ENGAGE

‘Development of inclusivE iNteGration pAths 4 miGrant womEn’

WP2: Up-Skilling Workshops for Labour Market Stakeholders (LMS) and Third-Country National (TCN) women

National Report by

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AMIF ENGAGE: Aims & Purposes

The project *Development of inclusivE iNteGration pAths 4 miGrant women* / ENGAGE aimes to increase TCN women's capability for entering the labour market and social life of the host society. The above will be achieved via the organization of Up- Skilling workshops, Job Shadowing Programme and Cross-cultural activities. The direct and indirect target groups are TCN women, LMS, TCNs and local citizens (women and men), professionals, policy makers, NGOs and the general public.

TCN women, which are representing the 45% of refugees in the EU, have lower activity and employment rates, a higher risk of poverty and are more likely to be in lower skilled occupations. Most of them face particular integration challenges associated with lower education and labour market outcomes compared to refugee men. A main reason is that they are coming from countries with high gender inequality and low employment rates for women. Therefore, an effective integration process of these women in the new social environment, can contribute to their social and economic inclusion.
Although the integration issue is at the heart of the political discussion in Europe, many countries face difficulties in absorbing a greater number of migrants, as well as in the latter's willingness to integrate. Much has been said and written on migration and integration, but too little attention, however, has been paid to women. While TCN women are highly qualified, most of them are directed to jobs and training mostly for household, care sector, secretary, and back-office services, unsuitable to their qualifications. Across the EU and specifically in Southern Europe, over 30% of TCN women work in low-skilled jobs, although they have tertiary degrees.
As a direct response to these facts, the project aims to organise targeted workshops for TCN women and Labour Market Representatives and serves a dual aim:
1. to support TCN women's first steps in the host community's labour market through the acquisition of employability skills
2. to increase LMS' awareness on TCN women's specific needs and gender issues
3. to introduce Job Shadowing as an efficient integration measure

National Report: Investigating practices, gaps & needs

The aim of this report is to investigate the current scene in partner countries in relation to the integration practices and to identify good practices and gaps for the development of new innovative ways to attract migrant women. Though there is evidence in existing practices and policies for TCN women's integration, the project consortium has organized 2 focus groups from each partner country with local key players such as representatives from NGOs, labour market, local authorities and the target group, TCN women, in order to collect valuable information about attitudes and perceptions. The

data collected, which will indicate the vulnerability of TCN women in specific topics, will be highly useful for the development of the consortium's targeted approach towards TCN women. Mapping and analysis of needs, gaps, good practices and policies in partner countries, is of great importance, as they will be used as the basis for the design of complementary and tailored integration tools. The proposed activities aim to provide useful information for the hosting country, such as introduction to social and cultural aspects, labour market policies and the delivery of an Employability Skills targeted training.

The report will reflect the state-of-the-art practices and the profile of migrant women in terms of needs and gaps in each partner country.

Policies, legislation & practices aimed at supporting TCN women

- *Identify policies, legislation & practices in place in your country*
- *Are the support systems / policies in place contingent on the residency status? How do they differ?*
- *Which requirements do TCN women have to fulfill to enter the labour market in terms of language skills, education and legal status?*

Third Country Nationals require a residency permit in order to be eligible to work in Germany. There are certain formal and legal requirements to their gaining working permits. For migrants who do not come to Germany specifically to enter a job or educational training, it is difficult to figure out the requirements to enter the job market.

Refugees and asylum seekers are allowed to work once they have resided in Germany for at least three months and are recognized as entitled to asylum. The federal agency for migration and refugees is concerned with people seeking asylum. First of all, refugees may only seek asylum in Germany if they did not pass another EU country on their way to Germany (Dublin Decree). Otherwise, they are obliged to return to the country where they first entered the EU. People who arrived in Germany directly may receive a (temporary) residence permit if they fulfill one of the following requirements: They are granted asylum or refugee protection according to international convention, on account of subsidiary protection, because their deportation is prohibited due to the UN's anti torture convention or their deportation is temporarily suspended for legal reasons.

Recognized immigrants with a permanent residency status have the same legal rights within the social benefit system as natives, therefore they are equally entitled to access publicly provided training and labor market integration programs. Newcomers are obliged to attend "integration courses" which cover a language course as well as an "orientation" course on German customs and culture. Occupation-specific language and integration courses are offered by some employers, immigrant or charitable organizations, but not by the federal system on a broader scale.

