



I-WELCOME - Reinforcing migrant women's
integration in society and the labour
market

EUROPEAN COMPARATIVE REPORT

Developed By:



INFORMATION ABOUT OUTPUT

Output: IO1 – A BELNDED UP-SKILLING PROGRAMME FOR TCN WOMEN
Activity: IO1-A1 : QUALITATIVE AND QANTITATIVE RESEARCH

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project acronym: I-WELCOME
Project title: I-WELCOME - Reinforcing migrant women's integration in society and the labour market
Project number:
Sub-programme or KA: KA2 Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices
Project website:



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1. General Introduction

The effective integration of migrants into the host country is a key challenge, countries around Europe facing at the moment. Specifically, TCN women appeared to be in more disadvantageous position compare to their male counterparts as they face additional obstacles such as child care obligations and gender discrimination. The integration of migrant women in the labour market and the host society in general is an important task for equity consideration alone, in order to close the socio-economic gap between men and women and also to promote the successful inclusion of children of migrants.

This report is part of the European Project 'IWELCOME: Reinforcing migrant women's integration in society and the labour market', and aims to provide an overview of the profile, needs and gaps of TCN women in 7 countries – Germany, Greece, Cyprus, France, Bulgaria, Italy and Spain.

2. The presence and characteristics of migrant women

The main conclusion rises from the data collected in terms of the presence and characteristics of migrant women in the partner countries is that migrant women is a heterogeneous group as every woman comes from a different cultural background, age group and educational level, hence the needs of this group needs to be considered carefully.

To start with a brief summary regarding the cultural background of the migrant women, some commonalities can be observed between Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Bulgaria – specifically, in regards to the fact that women coming from Syria, Pakistan, Cameroon and Afghanistan are big part of the migration population of those countries. For France and Germany, part of their migration population is coming from Russia, but also from African and Asian countries. In terms of Spain, contrary to the other countries a big part of the migration population is coming from Morocco and South American countries such as Colombia and Venezuela.

In terms of the age group, the age group of 15-35 appears to cover a big part of the TCN women in all the partner countries, followed by the age group 35-60. Regarding their educational background, this varies as in some countries such as France and Germany the percentage of TCN women who received higher education is higher, compare to the ones in Bulgaria, Cyprus and Greece where the majority of the TCN women attended mainly to primary or secondary education.



3. Migrant Women in the Labour Market

Employment is a key factor in the integration of migrants into the host country. In terms of the engagement of migrant women in the labour market in the partner countries, some similarities appear in relation to their employment status, field of employment and obstacles encountered by TCN women. A large number of TCN women in all the partner countries appear to be unemployed, and the unemployment rate compared to their male counterparts appears to be significantly higher. The different obstacles encountered by TCN women to enter the labour market are common in all the partner countries, such as communication barriers, child care obligations and lack of recognition in terms of educational diplomas. Additionally, those TCN women that are employed, the fields of employment in all the partner countries present some similarities. Specifically, the most common fields of employment for the TCN women are household/ domestic activities, agriculture and customer service, and usually in the form of temporary or part-time job.

4. State of Art regarding Policies/ Guidelines

In terms of policies, guidelines and strategies, positive steps towards the successful integration of migrants have been taken in all the partner countries the past years. Here is a brief summary:

In Bulgaria, a National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration 2015-2020 has been developed and it is due to be updated, along with the law regarding Labour Migration and Labour Mobility. However, it is mentioned that the focus of this strategy is mainly to secure EU's external borders, and integration is coming after. In terms of the integration of migrants, numerous NGOs are working towards the goal of integration both at a national and at a local level.

Similarly, in Italy, the main jurisdiction focusing on the rights of the refugees, whereas regional bodies are focusing on the promotion of the integration of migrants into the society through regional plans which targeting socioecological needs.

In Cyprus, the main legislation addressing refugee's rights is the Refugee Law 2000, along with a large number of international and regional conventions on human rights. Recently, the creation of a National Plan on the Integration of Migrants was drafted concerning suggestions and measures aimed at facilitating the integration of TCN citizens in the society, and it is to be implemented by the year 2022.

In Greece, after the outbreak of migration in 2015, a relevant legislation was adopted to promote the integration of migrants into the Greek society. The integration process is also promoted through the new legislation as it offers access to employability and vocational trainings provided by NGOs, VET centres and Universities.

