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## “Theory of Change for the Inclusion of Women Migrants in VET”

no. 2021-2-PL01-KA220-VET-000048764

# SYNTHESIS REPORT

FROM RESEARCH PHASE



## 2022

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Training course – Theory of Change  
for the Inclusion of Women Migrants  
in Vocational Education and Training**

# Synthesis Report

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no. 2021-2-PL01-KA220-VET-000048764

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## Synthesis report introduction

The Synthesis Report was prepared by consortium within the project “Theory of Change for the Inclusion of Migrant Women in VET” as a part of project result no. 1.

The project’s consortium consists of six partner institutions:

- Deinde sp. z o. o. (Poland),
- CESIE (Italy),
- Hip - Hub for Innovation Policy S.R.L (Romania),
- IDEC (Greece),
- Reset Ltd (Cyprus),
- Stichting Learning Hub Friesland (Netherlands).

The Synthesis Report includes three types of research conducted in six Partners’ countries:

- desk research,
- focus group,
- online survey.

Each partner institution within research phase performed a desk research, organised a focus group and interviews with at least 5 people, involving both representatives of VET organisations, as well as migrant women enrolled in VET, and collected at least 20 online questionnaires responses from VET staff and migrant women enrolled in VET.

The objectives of the research phase was:

- to map practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women and
- identification of actual needs of the target groups (migrant women and VET staff).

Each institution prepared two “national reports” from desk research and from focus group. Survey analyses were prepared by Deinde sp. z o. o. as online survey administrator and task coordinator.

Synthesis Report consists of 3 chapters and 13 parts:

1. Chapter 1 – Desk research, which includes:

- desk research in Poland
- desk research in Cyprus
- desk research in Greece
- desk research in Netherlands
- desk research in Italy
- desk research in Romania

2. Chapter 2 – Focus groups, which includes:

- focus group in Poland
- focus group in Cyprus
- focus group in Greece
- focus group in Netherlands
- focus group in Italy
- focus group in Romania



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3. Chapter 3 – Online survey, which includes:
  - online survey research in six Partners' countries.



# CHAPTER 1 – DESK RESEARCH



# Part One – Desk research in Poland

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## Introduction

Desk research is carried out under the project “Theory of Change for the Inclusion of Migrant Women in VET”. The research has three main goals. Firstly, to provide knowledge on the practices / tools / methods for inclusion of migrants, currently used by Polish VET institutions, with particular emphasis on migrant women. Secondly, to provide knowledge about the current needs of the project's target groups, i.e. migrant women in Poland and staff working with migrants in the process of their social and professional inclusion in Poland. The study will analyse selected publications (academic publications, research reports) and statistical data on the inclusion of migrants (including migrant women) in Poland.

Inclusion (integration) of migrants is one of the key policies of the European Union. According to Eurostat data for 2016 and 2017, in the field of social policy and the labour market, almost 4 in 10 foreigners in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The unemployment rate for migrants born outside the EU was 6.4 percentage points higher than for the native population. The median equivalent income of EU citizens residing in another EU Member State was 9.6% higher than that of nationals of that country, while the median income of non-EU nationals was 24.2% lower than that of nationals of that country. As many as every fifth migrant born outside the EU was a temporary worker, compared with one in eight native workers. In terms of education, young people born outside the EU were twice as likely to experience early leaving from education and training compared to nationals. At the same time, the risk of poverty for children in the EU who had at least one parent with foreign nationality was 35.8%, which is almost twice as high as for children whose both parents were nationals (18.8%). In terms of housing conditions, only 3 out of 10 foreigners owned a house, compared to 7 out of 10 EU citizens. At the same time, 1 in 4 foreigners living in the EU is overburdened with housing costs, compared to 1 in 10 EU citizens. Moreover, across the EU, foreigners more often lived in an overcrowded household compared to EU nationals.<sup>1</sup> That is why actions (including training and vocational education institutions) for the full inclusion of migrants in each EU Member State, including Poland, are so important.

In 2020, Poland numbered 38 million 265 thousand inhabitants, including 19 million 763 thousand women. The median age was 41.7 years. 59.5% of the population was in the working-age group (18 - 60/65). And in the post-productive age (60/65 years and more) – 22.3% of the population. The fertility rate was 1.378. In 2020, 16 million 979 thousand Poles were economically active, including 7,579,000 women. The number of unemployed was 537,000 people, and the number of economically inactive 13,292 thousand people, including 8,244 thousand women.<sup>2</sup>

In 2020, the birth rate in Poland amounted to -0.9, i.e. comparable to the EU average (-1.1). The demographic dependency ratio in Poland was 50.8% (in the EU it was 55.5%).

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<sup>1</sup> *Migrant integration statistics. 2018 edition*, Eurostat, pp. 4 - 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Poland in numbers 2021*, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2021, pp. 2-3, 6.



The economic activity rate (75.9%) was slightly lower than the EU average (77.7%). The employment rate (73.6%) was slightly higher than the EU average (72.4%). The unemployment rate in Poland (3.2%) was significantly lower than the EU average (7.1%). The at-risk-of-poverty rate (15.4%) was close to the EU average (16.5%).<sup>3</sup>

Poland after 1989 was not a country experiencing the visible phenomenon of migration (be it immigration to Poland or emigration from the country), therefore our country institutionally did not pay much attention to the phenomenon of migrant integration. At the national level, there were no specific strategies / policies in the area of migrant inclusion, as there was no such need. A breakthrough in the migration process for Poland was 2004, i.e. the moment of our country's accession to the European Union and the opening of the EU labour market to Poles (with the exception of a few countries, such as Germany). After 2004, several million people left Poland to work in other EU countries (periodically or permanently). Economic migration after 2004 led to the formulation of labour market strategies by Polish governments aimed at encouraging Poles to return from abroad and taking up employment in the country. It is difficult to unequivocally assess the effectiveness of these policies, as according to the estimates of the Ministry of Development, 2.6 million Poles still worked in the European Union countries in 2019.<sup>4</sup>

The Polish State also had to react to the phenomenon of immigration to our country. In the years 2008-2015, new or amended government documents were adopted, setting the administrative procedure for the migration phenomenon, establishing procedures and standards for the return of foreigners illegally staying in Poland, specifying the conditions of entry and stay of immigrants for the purpose of employment, simplifying the procedures for obtaining a residence, work and education permit, as well as simplifying the rules of legalising stay in Poland and obtaining Polish citizenship.<sup>5</sup>

In 2013, the Polish government adopted the "Long-term National Development Strategy. Poland 2030," in which, in response to unfavourable demographic trends (aging of the Polish society, falling number of births, decreasing labour force), the phenomenon of immigration to Poland was considered an opportunity for the development of the Polish economy and improvement of the situation on the labour market. The Strategy assumes an active immigration policy aimed at supplementing labour shortages on the Polish labour market in the next twenty years.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Poland in the European Union*, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2021, pp. 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> D. Kubas, *Theoretical foundations and strategies for implementing flexicurity as a model for solving labor market problems*, Lublin 2021, p. 275; see M. Górczyńska, *Poland as a country of immigration - who is coming to Poland and for what purpose? Facts about migrations to the 21st century*, Ed. Foundation Center for Civic Education, Warsaw 2020, pp. 3-5.

<sup>5</sup> S. Łodziński, M. Szonert, "Non-Political Politics"? *The shaping of the migration policy in Poland in 1989–2016*, CMR Working Paper, no. 90 (148), pp. 41, 57-58.

<sup>6</sup> *Long-term National Development Strategy. Poland 2030. The third wave of modernity*. Adopted by the Resolution No. 16 of the Council of Ministers of February 5, 2013 (MP of 2013, item 121) for the Supreme Audit Office, *Audit Report on Social Assistance for Refugees*, Warsaw 2015, p. 6.



Due to the intensive development of the Polish economy, relatively low unemployment rate compared to the EU, over the last few years, Poland has changed its image from the country of emigrants to the country receiving migrants, including those for work purposes. Research conducted over the last decade shows us that since 2014, the structure of immigrants arriving in Poland is dominated by citizens of Ukraine, most often young, relatively well-educated people, looking for a fixed-term or seasonal job, often working in positions that do not require high qualifications.<sup>7</sup>

According to the study “Immigrants in Poland in the context of a simplified procedure for employing foreigners,” the employment rate of immigrants in Poland increased systematically over the years 2015-2018. According to the registry data, in 2015, on average, about 133 thousand migrants worked in Poland each month under the simplified procedure. In 2017, the average monthly value was already around 415 thousand, to reach over 423 thousand people in the first half of 2018. Thus, the average number of migrants working in Poland has more than tripled over the three-year period. Among the immigrants employed in Poland, who in the first half of 2018 accounted for over 91% of the total number of working migrants, the citizens of Ukraine clearly dominated. The second most important migrant population were Belarusians (4.2%), and the third were Moldovans (2.4%).<sup>8</sup>

According to the estimates of the National Bank of Poland, in the years 2014-2018, immigrants were a more and more important factor increasing the production potential of the Polish economy. The percentage of working migrants accounted between 4 to 5.5% of the labour force. At the same time, migrants contributed to the growth of Polish GDP by approx. 0.5 pp. annually. The number of migrants legally employed in Poland and paying social security contributions has increased over the years from approx. 30,000 in 2014 to 500,000 in 2019. The growing trend in 2020 was stopped by the Covid-19 pandemic and the introduced lockdowns (both restrictions on crossing state borders and closing various industries and sectors of the economy). The vast majority of immigrants worked in Polish enterprises as unskilled blue-collar workers (70%). Qualified blue-collar workers accounted for 16% of the employed immigrants, lower office staff – approx. 2%, and specialists with higher education – approx. 12% of the employed immigrants.<sup>9</sup>

In 2019, foreigners submitted 207,343 applications for residence or protection permits in Poland. Most applications concerned temporary residence permits (181,788 persons, i.e. 87% of applications), approximately 8.7% for permanent residence (18,211 persons), 2.8% applications in the field of international protection (4,171 persons), and 1.5% of applications concerned long-term resident's EU residence permit (3,173 people). Apart from economic ones, migrants seeking political protection and applying for refugee status come to Poland. In

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<sup>7</sup> R. Bartłomiejski, D. Kowalewska, *Economic immigration to Poland - conclusions for the strategy of migrant integration*, Atheneum, vol. 70 (2) / 2021, p. 111.

<sup>8</sup> A. Górny, P. Kaczmarczyk, M. Szulecka, and others, *Immigrants in Poland in the context of a simplified procedure for employing foreigners*, Warsaw 2018, pp. 46, 48.

<sup>9</sup> *Immigrants in the Polish economy - a survey report*, Narodowy Bank Polski, Warsaw 2020, pp. 5-6, 11.

2009-2019, their number ranged from 800 to 1,281 people per year. The citizens of Russia, Syria, Ukraine, Belarus and Iraq dominated.<sup>10</sup>

An important moment in the process of immigration to our country was February 2022 and the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Since then, over 6 million Ukrainians have entered our country. Currently, it is estimated (the data is fluid as the migration of Ukrainians continues in both directions) that there are over a 1,5 million Ukrainians in Poland, which thus constitute the largest nationality group of immigrants. Women and children dominate among the migrants from Ukraine residing in Poland. The influx of such a large number of immigrants in a short time, as for Polish conditions, poses many challenges to our country in the field of immigrant integration. The main problems include the following aspects: knowledge of the Polish language, housing, education and childcare, employment, health care or broadly understood access to public services.<sup>11</sup>

## Examples of good practices

This part of the report will present good practices applied in Poland in the process of inclusion of immigrants. We will start with the example of the activities of a public institution – the City of Gdańsk.

In 2015, the City of Gdańsk established Poland's first intersectoral and interdisciplinary team for the model of integration of immigrants. The task set for the team was to make an inventory of the resources and possibilities to support immigrants in the city and to identify the most important needs and problems of the migrants who stayed in Gdańsk. Almost 80 people, coming from 40 different institutions and organisations, declared their work in the team for comprehensive solutions for immigrants. During the activities, the team was expanded and finally over 150 people from 70 public institutions and non-governmental organisations were involved in the work on the model. A group of over 20 immigrants, new residents of Gdańsk from different countries, also participated in the work of the team. The team worked from May 2015 to March 2016. Every month meetings were held in the space of the European Solidarity Centre, both in a large team of 150 people and in eight thematic groups covering the areas of: (1) education, (2) culture, (3) housing, (4) social assistance, (5) work, (6) violence, (7) local communities, and (8) health. Work on the Gdańsk model was based on the resources and capabilities of all organisations and institutions involved in the team. As a result, the effect of interdisciplinary and intersectoral synergy was obtained – a diagnosis was made and solutions were found for the integration of immigrants using all potential resources.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> E. Kacperska, M. Kacprzak, D. Kmiec, and others, *International migrations in Europe. Trends. The problems. Challenges*, Ed. SGGW, Warsaw 2019, pp. 146-147.

<sup>11</sup> See: M. Pawlak, *Public policies towards migration*, in: J. Kwaśniewski (ed.), *Sciences about public policy: Monography of the discipline*, Warsaw 2018, pp. 305-306.

<sup>12</sup> *Model of Immigrant Integration*, Gdańsk City Hall, Gdańsk 2016, pp. 10-12.



Thanks to the team's work, a model of immigrant integration (IIM) was developed, presenting the main areas and directions of activities aimed at conducting an effective and efficient integration policy in the local government of the city of Gdańsk, in the long term, which allowed the development of the migration management system in public and social institutions in Gdańsk and strengthening the inclusion of immigrants in eight thematic areas: education, culture, social welfare, housing, combating violence and discrimination, local communities, employment and health.<sup>13</sup>

Moving on to good practices in working with immigrants in Poland in the training and vocational education sector, let's first take a look at the activities of "Migrant Info Point" in Poznań, run by the Migrant Research Center Foundation. Migrant Info Point has been operating since 2013 and carries out the following activities for the inclusion of immigrants: providing legal advice, supporting professional development by conducting consultations and workshops, providing information on legalisation of stay and legal forms of employment, assistance in filling in official forms, language support during visits to offices, partially paid Polish language courses, organisation of initiatives, e.g. trips, picnics or support groups. Thus, this entity offers immigrants (mainly from the Greater Poland Voivodeship [Wielkopolska] and the city of Poznań) comprehensive services and support, going beyond learning the native language and vocational training. This institution supports immigrants in administrative matters (legalisation of stay, legal work) as well as cultural integration in the local community.<sup>14</sup>

As another example of good practice in inclusion of immigrants in Poland, we can mention the project entitled "We support foreigners in Mazovia," implemented by the Foreign Language Teaching Foundation Linguae Mundi. The project is aimed at third-country nationals who have a document permitting them to stay on the territory of the Republic of Poland. The aim of the project is to raise the competence of immigrants in the field of the knowledge of the Polish language as well as Polish culture, history and Polish realities. As part of the project, immigrants can take advantage of a varied offer:

- general Polish language course for adults combined with elements of knowledge about Poland and professional orientation in order to improve the language skills of foreigners, familiarise them with Polish culture, history and Polish realities, enabling students and introducing them to self-education;
- a course in specialised varieties of the Polish language aimed at linguistic preparation of immigrants to perform, find and take up the right job;
- a preparation course for the Polish language certificate examination.

In addition, for staff working with immigrants, the following are offered:

- specialised training in multicultural customer service,

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<sup>13</sup> *Model of Immigrant Integration*, Gdańsk City Hall, Gdańsk 2016, pp. 17, 45-46.

<sup>14</sup> J. Frelak, W. Klaus, *Integration of Refugees in Poland. Recommendations and good practices*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2007, p. 124.



- training and methodological workshops for preschool and school teachers in the field of intercultural competences and their use in the methodology of teaching Polish as a foreign language.<sup>15</sup>

## Current needs of target groups (VET staff and immigrants, especially women)

Analyses concerning the needs of migrant women will be largely made on the basis of collective data, including all immigrants in Poland, and not only women – due to the limited availability of existing data relating only to migrant women.

In the literature on the subject, in terms of the inclusion (integration) of migrants, various typologies and categories classifying their needs in a new country are distinguished. One of the typologies distinguishes the following areas necessary to meet the needs of migrants in Poland<sup>16</sup>:

- a. education (from childcare to tertiary education, including non-formal and vocational education),
- b. ensuring access to public health care,
- c. access to employment,
- d. social assistance,
- e. access to the apartment,
- f. protection against violence, especially against women, and against discrimination,
- g. belonging to the local community,
- h. accessibility to the culture of the country of residence.

Based on the research of the Batory Foundation, we can indicate that the main factors which caused the increase in migration, especially of the Ukrainian population, to Poland in the last few years were the liberalisation of migration regulations, including the employment of foreigners, and the geographical and cultural-linguistic proximity of both countries, which translates into low travel costs or the lack of major language barriers. Migration is also supported by well-developed Ukrainian migration networks in Poland. Polish migration policy could be called pragmatic because it is directed mainly at the short-term needs of the Polish labour market. A mechanism attracting Ukrainian citizens to the Polish labour market is the declaration system, under which a foreigner can be employed without the need to obtain a work permit (with a minimum of formalities and financial outlays) for a period not exceeding six months within the next twelve months.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> <http://linguaemundi.pl/pl/projekty-europejskie/projekty-aktualnie-realizacji/> (accessed on 08/09/2022).

<sup>16</sup> *Model of Immigrant Integration*, Gdańsk City Hall, Gdańsk 2016, pp. 24-34.

<sup>17</sup> M. Jaroszewicz, O. Małynowska, *The latest migration from Ukraine to Poland: an (un)permanent phenomenon?*, Ed. Foundation S. Batorego, Warsaw 2018, pp. 2-3.



Liberalisation of Polish migration law and facilitation in the employment of immigrants, especially from Central and Eastern European countries, was to a large extent a consequence of the situation on the Polish labour market, and specifically the difficulties of employers in finding the necessary workforce. Particularly high demand for immigrant workers, as well as an increase in their employment, was recorded in such sectors of the Polish economy as: construction, transport, industrial processing, and agriculture.<sup>18</sup>

The same research shows that despite the cultural and linguistic closeness, Ukrainian citizens need help in terms of inclusion in our country. First of all, they need legal assistance, language support, transparent rules of residence and employment, and the possibility of family reunification. Without this kind of help, immigrants are exposed to dishonest intermediaries (e.g. in terms of looking for a flat, work, obtaining permits), and their human capital remains unused. The research also shows that Ukrainian migration to Poland is of an eminently temporary nature. Therefore, for the benefit of both Poland and the migrants themselves, practices and solutions promoting long-term migration should be developed as an option for that part of migrants who would like to settle in Poland. In short-term migration, labour migrants cannot fully benefit from migration. They are doomed to play a supporting role both in Poland as a destination country and in their current place of stay (in the local community).<sup>19</sup>

There are many difficulties and challenges faced by immigrants after coming to Poland. A significant group of foreigners (especially those from geographically distant countries) do not have even basic knowledge about Poland, which would make it easier for them to start living in a new country. Migrants often do not even know where and how to look for a job or a flat. Immigrants do not know what Polish offices, e.g. employment office, are and how they function. Foreigners also do not have too much general knowledge about the basic realities of life in Poland. Immigrants (especially refugees) often have no family or friends in Poland to whom they could refer for help upon arrival. Some immigrants also indicate insufficient tolerance of a part of Polish society, which manifests itself in reluctance to rent or hire flats to immigrants.<sup>20</sup>

The Rating Group survey shows that immigrants from Ukraine complain primarily about the feeling of "secondary" status in Poland, which manifests itself in such negative practices as: employers' violation of their employment rights, discrimination, and lack of access to public services. Migrants from Ukraine staying in Poland most often need legal support in undergoing the procedure of legalising their stay, concluding a legal employment contract, obtaining social insurance, which is a condition for access to public health care. Immigrants also need linguistic help to find their place in Polish public offices and at the

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<sup>18</sup> M. Jaroszewicz, O. Małynowska, *The latest migration from Ukraine to Poland: an (un)permanent phenomenon?*, Ed. Foundation S. Batorego, Warsaw 2018, pp. 2-3.

<sup>19</sup> M. Jaroszewicz, O. Małynowska, *The latest migration from Ukraine to Poland: an (un)permanent phenomenon?*, Ed. Foundation S. Batory, Warsaw 2018, pp. 1-3.

<sup>20</sup> A. Gutkowska (ed.), *Refugees in Poland. Cultural and legal barriers in the adaptation process*, Warsaw 2007, p. 168.



workplace. Currently, most of these tasks in Poland are undertaken by migration networks and employment agencies, which are often vocational education and training institutions at the same time.<sup>21</sup> In order to efficiently implement these tasks, VET sector institutions need systemic support from the state, as they are not able to provide migrants with "multidimensional" support in the field of social and professional integration, dealing with official matters, housing, education or health care.

The difficulties of immigrants, especially refugees after arriving in Poland, are confirmed by the analyses of the Supreme Audit Office [pol. "NIK" – Najwyższa Izba Kontroli]. In the opinion of the Supreme Audit Office, the existing system of social assistance for refugees in Poland neither ensures their proper integration into society, nor it creates appropriate conditions for starting an independent life. The audit of the Supreme Audit Office shows that most immigrants applying for refugee status in Poland leave our country shortly after submitting the application for granting the refugee status, and another group – during the period of participation in the individual integration programme or shortly after its completion. Among the immigrants who remain in Poland, only a few manage to get a permanent job, and a significant number of immigrants are forced to use social assistance after the end of the integration programme. According to the Supreme Audit Office, the biggest barriers to the integration of immigrants (refugees) in Poland are: the threat of homelessness, the need to rent low-standard apartments, difficult access to housing from municipal resources, an uneasy situation on the labour market and the lack of knowledge of the language. A positive phenomenon is Poland's advancement in the international ranking of integration policies for refugees. In 2014, our country saw an improvement in the integration conditions and was classified as "semi-favourable". In 2010, Poland was ranked at the level of "moderately unfavourable" to refugees. However, in the opinion of the Supreme Audit Office, the integration policies functioning in Poland are still insufficient and should be urgently reformed so that immigration to Poland could become a development opportunity for our country.<sup>22</sup>

The results of the NIK audit showed a low effectiveness of migrant pre-integration programmes implemented by public institutions in Poland.<sup>23</sup> The pre-integration programmes should, in principle, prepare immigrants / foreigners to function independently in our country, in particular through intensive learning of the Polish language and the implementation of training and vocational courses corresponding to the needs of the labour market. In practice, however, the implemented programmes for the integration of immigrants did not fulfil their role. Only a dozen or so percent of foreigners (from 14.7% to 17%) learned Polish in that period. Moreover, the hourly number of language courses was insufficient (usually from 2 to 5 hours a week). The situation of professional integration looked even worse. The refugee centres did not really identify the needs of the labour market and did not provide

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<sup>21</sup> M. Jaroszewicz, O. Małynowska, *The latest migration from Ukraine to Poland: an (un)permanent phenomenon?*, Ed. Foundation S. Batory, Warsaw 2018, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> *Audit report Social assistance for refugees*, Supreme Audit Office, Warsaw 2015, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> See: *Polish policy on the integration of foreigners - assumptions and guidelines*, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, project, Warsaw 2013, pp. 5-7.



immigrants with appropriate courses and vocational training. Thus, the processes of pre-integration of immigrants did not solve their basic problems, such as: knowledge of the Polish language, finding a flat, finding a permanent job. Thus, immigrants were forced to take up simple, occasional, poorly-paid jobs and, consequently, to use social assistance. Immigrants in Poland, having no chance for adequate housing conditions or suitable employment, often treat our country as a transit country to Western European countries, where they can also count on higher financial benefits.<sup>24</sup>

From the report “Foreigners in Poland. Handbook for people working with immigrants,” we learn that the main problems of immigrants in the process of legalising their stay in Poland and obtaining the right to work include: employers proposing employment under a civil law contract instead of employment contracts; proposing a salary lower than the rates applicable on the local labour market; complicated process of implementing procedures in Polish offices; difficulties with submitting applications; long waiting time for a decision (even several months); foreigners cannot determine the deadline for submitting an application in person at the office; the inability to contact the inspector in charge of the case and find out about the current status of the case; insufficient knowledge of Polish legislation; reliance on not always reliable sources of information; insufficient knowledge of the Polish language to settle the matter on your own; using the services of dishonest employment agencies.<sup>25</sup>

Based on the study “Refugees in Poland. Legal situation, scale of inflow and integration into Polish society and recommendations,” we can indicate that due to the language barrier, immigrants relatively rarely use public services in the field of finding employment, such as job placement, vocational training, participation in professional internships. Since public labour market services (e.g. training and vocational courses) are designed for Poles and are conducted in Polish, they do not match the needs and capabilities of foreigners. Immigrants who do not speak Polish are not interested in participating in such forms of support. Besides, their participation would not be effective anyway. They would not be able to acquire knowledge, skills, pass an exam, or improve their professional competences in order to find a job for a decent salary. The integration needs of immigrants do not end with labour market services. Many foreigners do not have relevant professional experience. Many people struggle with mental problems. Thus, it should be pointed out that actions or instruments within public policies are insufficient to realistically level the chances of immigrants on the Polish labour market and lead to their full social and professional inclusion.<sup>26</sup>

Another study shows that, according to the estimates of OTTO Work Force Polska, up to 20% of Ukrainian citizens coming to Poland work illegally. This situation generates many negative consequences for immigrants. First of all, they cannot use public health care, they

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<sup>24</sup> *Audit report Social assistance for refugees*, Supreme Audit Office, Warsaw 2015, pp. 10-12.

<sup>25</sup> M. Nowicka (ed.), *Foreigners in Poland. A handbook for people working with immigrants*, ed. Caritas Polska, Warsaw 2020, pp. 160-162.

<sup>26</sup> A. Górny (ed.), *Refugees in Poland. Legal situation, scale of inflow and integration into Polish society and recommendations*, Kraków - Warsaw 2017, p. 29.



are not entitled to benefits under the state social welfare, and they do not have accident insurance while working. Illegal immigrants also do not have the possibility to claim their rights in the event of dishonesty of the employer (e.g. failure to pay their remuneration). They are also at risk of deportation. Ukrainians who come to Poland for work are also, unfortunately, exposed to dishonest intermediaries. There are situations in which immigrants are charged fees for administrative activities (e.g. obtaining a work permit, visa, or finding a job) before their arrival in Poland, which many times exceed the official administrative fees (e.g. for a visa) or are activities exempt from fees. According to the study, it was not uncommon for an immigrant to find out that there was no job waiting for ones there.<sup>27</sup>

From the research on the situation of Ukrainian migrant women in Poland, we learn that during the Covid-19 epidemic, new problems were added to the old problems of immigrant women (such as the time-consuming and complicated process of legalising a stay in Poland and obtaining a work permit, language barrier, and housing difficulties). These can include: difficulties in travelling and crossing the border, loss of job due to lock-downs or deterioration of working and salary conditions, deterioration of the financial situation, deterioration of the housing situation, lack of support from the family who remained in Ukraine, problems in the organization of education for immigrant women's children in a remote system, information chaos and economic uncertainty.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, from the study "Entrepreneurship of immigrants in Poland," we learn about the difficulties and problems of immigrants in Poland in the field of establishing and running a business. The main difficulties identified in the research include: personal barriers (language barrier, fear of inability to attract clients), market barriers (problems with finding staff), administrative and legal barriers (differences between countries, long waiting times for decisions from public offices, excessive formalism, breakdown of competences between different offices) and social barriers (lack of tolerance and distrust towards immigrants).<sup>29</sup>

In order for better inclusion of migrants in Poland to run more efficiently with benefits for both immigrants and the Polish labour market and local communities, the whole process should start with an introductory / information training for immigrants, the aim of which should be introducing them to the integration programme. Providing a refugee with basic information, motivating them to be independent, supporting them by appropriate offices and institutions. In addition, foreigners should receive information about their integration programme (goal, activities, schedule, and procedures) in clear, simple language. The materials should contain a description of the rights and obligations of the foreigner and offices, and social and labour rights, as well as an information guide on general living

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<sup>27</sup> T. Kupczyk (ed.), *Immigrants as a support for the labor market and enterprise development*, Ed. Gazeta Wyborcza, Wrocław 2017, p. 107.

<sup>28</sup> B. Cope, M. Keryk, I. Kyliushyk, *The situation of Ukrainian migrants in Poland during COVID-19*, Ed. Our Choice Foundation, Warsaw 2021, pp. 12-22.