For people who have obtained a university degree or professional training of at least two years there are several ways to apply for a working and/or residency permit. It is possible to gain a working residency in Germany for immigrants who already have an employment opportunity or a training position. Immigrants who obtained their professional training in Germany may be able to stay if they are working in their profession. Permanent residency status may be granted after having worked in Germany for four years, or two years for immigrants who have completed their training in Germany already.

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In recent years, the German government has put considerable effort in facilitating the immigration process for qualified workers who offer skills lacking in the German workforce. Generally, qualified jobs may only be granted to Non-Citizens if no German citizen is available to fill the requirements. Degrees and qualifications which were obtained in other countries need to be formally recognized in Germany. One of the measures launched to facility the procedure is the skills auditing tool *myskills* (:https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/institutionen/myskills) offered by the Federal Employment Agency.

- *Which practices at the public sector can be seen as supporting measures for TCN women's skills development (for instance language courses, further education, skills auditing)?*
- *Which kind of support is offered for increasing TCNs (women and men) participation in the local labour market (training, internships, networking etc)?*

A support program aimed at offering better job market opportunities for people with a history of migration was launched in 2005. The support *program Integration through qualification* (IQ) is concerned with offering better job market opportunities for people with a history of migration in general. It was expanded in 2015 to focus on the recognition of qualification obtained in participants' countries of origin.

In each federal state, networks have been established which are concerned with giving migrants opportunities to work at transferring their acquired skills to the German job market's requirements. Additionally, in 2015 the European Social Fund (ESF) program *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. The program, which will run until 2022, has founded 90 reception centres which support migrant mothers looking for employment. Their aim is to offer individually targeted advice and counselling for all needs their target audience may have. They offer coaching, qualification and practical language courses and advice on the regional job market, on sponsorship and on employment opportunities. They cooperate with the local employment agencies, with family support institutions and cooperations. They are connected to institutions offering job placement, skill and language training, education as well as social services and finding child care places. About two thirds of the women who took part in the program have gained at least an employment prospect such as recognition of their qualifications, further qualification or an internship, while 32% are either regularly employed, self-employed or absolving training. (https://www.starkimberuf.de/)

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- *Do Job Shadowing Schemes exist for migrant women?*
- *Are any specific support services offered to TCN women in your country (childcare services, counseling etc)?*
- *Concerning TCN women participation in the community and interaction with locals, are any specific programmes offered in your country?*

Apart from the programs mentioned above, there are hardly any structural public support measures. Often, local organizations launch projects in support of increasing TCNs participation in the local labour market. However, these projects are dependent on funding and individual initiatives. Therefore, they mostly last for only a few months or years and are restricted to a limited number of participants.
On a local level for instance, the communal integration centres of Oberhausen and Bottrop offer legal and job counseling, language courses and a variety of integration measures. There are also social services which offer child care opportunities such as the *Caritas*. One of the communal centres located in Oberhausen*, Die Kurbel*, offers a year-long qualification as an intercultural trainer specifically to migrant women.

One of the local education and qualification centres offers job shadowing opportunities in a variety of three jobs for a day each. However, there are no Job shadowing opportunities for migrant women on a broader scale. Except for a few organizations concerned with integration measures which organize mentorship projects, job shadowing is only offered to students.

While there are a variety of projects aiming at the integration of TCN women into society, they are mostly organized on a private, voluntary basis. Either migrant organizations themselves or community organizations offer participatory projects based on volunteer work or employees from local organizations provide additional services based on their own initiative.

Give examples of successful practices of previous and current projects.

Kitev is at the moment working on the project *Gemeinsam Neu Aufbauen* (to build anew together), which aims at transforming empty spaces around the main station of Oberhausen into community centres, involving refugees in the redesign. The project is accompanied by language courses and networking events. Many of the trainers and staff involved in the project already are Third Country Nationals and many of the women seeking counseling or attending the (virtual) language exchange profit from the opportunity to get to know others.

Another successful project is *QualiMigra*. Founded in 2001 by migrant mothers themselves, the program offers counseling by women who share the migration

experience. Establishing contact via low-level leisure activities such as breakfast cafés for migrant women with child care provided, *QualiMigra* offers counseling on job and education opportunities. Focusing on the skills and interests participants already have, *QualiMigra* offers individual coaching in a relatble, empathic way. At the same time, the women organizing the events function as role models the target group can trust and relate to.

