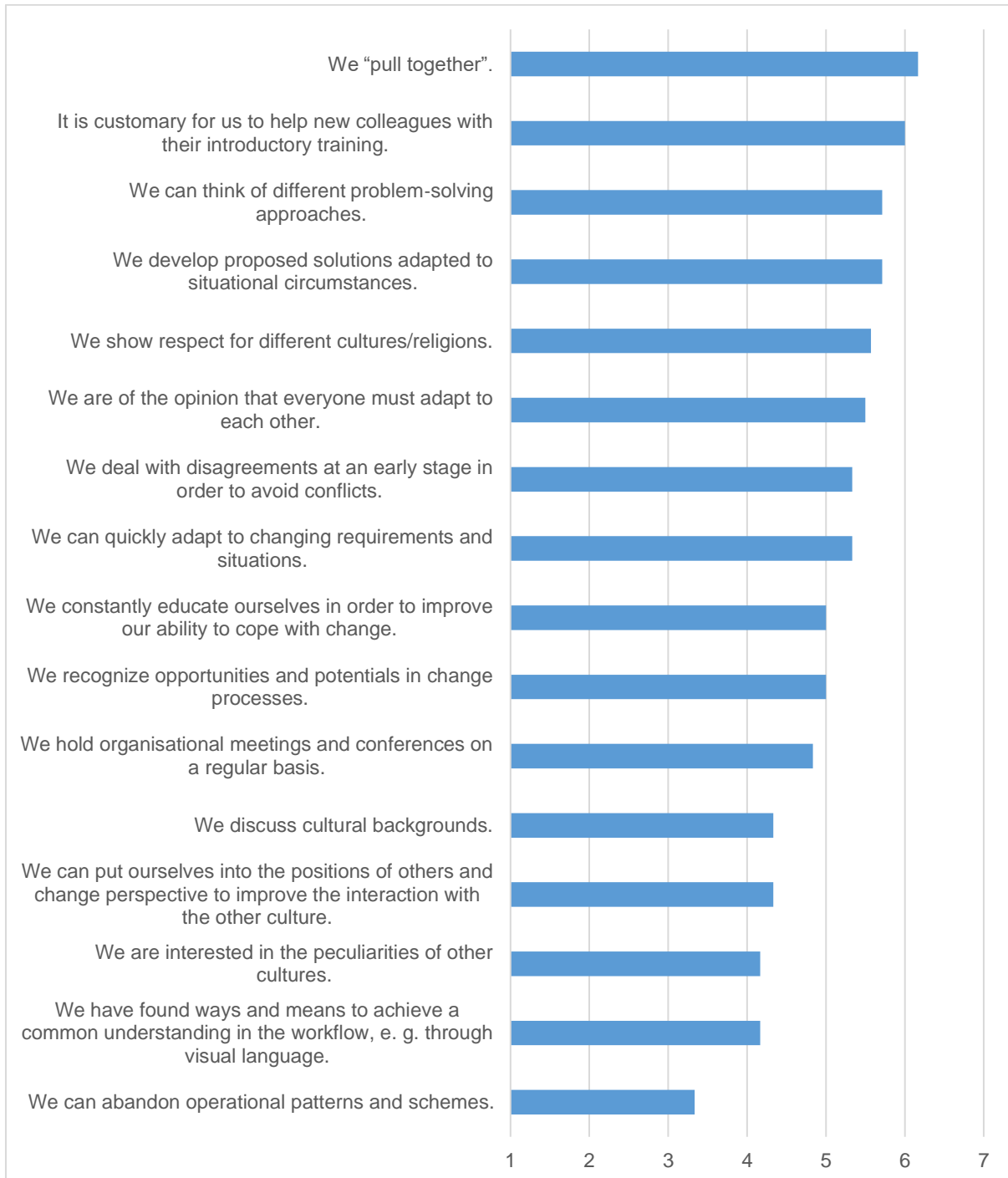
We asked the employers which aspects they perceive as major barriers to the integration of refugees in their companies. In addition, we asked them to estimate the degree to which each barrier has been, so far, successfully overcome. The results indicate that challenges like the adoption of operational procedures, family obligations, the creation of work motivation and lack of information on competences and qualifications have mostly been overcome. The largest barriers for successful integration from the employer perspective are language, professional competences, prejudice among the workforce, adaptation to social requirements and identification with social values and norms.