<sup>29</sup> S. Kubiciel-Lodzińska, J. Maj, P. Bębenek, *Entrepreneurship of immigrants in Poland. Approaches and challenges in conducting research*, Opole 2020, p. 130.



conditions in Poland. Immigrants should also have access to legal counselling and specialist consultations on various types of life matters (housing, social welfare, labour law, health protection, education).<sup>30</sup>

Migrant women should be given special support. They are often young, single mothers or mothers with many children. Migrant women need childcare facilities so that they can temporarily participate in induction programmes (language courses, vocational training, and internships) or work. Migrant women from different cultural backgrounds also find it difficult to participate in integration activities on an equal footing with men. Mechanisms should be created to counteract and eliminate such negative phenomena in the family environment of immigrant women as domestic violence, alcoholism or drug addiction.<sup>31</sup>

Turning to the needs of staff working with immigrants in the field of inclusion, it should be explained at the outset that in Poland we have both public institutions (e.g. public employment offices, social welfare centres, local family support centres) and the market of non-public institutions (e.g. training institutions, employment agencies, non-governmental organisations, temporary work agencies, employers' organisations, industry organisations). Working conditions, performed tasks, and thus the needs and challenges of the staff of these two types of institutions differ significantly from each other. The staff of public institutions carry out their own or commissioned activities in the field of migrant inclusion. It has defined top-down procedures and predictable budgets. They can count on periodic training (in accordance with the annual training plans of their employing institutions).

The staff of non-public institutions do not have such comfort in working with migrants. Activities carried out by non-public institutions of the VET sector are often project-based. Depending on the donor / programme / project, they differ in the scope of support for immigrants, the time available for the inclusion process, and indicators to be achieved by implementing integration programmes. The staff of non-public institutions operate in much more unpredictable and changing conditions of working with migrants than the staff of public institutions. The staff of non-public institutions can less often count on training to raise their qualifications / improve the quality of services provided to immigrants.

The available studies show that employees of public employment offices have the following needs / problems at work for the inclusion of immigrants: lack of sufficient knowledge of the labour code to effectively question unlawful actions of employers; no knowledge of foreign languages; lack of sufficient knowledge of legal regulations stay and employment of foreigners; lack of ability to work with a client from other cultural areas; work duties excess and overwork resulting from insufficient number of employees. There are also

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<sup>30</sup> J. Frelak, W. Klaus, *Integration of Refugees in Poland. Recommendations and good practices*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2007, pp. 253-254.

<sup>31</sup> J. Frelak, W. Klaus, *Integration of Refugees in Poland. Recommendations and good practices*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2007, p. 257.

reported needs in terms of improving working conditions, equipping workstations, higher wages, and insufficient digitalisation of processes / activities carried out by employees.<sup>32</sup>

We also learn from the available research that the staff of institutions dealing with the inclusion of migrants in Poland should be able to communicate at least in the basic languages spoken by migrants. If this condition cannot be met, translators should be provided in the offices. The staff also need training in the field of law and procedures that are in force in other institutions dealing with migrants, so that they can refer migrants to them and support them in ongoing contacts with these institutions. Before starting work with migrants, the staff should undergo training to work with foreigners, with elements of the culture and traditions of the migrants' countries of origin, social norms, the division of roles in the family, religion, different – from Polish – realities of everyday life. Staff working with migrants should also be provided with substantive and psychological support. Support for VET staff working with migrants should protect these people from burnout to which the staff are exposed due to the difficult and stressful daily work. The VET sector staff should also have methodologically appropriate materials and teaching tools that will be adapted to the student-foreigner.<sup>33</sup>

On the basis of the study "Immigrants as a support for the labour market and enterprise development," we learn that the staff of private VET sector institutions (employment agencies) in the field of recruiting employees-immigrants for Polish enterprises indicated two main needs. First, the need to further simplify the overly complicated procedures for employing foreigners in Poland. Secondly, the need to intensify at various levels, by various labour market stakeholders, activities aimed at persuading immigrants to stay in Poland. Other needs, problems and challenges faced by the staff of the VET sector include: language problems with communicating with immigrants (64% of responses in the survey); lack of knowledge of the law / standards in force in Poland by immigrants (23%), an increase in the costs of running a business (18%) or a negative attitude of Polish workers to immigrants (9%). VET staff also indicated cultural differences (4.5%). Occasionally, there were replies regarding: too short terms of visas issued to immigrants by offices, which makes it difficult to find a job for them, and high rotation of migrant workers.<sup>34</sup>

Let's take a closer look at the results of one of the latest research on migrants from Ukraine in Poland who came to our country after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022. In April 2022, there were approximately 2.9 million Ukrainians in Poland. Including about 1.35 million of those who lived in Poland before the war and about 1.55 million war refugees. Out of 1.15 million registered in our country (in order to obtain a PESEL number), more than 47 percent Ukrainians were children and adolescents up to 18 years of age, most

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<sup>32</sup> M. Nowicka (ed.), *Foreigners in Poland. A handbook for people working with immigrants*, Ed. Caritas Polska, Warsaw 2020, pp. 162-163.

<sup>33</sup> J. Frelak, W. Klaus, *Integration of Refugees in Poland. Recommendations and good practice*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2007, pp. 252, 258.

<sup>34</sup> T. Kupczyk (ed.), *Immigrants as a support for the labor market and enterprise development*, Ed. Gazeta Wyborcza, Wrocław 2017, pp. 6, 22.



of which (approx. 34%) were children aged 3-14. The next largest group were women in the working age – 42% of the registered people. The remaining migrants from Ukraine are mainly elderly people (over 60/65 years old), who accounted for around 7% of those who registered. In turn, men of working age accounted for less than 4% refugee population.<sup>35</sup>

Currently, it is difficult for researchers or politicians to predict the future of war refugees from Ukraine in Poland (and other EU countries). The number of Ukrainians coming to Poland and leaving our country will change in the coming months, depending on the war events, on how the war will unfold, when the hostilities will end, and finally on the course of the future reconstruction of Ukraine and the living conditions there after war. Thus, the experts present three scenarios. The first involves a long and exhausting war. Then, the number of refugees in Poland will fluctuate between 3.1 and 3.4 million people. The second scenario is a quick end to the war in Ukraine and the stabilisation of the situation in that country. In such a situation, it is estimated that around 1.75 million Ukrainians will remain in Poland. The third and worst scenario is a victory of Russia, which occupies a large part of Ukraine. Then, the number of refugees in Poland may exceed even 10 million people. And about 60% of them will stay in our country for longer. The researchers note that regardless of the outcome of the war and its consequences for the economic development of Ukraine, Poland will become a binational country, with an increasing share of the Ukrainian nation. This will entail many challenges for Poland in the field of housing, education, labour market, healthcare and culture.<sup>36</sup>

## Conclusions and recommendations

Poland after 1989 was not a country experiencing the visible phenomenon of migration (be it immigration to Poland or emigration from the country), therefore our country did not institutionally pay much attention to the phenomenon of migrant inclusion.

Due to the high economic development and low unemployment, over the years 2015-2019 the number of legally working migrants in Poland (especially for employment) has been systematically growing. From 133 thousand in 2015 up to 500 thousand in 2019.

The outbreak of the war in Ukraine brought the greatest challenges in terms of migrant integration in Poland. Since then, over 6 million Ukrainians have entered our country. It is estimated that there are currently between 1 and 1.5 million Ukrainians in Poland, most of whom are women and children.

The most important areas, in which it is necessary to meet the needs of migrants in Poland are: education, access to employment, ensuring access to health care, social assistance, access to housing, protection against violence, especially against women, protection against discrimination, integration in the local environment, and access to culture.

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<sup>35</sup> *Guest Poland 2022+*. Report of the Wise Europa Foundation, <https://oko.press/ukraincy-w-polsce-polskanie-sie-krajem-dwunarodowym-system-musi-sie-zmienic-raport/> (accessed on 08/09/2022).

<sup>36</sup> *Guest Poland 2022+*. Report of the Wise Europa Foundation, <https://oko.press/ukraincy-w-polsce-polskanie-sie-krajem-dwunarodowym-system-musi-sie-zmienic-raport/> (accessed on 08/09/2022).



Despite the cultural and linguistic proximity, immigrants from Ukraine need help with integration in our country, such as: legal assistance, language support, transparent rules of stay and employment, family reunification.

The biggest barriers in the process of inclusion of immigrants (refugees) in Poland are: the threat of homelessness, the necessity to rent low-standard apartments, difficult access to housing from municipal resources, difficult situation on the labour market and the lack of knowledge of the Polish language.

Processes of pre-integration of immigrants implemented in Poland do not solve the basic problems of immigrants, such as: knowledge of the Polish language, finding a flat, finding a permanent job. Immigrants were forced to take up simple, occasional, poorly-paid jobs and, consequently, to use social assistance.

Public labour market services offered to foreigners in Poland (e.g. training and vocational courses) are conducted in Polish and do not match the needs and capabilities of foreigners. Immigrants who do not know the Polish language do not have the opportunity to actually use such forms of support in order to acquire knowledge, skills, and improve professional competences. Many foreigners do not have relevant professional experience. Many people struggle with mental problems.

Women immigrants from Ukraine experience problems such as the time-consuming and complicated process of legalising their stay in Poland, obtaining a work permit, language barriers, and housing difficulties. During the Covid-19 epidemic, new problems were added to the old problems of immigrant women: difficulties in travelling and crossing the border, loss of job due to lockdowns or deterioration of work and salary conditions, deterioration of the financial situation, deterioration of the housing situation, lack of support from the family who remained in Ukraine, problems with the organisation of teaching of immigrant women's children in the remote system, information chaos and economic uncertainty.

VET workers working with immigrants report the following needs / problems: lack of sufficient knowledge of the labour code; no knowledge of foreign languages; lack of sufficient knowledge of the provisions on legal residence and employment of foreigners; lack of ability to work with a client from other cultural areas; excess of professional duties and overwork or insufficient digitalisation of the conducted processes / activities.

Before starting work with immigrants, the staff of the VET sector should undergo training with elements of the culture and traditions of the migrants' countries of origin, social norms, the division of roles in the family, religion, and different realities of everyday life from those experienced in Poland. The staff should be provided with substantive and psychological support. It should also have methodically appropriate materials and teaching tools tailored to the student-foreigner.

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## Part Two – Desk research in Cyprus

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## Introduction

### Cypriot context

Cyprus holds a stricter employment control that includes short-term contracts mainly to avoid permanent residence of migrants. Usually, short-term residence permits need to be linked to specific employers which are held accountable. In the majority of cases migrants (TCNs) are employed in sectors where the local population does not cover and thus there is need of personnel such as jobs involving little or no skills according to the Cypriot society like construction, agriculture, service industries, commerce, hotel and tourist industries as express in a 2010 report developed by KISA (KISA, 2009). However, these plans of employment control have failed to regulate and control untracked migration.

In Cyprus, people from Third countries can enter the country with various residence permits (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021). Each person coming from a third country is allowed to work on specific fields, which are determined by their status. TCNs must find a job and then come to Cyprus in order to arrange the appropriate information such as their visa. An interesting remark, is the increase of female migrants in Cyprus, however there are no available data in regards to the numbers or country of origin (NAME, 2020) .

In the majority of cases, if they do not have a student or work visa, they are either asylum seekers or holders of international protection (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021). In Cyprus, International protection can be assigned under the two statuses of recognised refugee or subsidiary protection. Individuals holding any of these statuses have the same labour markets as Cypriot citizens. The access of Asylum seekers to the labour market is different, as they are allowed to engage in working a month after their asylum application has been submitted. However, asylum seekers are only allowed to apply for a job on certain sectors providing them with very limited choices. Aside from the limited choices available for asylum seekers, there is a lot of bureaucracy and paperwork process when an asylum seeker is hired, thus discouraging employers to hire asylum seekers due to very long processes (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021). Asylum seekers are also allowed to engage in internships in the limited sectors that they are allowed to work. However, since these jobs are within low skilled and more physically orientated jobs there are limited internship oppoerunities but they individuals themselves prefer a paid job so they can also receive an income (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021). Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the employment fields of migrants have been greatly affected thus providing less opportunities for them in terms of employment (Crepaldi, et al., 2021).

### COVID-19

Morsheimer et al(2020) in their analysis of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers (RMAs) in Cyprus stated a decrease in the quality of life and a profound impact on individual freedom, livelihoods, economic situation, both physical and



mental health and personal development. Due to limited access to governmental information in regards to the pandemic, people with a migrant background faced greater challenges due to language or other barriers.

One of the main issues was the lack of language knowledge that did not allow RMAs to :

1. Send messages for any kind of outing as required by the government during the COVID-19 lockdown as they were issued in Greek and English
2. Inability to communicate with hotlines and telephone operators due to language barrier
3. Inability to understand information published by the government as they were published in Greek, English or Turkish

NGOs made an effort to fill out these gaps by providing further translation of official documents and information through their social media and websites.

#### *Enhancement of gender inequalities in COVID-19*

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasised even more the gender inequalities around the world and Cyprus is no exception. It was expressed that women belonging in the RMAs community and living with their families faced a greater risk of gender- based violence. The lockdown forced women to spend more time at home with their abusers which may have resulted in increased numbers of violent incidents, something experienced by women despite of their migration status (Morsheimer et al,2020). Morsheimer et al (2020) in their report state the increase of calls in domestic violence helplines by 30%. Furthermore, in comparison to men women faced additional pressure in regards to domestic and child-rearing obligations which resulted to increase pressure on the mental health of women. Their reproductive health was also put at risk since there was limited access to contraception and well as information on reproductive and sexual health (Morsheimer et al,2020).

#### *Migrant women in the workforce*

Migrant women are also forced to undertake jobs with little or no skills as perceived by the Cypriot society. Some common fields that migrant women find employment are domestic work, agriculture, customer service or even in the sex industry in either temporary or part-time jobs (Charalambidou--Solomi et al (2010); Emphasys Centre, (2021); KISA,2009). Furthermore, some women expressed that salary was another major problem.

Challenges in the field of employment are not restricted to salary only but also excessive workload, not satisfied with their work, inappropriate behaviour of the employer such as discrimination and in some cases even sexual harassment. The majority of women were not aware of where they should seek help if they became victims of any kind of exploitation (Charalambidou--Solomi et al ,2010).

In the case of domestic workers, based on a report developed by KISA(2009) their contract states that 42 hours over 6 days must be covered. However, this is far from the reality since various migrant women have expressed that they work way more than that and it could even



add up to 20 hours per day. There are cases where domestic workers are forced to work on a Sunday which is considered their rest day. Thus they are unable to have a rest eventhough their contracts says so (KISA, 2009). Migrant women are also discouraged to ask about money or possible raise since they are afraid not to lose their job (KISA, 2009).

In the cases were migrant women engage in domestic work, the employers are obliged to provide residence which is most cases the house that they are working at. However, unfortunatrely they are not treated equally as they usually have a makeshift house, outside the house of residence. Exept from residence, employers are obliged to provide to their workers medical and health insurance. In the case of medical insurance, the costs are divided between the employer and employee, however once again in the majority of cases such obligations are avoided and their medical insurance does not cover the basic needs especially for women. There have also been cases where the employers refuse to cover the costs of the employees treatment as required by law (KISA,2009). Except from health care, employers must provice social insurance however in most cases these services are also not used such as sick leave, holidays or severance pay. Thus, from what is observed migrant women are once again discriminated against their right to provision of adequate health care and social insurance (KISA, 2009).

Unfortunately, it is not suprising that migrant workers earn less per hour as they are considered as a way of access to cheap labour, and sometimes even ignoring their basic human rights. The social and legal systems do not cover the rights of the migrants and especially migrant women. As a result, any issues in regards to the wellbeing and rights of migrant women are not addressed(NAME, 2020).

## Challenges faced by migrant women

### *Childcare:*

TCN women express that they feel of having a more disadvantageous position than men due to childcare obligations and disrimination based on their gender (Emphasys Centre, 2021). Childcare is one of the major issues for women. Due to lack of networks, TCN women have little to no options in regards to where to leave their children in order to attend such opportunities. Since private childcare is also expensive, TCN women are unable to afford enrolling their children in order to have access to such opportunities (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021). A reality for migrant women is the fact that due not having an established network to help them out with childcare are unable to take on various opportunities due to limited free time. One of the fields impacted by this situation is the field of employment (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021).

### *Gender:*

The unemployment rate in TCN women appears to be in comparison to male TCNs. Unfortunately, there are several cases where TCN women are referred to severa jobs but the nature of the job does not match their needs and may be disadvantageous in terms of gender (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021). Unfortunately , racism is not



experienced only in job interviews as various women experienced racist behaviours and/ or exclusion in the host community (Charalambidou--Solomi et al,2010)

#### *Discrimination:*

Due to a discriminatory treatment of migrant women their rights are violated on a daily basis as expressed above as well. Topics in regards to their healthcare, social insurance and work load are avoided and not discussed in order to avoid any persecution or being deported. However, migrant women are also not aware and informed where to appeal in cases where violation and exploitation takes place against them. (NAME,2020)

#### *Language:*

Language is a major element involved in the job seeking industry which is a determining factor for the involvement of TCN in areas. The government provides Greek language classes for personal and professional development however various obstacles such as lack of child support and networking does not allow women to participate in these courses (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021).

UNHCR Cyprus and Cyprus Refugee Council promote the participation of International Protection holders as well as asylum seekers in the labour market. Furthermore, the labour office provides training opportunities to International Protection holders only through ANAD (Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus). In addition, many EU funded projects are providing trainings for third-country nationals which promote integration. Due to the fact that these programmes take place only for a specific period of time, they may not have the desired impact that is expected (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021).

## Good practices

1. iLearn Greek : <http://www.ilearngreek.eu/>
  - a. The iLearn Greek platform provides two different levels of Greek language courses for RMAs : basic and intermediate levels. The lessons take place in all the cities. Language learning can enhance the integration of individuals with migrant background as it implies increased communication.
2. Help Refugees Work Platform: <https://www.helprefugeeswork.org/>
  - a. The Help Refugees Work platform is an initiation of the UNHCR Cyprus in Collaboration with the Cyprus Refugee Council. The aim of the platform is to enhance the integration of individuals with migrant background through employment. The platform allows potential employers to create a profile and post possible jobs or training and also allows migrants to create an account and find in turn employment or training opportunities.
3. Greek language classes: <https://caritascyprus.org/greek-for-newcomers/>
  - a. Greek lessons for newcomers are provided by Caritas Cyprus



## Actual needs of the target groups

Various women that participated in a focus group under the AMIF-ENGAGE project (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021). expressed that they have:

1. **Low Greek language skills:** Many women express that the language barrier is one of their main issues, if not the main one, while also lack of communication negatively impacts the wellbeing of migrants. If migrants do not acquire knowledge in Greek or English, they are also unable to understand what do official documents include since these are the two languages that they are published (E-mploy-me!,2020). Lack of language knowledge can have a negative impact in the communication with labour office or future employers (Crepaldi, et al., 2021)
2. **The lack of job experience and related skills** based on the jobs that they are allowed to apply for. In addition, there is a lack of recognition of previous skills or qualifications from their countries of origin due to the different systems. Thus, some women may have gained experience and knowledge in certain fields but they are unable to use it due to inability to validate it (NAME,2020)
3. **Lack of childcare:** as previously expressed by TCN women, in the majority of opportunities they are unable to attend as they do not have any help in regards to childcare. Due to lack of networks they do not have any relatives that can take care of their children while they are gone and private childcare is too expensive for them in order to cover the costs (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021)..
4. **Lack of networks:** the limited numbers of networks and people to create links with contributes to the lack of safety and socialising among migrant women. Consequently, lack of networks can be linked also to lack of childcare since there is not a secure network for women leave their children in order to attend any type of training or lesson (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021)..
5. **Racism and prejudice:** various women felt there was difference in treatment towards them because of their physical appearance, especially in their job seeking efforts. TCN women feel that wearing a hijab or having a different skin tone changes the behaviour of the employer towards them and they believe this is the main reason that they are rejected (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021).
6. **Transportation** – another significant challenge for migrant women is transportation. Due to the lack of structure and stable timetables in Cyprus public transport, it makes it quite difficult to travel anywhere due to the unexpected and unstable schedule (Emphasys Centre & Cyprus Refugee Council Cyprus, 2021).



## Conclusions and recommendations

Individuals with migrant background and especially women face a number of significant challenges that make their life in Cyprus a bit more difficult than expected, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. As stated above women face difficulties in different fields such as :

1. Language/ communication
2. Childcare
3. Discrimination

Their migrant background unfortunately affects the way they are treated, especially as a form of cheap labour.

Some recommendations that could improve such situations are:

1. Provision of online options or kids' corner at physical lessons so that migrant women who have children can also have access
2. Educate migrant women on the importance of language knowledge and thus enhance their motivation in learning a new language
3. Psychological support to migrant women-migration can be considered as an already traumatic experience thus any kind of support will be helpful and beneficial towards women
4. Creation of informative workshops that can inform migrant women where they can access anything they need as well as beneficial information such as their working rights.

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## Part 3 - Desk research in Greece

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## Introduction

Greece constitutes one of the host countries of the EU for migrant people. Its geographical position plays a vital role because it connects the East with the West world, and it is located on the main commercial routes. Therefore, it receives migratory and refugee flows mainly from the Asian and African countries, but also from the Balkans and other countries.



*Picture 1: Geographical position of Greece.*

Migrants and persons coming from a migrant family have a vital role in the development of the Greek society. Their contribution to the national economy is of considerable importance. However, they face many difficulties concerning their access to the educational institutions due to their migratory background. The pandemic of Covid-19 has made these difficulties more obvious, but it has also shown that inclusion and equal opportunities in education are important for the integration of migrant populations. Inclusion and gender equality is one of the six targets of the European Education Area to be achieved by 2025 through several concrete initiatives.

A good quality of Vocational Education and Training (VET) with a strong work-based learning dimension can be a powerful tool for migrants to enter the labour market. However, obstacles



to their participation in VET still remain, despite the need of more and more migrants to participate in high-quality VET<sup>37</sup>.

Unfortunately, Greece shares the highest rates, among other states of the EU, for the risk of poverty or social exclusion for non-EU citizens (57%) and for citizens of other EU members (36%), based on surveys conducted in 2019<sup>38</sup>. Especially, migrant women's position is more affected because they face more difficulties, due to the patriarchal structures, and, when it comes to participation in the labor market, they are often discriminated. The migrant background can worsen their social and economic status because they don't speak the Greek language and they have religious and cultural differences from the natives. Sex and gender play, also, an important role since the stereotypes around these topics can prevent them from doing what they want. These can block their access to learning opportunities and to the labor market. Finally, in many Greek communities, it is observed that the natives don't agree with the education of migrants, and, in some cases, even protest against this measure.

Migrant people usually have a lower educational and economic status than Greek people. At the same time, they have high rates of school drop-out or they are unemployed, and they are often victims of xenophobic and racist attitudes. They usually don't know their rights and they tend to work in low-wage jobs because they are unqualified. Therefore, it is essential to allow migrant populations and, especially, migrant women to have access in VET education.

According to international and national legal documents, every person has the right to be educated. The same issue is highlighted in Goal 5 ("Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls") of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, which underlines the importance of participation of (migrant) women in society and economy and, so, education plays a vital role in order to achieve this goal. Therefore, migrant women should be able to have access to educational institutions and receive effective training on the topics they are interested in. Migrant women's participation in VET education plays a vital role for their inclusion in the Greek society and the promotion of their rights as migrants and as women, in general<sup>39</sup>.

The Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning contributes an overall picture of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in each state around the world. GRALE is an indicator which shows the devotion of UNESCO Member States to their international ALE commitments and if they put them into practice. The reports conducted combine survey data, policy analysis and case studies which present to policymakers and practitioners recommendations and examples of good practices. They

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<sup>37</sup> *Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027*, European Commission (Brussels, 24.11.2020) - COM (2020) 758 final ([EUR-Lex - 52020DC0758 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#))

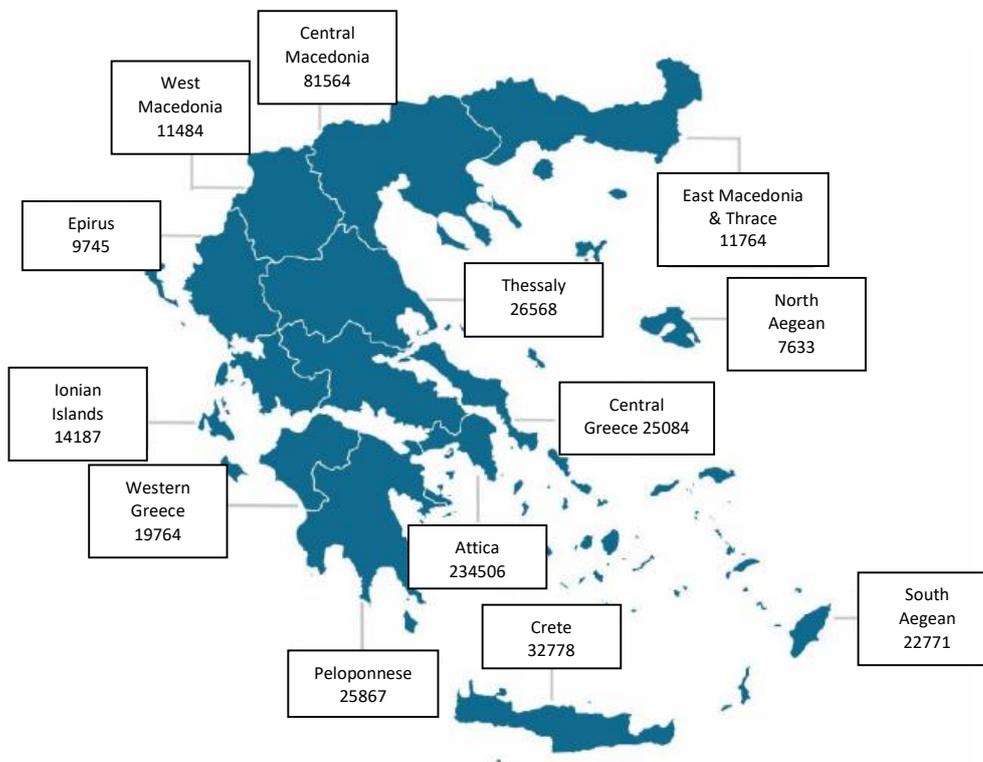
<sup>38</sup> *Migrants and the risk of poverty or social exclusion*, Eurostat (02/02/2021) (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210202-2>)

<sup>39</sup> *Migrant women as champions of learning: Policy Recommendations*, A policy paper of Women in diaspora communities as champions of learning to live together (2021) ([WIDHT-policy-recommendations.pdf \(eaea.org\)](#))

provide evidence on how ALE can help countries address current and future challenges, including the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>40</sup>.

The most recent report was GRALE 4 which was published in 2019. The Member States were urged to answer several questions about their ALE indicator regarding different target groups, two of them being women, migrants and refugees. According to the survey data which concerned Greece, the ALE participation rate of women hadn't increased a lot. But, on the other hand, the same survey asked whether the countries' governments prioritize financing of ALE for women on the one hand, and migrants and refugees on the other hand. For Greece, the financing of women and migrants' participation in adult education is of high importance<sup>41</sup>.

Regarding the population, the number of migrants who legally reside in Greece is 523,715, while the number of asylum seekers is 137,155. Specifically, in the following picture, it is drawn that the majority of migrant population lives in the regions of Attica (234.506), Central Macedonia (81.664) and Crete (32.778).



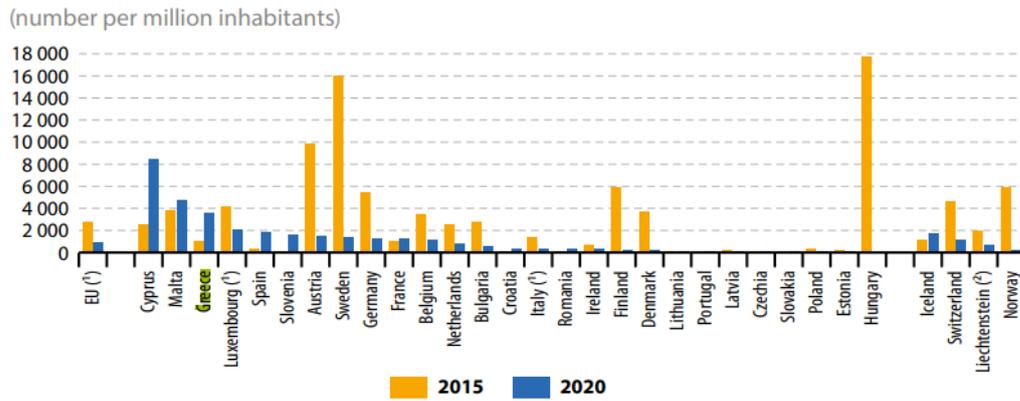
Picture 2: Distribution of migrant population by region (Source: Migration Information System, Ministry of Migration Policy, April 2018)

<sup>40</sup> *Global Report – GRALE*, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (<https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/global-report>)

<sup>41</sup> *Migrant women as champions of learning: Policy Recommendations*, A policy paper of Women in diaspora communities as champions of learning to live together (2021) ([WIDHT-policy-recommendations.pdf \(eaea.org\)](https://www.eaea.org/widht-policy-recommendations.pdf))



In terms of education, many migrant people living in Greece have graduated from school, while a small number of them have finished their university's studies. However, a considerable number of migrants haven't finished the non-compulsory education, while others are illiterate. Their educational status can affect their position in the Greek society.



