



“Encouraging integration for newly arrived immigration women through entrepreneurship”

IO1

Summary report of partner research and workshop outcomes on immigrant women needs on the subject of entrepreneurship

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Introduction

The 2019 Erasmus+ project We Can is a three years project aiming to facilitate the integration of immigrant women both socially and in the labour market.

To achieve this the project focusses on the creation of learning opportunities in adult education aimed at the development of entrepreneurial skills and related competences, stimulating required self-management, career development, entrance to further education and/or start of own business initiatives.

In the project partner organisations from Cyprus (MMC), Greece (Dimitra), Ukraine (KNUTE), United Kingdom (Rinova), Netherlands (Revalento and Sweden (Folkuniversitetet Uppsala) work together. The project is coordinated by Folkuniversitetet.

This research report is a summary report describing the current situation of immigrant women in the partner countries, the vision of stakeholder organisations on the needs of migrant women, as well as the assessment results of the target group itself. The summary report is based on of two separate activities in the partner countries: desk research as well as as workshops / focus group and or small seminaries with stakeholder organisations and with potential participants of the target group. The workshops often have been used to validate the research findings.

The conclusions of this joint summary of the research is an essential element in the project since it leads to a context specific needs definition and focus on the required content of the training material which will be developed in IO2. Also is relevant for the link toward network for the development and testing of the training materials.

Revalento

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1. Organisation of the activities in the partner countries

Research and workshops have been carried out by the partners in the period from September 2019 till July 2020. For the research, the workshops as well as the initial needs assessment of the target group templates and a questionnaire has been developed by Revalento and sent to all partners at the beginning of December 2019.

The activities itself have been quite diverse in character covering desk research, small interviews, workshops as well as small seminars. In some partner countries the Corona crisis has had impact on the activities planned. For example in Cyprus the last two well-planned workshops had to be postponed and organised in a way that was conform the rules regarding Corona. In most of the partner countries the organisation of the last workshop was also affected by the virus outbreak.

In general more individual interviews have been organised instead. The table below gives an overview of the amount of stakeholder organisations involved and the amount of migrant women involved in this stage of the project per partner country

Table 1

Partner country	Number of stakeholder organisations involved in this stage	Number of participants of target group involved in this stage
Cyprus	3	6
Greece	10	10
Netherlands	24	12
Sweden	7	25
Ukraine	8	18
United Kingdom	11	10
Total amount:	63	81

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The rescheduling of some of the workshops has taken somewhat more extra time than originally planned. Therefore the activities in this stage of the project have taken 2 months of extra time. This however will not have impact on the remaining scheduled work. The time table of project itself has not been under any threat.

2. Context: newly arrived in the host country

The situation regarding newly arrived in the context of the project mostly referring to women (asylum seekers) differs in time as well as per partner country. Also the current corona crises has impact on the migration figures. The current situation of newly arrived is described in 6 parameters (not all figures are comparable since some partners refer to all migrants while others only refer to asylum seekers. For Ukraine most of the statistics refer to Induced displaced persons:

a. Amount of newly arrived / asylum seekers

In Greece the amount of immigrant refugees is app 60.000 in 2019. In Netherlands the amounts of newly arrived has been dropping systematically since 2017. In 2019 app 22.000 applied for asylum in NL. The 2020 figures again will be lower. In Sweden the amount of newly arrived asylum seekers is dropping also in the last couple of years to app 21.000. UK figures show an amount of 29.380 asylum seekers in 2018. The situation in the Ukraine is different due to the. In 2019 2096 foreigners were granted subsidiary protection. The annexation of Crimea has led to a large number of induced displaced persons (IDP). In 2019 1,4 million IDP have been registered.

b. Sex

In the Netherlands 60% of the asylum seekers are adult men. A total of 20% are adult women. The remaining percentages are underaged (again majority men). In Greece and in Sweden app 40% of the newly arrived are women and app 1/3 of all are underaged. The UK shows related figures. In the Ukraine the majority of IDP are women: 62%.

c. Women: Purpose of arrival

In the Netherlands 95% of the women who arrive as asylum seeker come to the host country for purpose of family reunion. In Sweden the most common reason for women newly arrived is also family reunion.