N = 7

Cooperation within the organization

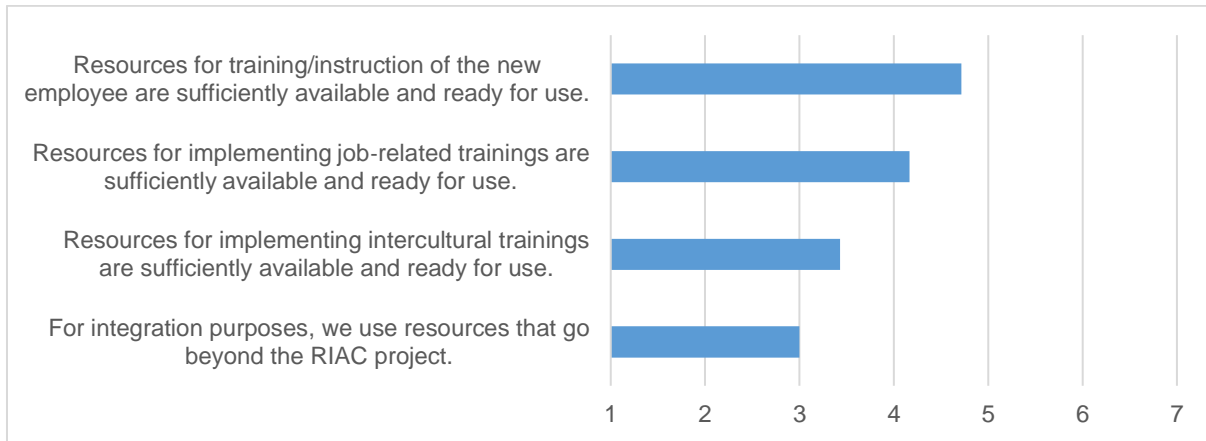
Employers show an integrative overall culture and sufficient flexibility for adaptations. However, structures and operational patterns cannot be changed easily.



N = 7

Available resources

The resources available in the companies are modest. A discussion on possible reasons for this may be fruitful.



Average: 3.83, N = 7

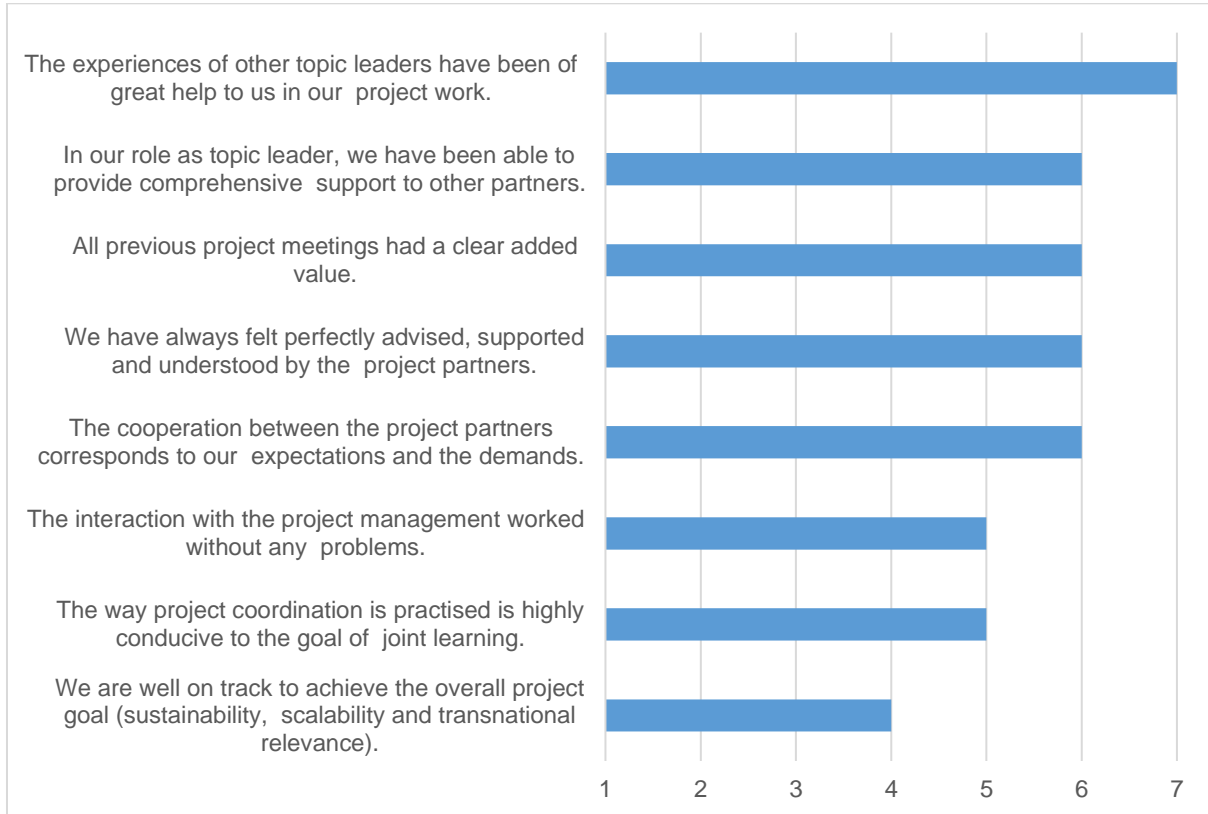
Alisei Coop, Italy

Type of RIACs:

1. Women
2. Industrial sector

Project Coordination:

Alisei Coop benefitted more from the experiences of other topic leaders and could provide more support for others than other partners.