Note: 2020 data are provisional estimates.  
(\*) Break(s) in time series between the two years shown.  
(†) 2016 data (instead of 2015).  
Source: Eurostat (online data code: sdg\_10\_60)

Figure 1: First time asylum applications, by country, 2015 and 2020

Greece also receives many asylum applications from migrants every year. As it is shown from the graph above, the rate of asylum seekers in 2020 has risen compared to the equivalent rate in 2015. Almost 6.000 people applied for asylum application in 2020. This happened due to the fact that regional conflicts have risen the last 5 years in Asian and African countries, and it is estimated that asylum applications will grow further since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022.

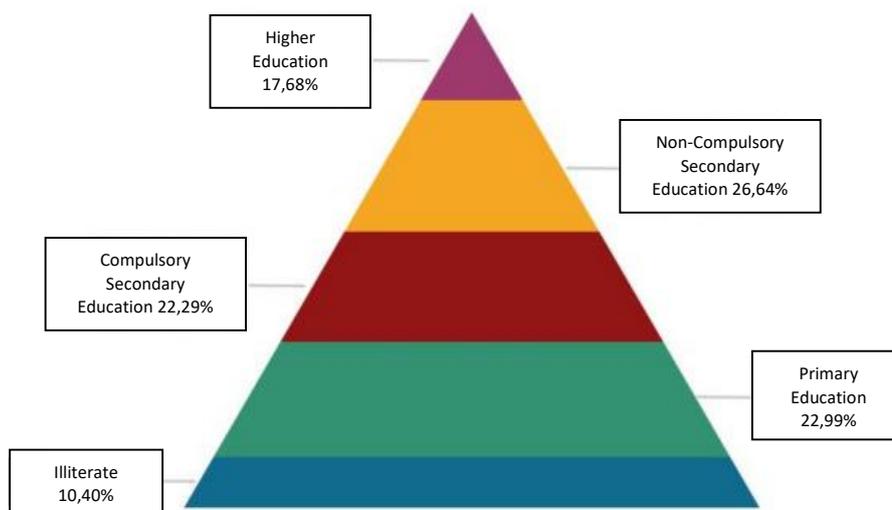


Figure 2: Educational level of beneficiaries of international protection - over 18 years old (Source: Source: Asylum Service Statistics, April 2018)



According to the above graph, most people living in Greece under international protection have finished the non-compulsory secondary education (26,64%), while those who have a bachelor's degree are estimated around 17,68%. However, a considerable amount of this group of people is still illiterate (10,40%) or have only finished the primary education (22,9%). This highlights the persisting need of better education services being offered to these groups.

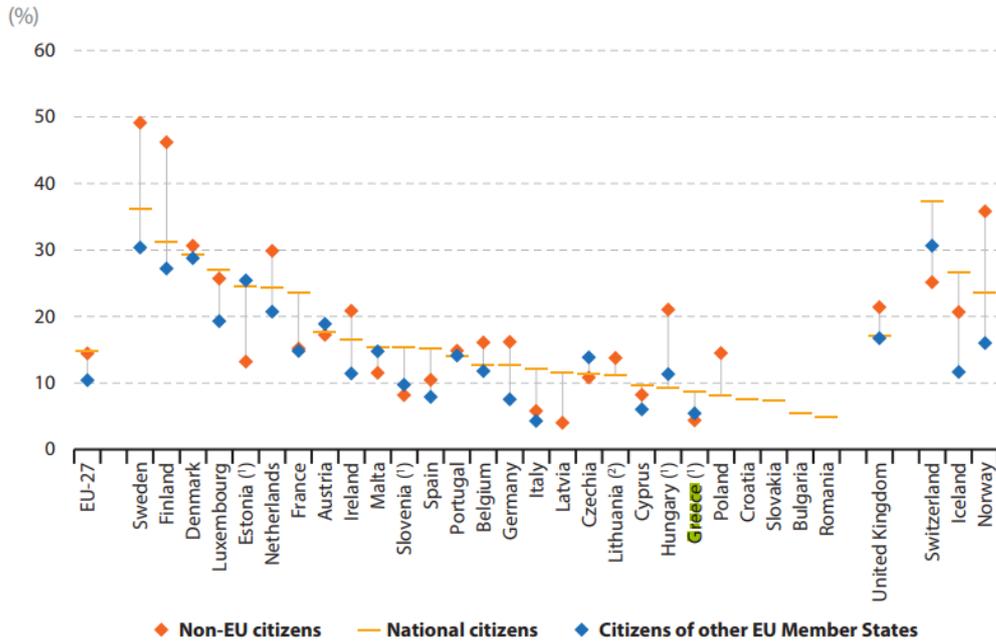
Table 1: Educational level by citizenship (Source: Asylum Service Statistics, April 2018)

Nationality/ Level of Education	Syria	Afghanistan	Iraq	Pakistan	Non-natives	Other	Total
Illiterates	2259	1248	662	42	141	557	4927
Primary (1-6 years)	2859	1010	877	78	55	764	5714
Compulsory secondary (7-9 years)	2329	473	473	102	54	627	4127
Non-compulsory secondary (9-12 years)	1754	496	409	359	58	1117	4292
Higher	1251	142	237	233	45	705	2640
<b>Total</b>	<b>10452</b>	<b>1248</b>	<b>2618</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>3770</b>	<b>21700</b>

Here is a clearer picture of the nationality of the migrant population living in Greece and their educational level (mostly concentrating in east Asian people who make up the majority). The highest number of those who have a bachelor's or a master's degree are from Syria (1,251). But, for the same group of persons, it is noted that they have the highest number of illiterates (2.259) or persons who have finished the primary education (2,859), much bigger than the number of those who have a university degree. In the second place comes Afghanistan, with 1,248 illiterates and 1,010 who have attended the first classes of school (whereas only 142 have finished their university's studies). Finally, the third place is occupied by Iraq, with 662 persons uneducated and 877 who have finished the primary education (237 people have a bachelor's or a master's degree)<sup>42</sup>. It is apparent that many of these migrants are lacking in education, highlighting the need in creating more educational opportunities for these people.

As it was said before, Greece holds one of the last positions in the EU regarding the participation of citizens in adult learning from the other EU countries and the third country residents. These results can be concluded from the graphs below:

<sup>42</sup> *National Strategy for Inclusion*, Greek Republic - Ministry of Migration and Asylum (July 2019) (in Greek language) ([Εθνική-Στρατηγική-για-την-Ένταξη final .pdf \(opengov.gr\)](#))



Note: ranked on share for national citizens. Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovakia: citizens of other EU Member States and non-EU citizens, not available. Latvia, Lithuania and Poland: citizens of other EU Member States, not available.

(1) Citizens of other EU Member States: data with limited reliability.

(2) Non-EU citizens: data with limited reliability.

Source: Eurostat (ad-hoc extraction from the labour force survey)

Figure 3: Share of the population aged 20-64 years participating in adult learning, by citizenship, 2019

In 2019, Greece had the lowest positions, among other EU member states, for the participation of the non-EU citizens and citizens of other EU countries between 20-64 years old in adult learning. The difference between these groups of people with the national citizens is prominent.

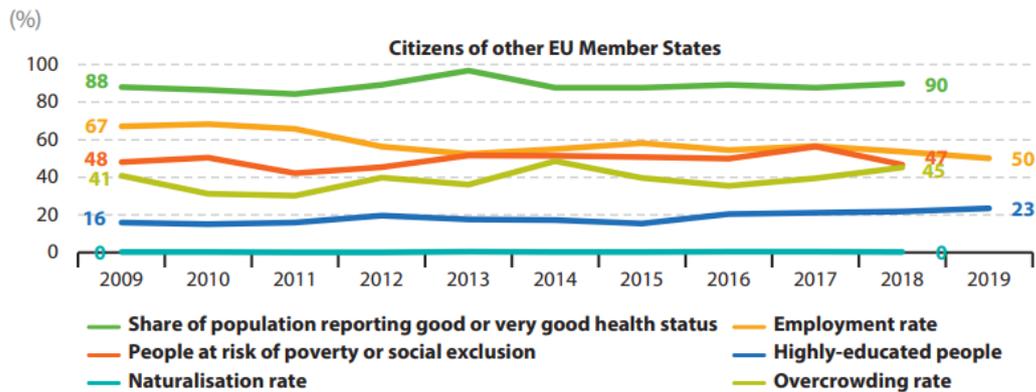


Figure 4: Citizens of other EU Member States (time series, 2009-2019)



Regarding the time period from 2009 to 2019, Greece has made some progress concerning the integration of migrant population coming from other EU member states and their status of well-being. However, problems continue to exist regarding their employment rate and the risk of poverty or social exclusion. Their migratory background and their sex may further affect their vulnerable position.

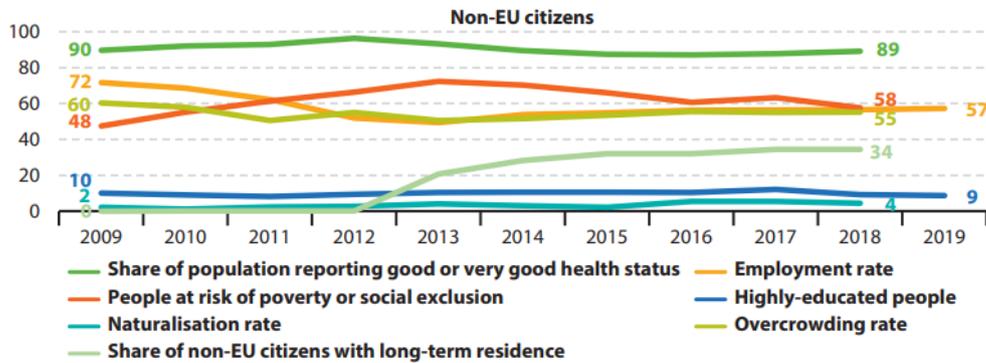


Figure 5: Non-EU citizens (time series, 2009-2019)

Regarding the same time period, Greece has shown a decline on some sectors for the non-EU citizens. Concerning the health status of this population, a significant progress has been shown and the same can be said for the risk of poverty or social exclusion. Nevertheless, other sectors have been marked a slight decrease. Overall, the Greek state needs to make changes in order to improve the living standard of this group of people<sup>43</sup>.

Regarding the participation of those people in VET education, it is generally proven that more and more students tend to attend institutions which provide this type of education. Attending a higher level of education has become easier over the last years as the living standard in Greece has improved.

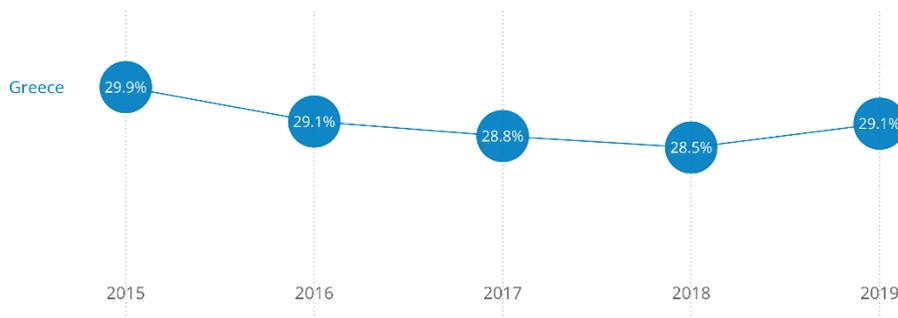


Figure 6: IVET students as % of all upper secondary students in Greece

<sup>43</sup> Migrant integration statistics – 2020 editions, Eurostat (2021) ([Migrant integration statistics - 2020 edition \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1))



From the graph above, it is concluded that a significant number of Greek students participate in IVET education. Nonetheless, this number has shown a slight decrease over the last years. Only in 2019, it has risen a little as it seems that more and more persons are interested in VET education.

It is also observed that the participation of women in VET education has risen during the last years. More and more women attend faculties of higher education, and they are encouraged to have higher level of education. This is very positive due to the fact that women's participation in VET education was rather disappointing in the previous years. Nowadays, we can talk about women experts and professionals. In addition, they have more freedom to make their own choices.

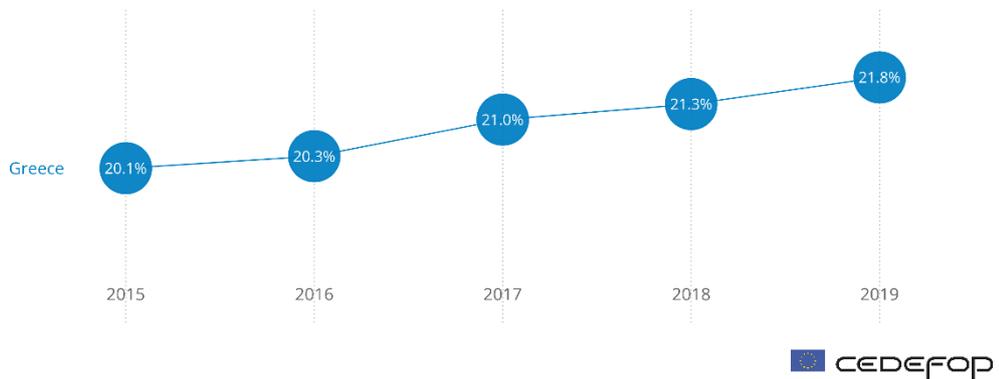


Figure 7: Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students in Greece

From the above graph, the conclusion is drawn that the rate of female students participating in IVET education has risen in Greece throughout recent years.

There are also many older adults in Greece who participate in adult lifelong learning, and they want to develop their skills. The desire to learn new things and acquire expertise characterizes not only the new generations but also the older ones.

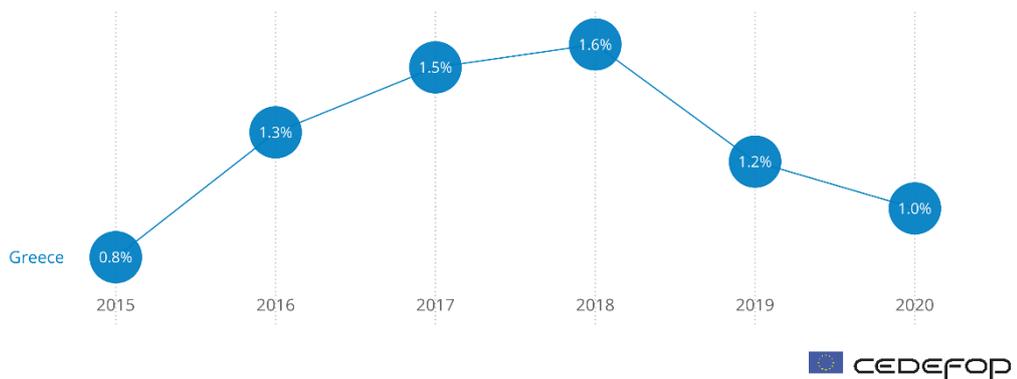


Figure 8: Older adults in lifelong learning (%) in Greece

From the graph above, it is understood that the participation of older adults in lifelong learning had reached its peak in 2017-2018. However, the last 3 years, this rate has been decreased closer to the levels of 2015. The pandemic of Covid-19 surely played an important role in this reduction, presumably because distance learning and the use of digital tools made it difficult for this group of people to attend their lessons. In addition, the extra obligations concerning their household and their work life prevented them from attending VET education. The same can be said about the migrant population. Especially for migrants, a considerable number of them don't have access to the internet or they do not have the necessary means to connect in online classes. It is necessary to note that many migrant people come from low-income backgrounds, and they can't afford these necessary means<sup>44</sup>.

Another issue is that the unemployment of adults in lifelong learning continues to be a big problem for the Greek society. In general, Greece's unemployment rate for 2021 was 14.80%, a 1.51% decline from 2020<sup>45</sup>.

As it is shown in the graph below, the unemployment rate of adults in lifelong learning has risen over the last few years. Only in 2020, a decrease of 0.1% compared to 2019 was calculated.

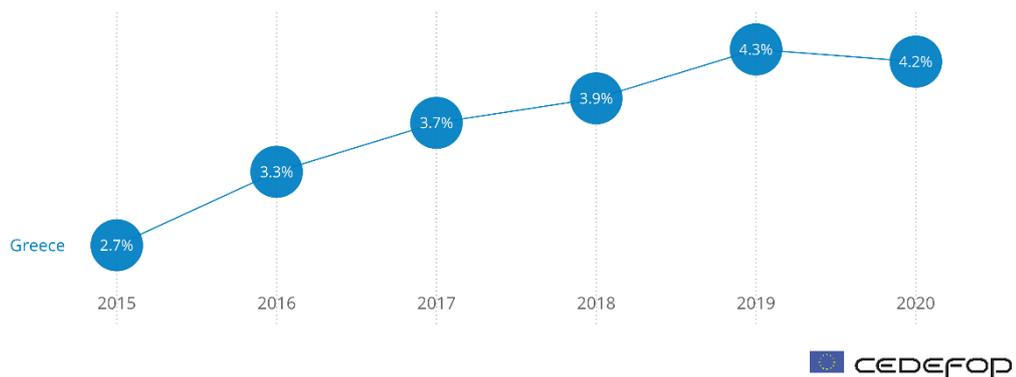


Figure 9: Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%) in Greece

Unemployment affects more people in precarious positions or in weaker social positions, such as migrant women. These people feel that they are not welcomed by the society, and they face social discriminations. This situation can lead to many problems, such as low self-esteem and disappointment, but also to many social pathogeneses, such as the deterioration of the living standard, poverty and crime increase.

Nonetheless, the Greek State has reduced its expenditures in VET education since the outbreak of the economic crisis, as it is seen in the graph below.

<sup>44</sup> Key indicators on VET, CEDEFOP ([Countries | CEDEFOP \(europa.eu\)](#))

<sup>45</sup> Greece Unemployment Rate 1991-2022, Macrotrends ([Greece Unemployment Rate 1991-2022 | MacroTrends](#))

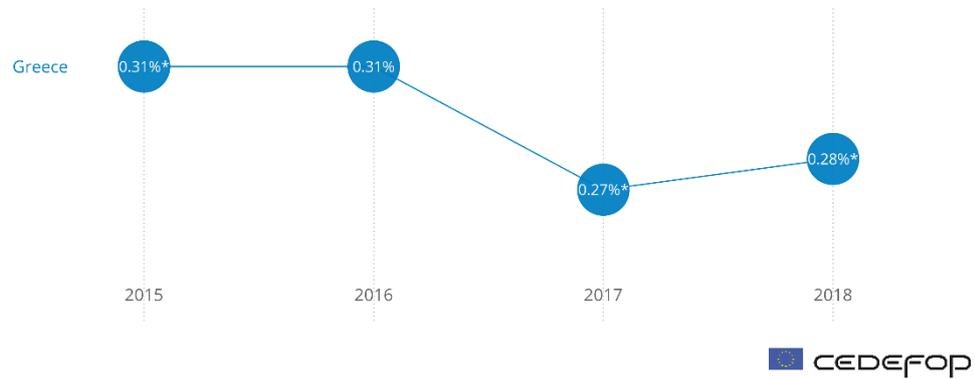


Figure 10: IVET public expenditure (% of GDP) in Greece

Without the support of the public expenditures, the quality of VET education may be downgraded and the inequalities concerning the educational access of migrant populations and, especially, migrant women may scale up. It is important to also have the support of the state in matters of education<sup>46</sup>.

Additionally, the social status of migrant people plays an important role in their integration to the Greek society. In particular, migrants who live in big cities have more chances to find a job or attend an educational institution. The integration process is easier in the urban centres because there are professional and educational opportunities, and they can find communities who share the same migratory background. On the other side, migrants who live in rural areas don't have the same chances and they need to make a greater effort in order to achieve their goals due to the fact that there is a shortage of basic services. Unfortunately, natives living in the Greek provinces are more conservative compared to those who live in the cities and so, they are more prejudiced against migrants. For migrant women, these conditions can be more difficult. They tend to face more discrimination than the male migrants because of their sex. Nevertheless, the majority of unemployed migrants are men as shown to the graph below but still they work in precarious jobs

<sup>46</sup> Key indicators on VET, CEDEFOP ([Countries | CEDEFOP \(europa.eu\)](http://europa.eu))

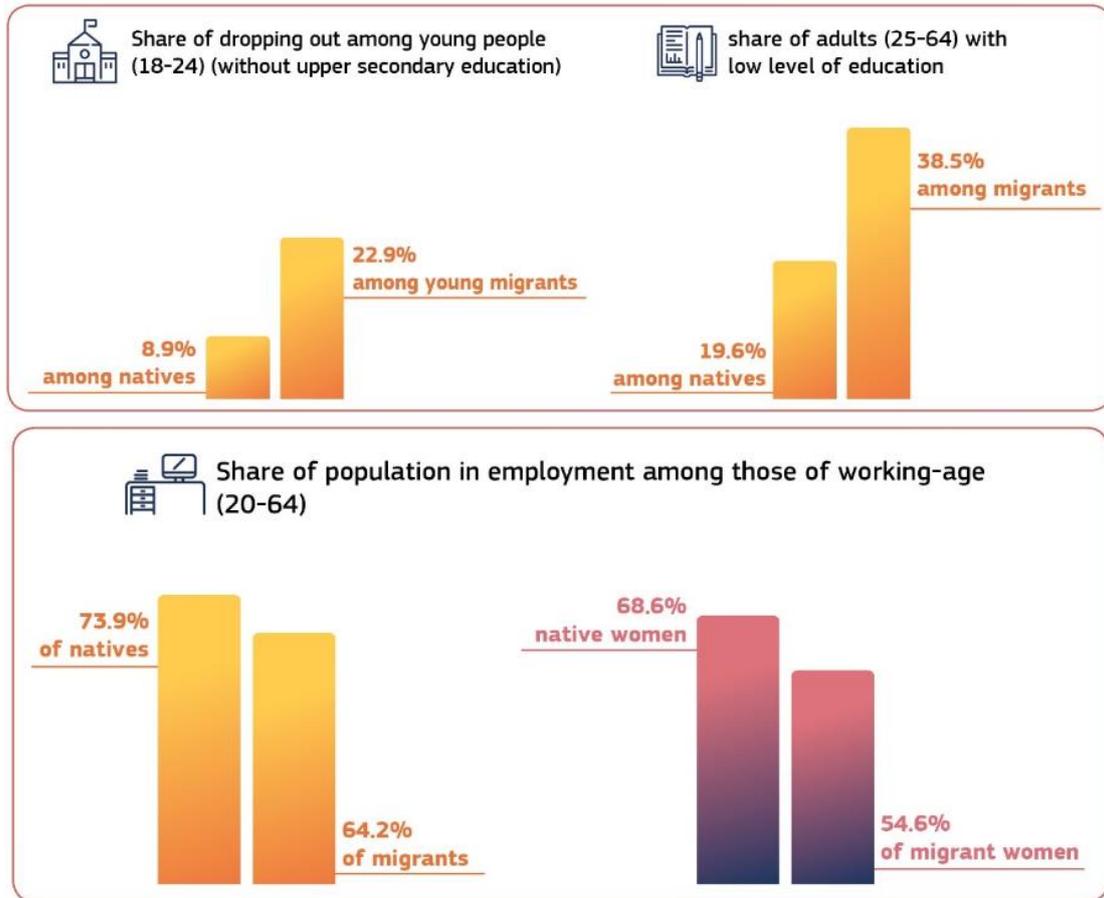


Figure 11: Key facts and figures on integration and inclusion (EU-27, 2019)

From the above graphs, it is concluded that young migrants (18-24) born outside the EU are much more likely than the natives to be unemployed or uneducated, especially migrant girls and young women. Migrants who live rural areas tend to face more difficulties regarding integration not only compared to natives but, also, with respect to migrants living in cities and towns. As there is generally a shortage of basic services in many provincial regions, migrants may also lack the support services needed<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> Action plan on the integration and inclusion, European Commission ([Action plan on the integration and inclusion \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/euro-iss/Action-plan-on-the-integration-and-inclusion_en))



## Good practices

### **Migrant Integration Centers**

Migrant Integration Centres are branches of the Community Centres of the municipalities, where migrants can take lessons in Greek language and know the basic elements of the history and culture of Greece. They can take these lessons at the Centre, if they are an immigrant, asylum seeker or beneficiary of international protection. Some Centres offer not only Greek language courses (A1 and A2 level) and Greek history and culture, but also computer courses and personalized vocational counselling sessions to promote access to the labour market (in 11 Greek municipalities).

### **Lifelong Learning Centers**

Lifelong Learning Centres provide non-formal education for adults and, especially, within the framework of general adult education, Greek language courses for immigrants. These centres are established and operate, according to Law 4763/2020, in those municipalities that wish to do so. To ensure equal access to general adult education activities, special attention is paid to members of vulnerable social groups, migrants and people living in remote, hard-to-reach areas. Furthermore, adult learners can take courses in other subject areas, such as economy, entrepreneurship, new technologies, language and communication, social skills and actions<sup>48</sup>.

### **Get Ready for your Future**

Get Ready for your Future is a programme which focuses on entering the labour market, organized by ELIX with the support of HSBC. During this course, ELIX is going to offer a network of activities and training actions that provide the necessary knowledge and skills to familiarize the beneficiaries with issues related to the labour market so that they can perform tasks such as CV writing, job search and retention, as well as job performance and job interview readiness<sup>49</sup>.

### **National Integration Strategy (2019)**

Based on specifications from the European Council and the European Union, the National Integration Strategy for 2019 asserts that a successful social integration program demands the active participation of the state, institutions, and civil society. Local communities in Greece have a key role in the implementation of social integration initiatives. Local Greek government administrations, by involving and engaging local populations, serve as important instruments

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<sup>48</sup> *Education*, Greek republic - Ministry of Migration and Asylum (in Greek language) ([Εκπαίδευση | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου \(migration.gov.gr\)](#))

<sup>49</sup> *“Get Ready for your Future” - a programme to enter the labour market*, ELIX ([Κοινωνικά προγράμματα \(elix.org.gr\)](#))



for social integration. Some of the national strategy's action pillars, as well as their related policy actions and initiatives, are listed below:

- Collaboration with local government administrations for the promotion of local integration, which includes actions such as: improving collaboration between the central and local government administrations, allowing local administration bodies to participate in integration initiatives, and improving reception services, offering accommodation services to beneficiaries and applicants of international protection (M.I.C.).
- Promote labour market integration through the identification and the recognition of the skills and the credentials of third-country nationals, the facilitation of their entry to the labour market, and the encouragement of entrepreneurship.
- Enhancement of Intercultural Mediation, which includes actions and measures for the strengthening and the extension of intercultural mediation and the encouragement of intercultural connection and communication.
- Encourage civic participation, which includes activities such as facilitating civic and community participation for third-country nationals through participation in community activities and volunteerism.
- Combating racism and xenophobia by the detection and the monitoring of racist and xenophobic phenomena as well as increasing awareness about them.
- Implementation of specific integration strategies for disadvantaged populations, such as women, special needs individuals and geriatric integration.
- Improving second-generation citizens' assimilation into the Greek society and implementing tailored programmes<sup>50</sup>.

## Actual needs of the target groups

Learning the Greek language and the social and cultural context of the country constitutes a necessary element for the smooth integration of migrant women into the Greek society and their access to the labour market<sup>51</sup>. Many migrant women don't know how to speak the native language and sometimes are not aware of their rights. In addition, they face many difficulties concerning their access to educational structures. Their migratory background and their status of being women can make their condition worse.

The participation of migrant women in adult learning requires the evaluation and the acknowledgement of barriers, as well as taking action in order to reduce them. A successful social integration program necessitates the active participation of the state, institutions, and civil society. Local communities in Greece have a crucial role for the proper implementation

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<sup>50</sup> *Migrant women as champions of learning: Policy Recommendations*, A policy paper of Women in diaspora communities as champions of learning to live together (2021) ([WIDHT-policy-recommendations.pdf \(eaea.org\)](#))

<sup>51</sup> *Education*, Greek republic - Ministry of Migration and Asylum (in Greek language) ([Εκπαίδευση | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου \(migration.gov.gr\)](#))



of social integration initiatives in this setting. Local Greek government administrations constitute important instruments for social integration by the involvement and the engagement of local populations. In addition, the Greek community should shed the prejudices and the stereotypes around migrant population and welcome them as if they were their own people.

This also applies to teachers and trainers who are going to work with migrant women. In particular, the teaching staff should realize the basic needs of migrant women. They should bear in mind that women of this group come from disadvantaged social position and, so, they should adapt the training material to their requirements. Under no circumstances should they be racist or sexist towards them, but they should make them feel that their useful and that their voices can be heard<sup>52</sup>.