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d. Women: Home country

In the Netherlands the majority of the newly arrived asylum seeker women have a Syrian or Eritrean background. In Sweden the majority of newly arrived has Afghan, Syrian or Indian background. In UK it is mainly from Syria and the surrounding region.

e. Women: Age

In the Netherlands over 50% of the newly arrived women are the age range 18-45, and almost 40% consist of children (meaning a total of 90% is in the age range up to 45). In Sweden and UK this picture is approximately the same. For the Ukraine the majority of IDP women are under the age of 40.

f. Women: Educational level

Compared to men the newly arrived women in NL generally have a lower educational level less or no work experience and often fulfil a traditional role in the family. In NL the general population has 18 years of education on average, for Syrian women it is 12,3 years and for Eritrean women this is only 4,1 years (World Development Report, 2019 UN). Level as well as cultural background are a severe handicap for smooth integration. For Sweden no details are specified. In UK educational levels nor work experience is officially registered. For the Ukraine most of the IDP (61% have prior work experience). The remain part consists of inactive women (parental leave, study, retirement).

Conclusion: Since the presented statistics are hardly comparable no conclusions can be drawn from this part of the research. A more detailed description of the target group is needed to get a better image of their needs and the consequence this has on the next step in the project.

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3. Main barriers preventing integration

In this section of the report the results will be presented regarding the perceived main barriers for integration for newly arrived women. Since the objective of the project is on newly arrived women this section will not go into detail regarding migration but on asylum seekers and people coming in for family reunion from asylum seekers perspective. Again described barriers are also linked to partners specific national context and therefore not all of them are valid in all partner countries. However the listing provides some clear information as to what attention areas for training can and should be. Mentioned barriers are groups into categories.

Labour market / stakeholders

- Economic situation in host country, Lack of jobs
- Mismatch of offer and demand
- lack of access to social and legal protection as well as integration programs due to working in the informal economy
- Stakeholder organisations hardly have time to assess family situations
- Stakeholder organisations hardly have interest in a woman's position if the family (husband) is out of social welfare system
- Stakeholder lack time for individual approach / gender sensitive approach

Rules and obligations

- Being available for 5 days a week for work or study
- Society demands to take care of yourself
- Society demands to take initiative, be self-managing

Skills and competences

- Children who do not attend to school / parents who do not support going to school
- Diploma and experience is not officially recognised
- Diploma is recognised at lower level;
- Basic skills and competences (reading writing, speaking, habits, norms and values) do not even come to level required at the lowest entry level of the labour market
- Lack of digital experience
- Hardly any work experience
- Hardly any experience in entrepreneurship

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- Majority of women lack skills and competences required for starting a business of their own.
- Lack in self-belief
- Lack of knowledge of labour market, consumer and service market

Personal situation and belief system

- Lack of space / very poor housing situation
- Host land is perceived as a temporary place to stay / dream of return to homeland
- Stress, trauma and anxiety prevent participation in programs
- Expectation and roles follow traditional lines and prevent women to develop themselves (gender barriers)
- Taking care of children and family first concern
- Passive attitude: “now the host land will take care of me”

Conclusion regarding barriers of majority of newly arrived women:

The majority of the newly arrived women lack the basic competences, knowledge and experience to be able to start an enterprise of their own in the host land, or to be able to build up an independent life. Also they have barriers related to their own cultural heritage as well as gender. This often leads to relative inactivity, waiting and resentment. Additional obstacles are created due to the reasons and circumstances of leaving their home country. This is partly reflected in the kind of ambition (direction of the ideas) as well as the lack of ambition (see next chapter).

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4. Ambitions of the newly arrived low skilled women

In the different workshops and interviews the hopes and dreams of the newly arrived women has been discussed. Regarding their future in the host land the summary below presents an overview of the ideas that have been mentioned in the different partner countries .