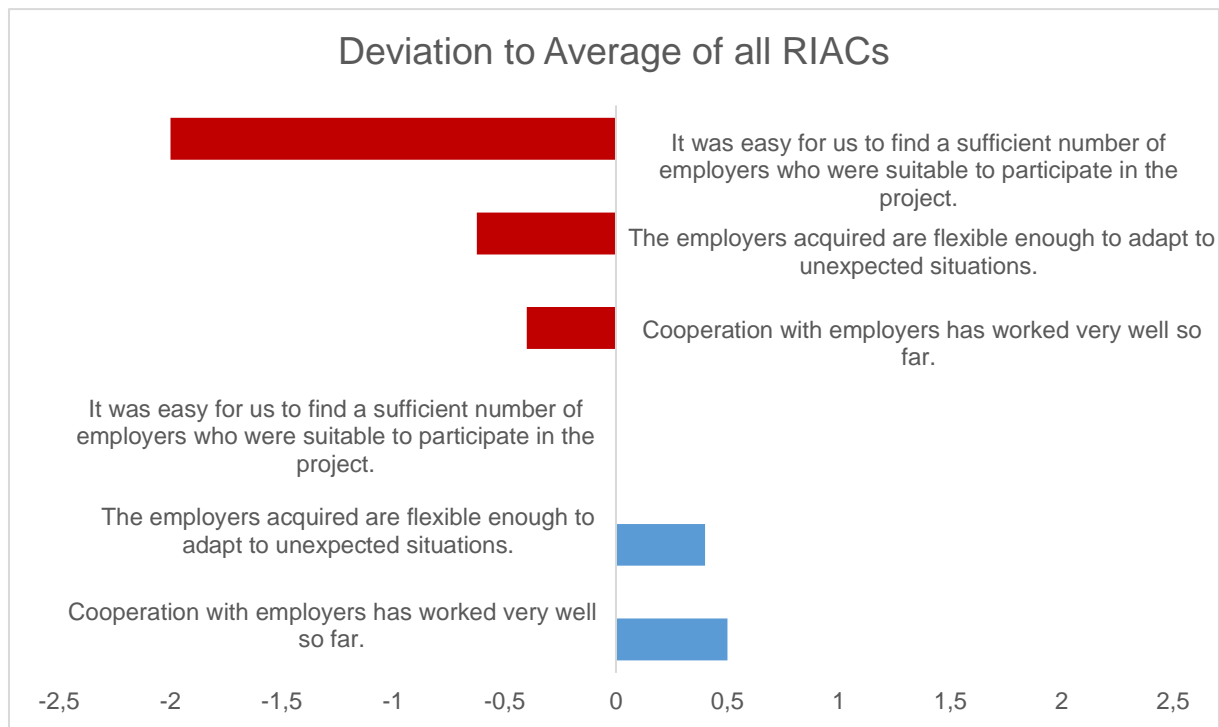
Average: 5.63

RIAC 1: Women

Recruiting of suitable project staff: No problems.

Selection of participating refugees: No problems. The situation for young mothers is difficult due to gender issues and missing help of relatives and friends.

Cooperation with employers: The cooperation with employers was more difficult than in other RIACs. Especially the acquisition of a sufficient number of employers was problematic. The parallelism activity could not start in time because too few employers could be acquired.