In France, in order to encourage the professional integration of women, migrant women are targeted as a priority in calls for projects under the RPIIP (Regional Program for the Integration of Immigrant Populations) created in 1990 and generalises on the whole French territory in 2003 and their departmental equivalents, the DIP (Departmental Integration Plan). This program is part of the national integration policy, which aims to promote access by legal foreigners to mainstream services. The integration process is considered complete when the person obtains French nationality.

In Spain, the Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration aims to support the different public administrations and social organizations, creating policies aimed at all citizens and looking for the inclusion of the migrant community in the public services. The basic pillars on which the plan is based are equality, citizenship and multiculturalism.

Lastly, in Germany, a support programme aims to offer better job market opportunities for people with history of migration developed in 2005, and expanded in 2015 to include the recognition of qualification obtained in the migrants' country of origin. Additionally, in 2015 the European Social Fund (ESF) programme „Stark im Beruf“(strong at work), which is targeted towards the support of mothers with a history of migration was launched by the federal ministry of families, seniors, women and adolescents.

Overall, it appears that in the partner countries positive steps were taken towards the integration of migrants as a group in general whether in the form of a national policy plan, a relevant legislation or a combination of both. Despite those positive steps, it is important to note that most of the policies introduced are still gender insensitive, hence might not reflect the needs of TCN women as a group due to additional obstacles such as child care obligations and gender discrimination. Hence, it is evident that there is still room for improvement in order to promote a more inclusive and diverse society.



5. Good Practices

This section presents training programmes/ initiatives at a local/national level directed to migrant women in the partner countries, focusing on the development of their skills and competences – for more detailed information about the good practices please check each partner’s country national report.



BULGARIA

✓ **The Council of Refugee Women**

The Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria is an association founded in 2003 in Sofia by nine women who came from Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. Linda Awanis is the current Chair of the Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria. The association helps all refugees and asylum seekers in the process of their integration in Bulgarian society. <https://crw-bg.org/en>

✓ **Caritas Sofia’s Migration and Integration Department**

Caritas Sofia provides comprehensive services to aid effective adaptation and integration of asylum-seeking people refugees, and third country nationals. <https://www.caritas-sofia.org/en/groups/refugees-and-asylum-seekers>

✓ **Association of Teachers of Bulgarian as a Foreign Language (ATBFL)**

The Association is an independent, voluntary public organization based in Sofia. It provides assistance for the professional development of teachers of Bulgarian as a foreign language as well as developing and teaching courses and training materials for migrants and refugees. <http://bglanguageteachers.org/>

✓ **Bulgarian Red Cross’s refugee-migrants service**

The Bulgarian Red Cross’s refugee-migrants service is committed to facilitating refugee integration, to preventing the isolation of migrants, and to promoting tolerance towards both groups in the Bulgarian society. <https://en.redcross.bg/activities/activities8>

✓ **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Bulgaria (UNHCR)**

Provides assistance to the authorities and civil society organizations working directly or indirectly on the protection of refugees, and supports the further development of the national



protection system within the constantly evolving pan-European asylum system.

<https://www.unhcr.org/bg/>

✓ **Bulgarian council on refugees and migrants**

Protection and integration of refugees and migrants. The association works on various project and develops materials, organizes teachings and trainings that help facilitating the process of integration of refugees. <https://bcm-bg.org/en/>

✓ **St Anna Integration Centre for Refugees and Migrants in Sofia**

Various assistance including counselling, providing information about living in Bulgaria translation and consultation, Bulgarian language trainings. <https://migrantlife.bg/st-anna-center-for-refugee-and-migrant-integration-cc> .



CYPRUS

✓ **European University of Cyprus**

Workshops aimed to develop the employability skills of unemployed asylum-seekers and refugees in Cyprus, with the goal to facilitate their integration in the local society.

<https://www.unhcr.org/cy/2019/05/21/employment-mentorship-workshops-for-refugees-offered-by-the-european-university-of-cyprus/>

✓ **UNHCR Cyprus & Cyprus Refugee Council**

HelpRefugeesWork is an innovative and free web service that brings motivated refugee job-seekers in contact with employers and training providers in Cyprus in an easy and efficient manner. <https://www.helprefugeeswork.org/>

✓ **Cyprus Refugee Council**

The CRC is an NGO focus on promoting the wellbeing and integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Cyprus through offering training, legal, social and psychological support.

