



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



EMIRE EMPOWERMENT OF MIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

SUMMARY



PROJECT NUMBER: 2020-1-DE02-KA204-007398 • PROJECT DURATION: 01.11.2020 – 31.01.2023 • PROJECT PARTNERS:



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ABOUT EMIRE

Labour market integration is one of the most important aspects of migrant and/or refugee women's integration to the host country. Increasing the employment rate of women with a migrant or refugee background strengthens their social integration and contributes to economic growth and social cohesion. According to data from the European Website on Integration, many European countries lack policies that specifically address the challenges women with migrant or refugee background face when trying to find a job.

EMIRE is an Erasmus+ project, co-funded by the European Commission that aims to empower women with migrant or refugee backgrounds to support their labour market integration and to foster social inclusion. EMIRE's objective is to develop concepts and tools for social workers, employment advisers, and volunteers to support the empowerment process enabling women to become self-effective in their own integration process. At the same time, the project strongly supports a positive perception of women with migration background in the labour market.

The present document is a summary of our **Policy Guideline** particularly designed for decision makers at local, national, and European level.

NEED ANALYSIS

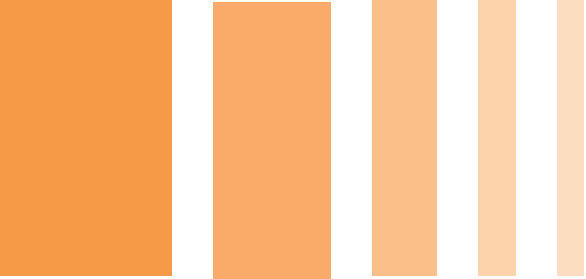
According to our extensive research in partner countries regarding the main challenges women with migration background face when trying to enter the host country's labour market, we have come across the following observations:

Moving to a new, often unknown, country creates a very stressful and insecure situation, especially for women. Upon arrival to the host country and during their integration process, women with migration background usually need linguistic, psychological, and financial support.

“Across Europe, 35% of immigrant women are in the bottom income level and less than 5% reach the top” (Frattini & Solmone, 2022). Women coming from non-EU countries face double discrimination in the labour market based on their gender and immigrant status and the situation has, unfortunately, not changed significantly in the last decade.

Labour market policies regulating the work of migrants are usually not based on prepared analyses but are designed as ad hoc mechanisms and are therefore mostly harmful to migrants.

Summing up, the main challenges that most migrant women face are discrimination from employers, difficulties in formal recognition of foreign qualifications or low transferability of skills acquired at home and lack of fluency in the host country language. (Frattini & Solmone, 2022).



The skills, competences, talents, and rights of migrant women should be recognised and valued by the states and societies that receive them, and transparent procedures for the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad should be established. They should also have access to vocational training and lifelong education, as well as free language courses so that they can participate on an equal footing with native workers.

At the end of 2019, most of the European countries policies on education were designed without a gender sensitive approach and focusing mostly on families, which in practice was considered inefficient due to different duties and roles inside the families (European Institute of Gender Equality, 2019). The language courses were mainly those offering childcare during the lessons in some of the European hosting countries, but most of the other types of courses or education were not offering such a service.

Housing issues and distance challenge migrant women because most of them do not have a driving license and cannot regularly attend activities or social integration programs.

Finding a new identity is a difficult process for them, especially for women in their mature years who came with an already built identity as well as knowledge and skills. In this way, migrant women also experience the isolation and segregation that result from not addressing social integration issues from the beginning.

VOICES OF WOMEN

In the framework of the EMIRE project, a video platform with videos of women with migration background sharing their stories on how they successfully integrated in the labour market has been created:

- 1 All the testimonials claimed that the main difficulty they encountered when moving to a foreign country was learning the new language, a primary goal for integration.
- 2 To overcome challenging difficulties in the host country, it is important to keep the determination useful to later achieve professional goals. Testimonials gave suggestions in this regard.

Lejla, a Bosnian psychologist who works in Slovenia, claimed “Educate yourself and believe that you can do anything.”

Amena from Yemen works as an accountant and lives in Germany. She says that despite all the difficulties “Always think positive. Always! Even when something negative happens.”

- 3 To achieve their professional goals, women should be ambitious and grow awareness of their potential. Nevertheless, the hosting country should also provide adequate opportunities for their effective integration into the labour market.



Eliza would like to suggest that employers evaluate work experiences and not only degrees or qualifications. She says: “One idea we could change is to give more opportunities to women in more managerial or high positions.”

4 In moments of discouragement, it is important for migrant women to find support from the people surrounding them and to observe the positive aspects of the socio-cultural contexts the encounter in the hosting country. This can help to keep determination to fulfil their ambitions.

Ikhlas comes from Iraq and now lives in Germany; she tells us that the teachers at the vocational school have always helped and supported her, and she claims: “My family motivates me, and I, also, motivate my children to find their career paths.”

Independence: My advice today would be: Open your mind to independence, but don't forget where you come from... that is your value and strength.”

Mediation: “Especially women should be supported in their empowerment paths, starting from expressing who they are and what their goals are... I see many of them giving up their dream job because they do not believe it would be achievable. My suggestion is to learn the language and look for right information that could be helpful to start building a dream!”

POLICY GUIDELINE

In our Policy Guideline particularly designed for decision makers at local, national, and European level we outline practical recommendations from experts who work on the field to foster the most effective way to support newly arrived migrant or refugee women, here are some examples:

“Social workers and operators should be better trained in order to face the needs of immigrants concerning psychological and professional aspects of their life.”

In our Toolkit for social workers we collected and described workshop methods and techniques to develop a professional identity based on the theory of resilience, non-violent communication and emotional intelligence.

“Offer them an info package with the host country’s laws explained in simple language (ideally translated to their mother tongue) so that they know their rights and responsibilities. Enrol them in language classes to learn the language and inform them about any traineeships they might be eligible to apply to in order to start building a professional network.”

“An offer of relationships and a network, whereby the arriving person can choose between an attachment to a group or a single person - either of migrants from the same region with already experience in the welcoming state or like a mentor, who migrated once to the welcoming state – activities of different interest, to get to know the surroundings, to enjoy their hobbies or to learn new ones, to have people in their life for comfort or to get to know or hang with and also to get to know how the systems work in the welcoming state – furthermore, also a professional of different fields (e.g., medicine, social work, law, etc.).”



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