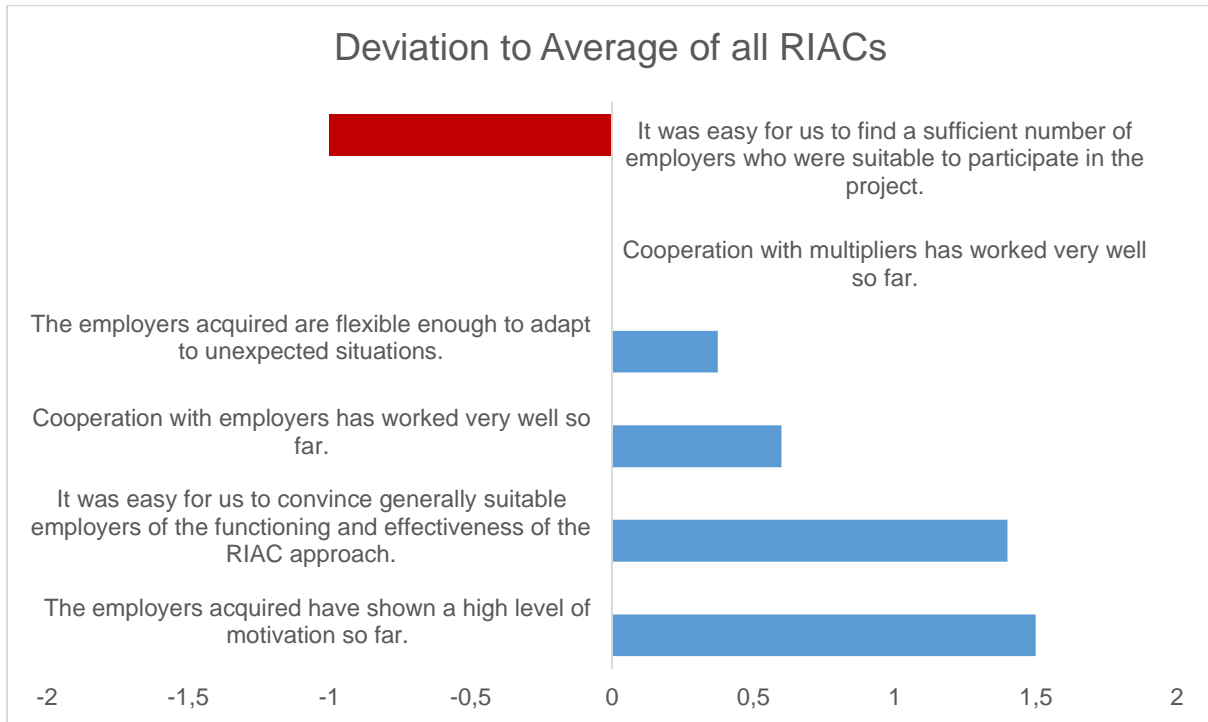


RIAC 2: Industrial sector

Recruiting of suitable project staff: No problems.

Selection of participating refugees: No problems.

Cooperation with employers: The cooperation with employers was more difficult than in other RIACS. Especially the acquisition of a sufficient number of employers was problematic.



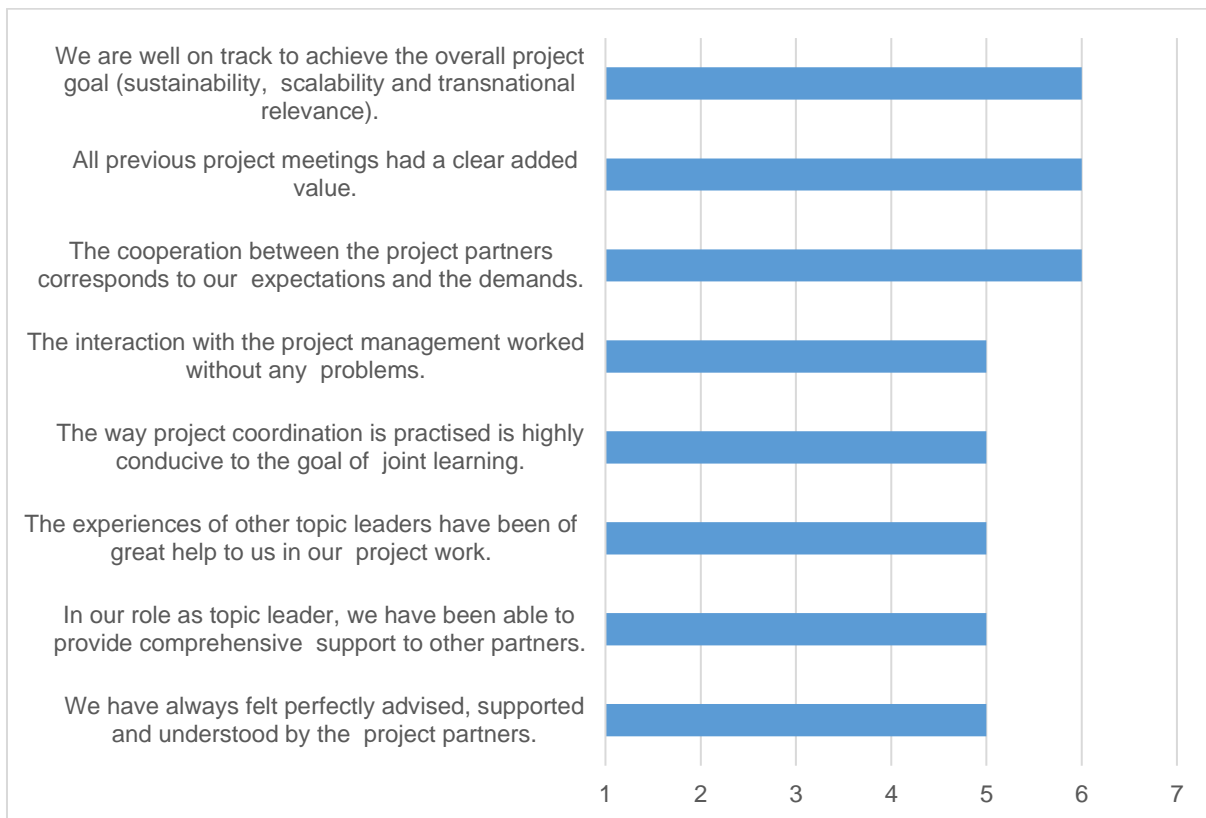
Cidis Onlus, Italy

Type of RIACs:

1. Hotel/Restaurant/Catering/Kitchen
2. Agriculture
3. Textile sector

Project Coordination:

The role of the topic leader could be clearer and the exchange of experience could be intensified.