<https://cyrefugeecouncil.org/>

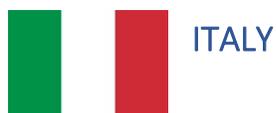
✓ **New Channels for Integration**



New Channels for Integrations is a collaborative initiative that has been running since 2012 by a consortium of municipalities across Cyprus. Municipalities joined forces to uphold the principles of contemporary democratic pluralistic society and assist in the integration of migrants at their communities and in the Cypriot society more broadly. <http://localintegration.eu/en/>

✓ **iLearnGreek**

iLearnGreek provides free Greek language courses at two different levels (basic and intermediate level) for refugees, asylum seekers, and persons with subsidiary protection and non-EU migrants. The courses are held in all cities and they aim to support the integration process in the Cypriot society. <http://www.ilearngreek.eu/>



✓ **SKILLS TO WORK**

The project aims to create customized inclusive paths in order to promote and support migrants' integration and autonomy. It provides with certification of formal and non-formal, personal and professional skills, creation of cv and skills balance. Migrants have access to European platform "Skills profile tool for Third Country Nationals" for job mentoring and placement. The individual online profile allows matching migrants' job experiences and labour market placement in European Countries. <https://ec.europa.eu/migrantskills/#/>

✓ **CPIA (Provincial Centres for Adult Education)**

Adult education, including migrants regularly resident in Italian territory, is promoted by the CPIAs established with the decree of the President of the Republic 263 of 29 October 2012. They constitute a type of autonomous educational institution with its own staff and specific didactic and organizational structure. The CPIAs are divided into "territorial service networks" working on adult illiteracy thanks to Italian language classes. <https://www.miur.gov.it/i-centri-provinciali-per-l-istruzione-degli-adulti>.

✓ **MUSEI ACCOGLIENTI (MUA)**

The MUA promote a training program for intercultural dialogue aimed at migrants and refugees from the provinces of Lecce and Brindisi. The project aims to explore and build skills and practices to make cultural heritage more accessible and to promote social and collaborative interaction. The activities will include several methodologies, such as digital storytelling, which allows combining traditional forms of storytelling with modern digital



tools; starting from personal values and views. <http://www.cir-onlus.org/2018/10/15/cir-aperta-la-selezione-per-il-percorso-formativo-del-progetto-musei-accoglienti/>

✓ **CeFAS (Training Centre for Social and Healthy Assistance) – Job Placement**

Provision of individual training and job placement paths for migrants. This Centre based in Magliano (Lecce- South Italy), offers a service of professional's integration and it's a bridge between individuals and local companies. Starting from practical training activities (classes of cooking, carpentry, barman, etc.) CeFAS allows developing of paid internships for migrants. <http://www.cefasslecce.it/corsi.html>.

✓ **FA.Ci.L.E.**

Project for civic-linguistic training and experimental services. The project aims to activate 5 integrated training courses of Italian language (L1 / L2) and civic education; to achieve the knowledge and language skills useful for the socio-economic integration in the territory of 100 applicants, holders of international protection belonging to vulnerable categories, selected within the CAS Centres and SPRAR active in the provinces of Lecce, Brindisi and Taranto (Apulia). <http://www.cooperativarinascita.org/servizi/al-via-il-progetto-fa-ci-l-e-formazione-civico-linguistica-e-servizi-sperimentali>

✓ **Cooperative Rinascita - Internal Literacy Courses**

Formal and non-formal educational activities provide to asylum seekers of CAS (Extraordinary Welcoming Centres) of Lecce and holders of international protection of SPRAR (Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers). Everyday educational activity made by Rinascita Social Operators helping beneficiaries of its own projects to develop linguistic and cultural skills. <http://www.cooperativarinascita.org/>



GREECE

✓ **DIMITRA Educational Organisation**

A training programme of 140 Hours for migrants and refugees to improve their skills in Greek language and learn more about Greek history and culture to be able to communicate easier and more efficient when in host country. Furthermore, the knowledge in history and culture provides opportunities for better integration in the local community.

<https://www.dimitra.gr/european-projects/?lang=en>



✓ **The Melissa Network**

Its aim is to promote empowerment and active citizenship operating as a hub in which networks and individuals can meet and share their ideas to provide better opportunities in social, educational, and professional sector for TCN women. <https://melissanetwork.org/>

✓ **InCommon Toolbox**

The project was funded by the Asylum, Integration, Migration Fund (AMIF) of the European Commission for the integration of refugees and migrants and consisted of partners from Austria, Cyprus, Spain, and Greece. The main scope was to provide educational materials for personal and professional development of TCN Women.