International documents, such as the Action Plan for the Integration of Third Country Nationals, created by the EU, highlights the importance of access for migrant and refugee women to basic goods and services, as it constitutes a necessary element in their integration to the new society. In order to facilitate the participation of migrant women in VET education, it is essential that:

- Women of this group obtain basic skills in the Greek language (basic knowledge of the language and how to communicate in different situations)
- Trainers facilitate their integration in the working environment (learning terminology related to the working environment, communication skills in the workplace, etc.), as well as train them on issues of filling correctly a curriculum vitae and handling job interviews

From the State's side, it is necessary to create a legal framework for the recognition of education and training qualifications of third-country nationals who are unable to provide evidence of their education and training from their country of origin. By achieving the above, inclusion of migrant women in Greece can be better fostered<sup>53</sup>.

## Conclusions and recommendations

It is essential that migrant women should participate in VET education in order to improve their competences and be integrated in the Greek community. The Greek state has carried out many initiatives for their participation in VET education. However, barriers continue to exist, as many migrant women face many difficulties concerning their access to this type of education, and they often fall victims of discrimination due to their sex and their migratory

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<sup>52</sup> *Migrant women as champions of learning: Policy Recommendations*, A policy paper of Women in diaspora communities as champions of learning to live together (2021) ([WIDHT-policy-recommendations.pdf \(eaea.org\)](#))

<sup>53</sup> *National Strategy for Inclusion*, Greek Republic - Ministry of Migration and Asylum (July 2019) (in Greek language) ([Εθνική-Στρατηγική-για-την-Ένταξη final .pdf \(opengov.gr\)](#))



background. For these reasons, both the Greek state and the local communities should make changes in order to facilitate their integration in the nation. Because not only is their contribution to the Greek society important, but they also deserve to find the proper reception structures in their new country of residence and become proactive citizens.

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## Part 4 – Desk research in Netherlands

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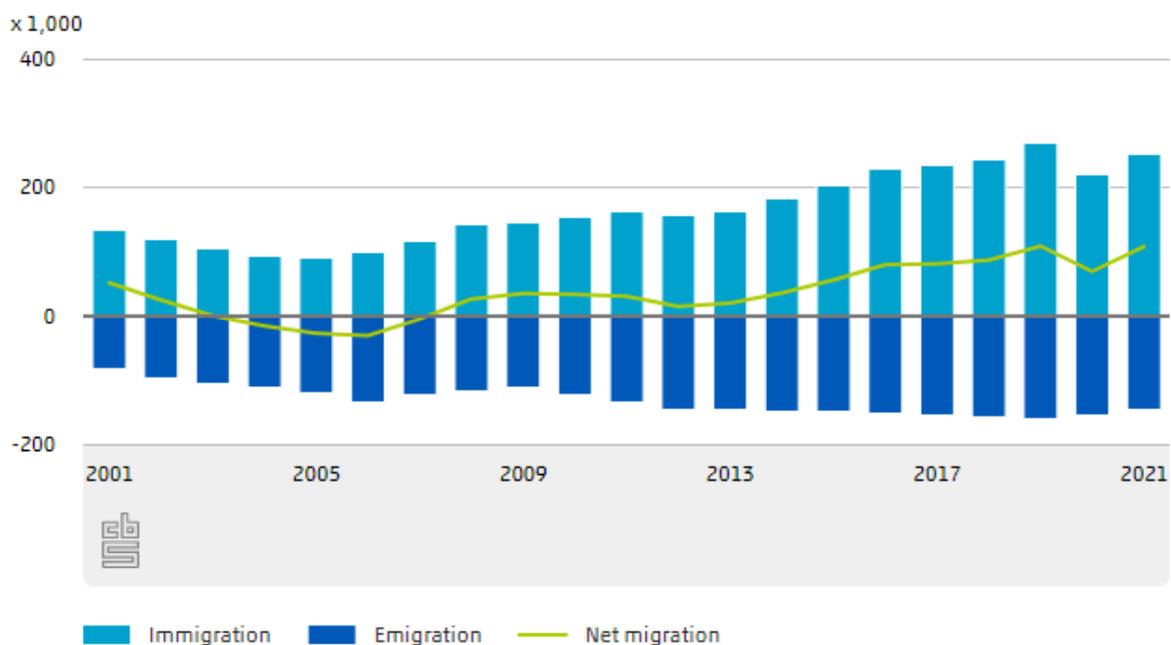


## Introduction

Desk research is carried out under the project “Theory of Change for the Inclusion of Migrant Women in VET”. The research has three main goals. Firstly, to provide knowledge on the practices / tools / methods for inclusion of migrants, currently used by Dutch VET institutions, with particular emphasis on migrant women. Secondly, to provide knowledge about the current needs of the project's target groups, i.e. migrant women in The Netherlands and staff working with migrants in the process of their social and professional inclusion. The study will analyse selected publications (academic publications, research reports) and statistical data on the inclusion of migrants (including migrant women) in the country.

In 2021, 252,528 persons immigrated to the Netherlands. This was 31,675 more than the figure for 2020. In addition, 145,330 persons emigrated from the Netherlands, 7,164 less than one year earlier. Overall in 2021, more people migrated to the Netherlands than emigrated. Net migration (immigration minus emigration) amounted to 107,198 persons. From 2003 to 2007, net migration was negative: there were fewer immigrants than emigrants<sup>54</sup>.

### Migration

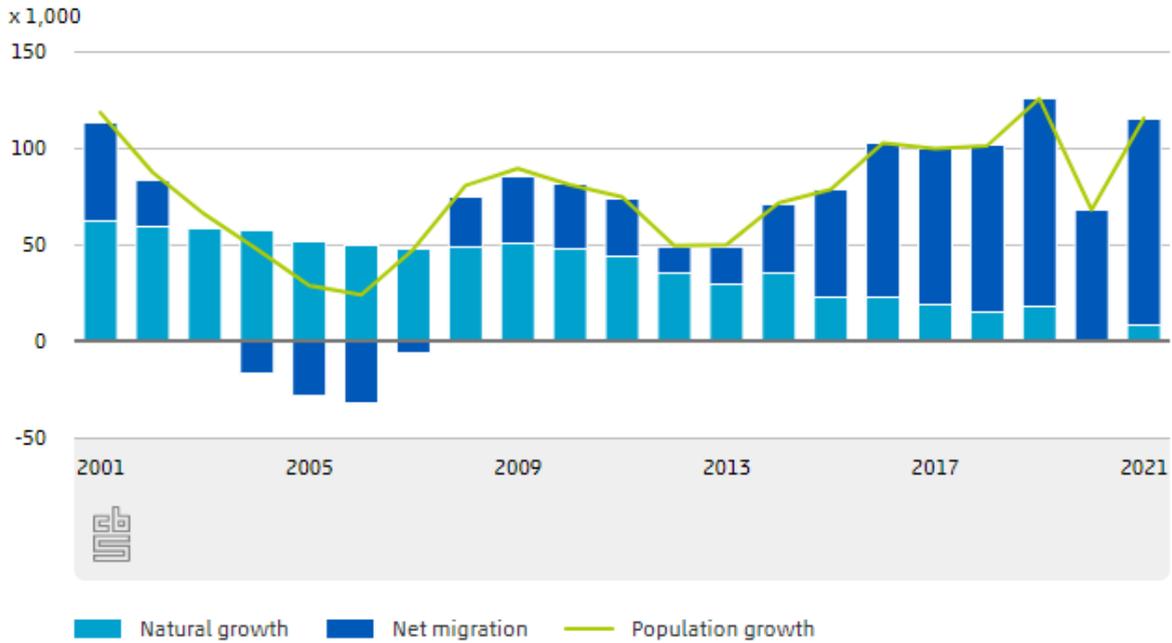


<sup>54</sup> <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/dossier/migration-and-integration/how-many-people-immigrate-to-the-netherlands->



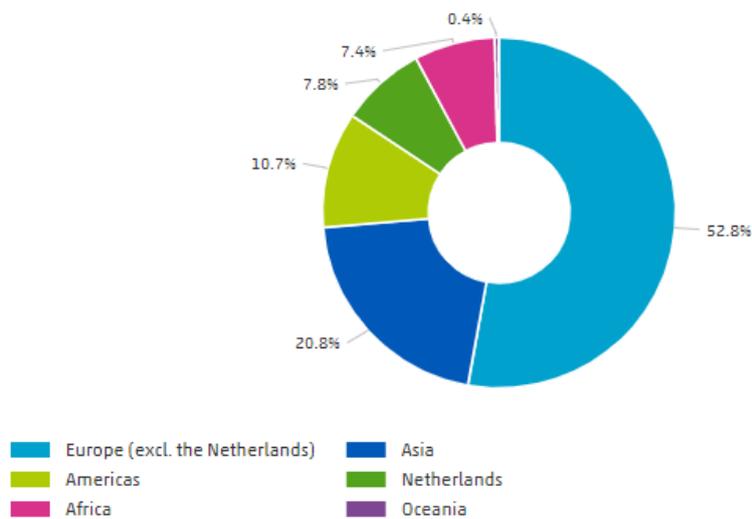
In 2021, the Dutch population grew by 115,257 inhabitants (including corrections). International migration (immigration minus emigration) accounted for 107,198 more inhabitants, while natural growth (births minus deaths) accounted for 8,469 more inhabitants. Up until 2014, the population increased primarily due to natural growth.

### Population dynamics



In 2021, 252,528 persons moved to the Netherlands. Of these immigrants, 7.8 percent have a Dutch background. The majority have a European background: 133,427 persons. This is 52.8 percent of all immigrants in 2021. A share of 20.8 percent have an Asian background.

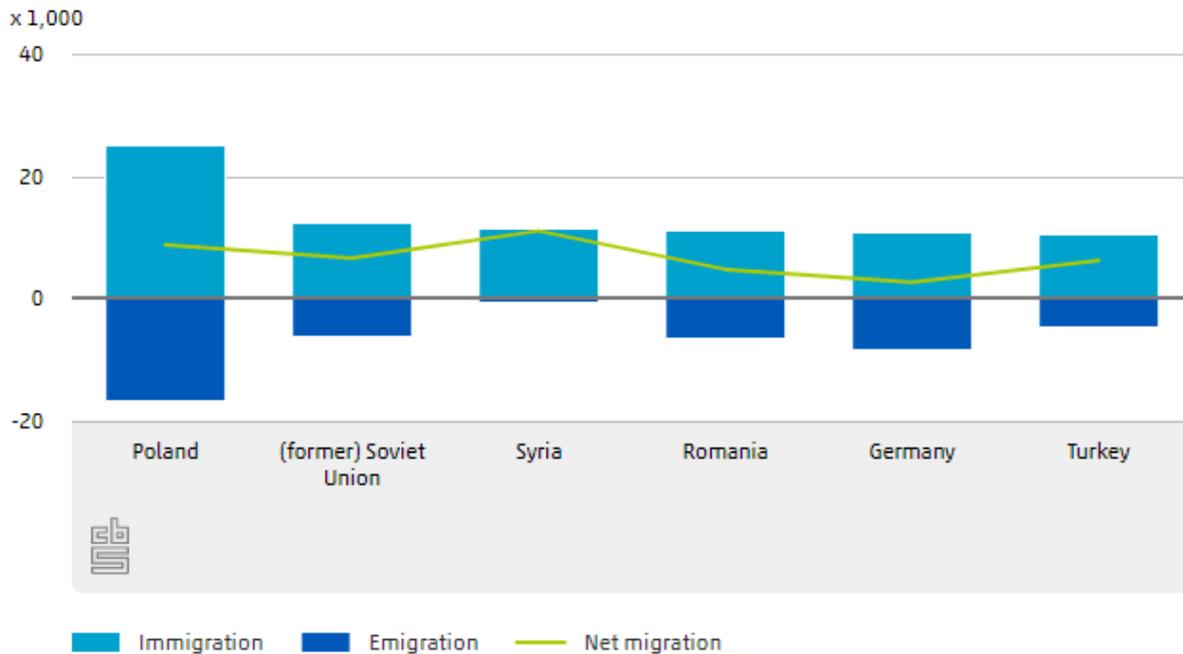
### Immigration by migration background, 2021





In 2021, most immigrants had a background in Poland: 25,269 persons. The majority of 56.7 percent were men. Persons with a background from (former) Soviet Union, Syria, Romania, Germany and Turkey also immigrated to the Netherlands relatively often in 2021m

### Top 6 migration backgrounds, 2021



Immigrants do not always settle in the Netherlands permanently. Some of them come here for a short stay, for instance to study or work. In the period 2006-2011, altogether 319,285 people from the EU and EFTA member states (Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland) immigrated to the Netherlands. Of this group, 49.9 percent had left again after three years. Ten years later, 72.0 percent of these immigrants were not living in the Netherlands anymore.

People from outside the EU/EFTA were less likely to emigrate after three years than EU and EFTA citizens: 36.7 percent. After ten years, 58.3 percent of immigrants from non-EU/EFTA countries were no longer living in the Netherlands.

### Reasons for immigration

People have different motives to come and live in the Netherlands. Labour migrants come to work while study migrants come for education, for example. For family migrants, the main reason is not work-related; they come to settle down with a partner or join a family member. Under EU legislation, all EU/EFTA citizens can start working in any other EU country without a work permit. This has been possible since 2007 for Poland and other countries which joined the EU in 2004; and since 2014 for Bulgaria and Romania (joined in 2007). As for immigrants from outside the EU/EFTA, their migration motives are more influenced by policy

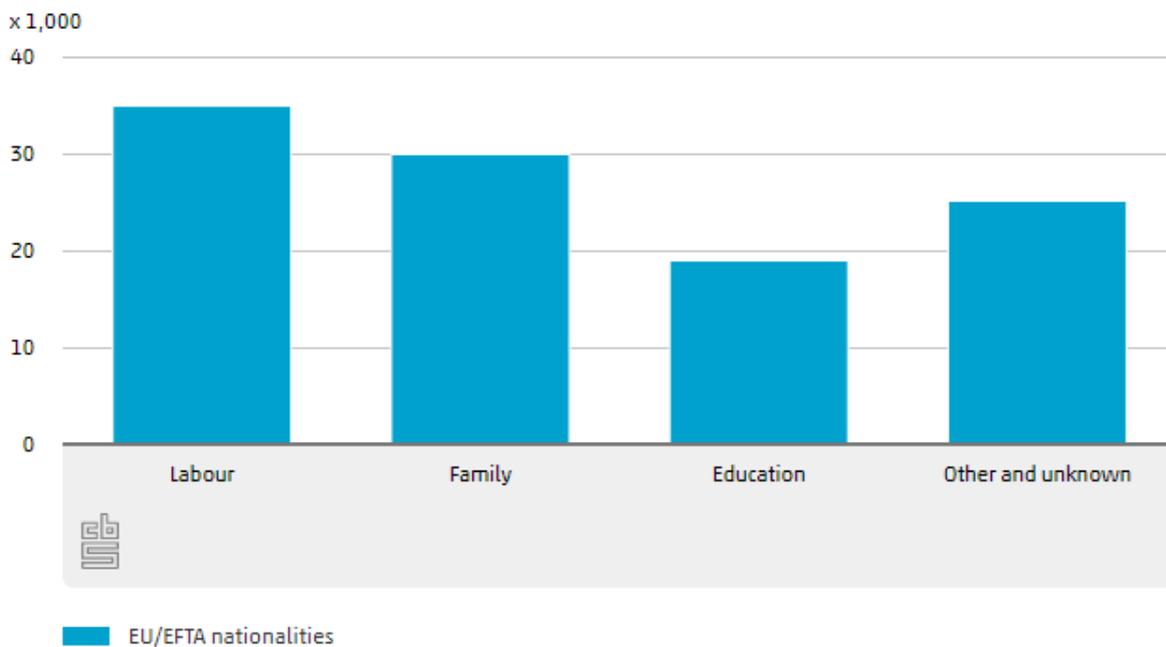


measures taken by the Dutch government and the EU, and by the political situation in their own country.

In 2020, labour was the most common motive for 35,040 immigrants from within the EU/EFTA. For 29,940 immigrants, the reason was family-related. Education was the reason for 18,985 EU/EFTA citizens. The motive is unknown for 25,105 EU/EFTA citizens who immigrated to the Netherlands.

Among non-EU/EFTA citizens, family was the most common migration motive for 21,350 persons. Education (12,950 persons) and asylum (12,310 persons) were also important reasons for non-EU/EFTA citizens to immigrate to the Netherlands.

### Immigrants by migration motive, EU/EFTA, 2020



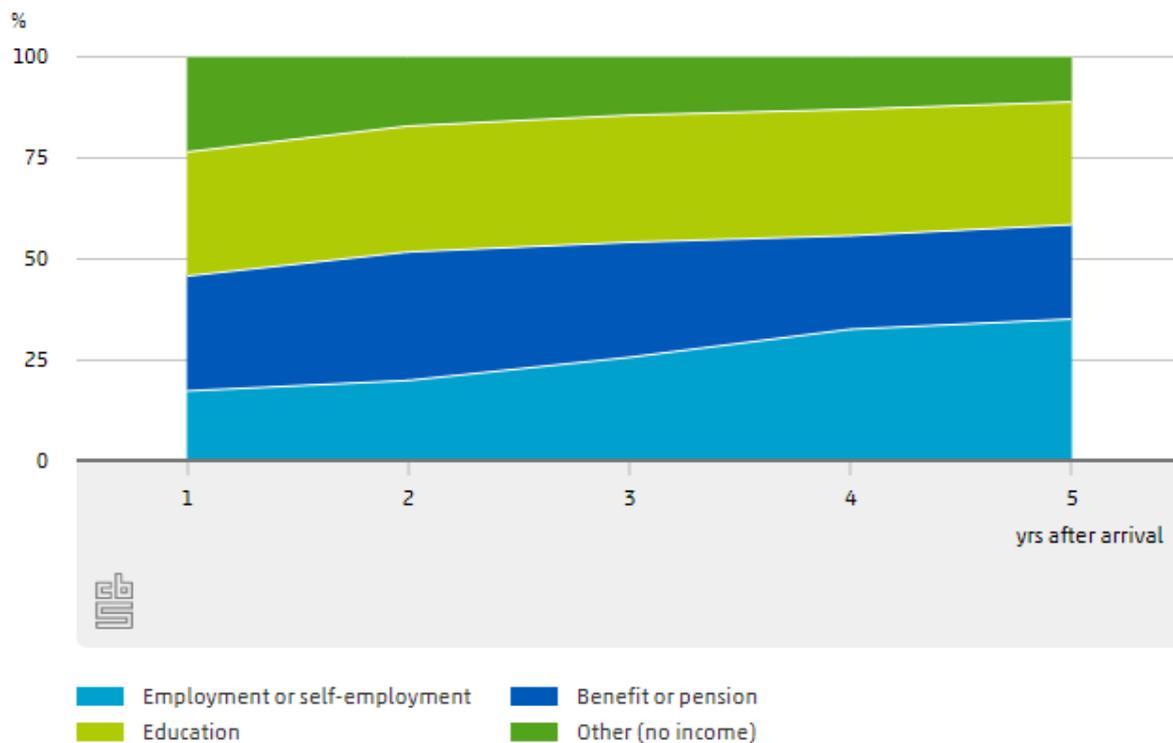
### Primary income sources

Of all EU/EFTA citizens who immigrated to the Netherlands in 2015 and were still living in the Netherlands after one year, 50.2 percent were employed or self-employed. After five years, 65.0 percent of the EU/EFTA migrants who were still living in the Netherlands at that time were employed or self-employed, 15.3 percent were schoolchildren or students and 7.5 percent were receiving a benefit and/or pension.

Among non-EU/EFTA citizens, the share in work is lower than among immigrants from the EU/EFTA. Of all immigrants from outside the EU/EFTA who entered the Netherlands in 2016 and were still living here after one year, 17.2 percent were employed or self-employed. After five years, this share was 34.9 percent. Immigrants from non-EU/EFTA countries are relatively more often schoolchildren or students or are more likely to receive a benefit or pension than immigrants from the EU/EFTA. After five years, 30.4 percent of non-EU/EFTA migrants who were still living in the Netherlands were schoolchildren or students, while 23.3 percent were benefit recipients.



## Primary income sources of immigrants from 2016, non-EU/EFTA



### Work and regulations

To work without restrictions in the Netherlands, one must possess the correct residence permit.<sup>55</sup> In October 2020, the national employment insurance agency UWV reports that 61% of people with a migrant background have some form of legal, tax-paying employment. For those without a migrant background, the figure is only slightly higher, at 69%. There are a range of different resident permits available depending on the applicant's age, duration of stay in the Netherlands, sector of work and skill level. Each permit provided different conditions to allow the individual to enjoy paid employment. Increasingly, the Netherlands is working to market itself as the international innovating economy for investment, innovation and high skills. In 2021, a new addition to the menu of possible visas was launched – the startup visa, which is designed to give Dutch start-up companies better opportunities to recruit foreign staff with special expertise.

Generally, third country nationals are granted significant support and information to access the Dutch labour market. Expat desks (physical and virtual) are present in at least 12 cities in the country to provide legal advice, referrals, workshops, as well as information about housing and relocation for foreign workers who are preparing to settle. Led by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Dutch government launched the NL Talent Coalition in 2017

<sup>55</sup> <https://includeu.eu/labour-inclusion-in-the-netherlands/>



in an effort to better attract and retain third country nationals as labour. Amidst the realization training and upskilling of the local population will not appease growing labour shortages, the NL Talent Coalition now works to “lay the red carpet” for international talent through the provision and adjustment of policy and procedure.

During the first six months after lodging an asylum claim, an asylum seeker cannot work at all. Following this initial six-month period, asylum seekers have restricted access to the labour market until the point when they secure a residence permit. This restrictive six-month period allows individuals to work for 24 out of 52 weeks. But only if they have a foreign nationals identity document, and if their employer is in possession of a “tewerkstellingsvergunning” certificate work permit. As certain conditions and legal obligations must be taken into account by the employer but also the migrant employee, this certificate verifies an employer’s capacity to recruit migrants and adhere to state regulations associated with this. For asylum seekers who pursue this option of working to receive an income while they are in the asylum procedure, a proportion of their standard living allowance will be deducted by the Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers (COA) – the national body that is responsible for the housing and wellbeing of asylum seekers in asylum centers. In reality, this rule could act as a deterrent for migrants to seek and declare paid employment during their asylum procedure. However, those who are still willing to work during their asylum procedure can benefit from establishing an early foothold on the career and integration path, with the intention of continuing their employment if/when their asylum claim is approved.

Once migrants receive a positive residence permit outcome, they are permitted to work free from restrictions, and can apply for jobs with all. Unfortunately, many migrants struggle to secure meaningful work until they improve their Dutch language skills, as well as upskill, retrain and become familiar with Dutch culture. As with most European countries, even individuals who conducted a highly skilled profession in their country of origin may be disappointed to find that they are required to conduct manual/menial labour or voluntary work until they integrate further and complete their state integration examination. A range of social benefits are available for migrants who have a residence permit but earn insufficient income on the legal job market. Social benefits include social assistance to cover daily living expenses such as food, clothes, transport. Social benefits are also available to cover or subsidize monthly housing rent, monthly health insurance costs, child- related expenses. When individuals are able to secure higher paying jobs, or find ways to increase their incomes, the availability of social benefits is reduced until the ideal outcome – which is that the migrant becomes financially self sufficient.

Those who receive a negative asylum claim, are not legally permitted to work under any conditions.

Migrants who wish to naturalize or for any other reason need to complete the state integration examination have been required to complete the Orientation on the Dutch Labour Market (ONA) examination, which serves as orientation, preparation and expectation setting



for migrants to enter the Dutch labour market. The entire process can take several months and entails two parts: producing a portfolio of assignments and a 64-hour course or final interview (in spoken Dutch). Exceptions to this integration obligation are foreseen, particularly if the individual already has secured employment.

Statistics Netherlands has calculated that the number of highly skilled migrant workers has grown from 2.7% to 4.2% of the labor force in the past fifteen years. Compared to other EU member states, the Dutch highly skilled migrant procedures are considered to be the most flexible and least complicated in the region. Employers must first secure a certification as a “recognised sponsor” through the Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND), indicating that they as an employer have the capacity and resources to support a migrant for the purposes of employment. Once the recognized sponsorship certification is secured, employers can proceed with an application for a visa on behalf of their new employee. A wide range of conditions determines which type of visa applies, the duration of validity, obligations of the employer and obligations of the employee. Rules can differ depending on details such as the age of the employee, their country of origin, the sector of work and even their job function.

### **Covid-19**

The Dutch integration policy and procedure centres itself upon the path for an individual to become financial and socially self-sufficient. Integration obligations require migrants to gain experience in the labour market not only to secure an income, but also to practice Dutch language skills, build a social network and contribute to their communities. The closure of workplaces, particularly in the hospitality sector due to the pandemic has hit migrants particularly hard. Many low skilled and vocational professions are dominated by migrants, but unfortunately, these are also the professions and sectors of the economy that cannot be implemented remotely or virtually (fruit picking, cleaning, construction work). Leaving many migrants without work and without social interaction. Migrants tend to work under temporary and flexible work contracts, which has resulted in unemployment without severance pay or other benefits.

The Dutch Refugee Agency reports that migrants have struggled to navigate through the pandemic what their rights and obligations are when it comes to work, income, their integration requirements, taxes and benefits. Standard avenues for information tend to only offer information in Dutch, and many support centers have closed. Particularly during the so called “first wave”, migrants struggled with the lack of clarity until the national and local governments established Covid-19 rights and obligations for migrants, and employers rolled out their own Covid-19 contingency plans.

For the undocumented migrants, an already dire situation has pushed many migrants into destitution. No work for these groups means no income. Undocumented migrants cannot access social benefits, cannot open a bank account and may struggle when standard support networks such as friends and family also lose their jobs due to the pandemic.



Completing integration classes, gaining credits through work participation and subsequently passing the state integration examination are critical steps toward meaningful employment for migrants. In April 2020, the integration exams of about 15,000 migrants were postponed. Such delays are expected to have a protracted effect, meaning that the current inability to practice Dutch language skills, to gain useful soft skills, to build a network, to strengthen job skills and to sustain a level of self-esteem needed to perform in the workplace, may have long term effects of a stagnation in an individual's progress toward meaningful work.

### **Policy developments and future outlook**

No national integration policies or measures were identified that were developed to counteract consequences of COVID-19 specifically for migrant women's integration. A significant change is foreseen in the civic integration policy as of 1 January 2022, though this does not address challenges experienced by migrant women specifically. Also, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy has proposed a programme for improving inclusiveness and diversity in entrepreneurship, responding in part to the low self-employment rate among women and first-generation migrants.

## **Examples of good practices**

This part of the report will present good practices applied in the Netherlands in the process of inclusion of immigrants. Please note that the paragraphs below do not constitute an exhaustive list of good practices.

### **Good practice 1: VOI-Pilot on female family migrants**

The VOI-Pilot on female family is a local ad hoc project which targets third country nationals position in the areas of labour market, education and vocational training, language training and overall civic integration. The pilot projects run from 15 August 2019 and lasted two years. The pilot is a tailor-made measure (only migrant women) which targets two types of women; women who arrived in the Netherlands to join a beneficiary of international protection and women who received a regular residence permit to join their partner or family member in the Netherlands. The target group of the VOI Programme concerns persons who are subject to a civic integration requirement, i.e. third-country national newcomers. This good practice was proposed by an expert from the Knowledge Platform on Integration and Society (KIS), as the project was effective in reaching empowerment goals for the women involved. This was also highlighted in the project's final report. The VOI-Pilot comprised six pilots, in which municipalities experimented with different trajectories for supporting female newcomers who arrived as family migrants, aimed at strengthening their labour market position. The pilots were in response to the weaker labour market position of female newcomers. In addition, while municipalities are – in line with the Participation Act – responsible for providing labour market integration support for this target group, they are not



always able to do so. The participating municipalities also experienced this challenge, noticing specifically that female family migrants are not always oriented to finding employment due to e.g. lower levels of education, a lack of work experience and lack of a professional identity. The projects aimed to activate female family migrants, although it was noted that it would not be possible to achieve paid employment for all participants within the scope of the project. A secondary objective was to improve Dutch language attainment. The measure applied strategies and methods identified in research as potentially increasing labour market participation among women. For example, it was found that empowerment – improving self-confidence and confidence in labour market opportunities – could increase motivation among women to find work. The pilots were implemented by six different municipalities which partnered with a local implementing organisation for the project. The measure was funded by the Ministry of SZW and consisted of the following three strategies.