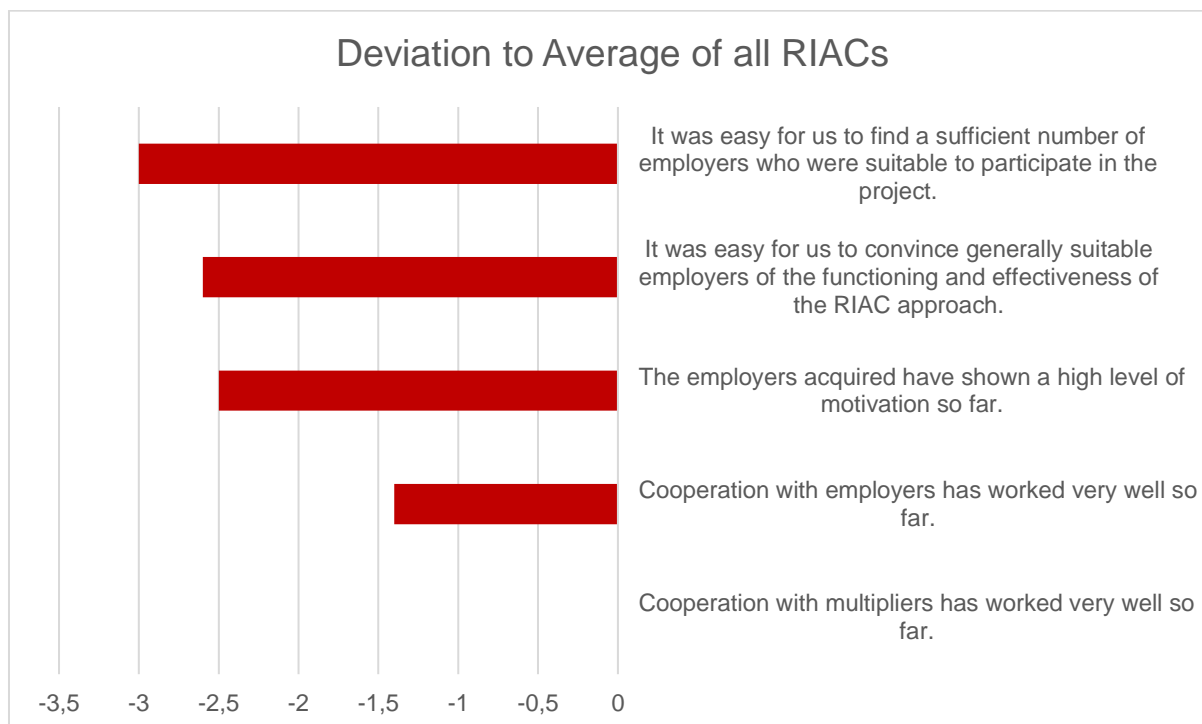
Average: 5.38

RIAC 1: Hotel/Restaurant/Catering/Kitchen

Recruiting of suitable project staff: No problems. Mentors caused, like for most RIACs, more problems.

Selection of participating refugees: No problems.

Cooperation with employers: The cooperation with employers was very difficult. Especially the acquisition of a sufficient number of employers was highly problematic.



RIAC 2: Agriculture

Recruiting of suitable project staff: No problems.

Selection of participating refugees: No problems.

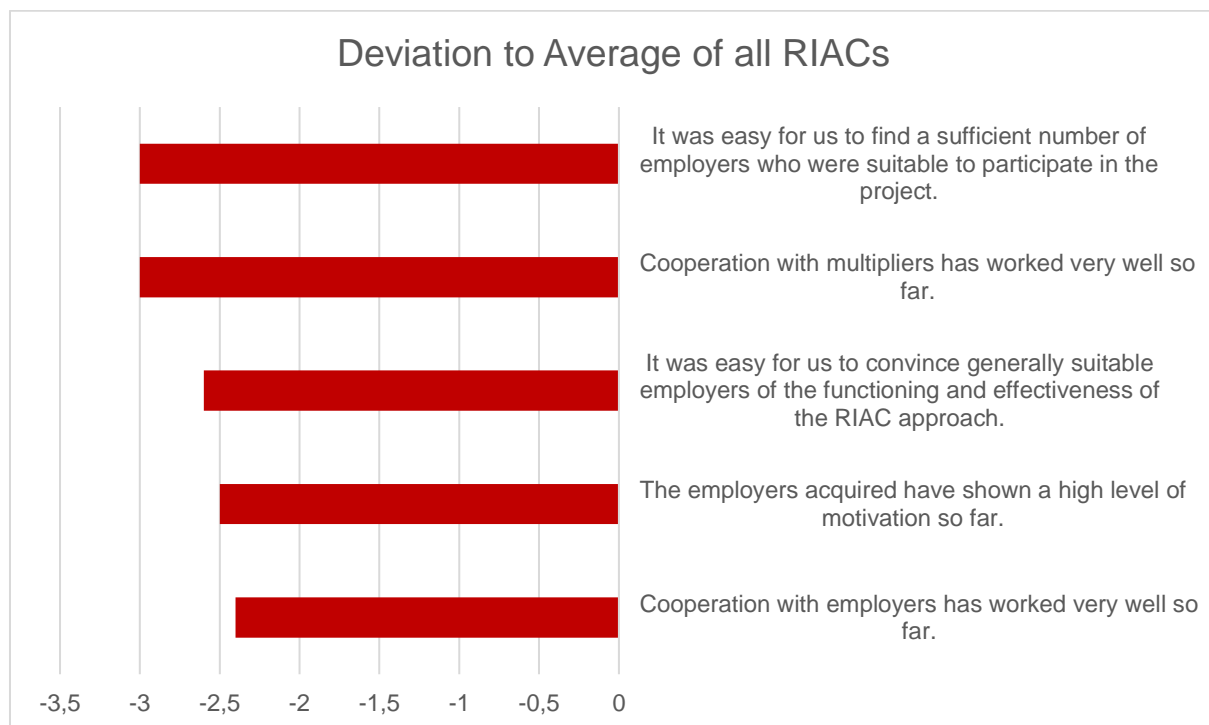
Cooperation with employers: The cooperation with employers worked very well for this RIAC.

