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Transnational Report

Main findings about trainers' readiness and migrant women situation in host participating countries

NOVEMBER 2021



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LET'S **Digital**

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Main findings about trainers' readiness and migrant women situation in host participating countries

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	5
2	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: EDUCATIONAL THEORIES	5
3	METHODOLOGY	9
4	ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	9
4.1	Desk Research Findings	9
4.2	Field Research Findings	13
4.2.1	Réponse Rate	13
4.2.2	Interview Findings	14
5	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	17
	REFERENCES	20

1 INTRODUCTION

The research has been conducted in four countries (Spain, Italy, France and North Macedonia) with an aim to update the need analysis of trainers needs/gaps and to investigate the readiness of the trainers, needs and expectations on andragogical framework. It is part of the Intellectual Output 1 of the project Let's Digital which covers Trainers' social, professional and andragogical update needs research and creation of the competencies framework for trainers of migrant women, coordinated by Progestion (Spain) and FISPE (France). The aim of it is to exchange data and collect information from third sector organizations, official statistics, internal sources in the involved organisations. Review of literature and grey documentation about educational needs on andragogy fields and on social intervention with migrant populations focusing on women. The second phase will include co-working professionals in the sector in a process of monitoring their needs in the different activities they implement with groups of migrant women, with the aim of conducting a real and objective scan of the professional challenges of these adult educators.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: EDUCATIONAL THEORIES

The content of migrant education methodology is developed upon the premises of four theories: Malcom Knowles's Andragogy, Carl Rogers's Experiential learning, Jack Mezirow's Transformative learning, Robert Gagne's Conditions of Learning and Critical Theory. A short introduction of these different and complementary theories follows:

Malcom Knowles's Theory of Andragogy:

Malcolm Shepherd Knowles (1913 – 1997) was an American educator well known for the use of the term Andragogy as synonymous to adult education. According to Malcolm Knowles, andragogy is the art and science of adult learning, thus andragogy refers to any form of adult learning (Kearsley, 2010).

The term andragogy can be supposedly equivalent to the term pedagogy. Andragogy in Greek means man-leading in comparison to pedagogy, which in Greek means child-leading. However, it should be noted that the term pedagogy has been used since the Ancient Greek times, while Alexander Kapp, a German

educator, first used the term andragogy in 1833. Knowles' 5 Assumptions Of Adult Learners are:

- **Self-Concept:** As a person matures his/her self concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being.
- **Adult Learner Experience:** As a person matures he/she accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.
- **Readiness to Learn:** As a person matures his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his/her social roles.
- **Orientation to Learning:** As a person matures his/her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application. As a result his/her orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem centeredness.
- **Motivation to Learn:** As a person matures the motivation to learn is internal (Knowles 1984:12).

Experiential Learning Theory by Carl Rogers:

Experiential Learning is the art of learning from one's own physical experiences in real life. It originates from Carl Rogers' views about psychotherapy and humanistic approach to psychology. He believes that Experiential Learning is equivalent to personal change and growth, thus according to Rogers, all humans have a natural tendency to learn.

Rogers (1969) listed five defining elements of significant or experiential learning:

- *It has a **quality of personal involvement*** – Significant learning has a quality of personal involvement in which “the whole person in both his feeling and cognitive aspects [is] *in* the learning event”.
- *It is **self-initiated*** – “Even when the impetus or stimulus comes from the outside, the sense of discovery, of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending, comes from within”.
- *It is **pervasive*** – Significant learning “makes a difference in the behavior, the attitudes, perhaps even the personality of the learner”.

- *It is evaluated by the learner* – The learner knows “whether it is meeting his need, whether it leads toward what he *wants* to know, whether it illuminates the dark area of ignorance he is experiencing”.
- *Its essence is meaning* – “When such learning takes place, the element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience”.

Transformative learning theory by Jack Mezirow

Mezirow's transformative learning is defined as “an orientation which holds that the way learners interpret and reinterpret their sense experience is central to making meaning and hence learning.” Put in simple terms, transformative learning is the idea that learners who are getting new information are also evaluating their past ideas and understanding, and are shifting their very worldview as they obtain new information and through critical reflection. It goes beyond simply acquiring knowledge, and dives into the way that learners find meaning in their lives and understanding. This kind of learning experience involves a fundamental change in perceptions—learners start to question all the things they knew or thought before and examine things from new perspectives in order to make room for new insights and information. Many learners and experts agree that this kind of learning leads to true freedom of thought and understanding.

Once transformative learning occurs, individuals are more receptive to experiencing it again. Also, once transformative learning occurs it is unlikely that adults revert back to their prior beliefs.