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TCN focus group findings

Introduction of the participants

The focus group was composed of 5 women from the migrant community. Of the 5 women participating in the focus group, one was 24, one was 34, one was 36 and two were above the age of 50. Their countries of origin were Iran, Albania, Tunesia and Syria respectively. It is worthwhile to note that some participants passed through other countries before coming to Germany, namely Afghanistan (from Iran) and Italy (from Albania).

Except for one participant, all women had between one and three children. The children of one of the women in the age group above 50 are already adults, while the four others have children still living with their families. Four of the women were married and lived with their partner, while one of the women was a single mother. All women described their German language skills as poor or inadequate, even though the discussions could be mostly conducted in German.

All except for one of the participating women have language skills other than their native tongue and German. Their proficiency in English is diverse, ranging from excellent to average. The women passing through Italy from Albania knows Italian as well while the woman from Afghanistan has Dari language skills as well.

The young single mother did not receive formal education in her home country apart from 3 years of primary school, since she had to start working to support her family at the age of eight. When she came to Germany at the age of 19, she completed her secondary education and has now gained the permit for technical college. She gained most of her language proficiency through online courses she sought on her own initiative. The other women had demanding high-skilled jobs in their home countries, working as a photographer, as an archaeologist in a museum and or as a technical assistant in a laboratory. In the three to six years since they arrived in Germany, none was able to find employment in their fields.

- *Experiences with specific training / programmes aimed towards TCN women*
- *challenges towards labour market and social inclusion*
- *Difficulties faced in becoming employed (including discrimination & prejudices)*
- *Experience in or knowledge self-organizing initiatives, unions and labour rights*

All participants have taken part in language courses at the B2 level. However, they also report difficulties in taking part in courses consistently while taking care of small children, especially if children became sick or when they had to stay home due to the

Coronavirus pandemic. In Germany, Immigrants are eligible to attend a language course for 12 months, however they have to attend every day for at least 18 hours per week. Additionally, participants explained that their language skills deteriorated after the course was completed due to a lack in opportunities for practicing the language. Participants unanimously concluded that acquiring better language skills was one of their main priorities.

The most significant challenges reported were the lack of compatibility with services offered and child care duties. Participants also mentioned that the courses on offer were not very well adjusted to their language skills. Most of the women also reported not receiving enough information on which programs are offered.

Three of the women interviewed were familiar with integration measurements by local organizations and had taken part in the courses on offer. The most satisfying experience was reported by a woman who was able to take part in a project aimed at mothers and their children, allowing them to take part in activities together with others. Generally, it is difficult for TCN women caring for children to get to know others. All of the women report difficulties in finding suitable job placements by applying for jobs alone. Often, it is more successful to be referred to an employer by word of mouth. Therefore, networking opportunities are crucial to facilitate entry into suitable jobs.

One of the women reports that the unemployment agency required her to take on assistant jobs which are only paid 1€ per hour while still receiving financial aid. All of the participants' experience with the unemployment office was less than satisfactory. Two women reported that as soon as their husbands found work and they did not receive financial aid any longer, they also stopped receiving any support by unemployment services. Alongside with the unemployment office's incentive to place TCN women in child care, cleaning or cooking jobs rather than building on their experience as photographer or archaeologist, the impression remains that counseling especially in the unemployment agencies is affected by prejudices about TCN women.

Two of the women reported having faced discrimination in the work place in terms of their contracts being restricted to a few months and not prolonged afterwards. Participants report not being as familiar with social and legal services as they would like to be. They find the access to information concerning support systems and policies lacking.

- *Familiarity of the focus group with policies, laws & practices already in place.*
- *Access to specialized training, information, aid & support*
- *What kind of skills training do you think will help you find a job?*

All women report a lack of information and support in entering the job market. Generally, participants report frustration at not receiving sufficient support in terms of opportunities for further education or improving their language and other crucial skills. For the women above 50, it is difficult to find suitable placements due to their age as well. Rather than receiving coaching, application training, vocational guidance or help in finding suitable additional training or internships, they were mostly offered temporary jobs in child care, cleaning or as kitchen staff, especially by the employment agency. Concerning digital skills, important gaps are writing emails, making (video) calls via internet, placing online applications and general computing skills.