RIAC 3: Textile sector

Recruiting of suitable project staff: No problems.

Selection of participating refugees: No problems.

Cooperation with employers: The cooperation with employers was very difficult. Especially the acquisition of a sufficient number of employers was highly problematic.



Habitat, Turkey

Type of RIACs:

1. Self-employment

RIAC 1: Self-employment

Recruiting of suitable project staff: No problems for project coordinators and speed manager. Other positions “do not apply at all”, which may indicate that these positions are not needed in this RIAC (see note on page five).

Selection of participating refugees: No problems. Notably, 15 of 47 participants exited the “Special training to support self-employment”-activity.

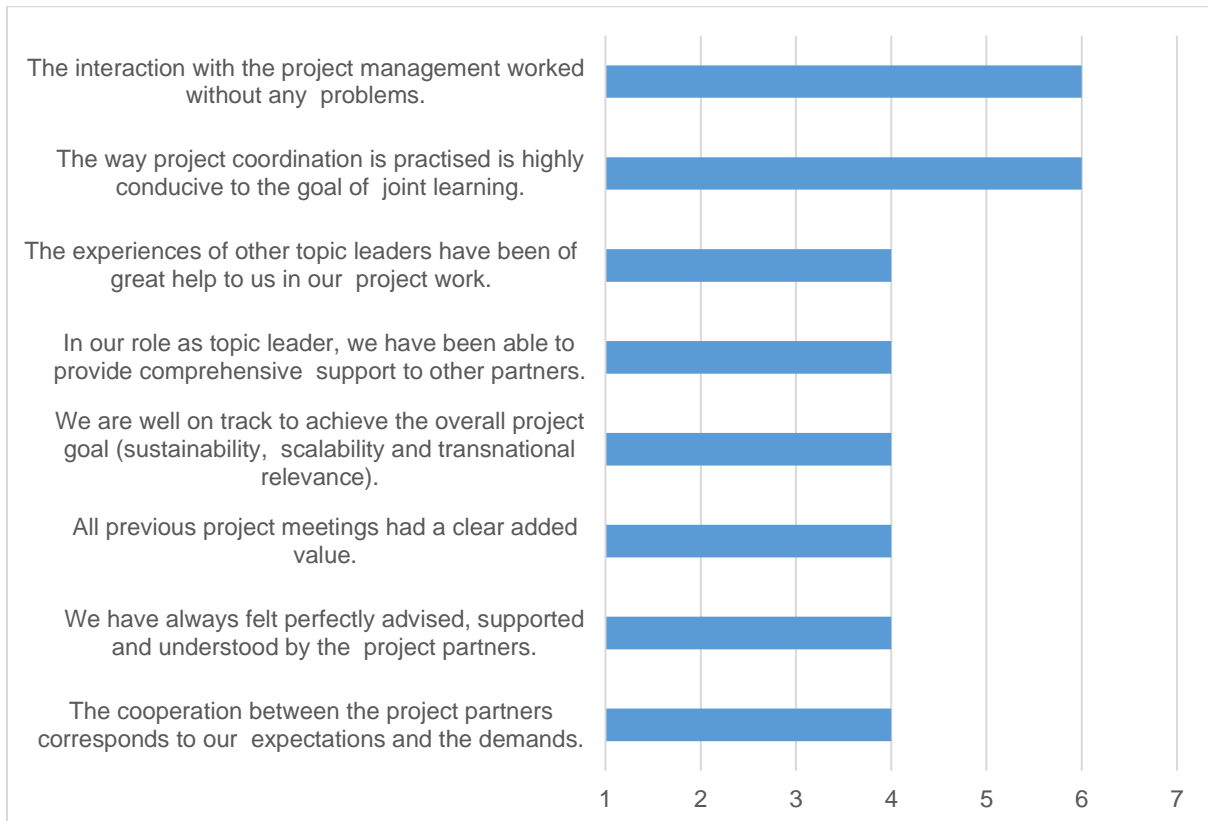
IGAM, Turkey

Type of RIACs:

1. Services (2)

Project Coordination:

Context factors are very different to those in other countries which complicates mutual learning. The missing legal framework for the integration of refugees in Turkey makes the implementation very difficult.



Average: 4.5

RIAC 1: Services (1)

Recruiting of suitable project staff: No problems.

Selection of participating refugees: No problems.

Cooperation with employers: The cooperation with employers worked very well for this RIAC.

RIAC 2: Services (2)

Recruiting of suitable project staff: No problems.

Selection of participating refugees: No problems.

Cooperation with employers: The cooperation with employers worked very well for this RIAC.