Principles of this theory:

- **Critical Reflection:** Individuals need to think critically about their experiences, which in turn leads to a perspective transformation. This process enhances self-awareness and promotes a deeper level of self-understanding.
- **Rational Disclosure:** This component of the transformative learning theory refers to the experiences that can bring about transformative learning.
- **Centrality of Experience:** In the last component of Mezirow's transformative learning theory, such experiences would include what people do, what they believe in, what they can put up with, the way they react to certain situations, what they would be willing to suffer for, and moreover, their desires, perspective, dream, and faith.

Robert Gagne's Conditions of Learning and Critical Theory:

Robert Gagne was an experimental psychologist who was concerned with learning and instruction for several decades. His earlier work was in a behaviorist tradition, but later he was influenced by the information-processing view of learning and memory. He is well known for his synthesis of research on learning and the identification of internal and external conditions of learning.

Gagne stressed that different variables influence the learning of different types of tasks. He identified five categories of Learning:

- Intellectual skills: Create individual competence and ability to respond to stimuli.
- Cognitive strategies: Capability to learn, think, and remember
- Verbal information: Rote memorization of names, faces, dates, phone numbers, etc.
- Motor skills: Capability to learn to drive, ride a bike, draw a straight line, etc.
- Attitudes: Approach to ideas, people, or situations, that affects how one acts towards these things.

Each category requires different methods in order for the particular skill set to be learned.

Gagne argues that learning tasks for intellectual skills can be organized in a hierarchy according to complexity: stimulus recognition, response generation, procedure following, use of terminology, discriminations, concept formation, rule application, and problem solving. The primary significance of the hierarchy is to identify prerequisites that should be completed to facilitate learning at each level. Prerequisites are identified by doing a task analysis of a learning/training task. Learning hierarchies provide a basis for the sequencing of instruction.



3 METHODOLOGY

The four theoretical frameworks explained in the preceding text comprise the main elements of the conceptual framework developed for answering the research questions. As a result, the research methodology applied is a combination of a desk and field research covering analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and information. The desk research is based on the use of secondary data, or data which have been collected, analysed, and published in reports, studies or other documents by relevant organizations or public institutions. In the concerned case the focus was placed on publications by established organisations which work with refugees and migrants in EU partner countries as public institutions, policy authorities and non-profit organisations.

The field research was based on local geographical targeting of the target group, while the research method applied was semi-structured interview conducted through online and direct contact meetings. For the field research, 25 interviews were organized with local stakeholders (non-profit organizations, institutional organizations, etc.), and local authorities.

While developing the research strategy and approach, the project researchers paid attention to the objectivity of the research process and findings. By following established theories and working with valid and reliable indicators, all possible risks for data contamination were minimized, while the project team ensured the findings are not affected by personal bias. All secondary sources of data published by other authors, organizations and institutions are properly referenced in the text

4 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Desk Research Findings

Mapping stakeholders

The analysis of the secondary data collected through the desk research focused on published quantitative and qualitative data in the form of official documents and statistics collected by entities working for and with refugees and migrants in EU partners countries as public institutions, policy authorities and non-profit organisations. In the analysis, the focus was placed on identifying existent barriers, needs, strategies, structures, services, actions and material in 4 areas:

labour market integration, entrepreneurship, interculturality and gender equity for the professional inclusion of migrant women.

In general, the labour Market Integration programs in the four targeted countries cover:

Spain

- The Directorate General for Inclusion and Humanitarian Attention annually announces the awarding of subsidies.
- Projects co-financed by the European Social Fund in the framework of the operational programme "Social Inclusion and Social Economy", in the field of employment.

Projects co-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, such as those aimed at acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to function in Spanish society.

France

Republican integration Contract implemented by the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) that offers:

- 4-day civic training course: this course is compulsory and introduces the principles and values of the Republic and the practical aspect of French society;
- Language training: the immigrant is given a French test (written and oral) to assess whether a language course is necessary (to reach at least the A1 level);
- Skills assessment and guidance towards employment service or other programs (e.g. HOPE program for job placement of refugees).

Italy

SAI (Reception and Integration System) offers:

- Reception services to refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied foreign minors, foreigners entrusted to the social services on reaching majority age.



- Accommodation for victims of disasters, migrants whose special civil value is recognized, holders of a residence permit for medical treatment, holders of a special- protection residence permit.
- Support for each individual in the reception system, through an individual programme designed to enable a person to regain a sense of independence, and thus enjoy effective involvement in life in Italy, in terms of employment, housing and access to local services and social interaction.