Identification of gaps and needs

- *Analysis of the gaps & needs identified in the focus group*
- *What are the problems that TCN women are facing when entering the local labour market?*
- *Which skills do you think are most necessary to develop further?*
- *Identification of challenges, barriers & gaps*
- *Level of satisfaction with the support/practices on offer*

If applicable: possible solutions, the importance/experiences of self-organizing

In alignment with statistics and research, one major problem reported by the focus group is the lack of recognition for the education and experience they gained before coming to Germany. Degrees obtained at universities in countries outside of the EU are devalued by the employment agencies. While immigrants coming to Germany on account of a need for qualified workers are offered further education and training to align their previous education to the needs of the local job market, (former) refugees and their families hardly receive the same opportunities.

Apart from language courses suited to the needs of caretakers, the participants also thought they would profit a great deal from application and assessment trainings, regarding not only how to apply but also how to find suitable job or training prospects.

One major problem is the difficulty in getting to know people outside of families and language courses, who might be able to share their experiences and give advice. Most of the participants experienced difficulty in getting access to the information and resources they required.

Organization focus group findings

Introduction of the participants

- *Type of organization, experiences in working with TCN women*
- *Location (region, capital / city / town / rural)*

The organizations who gave feedback on our questions were an employee of the *Department of childrens' and young peoples' affairs - refugee integration chapter* (Jugendamt) in Essen, who is well connected to the local businesses and small entrepreneurs and also the unemployment agency (Agentur für Arbeit), *the Communal Integration centre – migration department* (KI) in Bottrop *and the Centre for education and qualification* (ZAQ) in Oberhausen. All organizations contacted are located in cities of between 100.000 and 600.000 inhabitants. While the *Department of childrens' and young peoples' affairs* and the *Communal Integration centre* form part of the municipality, the *Centre for education and qualification* is an NGO offering educational and training opportunities. Working together with a variety of partner organizations, the responsible board of the *Centre for education and qualification* is composed of several non-profits.

- *What services and programs are offered? In which ways?*

During the lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic, ZAQ offered hybrid services via phone and digitally. Usually, they offer in-house counseling. Often, their services are part of other projects initiated by institutions they cooperate with such as unemployment agencies or migration services. Therefore, the exact services they offer depend on their requests. The KI also offered hybrid services for their qualification measures. These include language federation as well as media competence promotion and retraining. As far as known, the unemployment agency mostly provided online courses during the pandemic. They also offer language courses, retraining an integration courses and vocational training.

Experiences of the focus group

- *How are TCN women informed about the services? In which languages are they provided?*

ZAQ informs the target group via cooperation with other institutions and organizations such as job centres, social services, refugee and migration counsel services. Also, they distribute leaflets and brochures, mainly in easy German and Arabic. The courses and services themselves are mostly held in German and Arabic. Recently, since most

participants had been living in Germany for several years they were only provided in German.

The communal integration center of the city of Bottrop has opened up three locations in parts of the city with a large percentage of migrant population. They combine several services and programs for different target groups. Therefore, people are already familiar with the center when they launch a new project. Additionally, they profit from word-of-mouth recommendation of the target group themselves. Often, one family member starts going to one activity and tells other relatives and friends about what else is on offer or brings them along. The centre for education and qualification as well provides information directly to the target group by attending the local refugee counsel. The employe of the *Department of childrens' and young peoples' affairs - refugee* coordinates and organizes various events and dialog forums within the city area on the topic of labor market integration of new immigrants, including a dialog forum with the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, labor market placement in medical and clinical fields and a working group “integration on the labor market”. Topics also include language support and housing situation in the city area.

- *How are TCN womens’ needs and skills identified? Are trainings tailored towards them?*

Of the three organizations which took part in the survey, only one has programs which specifically aim at TCN women. Both *Jugendamt Essen* and *ZAQ* are concerned with the integration of migrants into the job market in general. Only a participant of the *KI Bottrop* reported offering services to migrant women specifically.

The KI Bottrop offers counseling and support on labour market integration according to migrant womens’ needs. They offer an analysis of their life circumstances, skills and needs and identify possible entry points towards the local labour market. If applicable, TCN women are able to take part in further qualification courses in cooperation with the local chamber of industry and commerce. In recent years the KI has also started offering courses on digital skills. All services are offered at least in German, Arabic and Turkish.

The *ZAQ* places its focus on job market integration. They support finding training or internships in small companies mostly in crafts and trades such as electrician, plumbing installment or hairdressing. They also offer occupational retraining and support in re-entering the job market. They are one of the few places which do not only offer general language courses but also occupation-specific language courses. They also report that it is important to take the skills and needs of participants into account.