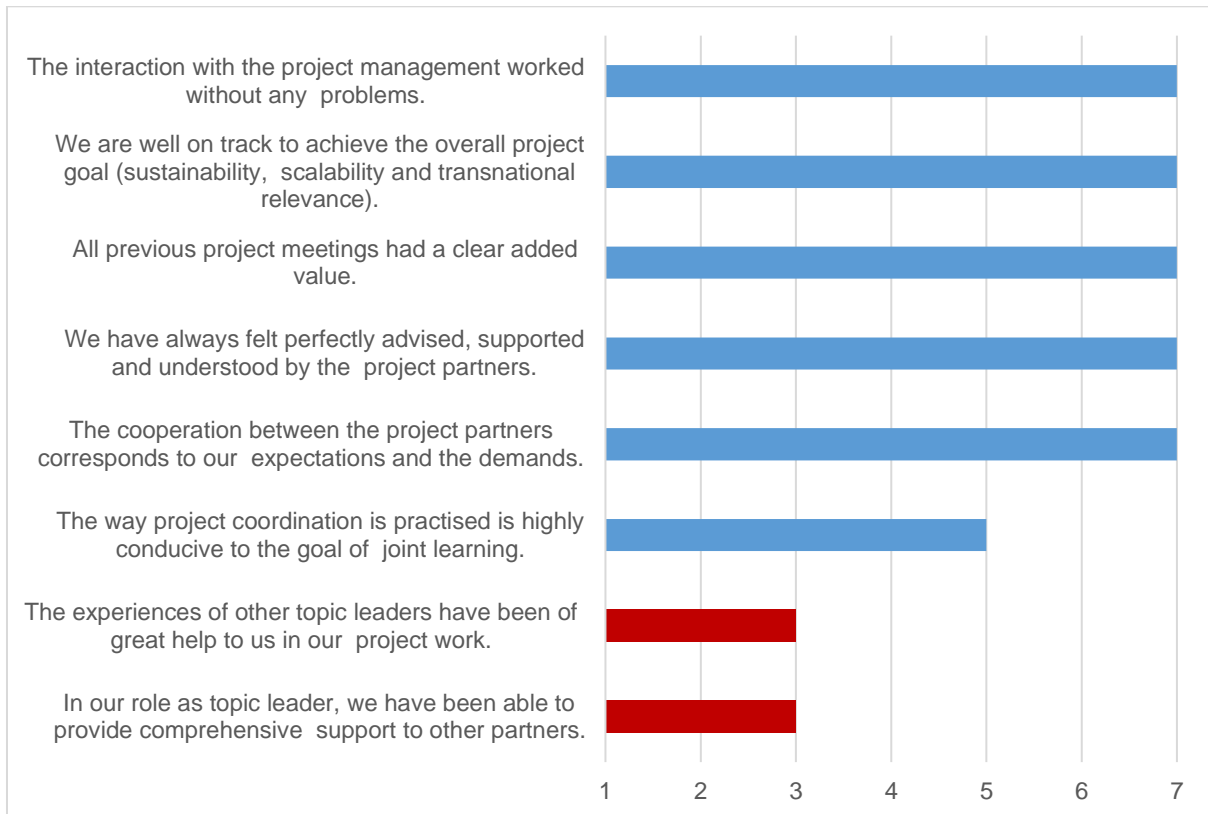
Esbjerg Kommune, Denmark

Type of RIACs:

1. Women
2. Construction

Project Coordination:

The issue with the unclear role of topic leaders that is reported on page three is especially prominent here.



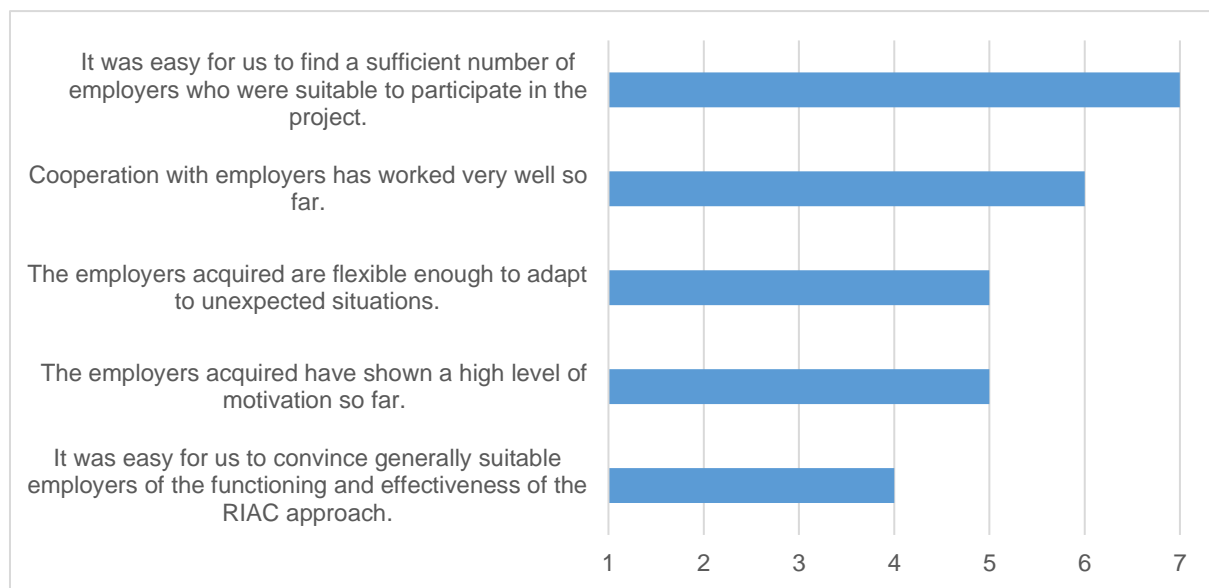
Average: 5.75

RIAC 1: Woman

Recruiting of suitable project staff: No problems.