North Macedonia

Strategy for the integration of refugees and foreigners in the Republic of N. Macedonia (2017-2027) targeting people with a recognized refugee status, people under subsidiary protection, asylum seekers and foreigners with a legal residence in the country and meant that during the process of receiving asylum, the asylum seekers can attend educational and professional training programs that will later ensure a smoother integration into the society. The asylum seekers also have access to the labor market, and the ability to apply for work permits.

The identified barriers of reaching migrant women include:

- Language gap: The process of language learning needs to be commenced at the Center for integration, at the very beginning of the asylum seeking procedure, so that by the time asylum is granted, the refugee can either join the regular schooling system, or join the labor market.
- Obsolete training methods: Traditional training system, voluntary based, that doesn't take into account the age, origin, background and culture of migrant students who are put in a passive stance.
- Absenteeism: women are usually overwhelmed with household and childcare burdens.
- Legal and administrative barriers: lack of administrative management culture and complex tasks.
- Lack of working experience due to gender gap, low level of qualifications, or discrimination when hiring.
- Lack of qualifications or recognition of qualifications acquired abroad due to complex procedures.
- Gender and racial discrimination, in society and in a institutional level as well.

Identified solutions from professionals from partnership and beyond:

- Adapted language courses to the real needs of migrant women delivered by trained professionals and not based on voluntary services.
- Innovative methods to teach language that put the migrant student in an active role, participating in their learning process.
- Inclusive learning spaces: most teaching spaces don't allow migrant women to bring their children with them, and this is a reason for them not to attend the lessons. Mixed spaces, where migrant women could learn language while their children could have a leisure/practice time, e.g. children library, tutoring lessons, nursery, etc.
- To enhance gender-sensitive measures to support the participation and inclusion of migrant women in society. Measures could include the provision of family reconciliation measures (baby-sitting and childcare services in general) and training opportunities for migrant women.
- More integration social services support from policy makers and public administrations, (e.g. more social services, supporting existing structures and reducing waiting time to acquire a legal status, because without a legal status migrants are unable to work).
- Recognition of migrant's certificates, diplomas, qualifications and soft-skills. An efficient social and professional integration it's beneficial not only for workers but also for the host country. The recognition procedures can be simplified and can become free or commensurate with each person's financial situation.

Further methods are suggested to be developed:

- To create a digital platform to centralise key information in entrepreneurship to easily share the information with easier access.
- To train social workers / volunteers in business management, legal and administrative procedures.
- To update some of the existing materials, such as physical and digital guides and training.
- To develop public and open resources to improve business development.
- To create a new andragogical approach and methodology to treat easily and deeply these subjects,



- To involve more stakeholders, by raising awareness about migrant women entrepreneurship,
- To develop translation/mediation support services, in the different kinds of proposed services, and train them to be able to work directly with professionals and migrant people, as mediators, enabling the network amongst communities and social services, workers, structures, public devices, etc.

4.2 Field Research Findings

4.2.1 Réponse Rate

To accomplish the aims of Let's DIGITAL project and have better and sustainable results, a field research was conducted in order to have a real scan of the professional challenges of adult educators. By interviewing social professionals from local partners organisations (non-profit organisations, institutional organisations, and local authorities) in France by *Fispe*, in Spain by *Progéstion* and in Italy by *Programma Integra*, this research permits people to better understand their needs when working with migrant women.

The respondents were thus distributed:

- Fispe: 11 local partners interviewed
- Progéstion: 14 local partners interviewed
- Programma Integra: 10 local partners interviewed

* In the North of Macedonia, this study was not conducted, because migration is a “new” phenomenon and for this reason there was not enough experience in this area.

This field research is focused on four main areas directly or indirectly involved with social educators competency domains required to work with migrant women as, **interculturality, gender equality, entrepreneurship and digital learning**.

In the interculturality and gender areas the aim was to understand if social educators are trained to deal with cultural and gender differences, analyse if they have received training about these subjects and if they know some materials or tools which can be used to train social professionals in these domains.

Concerning entrepreneurship, the focus was to know if entrepreneurship is already considered as an opportunity for professional inclusion and if they

require help from their target group about this subject. In parallel, this research permits collecting some existent materials/tools to train educators and users in this field and if there's any special support/materials for migrant women.

The last touch, and one of the most important subjects for the development of this project, was the research about distance learning, which is developing very quickly, and which is taking an increasing place in education. The research was conducted to know how social professionals deal with COVID-19 crises and which techniques or materials they used to keep in contact with their users during this period and also if they know any other techniques and materials to help migrant women in the development of their digital competences.

It's important to point out that during the field research in the four areas, we specifically investigated the meaning of 'working with migrant women', in order to detect the barriers/differences and specific needs between working with men rather than with migrant women..