The majority of the women mention ideas and ambitions like:

- Take care of children and husband;
- Learning the language
- Be active through voluntary work, do something back for received hospitality
- A small part time job
- Work as cleaner, in a hospital, restaurant or beauty salon, become nurse, work as tailor
- Not the faintest idea since they were never asked about these things

Those who expressed an entrepreneurial idea mentioned:

- Start own restaurant, catering
- Start hairdresser shop; beauty parlour; craft school;
- Event organisation

Most of the ideas mentioned are gender related, are linked to integration requirements. Majority of the women have not really thought about this. Only a very small portion of the women expressed some entrepreneurial idea without knowing what it needs to put in to get there (entrepreneurial attitude, commitment and involvement). Most women have a wrong impression of their own level of skills and competences in relation to the needs to be able to make a career move. An exception of the above summary are the contacted women in Ukraine. They all want to start a business of their own and are in need for detailed support to be able to do so (skills related to an entrepreneurial attitude as well as re creative thinking, design thinking, leadership emotional intelligence). However, in terms of attitude also these women are in need for a more entrepreneurial attitude.

For a more detailed description see the different partner reports.

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5. Characteristics of the target group involved in workshops and research in the different partner countries

In working on IO1 one of the aims of the project was to involve the target group at the earliest stage possible. Partners therefore have contacted potential participants through stakeholder organisations and inform them about the purpose of the project. In return information was collected regarding their back ground as well as developmental needs. Thus they contributed to focus the activities in IO1 on training objectives and content for IO2. An overview of the main characteristics of the target group in the different partner countries is presented in the tables 2 and 3 below. Part of this information has been collected by using an assessment questionnaire (when relevant completed with the help of a coach).

Table 2: Development characteristics of the target group

Country	N	Average age	Level of Education	Mastering of Writing/reading	Level of Numeracy
Cyprus					
Greece	10	30-40	Primary and secondary education	Low levels of verbal English language, 40% not able to write	
Netherlands <i>Newly arrived at start of their integration</i>	12	26-45	Primary education	Very poor	Below average
Sweden	25	25-45		Yes, able to complete forms themselves	Average
United Kingdom <i>Not really newly arrived</i>	10	Majority 45-55	Secondary education completed	Yes, able to complete forms themselves	Average
Ukraine IDP, Not low educated		26-35	70% higher education	Very well	Very well

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Most of the involved participants are in the age range between 25 and 45. Majority of the participating women is fairly low educated: completed secondary education. This does not mean that their level of secondary education will equal the level of secondary education of the host land. Exceptions are the participating women in Ukraine, they are not low skilled. However their participants have a different back ground.

The next table presents an overview of the experience, ambition and motivation of the newly arrived women.

Table 3: Experience, ambition, motivation

Country	Computer knowledge	Work experience	Ideas for future occupation	Motivation to develop
Cyprus				
Greece		Majority housewife, some paid and unpaid work in home country	Majority no specific ideas	Motivated to learn and integrate
Netherlands	Non-existent to basic use	Majority is housewife	Majority no clear ideas	Learn the new language
Sweden	Basic use of Word		Become self-managing, Payed job Own business (events, catering, entertainment)	Become self-managing
United Kingdom		½ voluntary work ½ paid work	Majority no clear ideas 2 start-up ideas (restaurant, craft school)	Motivated to earn own income/self-managing

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Ukraine Not low educated	Able to use all standard Programs	80% paid work experience / 5 days per week	Own business	Become entrepreneur

The majority of the participants have gender related back ground and work experience. The ambition stated by the majority of the participants is to become self-managing. Only very few have the ambition to start an own business. Most opt for more traditional job positions when they mention them. The only exceptions are the participants of the Ukraine. But their participants are not low skilled and have a very different back ground.

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6. Entrepreneurship or entrepreneurial attitude

In most of the partner countries a large portion of the newly arrived women enter for reasons of family reunion. The first focus of the women is to sort out the basic needs for living as well as take care of their families. The majority is in the age range of 18 to 45 years, is low educated and does not have the ambition to start an own business.