<http://www.documenta.es/web/incommon/>

✓ **Online Economics for Positive Change (Course)**

The Course aimed to reinforce the people's understanding of economic systems and choices to bring positive change to the community. Participants explored the way people make ethical decisions individually, within families and communities, and in larger contexts. The training modules could develop their understanding of issues they might come across in any context such as equality and participation, and of ways in which to ensure participation and peace to bring a positive change. The network founded in 2014 and involves migrant and refugee women living in Greece. <https://www.accmr.gr/en/services/service/4116-online-economics-for-positive-change-course.html>

✓ **ActionAid & Epikentro**

The Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee issues in cooperation with ActionAid and Epikentro centre are organising free lessons so as the migrants to learn the Greek Language. <https://www.accmr.gr/en/services/service/1211.html>

✓ **Migrant Integration Centre (KEM) of the City of Athens**

In 2019 the Migrant Integration Centre (KEM) of the City of Athens started providing free computer lessons for adult refugees regarding the basic Microsoft Office tools.

<https://www.unhcr.org/gr/en/11138-athens-migrant-integration-center-offers-free-computer-classes-for-refugees-and-migrants-with-the-support-of-unhcr.html>



✓ **Second Chance Schools (Adult Education)**

Since 2013 there are 56 schools for adults who did not accomplish the mandatory education. The goal is that adults can acquire the degree of primary and secondary education and if they want, they can continue to enter the Greek Universities. The participation is for free and is open to Greek citizens and migrant/ refugee communities. <https://help.unhcr.org/greece/living-in-greece/access-to-education/>.



✓ **L'association Grdr Migration-Citoyenneté-Développement**

The Grdr Migration-Citoyenneté-Développement association is an international association under French law made up of professionals (agronomists, economists, sociologists, geographers, town planners, social workers...) who put their know-how at the service of the populations of the territories in which they work. Created in 1969 at the instigation of West African nationals living in France, the Grdr is one of the few associations carrying out development actions in countries of departure, transit and reception (West Africa, Maghreb and France). <https://www.grdr.org/Faciliter-l-integration-des-femmes-immigrees-s-interesser-comprendre-en-tenir>

✓ **RAJFIRE NETWORK**

RAJFIRE, Network for the Autonomy of Immigrant and Refugee Women, is a feminist collective that fights for the rights of foreign, immigrant, asylum-seeking and refugee women. It was created in 1998. <http://rajfire.free.fr>

✓ **Association AZMARI**

AZMARI acts for the social integration of migrant women and children. Through different workshops, they wish to promote the learning of French as well as individual expression. Theater, plastic art or music, they think of culture as a vector of integration. Expression and exchange are at the heart of their project in order to fight against isolation and social barriers, an interface of sharing and mutual understanding. <https://asso-azmari.fr>



✓ **SINGA France**

This foundation has been working for several years with refugees to help them create social enterprises and create links with host societies. <https://www.singafrence.com/>

✓ **ARISE**

An Erasmus+ KA2 project having the objective to promote the social and entrepreneurial capacities of migrant women. The project aims to foster the development and implementation of innovative and economically sustainable entrepreneurial ideas related to food, in order to promote mutual learning between the cultures of migrant women and local communities.

<https://www.arise-network.eu/fr/>

✓ **“NOW- New Opportunities for Women” Programme**

A training program for single women with families, which should lead to a return to employment. The target group are mainly immigrants' women. The training program aims to strengthen national policies to combat unemployment among women. This program, launched by the European Social Fund as part of the "Human Resources Initiatives", aims to promote equal opportunities for women in the fields of employment and vocational training.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000000173998>



SPAIN

✓ **Por Ti Mujer, Intercultural Catering**

The program aims to promote the social and labour inclusion of both Spanish and migrant women in vulnerable situations from an intersectional, intercultural, and gender perspective. The areas selected were catering, restaurants and hotels in the city of Valencia. Free workshops on catering and hospitality and social innovation initiatives were developed, in concordance with the business sector. In that way, participants carried out practical activities and promoted their employability. <https://asociacionportimujer.org/>

✓ **Socio-Labour Centre for Immigrant Women (COSMI)**

The centre promotes the participation of women in the social life of their neighbourhoods, the social inclusion of immigrant women, the prevention of racist and discriminatory behaviours and the awareness-raising in favour of equality and against gender violence, paying special attention



to young women. The activity covers the legal, social, psychological, entrepreneurial, and labour areas. <http://www.mujiresenigualdad.com/>

✓ **Employment Women**

The project is aimed at immigrant women from third countries with work permit, in a situation of unemployment and vulnerability. The support includes individual advice on financial aid, referral to immigrant experts for card renewals, emotional support both online and face to face, workshops on personal development and job searching, digital skills workshops, occupational training in catering and professional cleaning, awareness of equal opportunities from a gender and intercultural perspective, and labour intermediate with companies. <https://larueca.info/>

✓ **SARA Programme**

It is aimed at migrant women or women of foreign origin who need to improve their employability and training in the labour market. It consists of the design of inclusion pathways with gender and intercultural perspective, adapted to the needs and characteristics of each woman. The contents are taught in a transversal way for the prevention of gender violence, healthy relationships, diversity and equality.