### **1. Identifying potential participants**

Potential participants were identified by municipal caseworkers based firstly on their own databases. Secondly, recent family migrants who had signed the participation statement as part of the civic integration trajectory were also known to the municipality. The remaining women were identified through an NGO that was in contact with beneficiaries of international protection.

### **2. Information sessions, personal intake and ensuring accessibility**

Most of the pilots invested heavily in the recruitment and intake of participants. Some held information sessions to which potential participants and their partners were invited. In some pilots, information sessions were followed up by a personal intake, if possible at women's own homes, so that caseworkers could get a view of their living situation. Several municipalities provided transportation and childcare to enable women to attend group meetings that were part of the pilot. In five pilots, women were assigned a buddy or coach, in addition to a caseworker, and in general all pilots used a tailor-made approach to support the participants.

### **3. Creating a safe environment in group sessions and carefully selecting groups**

All of the pilots organised group meetings aimed at empowering women, with the exception of one pilot where meetings were aimed at language acquisition.<sup>78</sup> In the empowerment sessions, trainers strived to create a safe environment and address the women in a positive way. Attention was paid to the composition of group, e.g. creating a separate group for women who spoke (some) English and a group for older, illiterate women with a shared cultural background. Several groups comprised women who spoke the same language or used an interpreter to ensure participants could communicate.

Evaluations of these pilots took place. The quantitative outcomes were as followed - after the pilots, women were more often active in volunteering, internships, education/training or work experience placements. At the start of the pilot, 35% of the 168 participants were active in



some form of civic participation (internship, volunteering, education, language training, work experience placements, paid employment). At the end of the pilot, 51% of the women were active, mostly in volunteering (35 women). Only 12 participants obtained paid employment by the end of the pilots. It was thus concluded that after the pilots, women were more often active in volunteering, internships, education/training or work experience placements.<sup>80</sup> Qualitative outcomes showed that empowerment is a necessary step for becoming active in civic participation or orienting on seeking employment: The objective of the pilots was to find out what works, and how to improve the position of female family migrants. In this regard, the municipalities participating in the pilots concluded that women who have arrived in the Netherlands for family reunification with beneficiaries of international protection ('nareizigers' in Dutch) should be considered a separate target group from other female family migrants, despite both being newcomers. As only a small part of the women who participated in the pilots were family migrants, conclusions could only be drawn about what worked for those that were beneficiaries of international protection. For them, it was found that empowerment is a necessary step for becoming active in civic participation or orienting on seeking employment. Existing support for newcomers and unemployed persons often disregards this element of empowerment. In the pilots, it was found that women's self-confidence improved and that participants started thinking about their own abilities, desires and skills, rather than focusing only on their families.<sup>81</sup> Drawing on this final point, the expert who proposed this project as a good practice also identified a broader challenge regarding measures targeting integration of female migrants. They noted that this group is targeted mainly through pilot projects, and that ownership and continuation of the efforts is not ensured. This would be better addressed by a systematic focus on the impact of (integration) policy on women and on their specific needs and strengths.

### **Good practice 2: Durven Doen!**

This is a local systematic initiative (multi-year / long team) focussed on the area of civic integration for migrants in general (not only third-country nationals, but also EU nationals). In contrast to the tailor-made VOI-pilot, Durven Doen is mainstream measure (migrant women are taken into account while the measure has a wider target group). This program targets single mother who live in poverty which often concerns single migrant mothers. The organisation Super Single Moms started in 2008 to strengthen the position of single mothers. The Training module 'Durven Doen!' started in 2018 and is still in place up till today, it is promoted by the Ministry of OCW and co-created by the Ministry of SZW. This good practice was proposed by experts from SZW and OCW.<sup>83</sup> According to these experts, the training program by the foundation Single Supermom is effective and has an important role within the Hague as it reached first generation migrant women that were not reached before. The gap between the first and second generation became smaller. The programme was also considered a good practice in a report of Movisie and the Verwey-Jonker research institute, for successfully reaching the target group and improving their participation.



In all municipalities and sub-municipalities the same strategy was used to recruit participants: a Facebook campaign, kickoff meetings for mothers and distributing flyers. At the end of the program the mothers filled in a survey and the coordinators asked for oral feedback. The results showed that the organisation was satisfied with the number of participants and also with the results. Most participants graded the project with an 8 (out of 10) or higher and said it helped them break out of their isolated position in society. In most municipalities 1/3 of the participants did not finish the program. No specific plans were made to overcome this problem.

## Current needs of target groups (VET staff and immigrants, especially women)

### Challenges specifically for migrant women

Statistical research in the Netherlands<sup>56</sup> shows challenges experienced by migrant women, in particular women with a non-Western immigration background (including secondgeneration migrants), firstly with regards to socio-economic characteristics. Non-Western migrant women are relatively often unemployed, not economically independent, and feel discouraged from seeking employment. Their position deteriorated during the COVID-19 pandemic, as unemployment rose while it decreased for persons without an immigration background. Secondly, non-Western migrant women on average have a higher cost of healthcare. Finally, migrant women have lower education levels than female nationals.

However, for the highest levels of education, migrant women show the same rate as female nationals, and on average their education levels are higher than migrant men. An additional challenge was identified based on reports, i.e. that female beneficiaries of international protection encounter a disadvantage in accessing the labour market, as municipal caseworkers who are responsible for supporting unemployed persons tend to focus their efforts on the person with a smaller distance from the labour market, which is often the male partner.

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<sup>56</sup> [https://www.emnnetherlands.nl/sites/default/files/2022-11/EMN\\_NLcontribution\\_loMW\\_def.pdf](https://www.emnnetherlands.nl/sites/default/files/2022-11/EMN_NLcontribution_loMW_def.pdf)



Table 3: Unemployment rates for third-country men and women and female nationals, age class 20-64, 2016-2020, Netherlands

	Total population	TCN migrant women*	TCN migrant men*	Female nationals
2016	5.5%	16.9%	12.3%	5.7%
2017	4.4%	13.3%	11.9%	4.6%
2018	3.4%	11.1%	8.9%	3.3%
2019	3.0%	10.3%	7.9%	2.7%
2020	3.3%	n/a	n/a	3.2%

\*TCN defined as non-EU28

Source: Eurostat, indicator lfsa\_urgan.

Table 4: Activity rates for third-country men and women and female nationals, age class 20-64, 2016-2020, Netherlands

	Total population	TCN migrant women*	TCN migrant men*	Female nationals
2016	81.6%	47.2%	71.8%	77.0%
2017	81.6%	47.3%	69.9%	77.4%
2018	82.0%	50.8%	71.5%	77.9%
2019	82.6%	52.4%	77.8%	78.8%
2020	82.7%	n/a	n/a	79.3%

\*TCN defined as non-EU28

Source: Eurostat, indicator lfs\_argan.

The data above show that each year in the period 2016-2019, a higher share of TCN (non EU28) migrant women are unemployed compared to TCN migrant men and female nationals. On average, the unemployment rate of migrant women during this period is 12.9%, while for migrant men this is 10.4% and for female nationals this is only 4.08%. Nevertheless, there has been a 1.3 Labour market decrease of the unemployment rate since 2016 among all groups (data for 2020 not available). Activity rates are also lower among TCN migrant women compared to TCN migrant men and female nationals each year in the period 2016-2019, but have increased for all groups.

## Education

According to the Eurostat data on this subject, in 2019 (the latest available year for which data are complete), 20.5% of female nationals aged 18-64 had an education level of less than primary, primary, or lower secondary education (levels 0-2). For TCN migrant women, the share of women who had lower levels of education was significantly higher at 35.6%. For TCN migrant men, the share that had lower levels of education was higher still: 39.8%. For upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, in 2019 42.4% of female nationals had completed these levels. This share was lower for TCN migrant men (at 30.8%) and women (at 22.7%). For tertiary education, among all groups TCN migrant women had the highest rate of tertiary education at 35.9%. For female nationals this was 37.1% and for TCN migrant men 26.7% had completed tertiary education. In short, in 2019 TCN migrant women on average had a higher level of education than TCN migrant men. Compared to female nationals however, they were overrepresented in the lowest levels of education (less than primary, primary and lower education) and underrepresented in middle levels of education (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education). TCN migrant women have a high rate of tertiary education compared to TCN migrant men, and are comparable with the rate of female nationals



## Conclusions and recommendations

### **Main challenges & opportunities**

Firstly, with regard to socio economic characteristics, Western migrant women are relatively often unemployed, not economically independent, and feel discouraged from seeking employment. Also, non-Western migrant women on average have a higher cost of healthcare. In addition, migrant women are overrepresented among lower education levels. However, for the highest levels of education, migrant women show the same rate as female nationals. Lastly, female beneficiaries of international protection encounter a disadvantage in accessing the labour market, as local caseworkers tend to focus their efforts on the person with a smaller distance from the labour market, which are usually men. Investing in empowerment, expanding female beneficiaries of international protection's social network and using a tailor-made approach when supporting migrant women, were identified as opportunities for the integration of women. Furthermore, lessons that have been drawn from projects focused on improving labour market participation among beneficiaries of international protection specifically can be applied to other target groups as well.

### **Key characteristics of the national integration policies and measures**

Migrant women are not specifically targeted in national government programmes, but are addressed as part of a wider group. This concerns third-country national migrant women addressed as part of a wider group of migrants (including also EU citizens with migrant background) or a wider group of women. In general government programmes, the integration of migrant women is mostly covered in relation to the labour market. There are also programmes related to the sectors emancipation, education, civic integration and healthcare. However, migrant women are not specifically targeted.

### **Link challenges and future policy plans**

There are several on-going programmes addressing labour market integration of migrants (Programme VIA) and women (Vakkundig aan het werk, Economische veerkracht van vrouwen). The programmes aim to draw lessons for local authorities on how to support the labour market integration of third-country national newcomers and of (migrant) women. This links to one of the challenges identified for migrant women, i.e. their disadvantaged position on the labour market. In the area of entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy has submitted a proposal for a programme (WINECON) which aims to make entrepreneurship more diverse and inclusive to create wider prosperity, in particular by better involving women and persons with a migrant background. This relates specifically to the challenge that migrant women are underrepresented in self-employment statistics.



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## Part 5 – Desk research in Italy

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## Introduction

This research is part of the InclusionToC project, which aims to support migrant women in their inclusion in VET education through the Theory of Change.

This report will begin with a presentation of the socio-economic background of migrant women residing in Italy, together with their needs referring to their social and vocational inclusion, as well as the needs of the VET staff working with them. Afterwards, an in-depth analysis of the good practices put into practice by VET organisation to promote their inclusion will conclude the research.

The research will conclude with the last section which will present possible recommendations based on the findings from the literature review.

## Migration to Italy: main features

Differently to emigration, which has been a long-lasting characterising phenomenon in Italy, migration towards the country is fairly recent, also compared to other EU countries, as it dates back only to the 1970s. Today, according to the most recent statistics from the National Statistical Institute (ISTAT), around **5 million people** out of the 60 million residents in the country have foreign origins, and slightly more than half of them are **women** (ISTAT, 2022).

However, UNDESA data from 2020 estimates that, if we include irregular flows and naturalised citizens, about 6,4 million migrants lived in Italy, around 10% of the whole population. Slightly more than 3 million of them come from non-EU countries; among the main countries of origin, **Romania** (16%), **Albania** (7,6%), **Morocco** (7,1), **Ukraine** (4%) and **China** (3,7%). Nonetheless, these older and more consolidated flows have decreased during these last years. (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (UNDESA), 2020).

In terms of **place of residence**, the majority of the foreign population in Italy lives in the **Northern and Central** regions of the country (Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, Trentino Alto Adige, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Tuscany and Latium), whereas fewer live in the Southern regions (Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria) or in the Islands (Sicily and Sardinia), with foreign women following similar patterns (ISTAT, 2022).

**Gender-wise**, the majority of foreign residents in Italy in 2020 were women (**54%**), but proportion of men and women in the migration flows vary depending on the country or geographical region of origin; in fact, flows from **Western Europe** are characterised by a majority of presence of **women**, especially from places like Romania (60%) and Ukraine (78%). Women originally from these countries, end up being mostly employed as domestic workers in Italy.



Other flows, for example the more recent **irregular ones from Africa and Asia**, mostly comprise **males**. For what concerns the older communities, such as the **Albanians, Moroccan and Chinese**, they are characterised by more **balanced flows**, mainly due to the nature of their migration being family migration and reunifications (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (UNDESA), 2020).

Research conducted in Italy shows three main phases of women's migration to Italy;

1. 1970's, during which migrant women mostly arrived mainly from Catholic countries from Latin and Central America, Cape Verde, Philippines, Eritrea, and, once in Italy, would be employed as domestic workers in middle-class families.
2. 1980s, during which countries of origin differentiated and job-segregation decreased. Nonetheless, their migration remained an invisible phenomenon for both scholars and the public sphere.
3. 1990s, during which women became gained some more visibility mainly for reasons related to family reunification, which involved also non-working women, and sex trafficking. (Giorgi, 2012)

Today, the increasing presence of migrant women, which is characterised by a high degree of internal differences in terms of migratory experience and legal status, caused them to gain more visibility in the public sphere and in the press, modifying the predominant representation of migration as an essentially male process (Giorgi, 2012).

### Migration to Italy: working conditions

The **living conditions** of migrant residents in Italy is often vulnerable; in terms of occupation, the report "*XI Rapporto Gli stranieri nel mercato del lavoro in Italia*" (11<sup>th</sup> report on foreigners in the labour market in Italy) published in 2021 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, shows for example how the instabilities caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, have **drastically affected the migrant population** in the country. In fact, although only **10%** of workers in the country are foreign (2,3 million out of the 60 million residents), they represent **35%** of those workers who have **lost their jobs in 2020** (Integrazionemigranti.gov.it, 2020).

If compared to Italians, occupied workers have decreased by **1,4%**, but non-EU by **15%** and EU by **19%**. Among them, women paid an extremely high toll; their occupation decreased by 10%, compared to the 2% of Italian women).

This report shows how foreign workers find it easier to lose their job if compared to Italian workers, and the risk is maximised for **young low-skilled foreign women** who are occupied in **low-skill professions** and who live in the Southern regions of Italy. (Integrazionemigranti.gov.it, 2020)



Moreover, foreign women are much more **exposed to unemployment** than Italian women. In fact, despite being only 8,5% of the female residents in Italy, they represent **16% of all unemployed people in the country**.

Another impactful data refers to the inactivity of these women; in fact, almost half of foreign women residing in Italy are inactive (La vulnerabilità delle donne straniere, 2021).

Furthermore, those women who do work, are frequently employed in work that is poorly paid and that requires little to no qualification. Among them almost **one out of every five** works in cleaning. Consequently, **migrant women earn less** and their income is below the national level. Fewer than a fifth (17%) of women immigrants in Italy have attended higher education and, comparing the areas of origin, this is lowest among African women (9% compared with 23% in Europe) (Infomigrants, 2022).

The situation is not much different for those women who have qualifications; in 2020, 42% of women workers were higher skilled than required from their current job. Despite overqualification being an issue also for Italian women, percentages for foreign women are almost twice as higher. (StranieriinItalia.it, 2021).

Lastly, the risk of unemployment is higher for low-skilled people, and it increases during crisis as unskilled workers are more vulnerable to employment. As a consequence, low-qualified migrant women represent a very **high-risk** category of workers (Angotti, 2018).

## VET in Italy

For what concerns VET institutions, In Italy there are general rules and common principles on a national level laid down by education and employment ministries, but each region as well as the autonomous provinces have legislative power over VET, and are in charge of VET programmes and apprenticeship type schemes (CEDEFOP, 2021).

In Italy, accessible education is a right guaranteed by the Constitution, and compulsory education lasts for 10 years, up to age 16. At age 14, students have to choose between general education, secondary VET school pathways and regional VET pathways.

The VET programmes offered at upper secondary level are the following:

1. 5-year programmes at technical schools or at professional education diplomas. Upon their completion, students receive respectively either a technical education diploma, or a professional education diploma.

These programmes combine general education and Ver and can also be delivered in the form of alternance training. Moreover, they grant students the access to higher education.

2. 3-year programmes, which lead to a vocational qualification. At the end of this programme, students can also decide to attend 1 additional year, which lead to a 4-



year vocational diploma and they are allowed to enroll in the fifth year of the State education system and sit the State exam for a general, technical or professional education diploma.

3. 4-year programmes, which lead to a technical professional diploma. (CEDEFOP, 2021)

All upper secondary education programmes are school-based, but they can also be delivered as apprenticeships<sup>57</sup>. (CEDEFOP, 2021).

At post-secondary level, VET is offered as higher technical education for graduates of 5-year upper secondary programmes or 4-year leFP programmes who passed entrance exams:

1. Higher technical education and training courses: 1-year post-secondary non-academic programmes leading to a high technical specialisation certificate
2. Higher technical institute programmes: 2-to-3-year post-secondary non-academic programmes which lead to a high-level technical diploma.

These courses are organised by foundations representing universities, schools, training centres, enterprises and local bodies. (CEDEFOP, 2021)

Furthermore, VET is offered to adults as well, and is provided by a different range of public and private institutions. It includes programmes leading to upper secondary VET qualifications to **upskill**, meaning to ensure progression opportunities for the low-skilled; these are provided by provincial centres for adult education under the remit of the education ministry.

### VET in Italy: participation and transition from education to the job market

In terms of participation, the share of IVET students as a percentage of all upper secondary students is higher (55.8%) than the EU average (47%). Nonetheless, Italy presents **fewer adults involved in lifelong learning (8.3%) than the EU as a whole (10,8%)**, which is well below the average target of 15% set by the *Education and training 2020 strategic framework*. Moreover, in Italy adults who present a low level of educational attainment or who are unemployed, are **less likely** to engage in lifelong learning compared to the EU average (CEDEFOP, 2017).

According to research carried out by the National Institute for Public Policy Analysis (INAPP) in 2017, higher technical education and training and vocational education and training are **very efficient** in supporting the access to the labour market.

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<sup>57</sup> Apprenticeships are available at all levels and programmes and is defined as an “open-ended employment contract”



This analysis showed the importance of IVET providers in establishing contacts and networks with employers to support graduates in their job hunt.

For what concerns the **type of contract**, 49% of the interviewees from higher technical education and trainings have stated to have received a fixed-term contract, 38% a permanent contract, 8.4% are self-employed and 4,9% are para-subordinate<sup>58</sup> (CEDEFOP, 2020).

For what concerns graduates from vocational education and training institutes, positive results emerged too. In fact, more than 60% of the 9000 graduates with a professional qualification (meaning that they have graduated from a three-year programme) have stated to be employed in the third year after obtaining their qualification, among them 90% have contracts, mostly fixed-term ones. **More than one third** of permanent employment contracts are in apprenticeship. Of the total, 23% are still looking for a job, 10% are continuing their education or training, 2% are engaged in some way and 4.3% are inactive (CEDEFOP, 2020).

Gender-wise, INAPP shows a **general absence of women** from VET institutions. For example, for the academic year 2019-2020, men represented 61% of the enrolled students in VET courses around the country, whereas women only 39%.

Lastly, it's important to remark how students of foreign origin represented **only 16%** of the national total (INAPP, 2022).

## Good practices

The list that follows provides with some examples of good practices adopted either on a national or local level aiming at the inclusion of migrant people in Italy. These practices respond mainly to few important needs of migrant people in Italy, namely learning the language and finding an occupation (avoiding illegal pathways).

### 1. Free and compulsory language courses

The National Plan for Integration adopted in 2017 by the National Coordination Board stressed the importance of free compulsory courses for the inclusion of foreign people in the Italian labour market. For this same reason, with the "Integration agreement", free and compulsory language courses have been introduced in 2011.

Nonetheless, lack of fundings for the implementation of this policy is often highlighted as an obstacle. Annually, Italian authorities only invest 21 million euros on these courses, way less than a country like Germany, which invests 240 million euros.

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<sup>58</sup> Type of contract for which a worker is legally self-employed but who often relies economically on a single employer. (CEDEFOP, 2020)



It appears therefore clear that **adequate funding** needs to be allocated to ensure that language courses can become accessible to all newcomers and ensure equality of opportunities.

Moreover, in some schools and educational environments there are linguistic facilitators, namely professionals who have expertise in teaching Italian as second language. Their role is to work alongside with the foreign student to manage workshop on Italian as second language in schools (both during school hours and outside of school hours), for example helping students doing their homework to make sure they can continue on the same path as their local peers and not be left behind (SIRIUS).

Despite this important role, the presence of linguistic facilitators is not nation-wide, as is mostly implemented through European projects and European funds (Mazzocato, 2007).

## 2. Legal architecture combatting irregular labour to support policymaking

In order to ensure that newcomers do not fall into irregular economy, in the last decade Italian policies have aimed to contrast irregular employment through a strategy of strengthening of the administrative and criminal sanctions. In particular, in 2016 an *anti-capolarato* law has been introduced in the Criminal Code to condemn illicit intermediation and exploitation of labour.

## 3. Good practice for the labour market inclusion of migrants: COMMIT project

COMMIT project (AMIF- Competenze Migranti in Toscana) proposed to improve the system of inclusion in the labour market in Tuscany, with a focus in particular on involving migrant people, refugee seekers and holders of international protection. This allows for an empowerment of these people and an opportunity to be present in the their local territory.

One of the central points of the project is to **valorise the competences** of foreign residents in relation to the needs of the local labour market and to better stress the contribute that each individual can have on the territory. The project aims therefore to ease the work of the employer centers, by consolidating the collaboration with reception centers through empowerment activities specific for the target group (Regione Toscana ).

## 4. MoU and guidelines promoting the inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in the labour market

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is the result of a synergy between local authorities, labour associations, trade unions, the diocese and a migrant rights association carried out by Municipality of Bagnoli di Sopra and Irecoop Veneto, in the Veneto region in Italy.



The main implementing agencies are the hosting managing authorities (cooperatives and other), local authorities and the territorial network of enterprises. These agencies will be involved in a common strategy for implementing asylum seekers and refugees' inclusion in the labour market. The MoU was approved in 2018 by the "*Consiglio Territoriale per l'Immigrazione*", and is currently waiting for final approval from the Ministry of Interior.

The guidelines of the MoU have been applied since August 2017 by some Cooperatives, with good results. The testing phase has involved 200 participants and it was composed by 5 parts:

1. Reception: sharing of an inclusion agreement
2. Implementation of literacy and language education; intensive Italian class (15 hours/week) + civic and citizenship education + labour law and immigration law; involvement in a social activity. This step lasts 90 days
3. Orientation training; 90 days' orientation training (25h/week), Italian language class (8h/week), social activity (8h/week).
4. Supporting job placement; foster internships (3-12 months for 25h/week), specific professional training

The project ends with the conclusion of a job contract and the exit from the centre during the following 90 days (Mateus & Pinho, 2018).

All these good practices show the attempts from local governments and entities to contribute to the inclusion of women in the social tissue of the country. Nonetheless, migrant women represent a complex target group with some needs that can be specifically related to their migratory experience. In the following section, an in-depth analysis of the main needs is introduced, and it's discussed how it intertwines with VET providers capacity and needs.

## Actual needs of the target groups

For what concerns the needs of migrant women in Italy, research conducted by OXFAM reports refugee and asylum seeker women as the **most vulnerable** in terms of employment, due mainly to their low, if not non-existent, level of education, and to the high percentage of human trafficking victims among them (WEMIN, 2019).

Moreover, the same research shows how migrant students have a **higher repetition rate** than native students and a **higher early school leaving rate**. This shows how VET providers should be given the appropriate tools to be able to respond to women's needs and to be more inclusive.

In order to do so, needs analysis should be a more constant monitoring action to be taken. For example, a local needs analysis conducted in the context of Palermo in 2018 shows that the



labour market of the city of Palermo has the need for both specialised as well as non-specialised workers; the service sector, in particular the food sector requires specialised personnel, such as chefs with experience, but also waiters who can speak at least two languages.

Other local sectors that often offer jobs are those related to cleaning services, pubs, sale assistants, mainly for those businesses managed by foreign citizens (CESIE).

Furthermore, a shared need of both women and VET is the nursery for the students' children. In fact, most migrant women who are intentioned to attend courses are mothers who cannot afford to leave their children alone, as their husband is probably working, sometimes also far from home. If VET institutions can offer a nursery service to women, this will allow them to more easily attend the courses (Openpolis, 2021).

Subsequently, it appears clear that VET offer that can focus on these **specific** needs respond better to the needs of the labour market and thus enhances the chances for VET students, and especially for migrant students, to find a job more easily.

According to research carried out by CEDEFOP in 2018, it's essential to **carry out skills assessment prior to the design of qualifications** as this kind of analysis represents a huge asset to provide useful to all stakeholders of the education system in charge of planning and implementing professional training pathways that are **as coherent as possible** with the needs of the labour market. (Angotti, 2018)

Lastly, lack of funding is a major obstacle for all parties involved, and it also affects the quality of the offer. In fact, the shortcoming or the actual lack of funding doesn't allow VET providers to receive the appropriate equipment required for the students to make practice, which hinders the quality of the education that they are able to offer.

Subsequently, this also affects the chances of the students to get jobs up to their competences and expectations.

## Conclusions and recommendations

When analysing specifically the needs of migrant women, OXFAM Italy explains that interventions should be designed with a focus on the right of foreign women to **become autonomous, informed and active citizens** in their new country, which means that on one side, interventions should allow women to acquire knowledge on the local society and its administrative system together with their rights and duties as citizens; on the other, practices should foster their self esteem and self confidence, to help them become more autonomous in their life.



Moreover, these interventions could be made with the involvement of certain target groups depending on the tackled situation, firstly schools. Findings show that, due to cultural or religious reasons, some Muslim women may be reluctant or even prohibited from participating in activities fostering their social inclusion and taking place outside their family environment, but research in the Spanish context shows that projects that involve the school environment can help curbing or eliminating doubts or opposition to participation.

These findings make it clear that policies should adopt an intersectional approach, considering the different levels of discriminations/struggles that different women coming from different backgrounds may find themselves facing, especially in a new country (WEMIN, 2019).

Furthermore, as shown by INAPP data previously presented (INAPP, 2022), the presence of women in VET Italy is lower than that of men; this is a clear sign that VET should become more accessible and more tailored to women's needs.

The low participation of women may be explained by the **gendered distribution of roles** in the household; men work (and therefore invest their time and resources in their education and training), whereas women stay home and take care of the children. In order to make it easier for women to leave the house and invest in their education, some policies should be implemented; for example, research shows that the presence of nurseries in educational institutional represents an essential support for women who are also mothers, and especially for foreign women who have more limited access to public resources, as it provides them with a service that is able to look after the children and give them more time and resources available to fulfil their life objectives outside of the house (Openpolis, 2021).

Moreover, according to the literature findings, linguistic facilitators can play an important role in making education accessible to foreign students of all ages (Mazzocato, 2007).

In a short-term perspective, and in lack of funding for more long-term planning, an alternative could be to pay particular attention on the language chosen to convey the given information to students; the vocabulary should be easy and straight-forward, and definitions should be provided whenever some more complicated terms are mentioned.

Furthermore, a major characteristic of Italy is represented by the difference among the different regions, in terms of territory, needs, features, working opportunities and in general, living conditions. In order to respond better to the specific needs of the local context, VET offer should be constituted after an analysis of these needs.

Nonetheless, this recommendation is strictly linked to the last point of this section, which is the lack of funding. Lack of funding is a remarkable obstacle that hinders the social inclusion of migrant women in Italy and the implementation of good practices and policies.



It appears therefore clear how investments are required in order to ensure the feasibility as well as the sustainability of these actions.

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## Part 6 – Desk research in Romania

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## Introduction

Over the past ten years, the EU has seen a great amount of migrants and refugees coming to live within its Member States. The first issue to be observed is that the MS tend to see the integration of these newcomers as a challenge rather than an opportunity. Economists agree that the presence of immigrants is highly valuable for European economies and will help to counterbalance the ageing European population. The integration of migrants in the labour market is thus vital. VET education is an important framework for the inclusion of the most disadvantaged groups in society and more especially migrants. VET institutions themselves are not always adapted to the needs and specificities of migrants, and women migrants in particular. This specific group may encounter various obstacles including cultural differences, linguistic barriers or specific discriminations because of their gender.

The idea of InclusionToC is to use the Theory of Change (TOC) to foster the inclusion of under-privileged groups such as migrant women in VET education. The TOC is a reliable, standardized method with the advantage to engage all project participants in a co-creation process, namely involving target groups in changemaking. Indeed, TOC is a “comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context.” One strength of the TOC is that it focuses on long-term goals. VET staff and trainers need an approach encompassing long-term goals in order to improve the inclusion of women migrants in VET centers and in society in general.