Selection of participating refugees: No problems, finding interested participants was slightly more difficult than in other RIACs.

Cooperation with employers: The acquisition of a sufficient number of employees has been unproblematic. Convincing employers of the advantages of the RIAC approach was more challenging.



Average: 5.4

RIAC 2: Construction

Recruiting of suitable project staff: Finding a language trainer was difficult. Mentors and on-the-job trainer either were not needed in this RIAC or caused serious problems (see note on page five)

Selection of participating refugees: Finding interested participants was slightly more difficult compared to other RIACs.

Cooperation with employers: The cooperation with employers was very similar to the overall results (see page seven)

KIZ, Germany

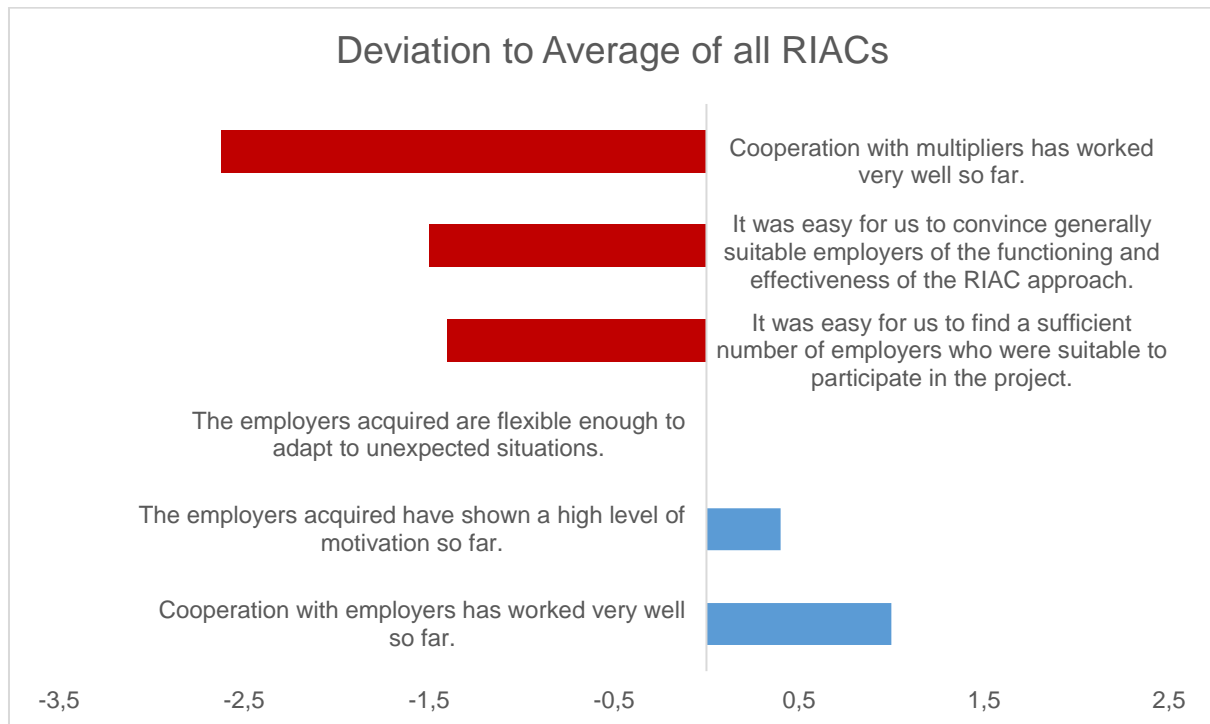
Type of RIACs:

1. Self-employment
2. Logistics

Information about the self-employment RIAC has not been delivered so far.

RIAC 2: Logistics

Cooperation with employers: Experiences with employers were more difficult compared to other RIACs.



Outlook

The project team from Ruhr-Universität Bochum thanks all partners for delivering the necessary information and supporting the evaluation process. For the further progression and with respect to the final report it would be very valuable if there could be a higher return rate, especially in the employer survey. Moreover, so far missing data for self-employment needs to be integrated. The interim report is now the basis for further overall and peer-based feedback with our project partners.

Note: In this report, quantitative data of only one informant for each partner is reported to allow meaningful comparisons between different RIACs. This does not mean that data of the other participants in the interim report is being disregarded. It is used for validation purposes and to identify crucial complementary information and is therefore of great use for the evaluation process. Open statements of all respondents are used for analysis.