



Dear {{ contact.FIRSTNAME }}

December has come around again, doesn't time fly! We can't help but reflect on the incredible journey we've had this past year. It has been a time filled with inspiring moments, significant milestones, and the unwavering support of our incredible community.

There are many highlights from 2023, one being the launch of **the Emerging Leaders Activism Alliance** program, which is **boosting leaders across Europe and Africa** in the realm of art and activism, creating spaces for meaningful expression and change. Additionally, the merging of **Fast Forward & Up Collective** shows our commitment to innovation and progress in the future world of work. Finally, the successful conclusion of our EU-funded **EMBRACE Project** after two years marks a great achievement in our continuous dedication to **connecting newcomers with decision-makers through public leadership**.

On a community level, we've seen the exciting growth of the **PLACE Team**, now with **11 team members!** We've rekindled old friendships, forging stronger connections, and extended a warm welcome to numerous new friendly faces. As we say goodbye to 2023, **we want to express our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been riding along with us this year**. Your unwavering enthusiasm has been a key motivation, and we couldn't have done it without you. **Read for more info on what happened this month with PLACE Network...**

## Activism Alliance Catalysts are shining bright through our partners

Our **Emerging Leaders Activism Alliance partner**, CAN (**Community Arts Network**), have featured **two PLACE Catalysts** in their latest Newsletter.

The article focuses on **how the arts can empower refugees and migrants across the world**. For **Uzoamaka Asiegbu**, migrant, gender, and disability inclusion specialist, the act of **storytelling** from people with **lived experiences** is key to shifting harmful narratives. And filmmaker **Cedric Bichano** is cited in his work of **boosting refugee voices through telling 'untold stories'**.

Read more about Uzoamaka and Cedric, alongside other inspiring stories such as the Tumaini Festival in Malawi's refugee camp, in the article [here](#)

[Read the article here](#)



**Uzoamaka Asiegbu**  
#InclusionWomenDisabilities  
#CreativeWriting



**Cedric Bichano**  
#NarrativeOwnership  
#RefugeeEmpowerment  
#Self-ExpressionPlatform

## Closing the EMBRACE program with a bang

This December, our Director **Shawgi Ahmed** and Public Leadership program manager **Selma Rassoul** gathered for one last time with the partners of the **EMBRACE program** in Prato, Italy! After two years, this key pilot in creating a two pronged approach toward **more democratic participation** aimed at **newcomers** as well as **host cities** has come to an end.

As a group, partners and participants from all over Europe took stock of the work accomplished and reflected on **the impact the project has already had**.

To give you a sense of the bubbling energy of the gathering, who better to hear from than a Catalyst who shared what she felt during this program?

**Nassira**, who joined the program from Prato and ended up joining both the **Emerging Leaders fellowship** and **accelerator** says **PLACE** gave her **the confidence to be the best leader she can be**. She highlighted some specific events that the program matched her with: **two trainings in Slovenia on mentorship** and her enrollment as a **BMW Responsible Leader**, all thanks to the recommendation of PLACE.

This closing event was also the opportunity to release **the final EMBRACE Booklet: Guideline on promoting Migrant Leadership: From Capacity-Building to Practical Experiences**.

Through EMBRACE, a two-pronged training path has been developed, aimed at **building the capacity of newcomers to engage socially and politically**, and at developing in local governments the **competencies needed** to include them in **policy development**.

After two years, EMBRACE is proud to present this final booklet, reflecting the activities, learnings, and guidelines learnt from the project.

In 2024, **the Resilient Cities project** will pick up on this foundational work to extend these methods across Europe; stay tuned !



Guideline on promoting Migrant Leadership:  
From Capacity-Building to Practical Experiences



[Read the booklet here](#)

## Thanks for joining us at Entrepreneurship Fest 2023!



A resounding **THANK YOU** to everyone who made **Entrepreneurship Fest 2023 on December 6th** an unforgettable success!

We were honoured to welcome both [Paola Salazar](#) to talk about the incredible work [Unir](#) does in **facilitating the academic integration of newcomers**, and [Marie Cohuet](#) from [Ben&Jerry's](#) France to discuss their current activism campaigns, such as '**Enfant Avant Migrant**' with [Utopia56](#).

This year's fest showcased the remarkable achievements of our [Fast Forward](#) cohort (so far), a group of **ambitious newcomer women in Paris** who have been diligently crafting their projects through our **Innovation Labs since September**. This event marked a pivotal moment in their **career-accelerating journey**, and we couldn't be prouder of their accomplishments in ideating, prototyping, and pitching their entrepreneurial projects!

**Click the button below to find out more information** on the individual projects. You'll find support services for new working moms, an app to ease the understanding of skincare, and much more!

[See the project booklet](#)

Their journey is not over yet, and until **their Graduation in March** we will be continuing to develop their transversal innovation skills through **online workshops** that ensure they are '**future-proofed**' in the world of work. There is much more in store for them alongside their **coaching sessions and partner networking events**, so keep an eye out!

## Food for Thought: Creating spaces for belonging

**What does it take to make you feel like you belong somewhere?**

This was the question we asked the **PLACE Team during our Winter Retreat**, and their responses were nothing short of inspiring. Through the lens of **creative expression**, our



team shared their thoughts and feelings, offering a glimpse into the essence of belonging. Curious to see what they said? Take a moment to **watch this video** that captures the unique perspectives of the **PLACE Team**.

**What gives you a sense of belonging?**



This question not only provided a **platform for self-expression** but also allowed us to **think deeper** about **the importance of creating spaces for belonging**, especially for newcomers. Addressing **social, emotional, and practical needs** is at the core of our mission and by **fostering inclusive, supportive, and thriving environments**, we empower everyone to feel **welcomed and valued in our community**.

As we reflect on these insights, we invite you to share your thoughts. **What helps YOU feel a sense of belonging?** Connect with us on social media and let us know!



### Place Network

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