The specific objectives this project is trying to reach are:

- To upskill VET staff and trainers to use the TOC
- To upskill migrant women by enhancing their soft skills and leadership competences
- To raise VET staff and trainers’ awareness about the obstacles related to the intersection of migration and gender inequality
- To help VET organizations use a participatory method (involving VET staff and migrant women) to apply TOC in VET institutions
- To empower migrant women and enhance their soft and leadership skills, to work as role-models in their own communities

## Non-EU citizen socio-economic background

Non-EU citizens were at a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion than citizens of other EU Member States or national citizens in 2019.

Across the whole of the EU, 45% of non-EU citizens were assessed to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared with 26% of citizens of other EU Member States and 20% of national citizens.

Being at risk of poverty or social exclusion means to be in at least one of the following three conditions:



- at risk of poverty after social transfers (income poverty),
- severely materially deprived, or
- living in households with very low work intensity.

In 2020, 24.2% of children (less than 18 years old) in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared with 21.7% of adults (18–64) and 20.4% of older people (65 or over).

Factors influencing the risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU in 2020 included:

- **work intensity:** 71.9% of the population aged less than 60 years living in very low work intensity households with dependent children were at risk of poverty;
- **level of education:** 50.5% of children whose parents' level of education was low were at risk of poverty compared with 7.7% of children whose parents' level of education was high;
- **type of household:** households composed of a single person with dependent children (42.1%), single-person households (33.2%) and households composed of two adults with three or more dependent children (29.6 %) had the highest risk of poverty or social exclusion;
- **migrant background:** children with at least one parent with a migrant background were at a greater risk of poverty than children whose parents were both native-born (32.9% compared with 15.3%);
- **living conditions:** 14.1% of households composed of a single person with dependent children were severely materially and socially deprived compared with 7.5% of all households with dependent children. (Eurostat, 2020)

### Children most at risk in Romania, least in Slovenia and Czechia

Among the EU countries, Romania recorded the highest rate of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (41.5%) in 2020, followed by Bulgaria (36.2%), Spain (31.8%) and Greece (31.5%). (Eurostat, 2021)

Romania is a country of emigration, with the number of departures greater than the one of arrivals, and the presence of foreigners in the country concentrated in the main cities. Official statistics show no major fluctuations in recent years, but a steady increase in the number of third-country nationals (TCNs) was observed in the period between 2013 and 2020, mostly due to the increase in the number of migrant workers.

The Romanian integration programme targets the beneficiaries of international protection who possess either a refugee or a subsidiary protection status. The programme consists of a series of services offered through a cooperation among public institutions, local communities and non-governmental organisations, all under the coordination of the General Inspectorate for Immigration.



The programme includes counselling services and support activities ensuring access to employment, housing, medical and social assistance, social security and education.

It also includes language courses and civic education, but does not provide vocational training or labour market assistance.

The programme generally lasts for 12 months and enrollment needs to start within 30 days of the date of granting protection. Participation is not mandatory. However, enrollment does offer certain benefits, such as non-reimbursable financial aid and accommodation in the Governmental Reception Centres for Asylum Seekers for a limited period - usually 12 months - available to low income refugees. Vulnerable persons may be accommodated in the reception centres for longer periods, either until their situation improves or until a more favourable solution is identified. (European Commission, ND)

### Integration law

Government ordinance No. 44/2004 on social integration ensures that beneficiaries of international and subsidiary protection have access to the following rights: employment, housing, medical and social assistance, social security, education. It also established an integration programme consisting of cultural adaptation activities, counselling and Romanian language classes. Government decision no. 1.483/2004 to approve methodological norms for the enforcement of Government ordinance no. 44/2004 regulates refugees access to rights and benefits, their participation in the integration programme and the assistance offered to vulnerable groups (disabled people, unaccompanied minors, victims of torture, and others). It also describes the role of state institutions and local public administrations. (Portal Legislativ, ND)

The migration flow has been intensified in the past few years, due both to the economic development recorded in the Romanian economy, and the geopolitical volatility in the Mediterranean basin, as well as other factors, also generating security implications. At the same time, Romania is facing a labour crisis, year after year recording an increased workforce deficit. Thus, the employment of foreign citizens has represented a measure attempting to cover a part of the said deficit. Every year a contingent of foreign workers newly admitted on the labour market is established and, in certain cases, following signals and information from employers, it may be supplemented. Due to very good macroeconomic figures, as well as to the permissive legal system, oriented towards covering the deficit, the number of foreign workers newly admitted on the Romanian labour market for 2020 was 545,50% greater than that of 2016. (Official Gazette of Romania, 2021)

This trend has brought plenty economy benefits but, at the same time, has increased the pressure on the institutions directly managing the legal regime applied to foreigners in Romania. Thus, although the General Inspectorate for Immigration, part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as authority with direct attributions in this field, has maintained the size it had



in year 2016, the immigration phenomenon has gained greater proportions since then. However, it ought to be mentioned that year 2020 has represented, due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemics, and especially due to the travel restrictions imposed, a special year for the field of migration and asylum at international, regional and national level. Thus, the pandemic affected, both directly and indirectly, the situation in terms of migration for employment purposes. In this context, 2020, a year characterized by economic contractions that have influenced the national labour market, GII has received 28742 applications for the issuance of an employment permit, with 4889 less than the number of applications registered in 2019. Out of the total number of applications, 27453 have been approved, with the requested employment permits being issued, i.e. 3185 less than in the previous year. Out of the permits issued in 2020, 22307 were part of the contingent of newly admitted workers established for this year, which means that 74,4% of the target was achieved. By comparison, it can be said that in 2019, out of the 30638 permits issued, 29327 were part of the contingent, resulting in a 97,8% degree of achievement. (Official Gazette of Romania, 2021)

The European Union and Member States define their short- and medium-term policies in the context of certain structural changes, such as long-term demographic evolution, lack of workforce in certain areas, the increasing competition for attracting highly skilled workers or based on the background of the immediate instability. More and more third-country nationals are choosing to come to Europe to work, study, as tourists, as service providers or in search of some form of protection.

The migration phenomenon is dynamic, being influenced by armed conflicts, the changing climatic conditions, and the deterioration of living standards in certain third countries, factors which on their own or combined determine the constant change/adaptation of illegal migration routes and a constant movement of population. Thus, in the field of migration and asylum, the following issues have been identified:

1. The capacity of structures within the Immigration Management Commission to efficiently manage the immigration phenomenon
2. Absorption capacity and the attractiveness of the Romanian labour market for foreign citizens
3. A national asylum system capable of permanently ensuring the fundamental rights and liberties of people requiring international protection
4. The degree of information and awareness of the Romanian society on the dimensions of the immigration phenomenon
5. The need to verify the combatant past/potential terrorist connections of individuals arriving through illegal migration flows, which might include operatives sent to carry out tasks

in Europe/former members of terrorist organizations, infiltrating in illegal migration flows. (Official Gazette of Romania, 2021)

The instruments for implementing the Strategy will be the two biennial plans: The 2021 – 2022 Action Plan and the 2023 - 2024 Action Plan. Each plan will be elaborated based on proposals of the members of the Commission for Immigration Management and approved through a Government Decision. These will include details on how the general and specific objectives provided in the Strategy will be fulfilled, as well as the activities carried out, the results aimed at, the deadlines and the institutions responsible for their implementation. As it regulates a broad, growing phenomenon, the implementation of the Strategy will have multiple implications. The dynamic nature of immigration may generate the occurrence of concrete situations or phenomena, even with impact on the national security, which would require new national/European legal solutions, case in which each institution will be responsible Monitoring indicators Performance report (assessment) Actions to exercise its right to legislative initiative in its area of competence, and thus the implementation mechanism of the present Strategy will create the framework necessary for consulting and coordinating the institutions involved. carried out With regard to the financial implications, the financial resources necessary for implementing the Strategy mainly come from: - Funds from the national budget allocated to each ministry and each institution with competence in implementing the Strategy, non-reimbursable funds dedicated to the management of migration, asylum and integration corresponding to the EU financial instruments in the field of Internal Affairs for the period 2021 - 2027, non-reimbursable funds approved at EU level under the cohesion policy for long-term integration activities, as well as other relevant external sources of funding, donations and sponsorships legally offered/accepted, as well as other sources. The action plans for implementing the Strategy will specify the sources of funding necessary for fulfilling each action carried out. Regarding the monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the objectives provided by the Strategy, each Action Plan will include monitoring indicators for each activity carried out. At the end of the Plan's period of applicability, the Report on the performance of general and specific objectives established in the provisions of the Strategy will be drafted and presented before the Government, then disseminated to the civil society and national/international partners through the main means of mass communication. (Official Gazette of Romania, 2021)

Vocational education and training (VET) is provided at upper secondary and post-secondary levels. Initial VET is under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education. The National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development coordinates the creation of training standards for qualifications validated by sectoral committees (coordinated by the National Authority for Qualifications) and approved by the ministry. Social partners participate in the committees and support VET implementation. Continuing VET development is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice. (CEDEFOP, 2019)



In Romania, investments to support the institutional development of education and training are still few. The main challenges are unequal access to education and training and the high rate of early leaving from it; this particularly affects children in rural areas, from poor communities, and Roma. (CEDEFOP, 2019)

Adult vocational training is offered by authorised private and public providers taking into account the needs of employers and basic skills needs of adults. One- to three- year continuing “apprenticeship at workplace” programmes have been managed by the public employment service since 2015. They offer adults (16+) without prior VET experience the chance to acquire a professional qualification at EQF levels 1 to 4, leading to a nationally recognized qualification certificate of the same value as in initial VET. (CEDEFOP, 2019)

## Good practices

Due to the conflict in Ukraine, more than 6.6 million individuals from Ukraine were recorded across Europe, most taken refuge into neighbouring countries, including the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. More than 80% of refugees are women and children. This refugee crisis is, in terms of speed and scale, unprecedented since the Second World War, and is showing of slowing down.

Romania started to receive refugees as early as February 24, 2022. Up to now over 1.6 million Ukrainians have arrived in Romania, out of which approximately 84,662 were still in the country. About 53,000 refugees from Ukraine received temporary protection.

UNICEF, along with other international agencies is part of the response task force led by the Romanian Government coordinating the National refugee response. UNICEF’s focus is three-fold: (i) care and protection of vulnerable children and families, (ii) ensuring children, adolescents and women have equal access to lifesaving health services, and (iii) education for all school-aged children by supporting their integration into national system.

Psychosocial support: ensure that mothers and children in distress have access to psychologists. Families can have access to inclusive activities that support recovery, resilience and psychological well-being of children and their parents.

Mother and Child friendly spaces: ensure children of all ages can have access to child-friendly spaces, allowing rest and play, separate spaces and specific interventions for adolescent girls and boys. Access to group activities for child well-being. Provide mothers with access to dedicated mother and baby/toddler space, for breastfeeding, baby care and hygiene, access to safe drinking water for formula etc. (UNICEF, 2022)



## Actual needs of the target groups

As it is mentioned in the introduction part of the report, Romania is a country where people emigrate from, not only from a national standpoint but also from the aspect of refugees or immigrants. Even in the case where many refugees or immigrants come on the territory of Romania, they don't stay in the country for a long period of time or in order to form a new life. Romania is a temporary place, before they end up going to the place where they will end up actually staying.

Because of this reason, there is a lack of up to date process for migrants integration. The Romanian integration programme offers counselling services, support activities that ensure access to employment, housing, medical aid etc. but it is not enough in order to make immigrants to stay in the country. The greatest down point is that even though they offer language courses, in order to help the people integrate in the country, it is not enough.

The language barrier is the greatest impediment, for both the migrants and VET staff. In organizations that do organize VET training, there might be the presence of a translator, which helps with the issue of language barrier, but it creates another in the social interaction between trainer and student, because there is no direct connection between the two. And this is a very important factor with migrant women, because they are more reserved when it comes to learning or opening up, either it be a professional or more personal setting, than men.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Romania is a country that has experienced emigration as a major phenomenon at a national level, and the number of immigration was not higher than the emigration one. In 2022, it has encountered a large number of immigrants and refugees, mainly because of the war happening between Ukraine and Russia, therefore a large number of women and children have come in the country. Because of that international organizations, such as UNICEF, have intervened and have organized themselves in order to provide basic needs for the refugees.

The number were very high at the beginning of the event, but have slowly gone down because most of the refugees have then left to other countries or have chosen to go back to Ukraine, in the case of the Ukrainian refugees on the Romanian territory.

A first recommendation from the VET system point of view, would be to organize courses that at the end of it give a certificate in order for the migrants to have a certificate that is recognized at a national level, because in Romania, not all certificates regarding skills or specialized preparation in a field are being acknowledged. At the same time, the period of VET training should be shorter, not 1-3 years, because it is not very helpful time-wise.



Another recommendation would be for the VET institutions and professionals to undergo some form of training regarding culture and tradition of migrant's countries, religion, social norms and different aspects of reality that create the difference between Romanian culture and society compared to theirs. To which it needs to be added that they also need to be able to provide psychological support, since as mentioned before, migrant women are more careful and less involved compared to migrant men.

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# CHAPTER 2 - FOCUS GROUPS



## Part 7 – Focus group in Poland

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## Introduction

The focus group study took place on November 9, 2022 at the Deinde sp. z o. o. office at ul. Okopowa 5/489 in Lublin. The focus lasted 1 hour and 50 minutes, it started at 15.00 and ended at 16.50.

The objectives of the focus group research were:

- 1) To map practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women to VET.
- 2) To identify actual needs of the target groups:
  - a) needs of the migrant women referring to their inclusion in VET;
  - b) needs of the VET Staff working with migrants (esp. women).

Five participants and two moderators took part in the study.

The structure of the participants is as follows: 3 Ukrainian migrant women enrolled in VET and 2 representatives of VET staff from Lublin.

Brief description of the participants: migrant women (hereinafter MW 1, MW 2, MW 3).

MW 1: has been in Poland since March 2022 (she came to our country after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine). In Ukraine, she graduated in architecture / design and worked in a public institution in the architectural department. After coming to Poland with her two daughters, she enrolled in a Polish course. Her first job in Poland was in a pizzeria (about one month). Another job was in delicatessen production (she made dumplings). The lady also cleaned occasionally. In this way, she met a Polish psychologist who helped her find a training offer in the field of computer graphics. After completing the course, thanks to the help of her friend – IT specialist from Ukraine, she started an internship in an advertising agency, deals with internet advertising and social media. From the beginning of her stay in Poland, the greatest challenge for the Participant is the language / communication barrier. Despite the fact that the person communicates quite well in Polish, the knowledge of the language is not sufficient to work in Poland in the learned profession of an architect / designer.

MW 2: in Poland from March 2022. After coming to Poland, she attended Polish secondary school in a class consisting only of migrants from Ukraine. The lessons were mostly conducted by Polish teachers in Polish. The class also had Polish lessons with two teachers from Ukraine. Currently, she is finishing formal education and is preparing to pass the secondary school-leaving examination (she is completing her last year of study). She is looking for courses / trainings in the field of cosmetology, hairdressing, cosmetics. Communicates in Polish at a good level.

MW 3: In Ukraine, she worked in a kindergarten. She came to Poland for the first time with her husband and children in July 2022. She worked in horticulture and agriculture for several weeks. Currently, she is not working because she is looking after the children. She took part in a Polish course. She is looking for a job or professional training, preferably in cosmetics, handicraft.



Brief description of the participants: representatives of the VET staff (hereinafter VET ST 1, VET ST 2).

The first representative of the staff (VET ST 1) is a person working as a career counselor, job broker and ICT trainer. A person currently professionally involved in the organization of Polish language courses for immigrants from Ukraine residing in Poland in the Lublin voivodeship.

The second representative of the staff (VET ST 2) is an Applied Linguistics graduate, English teacher, a person working as an expert / trainer and at the same time dealing with administrative activities at the VET institution in Lublin.

The focus study was moderated by Dominik Kubas, a doctor of social sciences with experience in working in a VET institution.

The auxiliary moderator was Agnieszka Stawiszyńska, a person with many years of experience in managing educational institutions and the VET sector, as well as in the implementation of activities / projects in the field of vocational education and training, labor market, social integration.

The focus group study was conducted according to a previously prepared scenario, which is attached to the Report.

Stages of the study:

1. welcoming the participants by the moderator,
2. introduction to the meeting by the moderator,
3. presenting the objectives of the meeting,
4. introduction to the InclusionToC project (project objectives, target groups, planned results),
5. short introductions by the participants,
6. proper conversation - participants' statements and discussion on 6 questions from the scenario,
7. completing the attendance list,
8. signing the information clause on the processing of personal data by the participants,
9. summary by the moderators of the participants' statements and the entire meeting,
10. taking a photo of the focus group,
11. thanking the participants for participating in the study and ending the meeting.

The focus group study was conducted in Polish, because two women - migrants spoke Polish at a good level, and the third participant at the communicative level.

There were no problems during the meeting.



## Good practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women

In order to map the solutions / practices used by the VET institutions in Poland for the inclusion of migrant women in the vocational education and training system, the focus study used three questions, two of which were addressed to all participants (staff and migrant women), and one question was aimed primarily at the staff. Below, we present the course of the study and responses / answers that appeared in the statements of the focus participants on specific topics.

The question (no. 3 in the scenario) was addressed to all 5 participants and was as follows: What types of practices, according to your knowledge, are already in use by VET organisations for identification of actual needs of migrant women in the region / country of residence? Are they effective and sufficient?

Responses from the discussion:

MW 1:

- I had career counseling in a VET institution that organized my graphic arts course, but it was not a real analysis of my needs/possibilities. "I went to the course with only Polish participants".
- "I found the course myself. A Polish friend helped me".
- "I had to find a professional internship for myself after the course. A friend from Ukraine, who works in Lublin in the IT industry, helped me".
- "It was difficult to find a job placement. They didn't want a foreigner as a graphic designer, they were looking for Poles".
- the solutions / practices used in the VET institution to analyze the needs of migrants are neither sufficient, nor effective.
- "Migrants should have the training/internship sought by the VET institution, and not be left alone with this task".

MW 3:

- "the solutions applied are not sufficient for migrants".

VET ST 1:

- "the project we implement for migrants from Ukraine assumes that the Polish course is at beginner level".
- "the training group can adjust the level or pace of the Polish course only on their own with the trainer".
- "there is no analysis of migrants' needs in the project".
- "internships from the Employment Office are what remain for migrants, because there are currently no professional activation projects for migrants on the market".
- "Polish language courses should have more hours. 60 hours is not enough".
- "migrants should have training in living conditions in Poland, where, what administrative / life matters should be dealt with".



- it is necessary to "eliminate language barriers" between VET staff and migrants.
- "printed information materials given to migrants in VET institutions would be useful".

VET ST 2:

- "First of all, Polish language courses are implemented".
- "in connection with the influx of refugees from Ukraine, various initiatives have been taken in Lublin, e.g. legal/psychological assistance, social advice, career counseling or language courses, but not all migrants or refugees have access to it, because, for example, they simply do not know about them".
- "It would be a good idea to train in the knowledge of how this reality in Poland functions on a daily basis in various aspects".

The question (no. 4) addressed to all 5 participants was: What types of practices / methods / tools, according to your knowledge, are commonly in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women to VET in the region / country of residence? Are they effective and sufficient?

Responses from the discussion:

MW 1:

- "migrants do not know where and how to look for VET services, most often they find out about something by chance, I learned about the graphics course from a Polish friend".
- "Migrants need to know in which office, which matter can be dealt with (e.g. Municipal Family Support Centre, Labor Office, Voivodship Office)".
- "Some ladies need psychological help - to calm down".
- "at the beginning (February – March), after arriving in Lublin, migrants met in the church / parish, e.g. 50 people came – people talked about where, what could be done. There was also a Polish course taught by a Ukrainian. Over time, the group dispersed, some returned to Ukraine, some stopped coming".

MW 3:

- "there is a language barrier (you need a Polish course first)".
- "you need to get to know the city, public transport, know how to get around the city".

VET ST 1:

- "VET institutions must look for female migrants through Social Welfare Centres, shelters, community centers where these people are accommodated, because they will not find themselves in VET institutions".
- "Word of mouth among migrants is effective on information about training/projects. Often a migrant who already knows about a VET institution/training will bring a friend with her".
- "in the period February - March, trainers/teachers conducted Polish lessons as part of their voluntary work. Over time, these initiatives came to an end".
- "there is no feedback that someone no longer wants to use something." Migrants disappear from VET institutions over time. The migrant does not inform that she no longer wants to use the services, that she resigns - the person simply stops coming.



VET ST 2:

- "neighbourhood community centers have taken appropriate action to ensure, for example, care for children of refugees/migrants, so that they can settle their affairs at this time - take up a job or an internship".
- "it was also a space to exchange information on various possibilities, ways of dealing with various matters, etc."

The question (no. 5) addressed to the VET staff was: What tools / methods / practices do you typically use while working with migrant learners in the process of their inclusion to VET? Are they effective and sufficient?

Answers that appeared in the discussion:

VET ST 1:

- "there are no special practices, they are not applied".
- "such a large number of migrants cannot be handled".
- "translation of training documents / materials by the trainer is usually done on their own".
- "lack of financial resources for professional translations of training materials into other languages".
- "in VET institutions, it is good to employ migrants - it would facilitate the work with participants - migrants".

VET ST 2:

- "no specific methods have been developed".
- "for sure, the activities carried out are still insufficient".

MW 1:

- "I did not know such solutions".
- "I had to deal with everything myself as if I were Polish. I had to find a course and then an internship. My friends helped me".

MW 3:

- due to the language barrier, I do not feel strong enough to independently participate in the VET system, there are no system / institutional solutions for migrants with poor knowledge of Polish. "I understand, but I can't speak Polish very well".

## Actual needs of the target groups

In order to map actual needs of migrant women enrolled in VET and VET staff working with migrants, two questions were asked during the study.

The question (no. 1) was addressed to all participants: What are, in your opinion, the main actual needs and the biggest challenges of migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET in the region / country of residence?

Answers that appeared in the discussion:

MW 1:



- the greatest difficulty and challenge is insufficient knowledge of the Polish language, especially professional terminology during the computer graphics course and exam.
- "training materials were only in Polish".
- "without good knowledge of Polish I cannot work in Poland in my profession of architect / designer".
- the participant did not learn about the computer graphics course from a state institution or VET institution, but from Polish woman for whom she worked occasionally.

MW 3:

- "the biggest barrier is the language".
- "trainings are only in Polish".
- "first you have to finish the Polish course, and only then the vocational course".

MW 2:

- communication is the greatest difficulty. "Polish teachers did not understand Ukrainian and Ukrainian students did not understand Polish". "Two Ukrainian teachers conducted Polish lessons for us".

VET ST 1:

- "for migrants who want to enroll in a project / training, the terminology used in the application documents is incomprehensible (e.g. professionally inactive, unemployed), and in projects implemented by VET institutions these are key concepts – recruitment criteria".
- "trainers do not speak Ukrainian / Russian, and participants - migrants from Ukraine do not speak Polish".
- "bureaucratic restrictions / existing administrative procedures", migrants do not know which office they have to go to settle a given matter (e.g. assigning a PESEL number, registering at the employment office)".

VET ST 2:

- "language barrier - migrants who have communication problems, rarely use job agencies, do not participate in vocational training or internships".
- "linguistic and cultural competences play a key role".
- "problems with the transfer of professional skills, inability to work in the learned profession".
- "migrants, especially refugees, need psychological support to adapt to the new reality".

The question (No. 2) addressed to all participants was: What are, in your opinion, the main actual needs and the biggest challenges of the VET staff working with migrants (esp. women) in the region / country of residence?

Answers that appeared in the discussion:

VET ST 1:

- "language barriers".
- "no training materials in Ukrainian".
- "the trainer alone is not able to translate all the necessary training materials from Polish into Ukrainian", even unprofessionally through an online translators.

VET ST 2:



- "communication problems, not only in the purely linguistic aspect - misunderstanding of cultural codes, especially when it comes to migrants who come from distant countries, both geographically and culturally".
- "the problem with finding vocational training or courses in the language of migrants".
- "the trainers are also most often unable to conduct the course in their language".
- "the adaptation to the target group is missing".

MW 1:

- "During my training, the trainer did not have an individual approach to me. I was the only migrant in the group with Poles. The trainer did not help me in any special way - he treated me like a Pole, who understands everything in Polish".
- "I had to translate myself from Polish to Ukrainian various words / expressions that I did not understand during the course".
- the VET institution that organized my graphics course did not carry out any analysis of my needs / possibilities. I signed up and found myself in a group with Polish participants.

MW 2:

- "the teachers did not understand Ukrainian".

The question (no. 6) addressed to all participants was: Would you like to add anything more referring to practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women or to actual needs of the migrant women and VET staff working with migrants?

Answers that appeared in the discussion:

VET ST 1:

- "There are some translations into Ukrainian for the Polish course. The trainers have to translate most of the training materials themselves".
- "submitting documents by a migrant as a participant in a VET project is difficult, because in a VET institution no one knows the migrant's language".
- "VET institutions should include migrants in their staff, who would then serve the participants - migrants".
- "no procedures (in VET institutions, state offices) - everything is spontaneous. Perhaps the predominant belief is that in a few months, when the war is over, they will return to their country".
- "migrants are not determined to stay in our voivodship or in Poland. They are thinking of going to Germany, where the living conditions are better".
- "migrants are not perceived as a potential for the employer / Polish economy to stay here".
- "there should be simple application documents for training projects".
- migrants should have "assistance in filling in application documents" from the VET staff.

VET ST 2:

- "cultural / integration / orientation courses as the first service for migrant women, cultural assistance is necessary".
- "the language is the greatest barrier".



- "migrants are forced to take up jobs that are below their qualifications / incompatible with their education".
- "it is difficult to recognize a diploma".
- "employers do not want to employ migrants".
- "when a migrant feels linguistically insecure, there is this fear to start a VET service (course or internship)".
- "administrative assistance for migrants in VET institutions / state offices is necessary (PESEL number, how to open a bank account)".
- "the need to provide childcare during the course / internship".

#### MW 1:

- "everything has to do with emotions and fear".
- "information brochures would be useful".
- "the key issue is linguistic communication. Either the migrant has to learn Polish or someone has to speak Ukrainian in a VET institution".
- "the cost of renting apartments in Lublin is very high. It is difficult to rent a flat, especially when you do not work - the costs of independent living for migrants are very high".
- "salaries are quite low in Lublin when you have to rent an apartment".
- "refugees are running out of savings".

## Conclusions and recommendations

We can present some key conclusions from the focus research we have conducted.

Firstly, both in the opinion of female migrants and VET staff, the biggest barrier and difficulty encountered by migrant women in Poland and VET staff are communication barriers resulting from the lack of knowledge of the Polish language by migrant women and the lack of knowledge of the languages of migrant women by Polish VET staff.

Another serious problem faced by migrant women is the lack of basic knowledge of which institutions to go to in order to settle a matter. Is it official, e.g. get a PESEL number, get a residence permit, get a work permit. Or is it getting support in the vocational education and training system, e.g. enrolling in training, finding a professional internship.

A key challenge for the VET staff is the lack of documents and educational materials in the languages of migrant women. Administrative staff and VET trainers have documents in Polish. This applies to both administrative documents (which migrant women must fill in to enroll in the VET system) and all training documents (training programs, presentations, scripts, etc.) on the basis of which VET staff conducts classes.

Migrant women pointed to the great challenge of living in an unfamiliar place. They do not know the city, public transport, offices / public institutions well enough. They don't know where to look for psychological or legal help. They do not know where to look for VET institutions and offers for themselves (training, courses, consultancy, internships, work).



From the research we learnt that practices / methods / tools are not used in VET institutions to identify the real needs of migrant women in their current place of residence (Lublin, Lubelskie voivodeship, Poland).

In VET institutions in Lublin (whose staff participated in the focus group study) there are also no special practices / methods / tools used to include migrant women in vocational education and training. Migrant women are directed to the Polish course by the Marshal's Office (public office). In addition, recruitment of migrant women by VET institutions is often carried out by word of mouth (one migrant will bring another person, an acquaintance, with her).



## Part 8 – Focus group in Cyprus

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## Introduction

The Inclusion Toc focus group took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November at 17:45 at the Generation for Change offices in Nicosia. In the focus group 6 participants were present including 5 migrant women and one woman who was both migrant and VET staff working with migrants. The focus group took place in English. The following day, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November via Google Meet an interview took place with VET staff working with migrants.

The aim of the focus group research is:

1. To map practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women to VET.
2. To identify actual needs of the target groups:
  - a. needs of the migrant women referring to their inclusion to VET;
  - b. needs of the VET Staff working with migrants (esp. women).

Some issues that arose were in regards to language. Some of the female participants were not quite fluent in English and thus may not have expressed themselves as much as they wanted to. A translator was also present to translate from French to English since 2 of the participants were not comfortable yet with understanding or speaking English.