Involved stakeholder organisations indicate that most low skilled immigrant women are lacking self-confidence and self-management skills and competences related to starting an own career. They have a tendency of being passive which is not very helpful for career development or for even thinking about starting an own career or let alone business. There are too many barriers which need to be addressed first. And when they are married and the husband has a paid job there is hardly any support anymore. This means that in most partner countries (except for Ukraine) the idea of low skilled immigrant women starting an own business is not considered to be realistic. This will take more time and they need to be living in the host country for a much longer time to be able to create a successful business start-up.

Table 4: Partner conclusions regarding entrepreneurship

Country	Becoming entrepreneur	Pro-active, entrepreneurial attitude
Cyprus		
Greece	Too many barriers of target group as well as in the country	Need for development of entrepreneurial skills, competences and attitude as a means to deal with barriers for integration
Netherlands	No chance with this kind of target group	Attitude far more relevant than focus on start- up skills and competences, since they need that attitude not just for work but also as being citizen in this new society
Sweden	Not realistic	Focus on soft skills, not on theoretical knowledge about enterprises (communication skills, community, leadership, entrepreneurial mindset, cultural and ethical awareness
United Kingdom	Not realistic	Gaining the kind of enterprise skills which are useful in many aspects of the labour market as well as in life
Ukraine	Become entrepreneur	

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What low skilled women do need however is a more entrepreneurial attitude. This is what the host society is expecting of them: be pro-active, take control of your own future, not wait. It is also the basis for becoming an entrepreneur.

Conclusion of all partner research regarding IO2 (except for Ukraine): Focus is not on design of a training to become an entrepreneur but on training material for development of an Entrepreneurial attitude, preferably in combination with training of other competences like: Communication, Social and Civic, Language and Digital competences.

What is an entrepreneurial attitude? An **entrepreneurial attitude** is characterized by initiative, pro-activity, independence and innovation in personal and social life, as much as at work (EU lexicon). Enhancing this attitude has a positive impact on migrant's integration process as well as on becoming an active citizen in general, benefiting as well as contributing to what the host society has to offer. Sense of initiative, entrepreneurship is also one of the discerned key competences of the EU which are relevant for all citizens. The EU definition for Sense of initiative, entrepreneurship is: *the capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them into values for others*. It is founded upon creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or commercial value.

Table 5: Additional training needs

Cyprus	Greece	Netherlands	Sweden	United kingdom	Ukraine
		Self-management	Communication skills	Building aspiration	Communication skills
		Insight in own quality and competences	Understanding community	Initiative	Team building
		Insight in own ambition and direction	Leadership	Resilience	Creative thinking
		Knowledge of society, habits, values	Entrepreneurial mindset	Confidence	Flexibility
		Insight in Dutch customer	Cultural / ethical awareness		Design thinking
		Non-theoretical	Non theoretical		Emotional intelligence

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In table 5 an overview is presented of the additional training needs as expressed by the different stakeholder organisations in the partner countries. To be able to order all mentioned need in a coherent way a qualifications framework needs to be developed first. In this way the developed material can also pay attention to the needs specified by the Ukrainian partner, since they work with a different target group.

7. Conclusion

Entrepreneurial success in terms of starting your own business seems to be mainly depending on having an “entrepreneurial nature” (possessing a strong will and great creativity). In this respect newly arrived are no different than others. The majority of women in our target group however are unconscious of their own work ability and career opportunities. Being an entrepreneur and having their own business is something they haven’t even dreamt about. For our target group this is in most partner countries a non-realistic ambition for the group less skilled as such. They hardly are capable of operating at a required minimum level. Therefore it is more effective and useful to focus on the development of an entrepreneurial attitude. This will support their integration in a much better way.

Meanwhile these newly arrived are often mothers, used to running the daily family business of cooking, cleaning, raising kids etc. They also often have showed important aspects of an entrepreneurial attitude; taking their lives in their own hands by fleeing from their home country. This might be a motivational source to draw from but it needs quite a paradigm shift to create a good pedagogic approach to support it. The next step on the project therefore should be to design a qualifications framework and way ahead which focusses the training objectives of the partnership and gives credit to all findings in the partner countries.

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