



ENGAGE Project Newsletter

The project *Development of inclusivE iNteGratiOn pAthS 4 miGrant women* (**ENGAGE**) aims to increase the capacity of Third Country National women for entering the labour market and social life of the host society. This will be carried out through upskilling workshops, a job shadowing programme and cross-cultural activities. The direct and indirect target groups are TCN women (and TCNs in general), labour market stakeholders, professionals, policy makers, NGOs and the general public.

“The comparative report provides valuable information that will be highly useful for the development of the consortium’s targeted approach towards TCN women and form the basis for designing the project’s complementary and tailored integration tools.”

ENGAGE COMPARATIVE REPORT: Investigating practices, gaps & needs for TCN women



The first months of the project were dedicated to carrying out research into the current practices, gaps & needs for TCN women in the partner countries. Each partner organised focus groups with local key players to collect valuable information about the knowledge, barriers and needs for an accessible and inclusive labour market. The findings were then compiled into a desk research that resulted in a **national report** from each partner country. UCLL in turn gathered the findings to develop a **comparative report** reflecting the current situation at a European level.

The research confirmed again that TCN women form one of the most vulnerable groups in all countries. The unemployment rate with TCN women is often almost twice as high as with national citizens. The women are either inactive, confronted with a lack of opportunities due to high standards and/or discrimination, or are in precarious conditions because of illegal or unregistered work. They often take up domestic work which is not recognised formally as work experience. While most countries have some policy in place for gender



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equality, integration of newcomers, and support for entering the labour market, these policies are often pillarized. These should instead be transversal and comprehensive, to address the specific needs of TCN women, who are at an intersection of three axes of identity: gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status. Gender equality policies don't take into account religion or ethnicity, while integration or employability policies are not gender sensitive.

Despite differences in local and national contexts, findings from the focus groups in the various partner countries were relatively similar. All participating women voiced experiences involving some form of discrimination which hindered their labour market integration: either hiring policies were not inclusive, or employers were outright racist. They found that their ability to access to the labour market is mainly hindered by discrimination or prejudices, limited knowledge of the local language, lack of experience and lack of flexibility in working hours. Labour market stakeholders in turn identified that TCN women mainly experience the following barriers: lack of awareness with employers, prejudice about the women's skills and culture, complicated procedures to hire newcomers, and lack of a clear policy on the validation of informal skills.

An analysis of these needs and gaps resulted in several recommendations to promote the integration of TCN women in the labour market. For one, an **outreaching and integrated policy at all levels** is necessary. This policy must account for the **multi-layered identity** of these women: their gender, their ethnicity or religion, and their socio-economic or legal status. Further recommendations included providing **opportunities for language learning** (formal and/or informal); **ensuring cultural competency** among labour market stakeholders; **reducing the possibility of cultural stereotyping** and lack of knowledge; and **supporting the validation and recognition of qualifications and informal skills**.

You can find the Reports on the [Results section](#) of our project website.



What's happening now ?

The findings from the research that has been carried out led to a series of recommendations which will form a strong foundation for the development of the upcoming activities, which include:

- Up-skilling workshops for TCN women and validation of acquired competences based on Open Badges methodology
- Capacity building for LMS
- Job-shadowing schemes
- Women's Circles involving local and TCN women
- Awareness raising activities

“The Info Days for women and Labour Market Stakeholders will soon take place in all countries. The events will take place online or in person, in the local languages of the participating countries.”

The 11 partners in the project consortium regularly meet online to coordinate and realign on the project objectives and preliminary results.

On the 27th and 28th of October 2021, the partners met for the first time in person for a coordination meeting in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.



The Info Days for women and Labour Market Stakeholders will soon take place in all countries. The events take place online or in person and will provide information about all upcoming activities and opportunities in the project.

More information on the Info Days is available online.



Get to know The Partnership: Spotlight on UCLL in Belgium

University College UCLL offers 16 graduates, 18 professional bachelor programs and 13 after-bachelor programs on 8 campuses in Limburg and Flemish Brabant. With some 15,500 students and 1,750 employees, UCLL is one of the largest institutions of higher education in Flanders. UCLL is active in the fields of interest of teacher training, management, technology, health and welfare and combines its educational mission with practice-based research and services. The university college places maximum emphasis on personal guidance of its students. Its broad educational network guarantees a place for everyone's talent and its diplomas stand strong on the labour market.



Setting people and ideas in motion by providing space for innovative thinking and collaboration, is the vision of the university, that aims at Moving Minds. The name UCLL shows the international ambition: UCLL, fully University Colleges Leuven-Limburg, offers solid programs, oriented on quality and with a view outward to the Euregion and beyond. UCLL is part of the KU Leuven Association.



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Contact us:

Project coordinator: Sebastiaan Jans

sebastiaan.jans@ucll.be

UC LIMBURG – CAMPUS DIEPENBEEK AGORALAAN GEBOUW B BUS, 3590 DIEPENBEEK, Belgium

	Belgium, Diepenbeek UCLL Research & Expertise		Germany, Berlin MetropolisNet EEIG
	Slovenia, Ljubljana Science and Research Center SAZU		Italy, Magliano Ce.F.A.S
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