## Good practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women

The participants expressed that they felt that the organisations they were attending VET courses were supportive of them and they asked them if they needed anything. It was really important for them to see that the organisation was there for them not only about the lesson that they were attending but for any kind of support or help that they needed. One of the participants gave an example of her Greek language teacher. She shared that the teacher gave her number to her students and told them to call her or send her a message on WhatsApp for whatever they needed. The students appreciated her support and motivation and it was an element that motivated them as well to attend and try in her lesson. Dedication was another element that the participants really appreciated in their teachers. When the dedication of the teacher was obvious to the students throughout the lesson it made students more motivated and dedicated as well.

The use of games and more participatory learning methods was also something that the participants enjoyed. They gave an example of a game where they attached the correct word to the correct picture. The game was expressed as a bit challenging for them but it was working for them. It was mentioned that for them it was important to make learning more fun. Some teachers advised them to listen to some basic Greek songs or watch movies with subtitles in order to familiarise them with the language, which was something enjoyable and helpful at the same time.



One of the VET staff also gave as an example the use of gamification in the VET field as well as the use of escape rooms. However, it was highlighted that the willingness to use such games also depends on the educators as well.

## Actual needs of the target groups

One of the main needs and challenges of migrant women were in regards to language and transportation. Some of them expressed that even though they learn to speak English, in the communities that they live in a lot of people might speak only Greek. One of the participants expressed that she lives in a small community where the majority of elderly people do not speak English. Since these people own bakeries and other shops, it could be an employment possibility for migrant women if language was not a problem for them.

Transportation is another major issue for migrant women. They expressed that if you do not have a car or driver's license it is quite difficult to move around since the public transport in the country is quite unreliable. As a result, their only transport options in order to move are either using the bus or walking.

Ability to attend the lessons was another important challenge raised one of the VET staff. Some women cannot participate due to the fact that there is no one to take care of their children or the lesson might be taking place during working hours, preventing their participation.

One interesting point made by one of the VET staff was the need in general of the VET sector to be more inclusive towards women. It was expressed that in Cyprus the VET field was more male dominated while also considered as plan b for students who did not perform well academically. However, it was expressed that this is a wrong stereotype that needs to be changed as for some activities it might be better to have a base of VET education. During the last years the VET field was made more open for the participation of women as well. as expressed one of the main needs of VET educators should be a cultural awareness course throughout the development of their career. VET trainers should also be trained and able to overcome any racists incidents that might arise in their lesson

## Conclusions and recommendations

Participants highlighted how important it is for them to practice the language, as they are able to learn better in this way. In general, similar responses were gathered from both migrant women and VET staff. The main needs express by migrants were in terms of language in order to make communication and job seeking easier as well as the ability to attend. The determining factors of attendance for migrants were transport issues, lack of childcare and some lessons taking place during working hours. Something that students also



appreciated in their lessons is the dedication of their teachers as well as a fun way of learning through games and a more participatory approach.

An interesting point raised by one of the VET trainers was the inclusion of women in VET generally and combatting of the stereotype that the VET field is a more male-dominated field. Some recommendations by VET staff were the inclusion of cultural awareness courses in order to be better prepared and more aware in regards to them teaching migrant students. Some recommendations for migrant women was the provision of a childcare corner so that women can learn while their children are kept busy. In regards to the transportation, a bus may be organised by the organisation in order to help them in regards to their transportation.



## Part 9 – Focus group in Greece

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## Introduction

On October 31<sup>st</sup> at 5 pm, in Athens, Greece, a focus group took place in the context of the research phase of the Erasmus+ Project InclusionTOC: “Theory of Change for the Inclusion of Women Migrants in VET”. The discussion took place in the headquarters of IEK DELTA, a VET school offering post-secondary education level classes in engineering, informatics, tourism, hospitality, administration, and many more. IEK DELTA hosted a culinary programme, organized by the UK non-profit organization “Saffron Kitchen Project”, which is based in Athens. The Saffron Kitchen Project aims to aid the refugee community and vulnerable people who are facing many obstacles such as lack of food, job opportunities as well as inadequate social inclusion. To this end, they organized a free vocational training in basic culinary skills for refugees and asylum seekers, which ran for four weeks in collaboration with IEK DELTA.

IDEC, a long time collaborator of IEK DELTA, had the opportunity to visit one of those classes and chat with 5 women migrants who participated in the cooking course. The discussion was moderated by Polyxeni Panousaki, European Project manager from IDEC, with the collaboration of Dr. Konstantinos Kiouis, Director of IEK DELTA and Mr. Konstantinos Georgatzas, Chef and teacher of the class.

The objectives of the focus group were to:

- a) map practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women to VET
- b) identify the actual needs of the target groups
  1. needs of the migrant women referring to their inclusion in VET
  2. needs of the VET staff working with migrants and especially with migrant women

Overall, the focus group can be characterized as successful. Despite some of the students of the class not wanting to participate and keeping to themselves, the five women that actually participated were enthusiastic and passionate in expressing their thoughts and experiences. The conversation was insightful and interesting, while also meeting its goal of shedding light into the above-mentioned topics.

## Good practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women

Through the discussion with the students and the VET staff, it was made apparent that overall there are not enough mechanisms in place, in order to facilitate the inclusion of migrant women in Greek VET.

This specific VET programme tries to bridge the gap by initiating the inclusion of its participants, before any kind of training begins. To this end, they first redirect them to



institutions which offer cultural induction and language courses. After those are complete, they put them in touch with the VET schools, in order to organize such trainings.

Specifically for the cooking courses he teaches, Mr. Georgatzas pointed out that the nature of his class is one that brings people together. Not only do they learn how to cook, but they also sit and eat together afterwards, bringing everyone closer and allowing them to exchange ideas. This helps people feel comfortable, while also creating a community and easing the migrants into a social setting. He also tries to use body language in order to better aid communication with his students.

However, it was made apparent that those women, and especially those who have just arrived in Greece, are not getting the help they need from the responsible organizations and are not being provided enough tools to make their induction in this new, foreign society easier. The participants highlighted that there is a lot of talk about change but not much action is taking place. They see a willingness to help them, which is not ultimately realized. In order to achieve this change, the actual needs of those people need to be heard.

## Actual needs of the target groups

The conversation with the people from both target groups highlighted the fact that there are plenty of challenges and unmet needs from either side and mostly from the migrant women, regarding their inclusion.

The most prominent need seems to be that of communication. The language barrier was unanimously agreed to be the biggest challenge both sides face, with some migrants not speaking Greek or English or even neither of the two languages. Most of the participants spoke in English, with only two speaking in Greek. They pointed out that the services they are being offered should be in both or more languages, if possible.

Specifically in the culinary sector, both sides reported that sometimes differences in food habits due to cultural barriers also arise. For example, while the Muslim students do not eat pork for religious reasons, they are called to learn how to work with this ingredient in the class, which might cause some issues, or even racist behaviors towards them.

Most of the issues the migrant women face however, seem to arise before they can even consider going into VET. The women pointed out that when they first arrived, they did not have accessible information about where to turn to, in order to meet their needs and facilitate the migration process. The bureaucracy was a convoluted and lengthy process and even in immigration services, they faced instances of racism related to skin color or religious practices, such as wearing a headscarf. This highlights a need for awareness, of training the people who work with migrants in all sort of services in sensitive issues and overall an improvement of the immigration services in Greece.

Especially due to their gender, this particular group faces even more hardships in their inclusion process. The women reported feeling shame and fear, and despite being accomplished in their countries of origin, they felt as if they could not offer society anything upon arrival in Greece. Social norms also contribute to that, specifically in the case of women



with children to take care of. It is apparent that there is also a need for better sociological and psychological support for these people, in order for them to feel empowered and capable to prove themselves in this new environment, acting as proactive citizens.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the focus group in Athens helped bring forward important points in the context of InclusionTOC's research.

The most important one is that women migrants face a lot of issues in their integration to the Greek society, which often makes it impossible for them to even consider or actually gain access to any sort of VET training. There is a need for more accessible information, social and psychological support, and of course state support to make these people feel safe and welcome first and foremost. At this point, it must also be noted that it was particularly difficult to find women migrants enrolled in VET, in order to have this discussion at the first place. This highlights the need to make information and services more accessible, and an overall need to make these women feel welcomed safe in our country.

For the migrants that actually make it into VET, as well as the VET staff and administrators who work with them, the primary goal is to tackle the language barrier. Language classes must be intensified, and it is worth trying to also offer multilingual services, in order to better facilitate communication.

In a more positive note, what is worth remembering from this focus group research is that some things, such as food and human connection transcend any and all barriers. The willingness to aid these people is also in place; by focusing on those interpersonal bonds and putting plans into action, the migrant community can become empowered and actively contribute to Greek society, as skilled professionals.



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## Introduction

The focus group took place on October 27<sup>th</sup> 2022 in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. Leeuwarden is the main city of the province of Friesland, home to Learning Hub Friesland, the Dutch partner in the project. To the focus group, 6 people took part; 3 representatives from local VET institutions, and 3 migrant women who have been in the Netherlands for different number of years.

The VET representatives worked directly with migrant women, for instance via the [MentorProgramma Friesland](#) and [OJO](#) – a center where young parents can meet.

The Mentor Program was founded in 1997, with a view to offering tailor-made guidance to students. Since then we have been working hard to realize good matches for both mentors and mentees. They have now built up a large network consisting of role models from different professions, positions and experts by experience.

MentorProgramme Friesland is for students of 5 partner institutions in Friesland: Friesland College, ROC Friese Poort, Aeres MBO, NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences and Van Hall Larenstein, whereby students are linked to role models from a follow-up study or the business community/work field. The activities are also available for VMBO youth in Friesland.

The Meeting Center for Young Parents (OJO) is there for all (future) young parents in the municipality of Heerenveen, who have had their first child before the age of 24. On the campus of Friesland College in Heerenveen there is the walk-in point, where young mothers and/or fathers can step in (an appointment is not necessary). You can go here for advice, light support and useful items, but you will also meet other young parents with whom you can exchange experiences.

The OJO itself organizes activities – such as a craft afternoon, parent and child swimming and a joint lunch – but they also go out together, for example to the ‘Mama café’ or the library.

Young parents can also contact the OJO for homework assistance and useful advice on how to proceed, such as study and career advice, help with finances, health and support in the future. They think along with young parents in an accessible way and, if necessary, they refer them to someone who can help further.

The focus group took place in dBieB in Leeuwarden, the public library of the city which is a known and neutral place for people from all sorts of backgrounds to come together. dBieB offers [Dutch language courses](#) for instance as well as other (vocational courses) in a small group, with a lot of personal attention.



## Good practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women

### **Mentoring and Role Models**

Mentoring is an instrument with a wide application in society. It is a form of coaching and networking and makes an essential contribution to the growth and success of others. Mentoring gives recognition and recognition. It offers role modeling, stimulation and a listening ear to the participants. The participants – mentees – achieve their goals faster when they receive support and encouragement from someone who has traveled the same path before. They make use of the mentor's success strategies.

The power of mentoring as applied by MentorProgramme Friesland lies in the fact that everyone involved benefits from it. The mentee gains self-confidence and a sense of not being completely alone. The mentor can further develop his own skills as a leader, trainer and coach.

Mentoring means an extra incentive for participants to realize their professional and life wishes. When a listening ear and positive example are lacking in their own environment, a mentor can help with dilemmas in the field of school or work. A mentor has the role of confidant, guide, coach, educator and friend.

These role models are a key factor for success. With the help of the mentoring relationship, the mentee sees that study and work are possible and becomes motivated to continue instead of giving up. MentorProgramme Friesland works with several role models who have a migrant background themselves, both in the programme's management and as individual mentors to youngsters.

### **Actual needs of the target groups**

The participants really appreciate a personal approach, which goes beyond the pure content of the vocational course itself (only). The (building of) trust and personal factors are equally important. Education in small(er) numbers is advised as well as atmosphere and team building as factors to consider to work on to increase motivation and engagement.

Language wise there should be a good balance between the language used and the content according to the respondents. This for deep understanding. So, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL, red.) when possible, but also look into bilingual options: it could well be the learner very much understands the course but is hindered by the confidence to actively use the (new) language.

For the side of the educators, the staff providing the courses on behalf of the vocational schools, they appreciate if they could work with a colleague who is complementary to their own qualities. In terms of being knowledgeable about the school subject, flanked by communication/cultural awareness specialist in order to make sure the message and content of the course gets transferred well. This includes various pedagogical approaches in lessons,



workshops, but also in ways of organising exams. This in order to have the various talents available among the participants come to the surface. Typically, not every participant learns in the same way. It would be great if we could cater for different learning styles and have this reflected in exams as well to have a inclusive pallet of lessons and exams.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Role models and support such as mentoring provided by a school or related organisations is key in addition to providing courses and having migrant women involved in VET courses.

Also, it is reaccommodated to look into the possibilities to have a true inclusive design of courses available, including various ways of organising tests and exams to enable different learning styles and qualities to be appreciated, rather than having a single (traditional) way of delivering education.



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## Introduction

The focus group took place on October 25<sup>th</sup> 2022 in Mazara del Vallo, a town in the south-western side of Sicily, 2 hour-ride from Palermo. To the focus group, 10 people took part; 2 representatives from the partner VET institution **Futura Formazione**, and 6 Tunisian women aged 28 to 52 and who have been in Italy for different number of years; some of them have been here for 5 years, some others for 30, one of them was born in Italy from Tunisian parents (making her a second-generation Italian citizen). The aim of the focus group has been to understand their educational needs and difficulties in their local context.

The focus group took place in a room of the institution that hosted us, being therefore a known place for these women, they felt confident to talk to us and the atmosphere we tried to create was of reciprocal respect and understanding, also thanks to introductive ice-breaking activities (which also represented the opportunity to get to know them and their stories better).

This allowed the focus group to proceed smoothly overcoming also, although rare, moments of language barriers, which did not interfere with the discussion and that were solved by rephrasing the sentences in a simpler and more straight-forward way.

## Good practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women

As all the women present at the focus groups are mothers, they all agreed that the most important practice used not only by VET organisations but also more generally by all those entities working with women is the presence of a nursery with designated staff who looks after the children. This enables women to have some free time that they can decide to use to harvest their passions and their interests. Moreover, VET representatives stated the importance of having a linguistic mediator in order to support with overcoming language barriers, which is not always guaranteed mainly due to lack of funding.

## Actual needs of the target groups

The 6 interviewed women have all repeated their **interest in continuing their education**, which they had to interrupt for different reasons (children, economic reasons mainly). The most important aspect for them is that VET institutions **should offer a nursery** at the same time when the classes take place, in order to make sure that their children are looked after and that they can therefore focus on themselves.

Moreover, support in **learning the Italian language** is also seen as something essential for them.

For what concerns the needs of VET staff working with migrant people, and especially with migrant women, the interviewed personnel agreed that one fundamental need is to have the



**support of a cultural and linguistic mediator** to overcome language barriers and ease communication between the foreign students and the personnel. Unfortunately, lack of funding doesn't always allow this to happen.

Another important need for VET institutions would be more **flexibility** when it comes to the requirements to enroll; according to the interviewed VET personnel, to enroll to their institutions, students are required to provide an educational qualification, but their recognition in Italy, especially for people coming from outside of the European Union, is not straight forward. This creates an obstacle for all those who would reside in the country but are not given the chance to continue with their education.

Lastly, the educational offers provided by VET institutions in Italy are standard across the country; the personnel believe that a needs analysis is necessary to develop courses that can align better to the actual needs of each local context.

## Conclusions and recommendations

When working with foreign women, the most important thing to keep into account is that they can often be mothers, and the biggest "obstacle" for them to continue their education is the **lack of time and resources** to have someone else look after their children. The presence of a nursery where they can leave their children while attending classes, represents therefore an essential service for their own **empowerment**.

Moreover, the **language** used for the courses is important, as they may not necessarily know the local language; phrases should be simple and straight-forward, and definitions of more complicated terms or concepts should always be added.

Lastly, related to the prior point, the presence of a **linguistic mediator** is to be considered an important added value to ease communication between VET staff and migrant women.



## Part 12 – Focus group in Romania

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## Introduction

HIP conducted a small focus group (3 migrant women) and 2 individual interviews, one with a migrant woman and another one with a VET professional. We came to this decision because we encountered some difficulties with organizing the focus group: the main problem being many migrant women even though they were interested in the beginning in taking part to the focus group, when it came to actually being part of it, they decided not to participate anymore. This factor, causing the focus group to be delayed, taking part on the 25 of November 2022. And the 2 individual interviews took place on the 24 of November 2022.

Both the small focus group and interview took place online, via Zoom or Skype. It being a more convenient way for the participants to take part in the research. Also this option presented the aspects that them being able to long in from wherever they were, it can help with the aspect of confidence and a sense of comfort when having the discussion about their inclusion.

There also needs to be mentioned that, since the interviews took place online, no direct connection is being created between the moderator and participants, which can have an impact on the way the participants answer the questions.

## Good practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women

All women involved in the research, both professional and migrant women, have mentioned that there are no good practices that they are aware of at a national level. The one thing that they noticed is that once with the Ukrainian war and many refugees entering the territory of the country, most of them being women, specifically mothers with children, the humanitarian organization and other NGO's have taken responsibility in creating spaces for the mothers with their children to be together.

## Actual needs of the target groups

The most important aspect that has been mentioned by the migrant women would be for the trainers to have experience teaching foreigners. Because many teachers or trainers do not have a lot of experience with migrants or even foreign students, which can then cause an inconvenience when it comes to teaching and connecting with the student. And related to this would be that it could be a big plus if have experience with teaching a foreign language. The motive for this argument being that once you try to teach someone a language, which is not your mother tongue, you are forced to adapt and also it helps you put yourself in the shoes of someone that needs to learn something in a language they are not a master off and also try to understand what you are being taught.



The system also needs to be updated for it to correspond with the job market, and for the system and staff to take into consideration that they want to work in certain fields, where they have their specialty in or have certain degrees, that prove their skills. This is where a comment made the VET professional comes in, because in Romania many certificates are not being recognized, because of how the system is. Therefore, many need migrants cannot integrate into a new society/country, especially from a work environment point of view because they don't have the qualifications in Romania, since they need a Romanian certificate or one is being recognized by the Romanian institutions (creating training courses that offer a diploma or certificate, that don't go over an extensive period of time 3-4 months, that will provide them with the skills needed for the jobs that are on market). Continuing with the updating the system, a suggestion from the migrant women would be to create an online platform or app, that would close the language barrier and that would also provide some sort of customer service, either online via chat or through phone calls, in order to better the process with integration. Also another aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is that many migrants come with their families, therefore a good practice would be to have programmes for children, so that the transition is smoother. To which it needs to be added that organizations need to be prepared also from a legal point of view, since a lot of migrants may not know all the legal documentation that they need or that might be needed from them.

From VET professional's stand point, the most important need is to know the language, so that communication is easier. The barrier language is one of the main aspects when working with migrant women. She mentioned that having a translator/interpreter can make things easier, but at the same time it takes away from the connection the trainer and the student form in a natural way when they interact directly with one another. At the same time, there can also be the risk that you don't know if the translator delivers the exact message that you want the student to receive.

Another important subject that was touched by the VET professional: the trainers need to be accustomed with the mentality and culture of migrants, and also be aware of the differences in relation to Romania; the teaching needs to be interactive, preferably in class, and at the end of the course for the migrants to have actually learned useful skills, not just theoretical knowledge; taking into consideration their psychological needs, and not only understanding but also accepting their needs, even if they don't seem relevant (here comes again the aspect of cultural differences).

## Conclusions and recommendations

The most important thing to take into account is that the language barrier can cause issues, therefore the trainers need to be well prepared and make the course and classes easy to understand.



Moreover, in the case of migrant women there needs to be taken into consideration the psychological needs that they might need (this is learned over a period of time when a connection is created with the trainer), because they also have to take care of the children and also work, which can be challenging, especially when you are also in a foreign country. The development of more children programmes, where they can leave the children while they attend classes, training programmes or lectures will be very useful, as it will encourage and empower them to better their skills.



# CHAPTER 3 – ONLINE SURVEY

## Part 13 – Online Survey

Within the survey research the consortium collected 124 responds in total from two target groups: VET staff and migrant women enrolled in VET. Each partner institution collected at least 20 responds. The number of responses collected by each partners' institutions is presented in the table below and as a graphic chart.

**Tab. no. 1: Number of responds collected by each partner institution.**

Partner institution	Chart	Number of answers	Ratio
Deinde (Poland)		20	16.13%
LHF (Netherlands)		21	16.94%
IDEC (Greece)		23	18.55%
Hip - Hub (Romania)		20	16.13%
CESIE (Italy)		20	16.13%
Reset (Cyprus)		20	16.13%

**Graphic no. 1: The responds collected by each partner institution.**





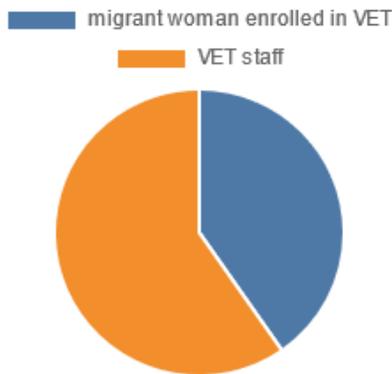
In the survey research in partners' countries 74 answers were collected by consortium from VET staff and 50 answers were collected from migrant woman enrolled in VET.

**Tab. no. 2: Responders' status.**

Answers	Chart	No. of answers	Ratio
migrant woman enrolled in VET		50	40.32%
VET staff		74	59.68%



Graphic no. 2: Responders' status.



Group of migrant women enrolled in VET had possibility to answer to 6 questions. Five of them were multiple choice question and final one was an open text question. Questions in the migrant women's survey were:

1. *What are the main actual needs of migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET in the country of your actual residence?* (multiple choice)
2. *What are the most difficult challenges for migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET in the country of your actual residence?* (multiple choice)
3. *What types of practices, according to your knowledge, are already in use by VET organisations in the country of your actual residence for integration of migrant women into VET?* (multiple choice)
4. *In what types of services provided by VET organisations did you have possibility to take part in during the process of inclusion to VET?* (multiple choice)
5. *What are, in your opinion, the biggest challenges for VET staff working with migrants in the country of your actual residence?* (multiple choice)
6. *Would you like to add anything more referring to practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women or to actual needs of the migrant women and VET staff working with migrants?* (open text)

Group of VET staff had possibility to answer to 8 questions. Four of them were multiple choice question, three were open text question and one was single choice. Questions in the VET staff' survey were:

1. *What are, in your opinion, the main actual needs of the VET staff working with migrants (esp. women) in your country?* (multiple choice)
2. *What are, in your opinion, the main needs of migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET?* (multiple choice)
3. *What types of practices/tools, according to your knowledge, are commonly in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women in VET?* (multiple choice)
4. *What tools / methods do you typically use while working with migrant learners?* (multiple choice)
5. *What other tools / methods do you use while working with migrant learners?* (open text)
6. *Have you ever had a chance as a VET staff to use "Theory of Change" as a method of building strategies for inclusion of migrant women in VET?* (single choice: yes or not)



7. *What, in your opinion, can be done to promote inclusion of migrant women to vocational education and training? (open text)*
8. *Would you like to add anything more referring to practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women or to actual needs of the migrant women and VET staff working with migrants? (open text)*

## Analysis of migrant women enrolled in VET answers

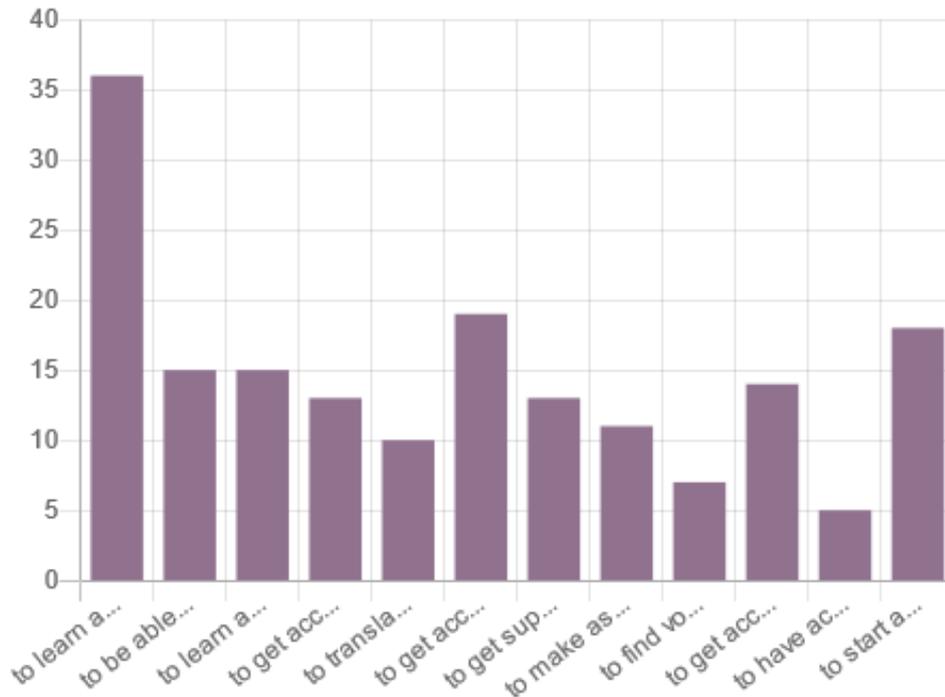
First question in the survey referred to actual needs of migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET. The question was: *What are the main actual needs of migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET in the country of your actual residence?* Collected answers are presented in below table and as a graphic chart.

**Tab. no. 3: The main actual needs of migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET.**

Answers	Chart	No. of answers	Ratio
to learn a new language (of the country of actual residence)		36	72%
to be able to communicate effectively with VET staff		15	30%
to learn about the culture of the country of their actual residence		15	30%
to get access to psychological support		13	26%
to translate curriculum from mother tongue into the language of the country of residence		10	20%
to get access to career counselling / individual plans		19	38%
to get support from mentors and tutors		13	26%
to make assessment and recognition of previous qualifications or skills		11	22%
to find vocational services in different languages		7	14%
to get access to appropriate education and vocational training		14	28%
to have access to digital tools within VET		5	10%
to start an internship / apprenticeship		18	36%



Graphic no. 3 The main actual needs of migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET



As we can see, the biggest number of migrant women chose the answer “to learn a new language” (72%), then “to get access to career counselling / individual plans” (38%) and “to start an internship / apprenticeship” (36%).

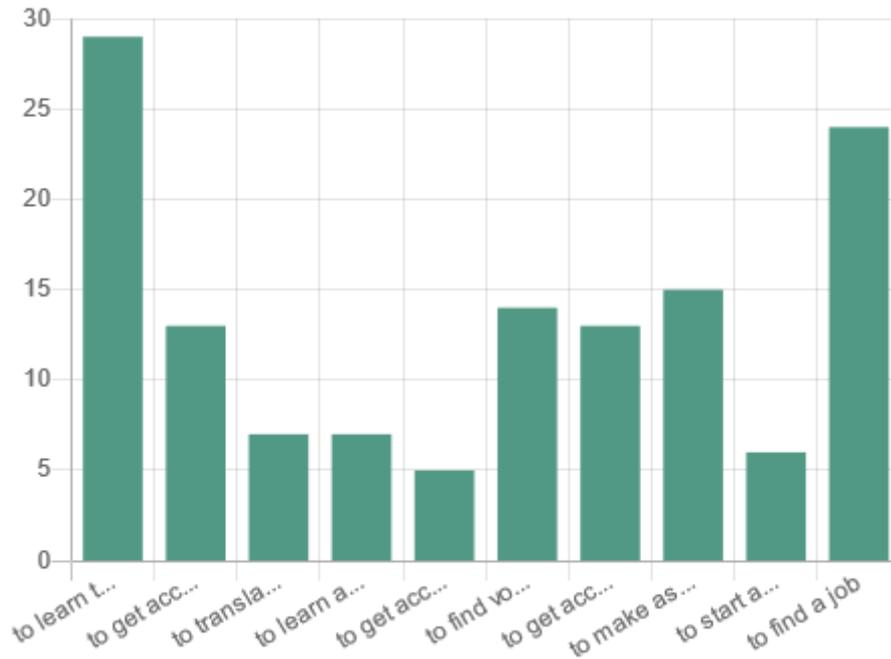
Second question referred to the most difficult challenges for migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET. The question was: *What are the most difficult challenges for migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET in the country of your actual residence?* Collected answers are presented in below table and as a graphic chart.

Tab. no. 4: The most difficult challenges for migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET.