<https://www.inmujer.gob.es/areasTematicas/AreaProgInsercionSociolaboral/SaraMujMigrante.s.htm>

✓ **Social and labour integration programme addressed to immigrant women**

The social and labour integration programme is aimed at third-country national women from a gender and intercultural perspective. It is carried out in several cities in Spain and includes different activities such as training, job guidance, and workshops. The entity also works as a link among companies and participants. The programme usually lasts one year. <https://www.mzc.es/accionesocial/>



GERMANY

✓ **MuT – Mütter und Talent (Courage – Mothers and Talents)**

While aimed primarily at refugee mothers, MuT nevertheless provides an example of good practices for migrant women in general. Participants are offered support in finding suitable child care services foremost so they are free to receive counselling in figuring out the next steps – for



instance to be conveyed to a language course, an internship /training or an integration course. As a special offer, the centre itself provides a one-year qualification course on becoming an intercultural mediator. <https://www.starkimberuf.de/praxis/praxisbeispiele/praxisbeispiel-oberhausen>

✓ **lebens:ARTplus**

For a duration of 9 months, migrant women who are caring for children take part in a programme which combines theatre seminars, communication training and job coaching. Individual care for children according to their needs is an integral part of the programme. Improving communication and presentation skills is at the backbone of the coaching. Intensive individual counselling, which takes the women's qualifications as well as their educational responsibilities into account, accompanies the theatre work which allows them to express themselves. <https://defakto.org/de/konzept/lebens-art-plus>

✓ **Hayati**

Targeted towards refugee women with small children below the age of six, Hayati (arabic for “my life”) offers language courses and job orientation. Participating women receive a programme combined of consultation on the German education system and job market, culturally sensible coaching as well as language and integration courses. The courses and coaching are accompanied by flexible child care according to the women's needs. <https://www.awo-sh.de/main/awo-interkulturell/arbeit/>

✓ **FrauenKompetenzCenter Wetzlar**

For a duration of 24 weeks, the Women Skills Centre of Wetzlar offers part-time job orientation for refugees and migrant women. A combination of teaching job relevant skills such as a secure (self-)presentation or how to create a CV is combined with the opportunity of getting to know new fields of employment by internships. Participants are encouraged to recognize their strength and skills, to learn new competencies important for work and education and to gain relevant experiences in a variety of fields. <https://www.internationaler-bund.de/angebot/10578>

✓ **QualiMigra**

Founded in 2001 by migrant mothers themselves, the programme offers counselling by women who have migration experience themselves. Establishing contact via low-level leisure activities such as breakfast cafés for migrant women with child care provided, QualiMigra offers counselling on job and education opportunities. Focusing on the skills and interests of the participants, QualiMigra offers individual coaching in a relatable, empathic way, as the counsellors have migration experience themselves. At the same time, they function as role

models the target group can trust and relate to. <https://www.netzwerk-iq.de/angebote/iq-good-practice/interkulturelle-kompetenzentwicklung/qualimigra>

6. Conclusion/ Summary

To sum up, this report is part of the European Project 'IWELCOME: Reinforcing migrant women's integration in society and the labour market', and provided an overview of the profile, needs and gaps of TCN women in 7 countries – Germany, Greece, Cyprus, France, Bulgaria, Italy and Spain.

The main conclusion rises from the data collected in terms of the presence and characteristics of migrant women in the partner countries is that migrant women is a heterogeneous group as every woman comes from a different cultural background, age group and educational level, hence the needs of this group needs to be considered carefully. Additionally, as employment is a key factor in the integration of migrants into the host country, the engagement of migrant women into the labour market in each partner country was analysed as well. In terms of policies, guidelines and strategies, positive steps towards the successful integration of migrants have been taken in all the partner countries the past years, however due to the specific needs of TCN women, a more holistic approach is required in order to promote a more inclusive and diverse society.