For instance, do they need an internship? Occupational guidance counselling? A training position?

The Jugendamt tries to get in contact with the local employers, who often run small businesses and try to raise awareness and sensitivity for the topic by organizing dialog forums or in cooperation with a center for business startups in the area.

- *How are employees trained in terms of gender and cultural sensitivity? Are there specific measurements in place against cultural or gender discrimination?*

In most organizations, there are no specific measurements or trainings for gender and cultural sensitivity. Rather, there is the general understanding that employees are asked and required to educate themselves on these subjects.

- *How long after their arrival do TCN women generally participate in the programmes? How many months do they participate?*

There was no general information on how long after their arrival TCN women participate. At ZAQ, participants take part in programs mostly for 3 to 6 months and are continuously guided and supported afterwards to ensure a sustainable integration.

- *How are TCNs supported in gaining access to the labour market ?*

The ZAQ offers projects, measures and support programs with practical parts. The skills learned are to be deepened and applied immediately in an internship. In some cases, this also results in the participants being taken on by the companies. However, the projects and measures are not aimed specifically at TCN women.
The goal is sustainable professional integration, which is why participants continue to be supported in the companies in which they were employed even after the projects and measures have ended.

- *What positive impact does the training have on TCN women?*

Especially in the programs offered by ZAQ there is an improve of language skills, the assessment of one's own professional skills and of communicative skills through personal contacts during the internships.

An improvement in social commitment is also noticeable in the participating companies.

Identification of gaps and needs

- *What are the key problems in providing services for TCNs?*

Women whose country of origin is shaped by a rather traditional view on gender can lack motivation of finding work or becoming active in participating in social life themselves as well as receive less support by their partner / family. For women with children, child care is often the priority or they lack access to child care services. Additionally, TCN women may not have a high level of formal education or their education is not recognized formally in their host country.

- *Level of implementation of policies regarding gender equality in the workplace*

Not applicable.

- *Which services would help TCN women enter the labour market but are not available in the region?*

More services for women with children are needed.

- *Why do many companies not have any strategies for recruiting TCN women?*

Small companies or self-employed workers often don't have the capacity to provide for TCN women. Companies do not regard TCN women as a source of additional employees. General prejudices which exist towards migrants and their "inferior" Qualifications / skills are even more prevalent towards TCN women. Stereotypical views of TCN women, for instance as housewifes foremost add to the disinterest in recruiting them.

- *What kind of skills/knowledge do employers need in order to support TCN women employment?*

Employers need more confidence in TCN womens' abilities and skills, their motivation and willingness to learn. Also, they should be trained on sensibility towards cultural specifics. Additionally, they need to be trained to realize how TCN-

Women can acquire better language skills, gain further qualification and be able to combine work and family, especially small businesses need more support.

- *Are most TCN women generally satisfied with their lives in the host country (in terms of education, employment etc)?*

  Most women reported having few opportunities getting to know the host country society and establishing social relationships outside of work or language courses. Especially women with small children felt rather isolated and did not receive sufficient information on aids and services provided in the community.

Conclusion

- *Which experiences were useful or facilitated the process of labour integration?*
- *What should change in order to make the labor market more accessible?*
- *Is the target group familiar with existing rights and policies?*
- *the role of civil societies*
- *existing gaps*
- *problematic and positive practices*
- *lessons learned, possibilities*

Some of the key factors in supporting TCN women's integration in the labour market are acquiring language skills, the recognition of foreign education and experiences, providing of child care services, more information on existing measures, services and rights. It is crucial to support the social integration of TCN women outside of mere employment opportunities, in order for them to get to know the language, customs and culture but also since it is extremely difficult for TCN women to become employed via applications alone. A useful approach are programs which aim at mothers and their children at the same time, which offer activities for both adults and young children. The services provided by migrant counsels and the unemployment agencies prove not to be sufficient. Especially unemployment agencies often disregard TCN women's qualifications and interest.

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https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/migration/zuwanderung/arbeitsmigration/arbeitsmigration-node.html#doc9392962bodyText1

https://mediendienst-integration.de/migration/zuwanderungsrecht.html

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Migration Policy Institue: Stefan Speckesser: The Immigrant Workforce in Germany: Formal and informal barriers to addressing skills deficits

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