Answers	Chart	No. of answers	Ratio
to learn the language of the country of actual residence		29	58%
to get access to the staff in VET sector who speak in migrant’s mother tongue		13	26%
to translate curriculum from mother tongue into the language of the country of residence		7	14%
to learn about the culture of the country of actual residence		7	14%
to get access to psychological support		5	10%
to find vocational services in mother tongue		14	28%
to get access to appropriate education and vocational training		13	26%
to make assessment and recognition of previous qualifications or skills		15	30%
to start an internship		6	12%
to find a job		24	48%



Graphic no. 4: The most difficult challenges for migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET.



We can see, the biggest number of responders chose the answer “to learn the language of the country of actual residence” (58%), then “to find a job” (48%) and “to make assessment and recognition of previous qualifications or skills” (30%).

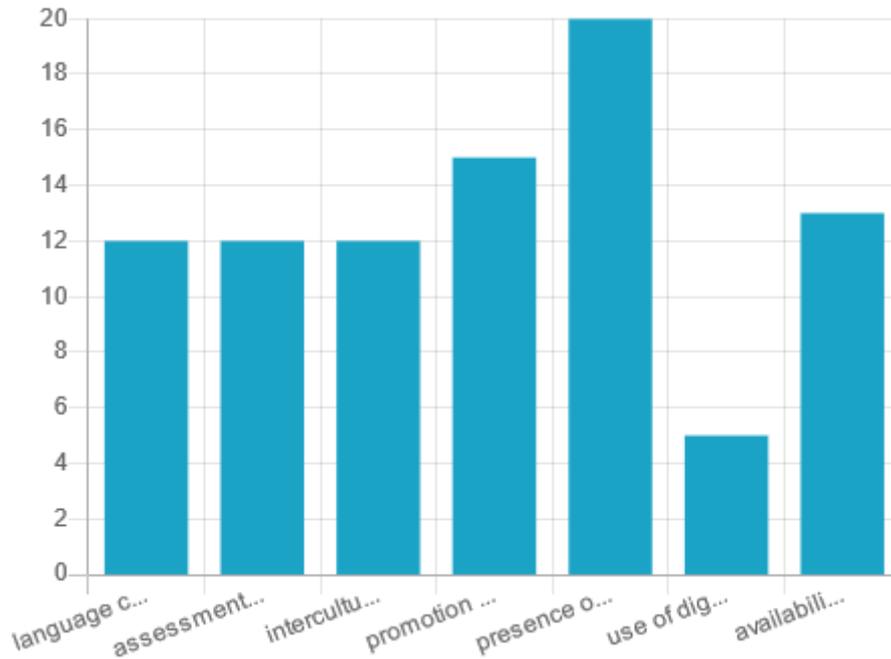
Third question referred to the types of practices already in use by VET organisations for integration of migrant women into VET. The question was: *What types of practices, according to your knowledge, are already in use by VET organisations in the country of your actual residence for integration of migrant women into VET?* Collected answers are presented in below table and as a graphic chart.

Tab. no. 5: Types of practices already in use by VET organisations for integration of migrant women into VET.

Answers	Chart	No. of answers	Ratio
language country of actual residence assessment		12	24%
assessment and recognition of previous qualifications or skills		12	24%
intercultural dialogue / collaboration		12	24%
promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity		15	30%
presence of integration policies for migrants		20	40%
use of digital tools to increase participation of migrants in VET		5	10%
availability of learning materials in different languages		13	26%



Graphic no. 5: Types of practices already in use by VET organisations for integration of migrant women into VET.



The biggest number of migrant women chose the answer “presence of integration policies for migrants” (40%), then “promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity” (30%) and “availability of learning materials in different languages” (26%).

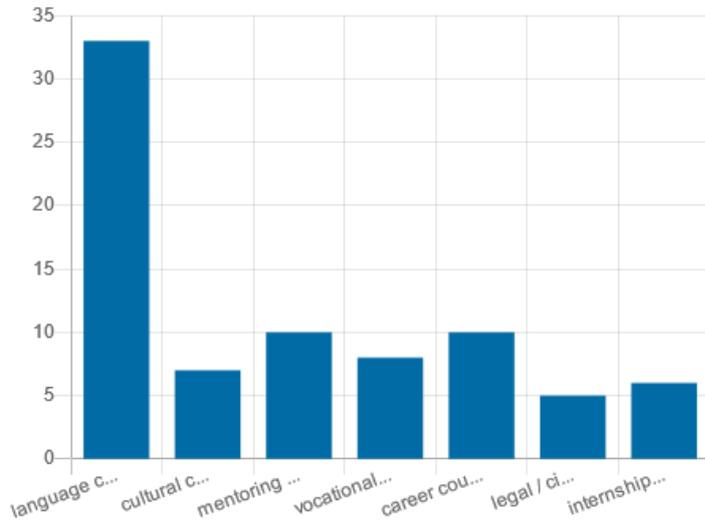
Fourth question referred to the types of VET services in which migrant women took part in. The question was: *In what types of services provided by VET organisations did you have possibility to take part in during the process of inclusion to VET?* Collected answers are presented in below table and as a graphic chart.

Table no. 6: Types of services provided by VET organisations in which migrant women had possibility to take part in during the process of inclusion to VET.

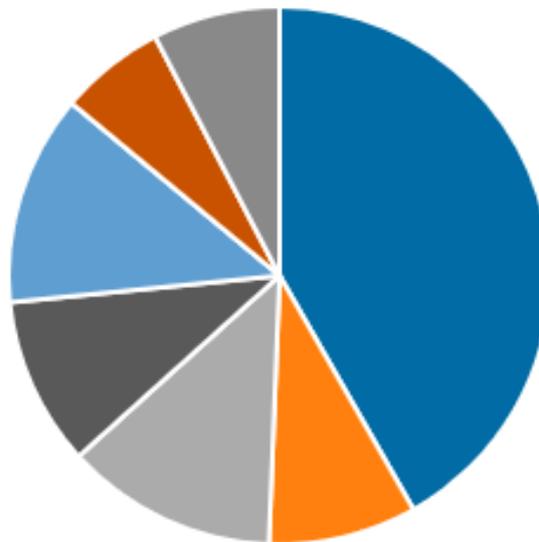
Answers	Chart	No. of answers	Ratio
language courses		33	66%
cultural courses		7	14%
mentoring / tutoring		10	20%
vocational courses		8	16%
career counselling		10	20%
legal / civic counselling		5	10%
internships / apprenticeships		6	12%



Graphic no. 6: Types of services provided by VET organisations in which migrant women had possibility to take part in during the process of inclusion to VET.



Graphic no. 7: Types of services provided by VET organisations in which migrant women had possibility to take part in during the process of inclusion to VET.



We can see that the biggest number of responders chose the answer “language courses” (66%), then “mentoring / tutoring” (20%) and “career counselling” (20%).

Fifth question referred to the biggest challenges for VET staff working with migrants. The question was: *What are, in your opinion, the biggest challenges for VET staff working with*

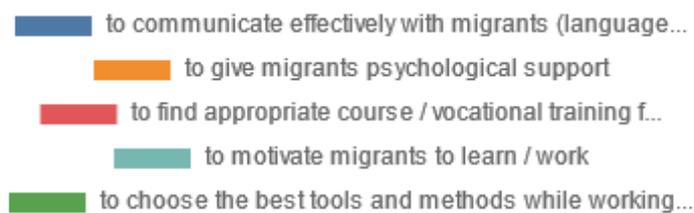


migrants in the country of your actual residence? Collected answers are presented in below table and as a graphic chart.

Table no. 7: The biggest challenges for VET staff working with migrants.

Answers	Chart	No. of answers	Ratio
to communicate effectively with migrants (language barrier)		32	64%
to give migrants psychological support		11	22%
to find appropriate course / vocational training for migrants in different languages		14	28%
to motivate migrants to learn / work		18	36%
to choose the best tools and methods while working with migrants		16	32%

Graphic no. 8: The biggest challenges for VET staff working with migrants.



We can see, that the biggest number of migrant women chose the answer “to communicate effectively with migrants (language barrier)” (64%), then “to motivate migrants to learn / work” (36%) and “to choose the best tools and methods while working with migrants” (32%).



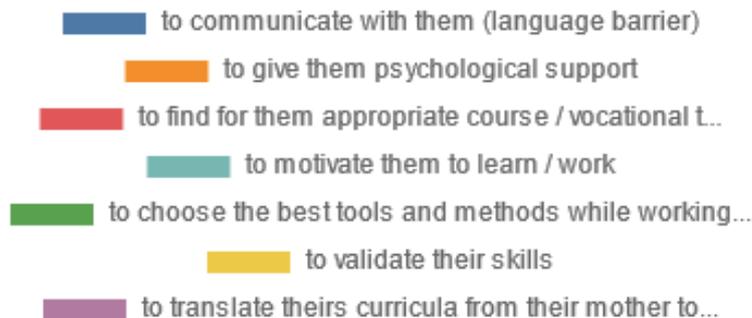
## Analysis of VET staff’s answers

Responders from VET staff group answered to eight questions. The first question in survey referred to their needs while working with migrants. The question was: *What are, in your opinion, the main actual needs of the VET staff working with migrants (esp. women) in your country?* Collected answers are presented below in table and graphic chart.

**Table no. 8: The main actual needs of the VET staff working with migrants (esp. women).**

Answers	Chart	No. of answers	Ratio
to communicate with them (language barrier)		39	52,7%
to give them psychological support		29	39,19%
to find for them appropriate course / vocational training in different languages		31	41,89%
to motivate them to learn / work		26	35,14%
to choose the best tools and methods while working with migrants		25	33,78%
to validate their skills		29	39,19%
to translate theirs curricula from their mother tongue into national language		9	12,16%

**Graphic no. 9: The main actual needs of the VET staff working with migrants (esp. women).**



The biggest number of responders chose the answer “to communicate with them (language barrier)” (52,7%), then “to give them psychological support” (39,19%) and “to validate their skills” (39,19%).

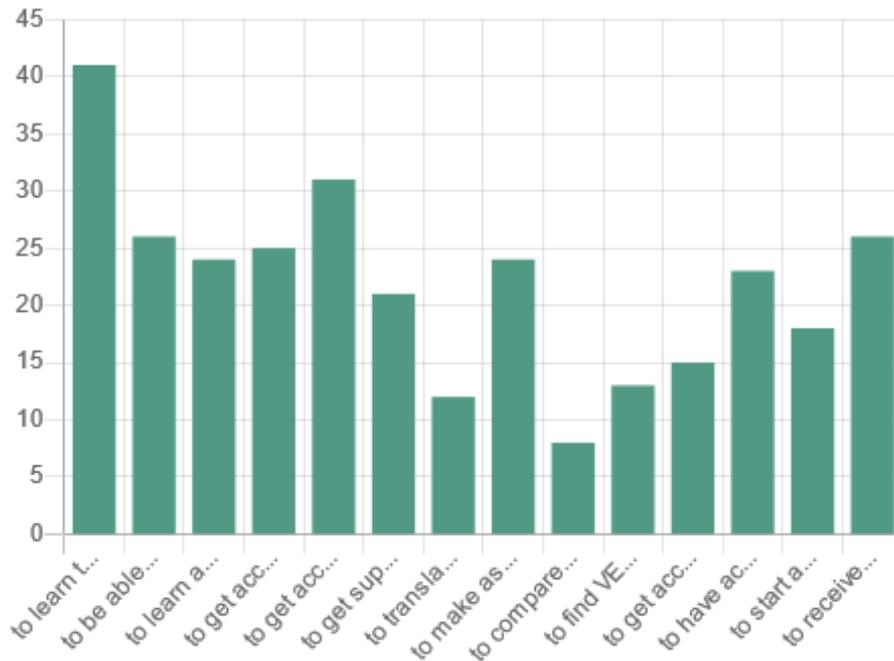


The second question in survey for VET staff referred to the main needs of migrant women. The question was: What are, in your opinion, the main needs of migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET? Collected answers are presented below in table and graphic chart.

**Table no. 9: The main needs of migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET.**

Answers	Chart	No. of answers	Ratio
to learn the language of the country of their actual residence		41	55,41%
to be able to communicate effectively with VET staff		26	35,14%
to learn about the culture of a country of their actual residence		24	32,43%
to get access to psychological support		25	33,78%
to get access to counselling / individual plans		31	41,89%
to get support from mentors and tutors		21	28,38%
to translate their curricula from their mother tongue into national language		12	16,22%
to make assessment and recognition of previous qualifications or skills		24	32,43%
to compare their skills with national		8	10,81%
to find VET learning materials / services in many languages		13	17,57%
to get access to appropriate education and vocational training		15	20,27%
to have access to digital tools within VET		23	31,08%
to start an internship / apprenticeship		18	24,32%
to receive career guidance		26	35,14%

**Graphic no. 10: The main needs of migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET.**



We can see that amongst VET staff the biggest number of responders chose the answer “to learn the language of the country of their actual residence” (55,41%), then “to get access to

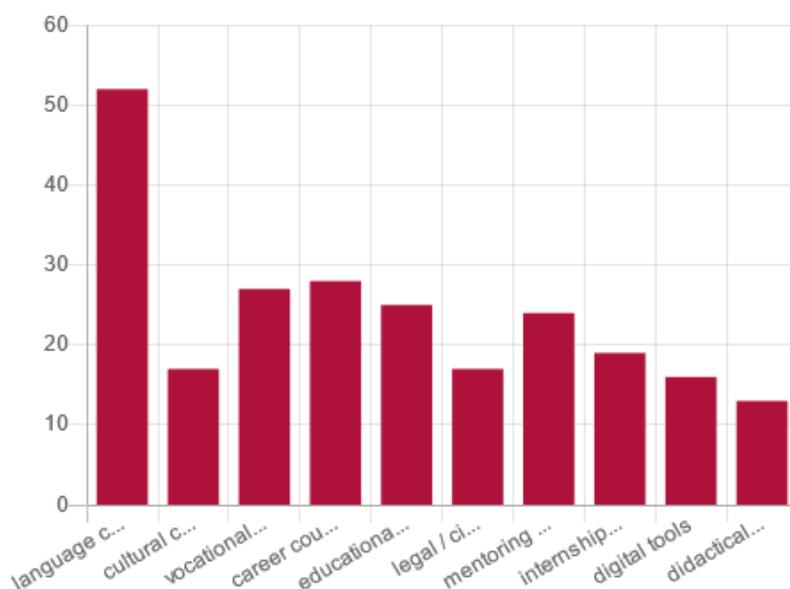
counselling / individual plans” (41,89%), “to receive career guidance” (35,14%) and “to be able to communicate effectively with VET staff” (35,14%).

The third question in survey referred to the types of practices/tools commonly in use by VET institutions. The question was: *What types of practices/tools, according to your knowledge, are commonly in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women in VET?* Collected answers are presented below in table and graphic chart.

**Table no. 10: Types of practices/tools which are commonly in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women in VET.**

Answers	Chart	No. of answers	Ratio
language courses		52	70,27%
cultural courses		17	22,97%
vocational courses / trainings in different languages		27	36,49%
career counselling		28	37,84%
educational counselling / guidance		25	33,78%
legal / civic counselling		17	22,97%
mentoring / tutoring		24	32,43%
internships / apprenticeships		19	25,68%
digital tools		16	21,62%
didactical materials in different languages		13	17,57%

**Graphic no. 11: Types of practices/tools which are commonly in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women in VET.**



The biggest number of VET staff chose the answer “language courses” (70,27%), then “career counselling” (37,84%) and “vocational courses / trainings in different languages” (36,49%).

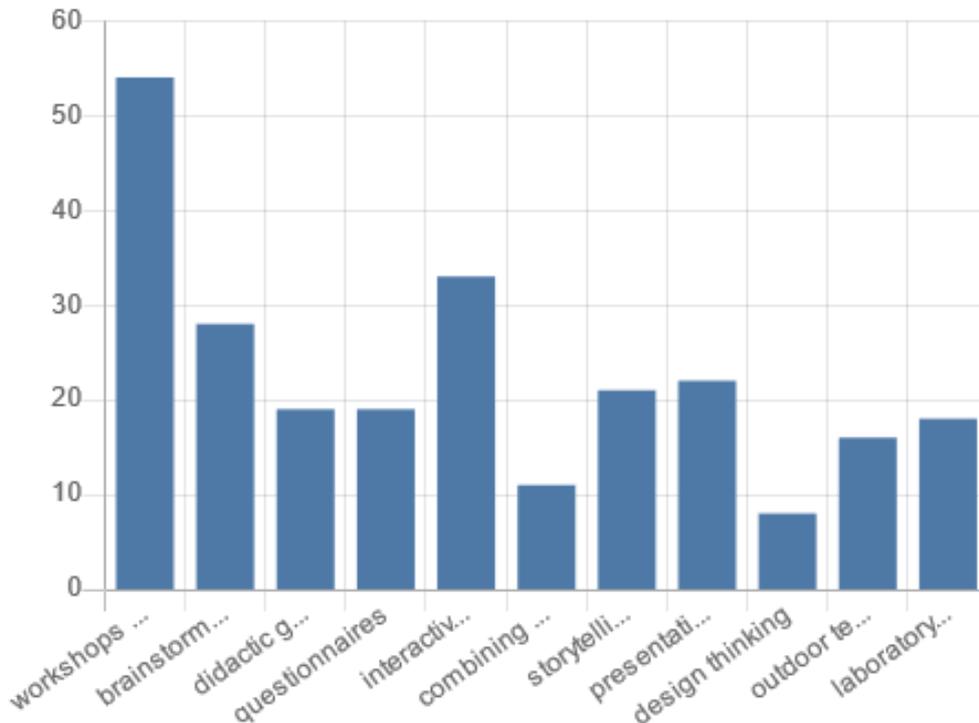


The fourth question in survey for VET staff referred to the types of tools / methods used by responders while working with migrant learners. *The question was: What tools / methods do you typically use while working with migrant learners?* Collected answers are presented below in table and graphic chart.

**Table no. 11: Tools / methods which VET staff typically use while working with migrant learners.**

Answers	Chart	No. of answers	Ratio
workshops / group work		54	72,97%
brainstorming / discussions / problem-solving		28	37,84%
didactic games / simulations		19	25,68%
questionnaires		19	25,68%
interactive methods		33	44,59%
combining deductive and inductive learning		11	14,86%
storytelling / coaching questions / group coaching		21	28,38%
presentations / lectures		22	29,73%
design thinking		8	10,81%
outdoor team experience		16	21,62%
laboratory / exercises		18	24,32%

**Graphic no. 12: Tools / methods which VET staff typically use while working with migrant learners.**





We can observe that the biggest group of staff chose the answer “workshops / group work” (72,97%), then “interactive methods” (44,59%) and “brainstorming / discussions / problem-solving” (37,84%).

The fifth question in the survey was: *What other tools / methods do you use while working with migrant learners?* Collected answers are presented below:

- “Field trips”
- “Our classes are frontal, and it doesn't change depending on the background of the students”
- “Working with migrant learners involves involvement of native speakers and using migrant tutors who are able to provide better shaped approaches and understanding of the migrants' real problems”
- “The comparison between cultures”
- “Buddy system”
- “Direct approach: house visits, a lot of whatsapp contact, sporting together”
- “Peer learning, mentoring and reverse mentoring”
- “Focusing on vocational language training”
- “Frontal lessons, but this is a standard method that we use with all students, there is no difference for Italian or foreign students. The only difference may be made by the subject and its specific needs/modalities for teaching”
- “Workshops that can ease socialisation and passage of knowledge and skills”
- “Labour market orientation”
- “Outdoor team experiences”
- “We have created an Office for international youth mobility”
- “Individual consultations”
- “Individual work”
- “Digital tools, ICT, incl. remote/online learning (e.g. flipped classroom method)”
- “Participatory dialogue”.

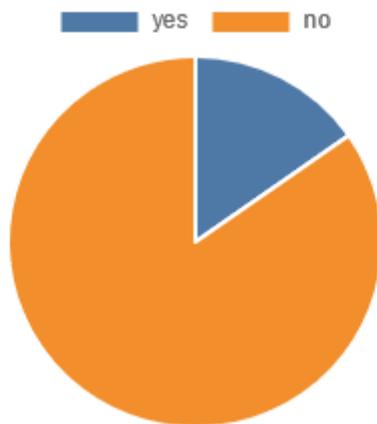
The sixth question in the survey referred to using “Theory of Change” by VET staff in the past. The question was: *Have you ever had a chance as a VET staff to use “Theory of Change” as a method of building strategies for inclusion of migrant women in VET?* Given answers are presented in table and as a chart.

**Table no. 12: The use of the “Theory of Change” as a method of building strategies for inclusion of migrant women in VET.**

Answers	Chart	No. of answers	Ratio
yes		11	15,28%
no		61	84,72%



Graphic no. 13: The use of the “Theory of Change” as a method of building strategies for inclusion of migrant women in VET.



As we can see, a vast majority of VET staff (84,72%) had never used “Theory of Change” as a method of building strategies for inclusion of migrant women in VET.

The seventh question in survey for VET staff was about promotion activities which may help migrant women to enroll for VET services. The question was: *What, in your opinion, can be done to promote inclusion of migrant women to vocational education and training?* Collected answers are:

- “To promote individualised plans, focusing on their interests and their potential, so to reinforce them better through ad-hoc counselling paths”
- “to promote better these institutions and their offers, trying to reach this specific target + to offer free and recognised courses”
- “combine distant (at home) and face to face learning”
- “Through workshops or seminars”
- “Communication, collaboration”
- “Change in thinking”
- “Inclusion of migrant women to vocational education and training can be promoted using materials in the migrants' languages and role models that encourage migrant women to undertake the training. Furthermore, helping mothers with the childcare is very useful”
- “Daycare for their children”
- “The involvement of all decision-making factors in education”
- “Vocational counselling”
- “Agreements with companies”
- “Support them to better identify their fields of interest”
- “A business type approach, bringing the 'real life' closer to them”
- “Stimulate them, challenge them”
- “To give them the chance to learn a job, since a large part of them do not have school”
- “Get involved in their lives, gain trust”
- “Match sectors with lack of workers with the upskilling of migrants”



- “Start from the earliest moment possible and involve the family”
- “Let them experience what job opportunities there are”
- “Work together WITH migrants in setting policy and in practice”
- “Motivate them”
- “The most important thing is to give them equal rights as local citizens”
- “To include workshops that can promote a better understanding of the Italian language”
- “Counselling services with the support of a linguistic and cultural mediator”
- “Focus on peer learning”
- “Social and civil network for migrants”
- “I think it would be useful to organise cultural events and workshops with the VET institutes to promote social inclusion and make migrant women feel comfortable to share their knowledge and participate in the trainings”
- “Full immersion activities; simulated enterprise workshops; on line courses and tools about the most request VET courses”
- “Advertisements”
- “Intercultural Communication Competence”
- “Make some campaigns”
- “To provide guidance and help for migrant women to check whether any of their existing qualifications could be recognised and to offer them additional language support. In addition, team work and interactive learning could increase the integration and inclusion of migrant women VET students within the educational environment and in the wider community as well”
- “Assistance and support from public authorities, local organisations and so on”
- “Social media campaigns, promotion in traditional media”
- “More specific programmes for their inclusion”

The last question in the survey for both groups of responders (VET staff and migrant women) was an open one and allowed responders to share with other comments, suggestions, recommendations. The question was: *Would you like to add anything more referring to practices already in use by VET organisations for the inclusion of migrant women or to actual needs of the migrant women and VET staff working with migrants?* Collected answers are:

- “We recommend the involvement of migrant tutors who are able to create faster connection and whom migrant women trust more or easier”.
- “You don't know what you don't know, and if you don't know what you don't know, you don't have a question”.
- “It's a big problem with rare language translators/interpreters”.
- “mentoring is key!”.
- “Make effective use of role models / buddies: those migrant women which are already a few years ahead can support others”.
- “Language barrier and need to have a job”.
- “Some lessons are expensive to cover and thus cannot attend”.
- “It's important to offer a babysitting service to take care of the kids while we study/work”.



- “It's important to have a babysitting service to take care of our kids so that we can have time to study/work”.

## Conclusions from survey research

### Joint results from six partners' countries

Thanks to the online survey questionnaires conducted in groups of migrant women enrolled in VET and among VET staff in six partner countries, we may draw some conclusions.

First of all, we can see that a vast majority of VET staff (84,72%) in partner countries has never used “Theory of Change” as a method of building strategies for inclusion of migrant women in VET sector.

Second, the most important needs of migrant women according to women respondents are: “to learn a new language” (72%), then “to get access to career counselling / individual plans” (38%) and “to start an internship / apprenticeship” (36%). As we can see, the two biggest needs chosen by migrant women were also chosen by VET staff. Staff indicated that the main needs of migrant women are: “to learn the language of the country of their actual residence” (55,41%) and “to get access to counselling / individual plans” (41,89%). They also indicated the following: “to receive career guidance” (35,14%) and “to be able to communicate effectively with VET staff” (35,14%).

Third, from migrant women's answers, we get the knowledge that the most difficult challenges for migrant women are: “to learn the language of the country of actual residence” (58%), then “to find a job” (48%) and “to make assessment and recognition of previous qualifications or skills” (30%).

Fourth, from migrant women we know that the most common practices which are already in use by VET organisations in process of inclusion of migrant women to VET are: “presence of integration policies for migrants” (40%), then “promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity” (30%) and “availability of learning materials in different languages” (26%). The staff indicated similar practices: “language courses” (70,27%), “career counselling” (37,84%) and “vocational courses / trainings in different languages” (36,49%).

Fifth, migrant women who took part in research indicated that they had possibility to take part in services provided by VET institutions such as: “language courses” (66%), “mentoring / tutoring” (20%) and “career counselling” (20%).

Sixth, from the research, we know that the biggest challenges for VET staff in daily work with migrants, in opinion of migrant women, are: “to communicate effectively with migrants (language barrier)” (64%), “to motivate migrants to learn / work” (36%) and “to choose the best tools and methods while working with migrants” (32%). Language barrier was also indicated as the most challenging by VET staff. 52,7% of the respondents indicated that answer. 39,19% chose “to give them psychological support” and “to validate their skills”.

Seventh, thanks to the research, we know that tools / methods which are typically in use by VET staff while working with migrant women are: “workshops / group work” (72,97%),



then “interactive methods” (44,59%) and “brainstorming / discussions / problem-solving” (37,84%).

## Countries similarities and differences

We did not notice differences between partner countries in VET staff opinions according their actual needs while working with migrants. In all the six countries, staff indicated mainly five answers: “language barrier”, “to find for them appropriate course / vocational training in different languages”, “to choose the best tools and methods while working with migrants”, “to validate their skills”, “to give them psychological support”.

According to the main needs of migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET, we also did not see differences in the opinions of staff in partner countries. They most often indicated the following five answers: “to learn the language of the country of their actual residence”; “to be able to communicate effectively with VET staff”; “to learn about the culture of a country of their actual residence”; “to get access to psychological support; to get access to counselling / individual plans”. In Italy, the big number of VET staff also indicated the answer “to make assessment and recognition of previous qualifications or skills”.

The VET staff from the six countries also agreed on the practices / tools commonly in use by VET organisations. They mainly chose: “language courses”, “cultural courses”, “vocational courses / trainings in different languages”, “career counselling”, “mentoring / tutoring”.

Staff respondents in six partner countries also agreed on the tools / methods which they typically use while working with migrant learners. The most common answers were: “workshops / group work”, “brainstorming / discussions / problem-solving”, “didactic games / simulations”, “questionnaires”, “interactive methods”, “presentations / lectures”.

When comparing answers given by migrant women enrolled in VET in six partner countries, we do not see big differences between their opinions. In each country, the women most often indicated their needs in the process of inclusion to VET as follows: “to learn a new language”, “to be able to communicate effectively with VET staff”, “to get access to appropriate education and vocational training”, “to get access to career counselling / individual plans”; “to start an internship / apprenticeship”, “to translate curriculum”, “to start an internship / apprenticeship”.

As for the most difficult challenges for migrant women in the process of inclusion to VET, we did not notice differences between partner countries. In all the six countries, respondents being migrant women indicated the following answers: “to learn the language of the country of actual residence”, “to get access to the staff in VET sector who speak in migrant’s mother tongue”, “to translate curriculum”, “to get access to appropriate education and vocational training”, “to make assessment and recognition of previous qualifications or skills”, “to start an internship”, “to find a job”.

Migrant women in the six countries agreed on the fact that the most common VET service they had possibility to take part in were “language courses”. In addition to them,



migrant women participated in: “career counselling”, “legal / civic counselling”, “internships / apprenticeships”, “mentoring / tutoring”.

Migrant women also agreed on the biggest challenges for VET staff working with migrants in the country of their actual residence. They mainly indicated “language barrier”. Other important challenges in opinion of migrant women are: “to motivate migrants to learn / work”, “to choose the best tools and methods while working with migrants”, “to give migrants psychological support”.



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