4.2.2 Interview Findings

Interculturality and Gender Equality

Analysing the results of the interviews , in the three countries, almost 75% of social professionals have already been trained in diversity and interculturality.

Regarding Gender equality in Spain and in Italy, 80% of social workers have received training or information about how to treat this theme, but in France almost 80% never received specific training about it.

There are already some materials available to train educators in this fields:

1. **Interactive resources** as: films, short films, online MOOCs, podcasts, informative websites
2. **Traditional resources**: Images, narrative books, magazines,
3. **Activities / workshops**: Group workshops, theatre workshops, external organisations' intervention workshops

Entrepreneurship

Analysing the results of the interviews in the three countries (in France, Spain and Italy), social educators are rarely required to be trained about this topic, in fact, almost 80% of the interviewed social workers were never asked to have this requirement.

In Spain, there's no specific materials to treat this subject with migrants, but in France and in Italy there are some available tools as:

1. **Interactive resources:** Online free courses, videos, podcasts
2. **Traditional resources:** Images, narrative books, magazines,
3. **Activities / workshops:** Face-to-face training courses and Individual Accompaniment sessions.

In the three countries, there's no specific resource for women but there's some specific actions such as group **workshops and individual accompaniment**.

Digital Competencies:

Regarding the results obtained with questionnaires, between 80% and 90% of the organisations from the three counties working with migrants kept their contact with their users during the covid crises.

Similar tools and methods were used in Spain, France, and Italy:

- **Rarely:** online platforms such as blogs and group chats
- **Often:** Social Networks and specially Facebook
- **Very often:** Mobile phone, specially by WhatsApp

An important and very often referred barrier during the Covid in all three countries was about the **internet access and the associated costs**. Many migrant people were isolated because of their low financial resources.

Identified barriers/differences and specific needs, when working with men rather than with migrant women

The answers are very similar in the three counties where this research was conducted:

The main identified barriers for migrant women were:

- **Stronger family constraints** (family responsibilities as childcare)
- **Migrant women in general have lower digital skills**
- **Lack of professional experience** due to gender gap, low education level, or discrimination when hiring
- **Gender and racial discrimination**, in society and in institutional levels as well



- Lack of self-confidence

The main identified needs to deal with migrant women:

- Reinforcement of host country language trainings
- Reinforcement of free public internet access
- Reinforcement of social workers' trainings in interculturality and gender equality
- Development of social educator's entrepreneurship competencies
- Development of free childcare facilities
- Reinforcement of digital and technical skills of migrant women
- Development of special tools and materials for migrant women
- Facilitate the access to education for migrants (in general) and the administrative procedures for qualifications and diplomas recognition.
- Development of financial public support for education and professional inclusion



5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are over 20 million migrants and refugees with different migration status living in Europe. Most of them face various challenges, employability being one of the major ones. Migrant and refugee women are at the centre of these challenges and, unfortunately, because of their sex and the gendered and cultural barriers, they face obstacles not only in the family and community domain but also in the societal domain. The boom of digital technology worldwide brings many opportunities and demands for new skills. Given the rising rate of migration across the globe, immigrant entrepreneurship is more than ever a topic of high theoretical and practical relevance. Immigrant entrepreneurship can offer host societies a win-win situation, generating incomes for immigrant entrepreneurs and contributing to knowledge transfer, innovativeness, and economic growth within the host economy. However, it requires educated social workers with entrepreneurial skills and competences to be able to help their target group. Field research shows that most social workers are not formed in this area and there's not enough material and tools to train them and help them professionally.

The summary report is the study of migrant women labour market integration, with a special attention to their digital competencies and, parallelly, the study of existent materials for social educators and their entrepreneurial competencies, in four European countries (France, Italy, North of Macedonia and Spain). It highlights the existent barriers and needs for the development of migrant women digital competences and, parallelly, the lacks and needs of trained social educators in entrepreneurship competences.

Field research (France, Italy, and Spain) concludes that most migrant women have low-digital skills and social workers have low entrepreneurial knowledge.

In all these countries, migrants and refugees were mostly involved in low-skilled and low-paid jobs, such as babysitting, cleaning, etc., or were unemployed. This is due, in particular, to language barriers, non-recognition of their qualifications from the country of origin and having low education. Furthermore, for migrant and refugee women family and childcare lead to absenteeism from the workplace, because women are usually overwhelmed with household and childcare burdens. This becomes a real problem for them and an obstacle for their socioeconomic integration in the host countries.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the unemployment rate in the EU and all over the world has risen and, according to Eurostat, women's unemployment rates have risen more than for men. On the other hand, the current pandemic has caused a

huge mindset shift towards digitalisation. To cope with daily tasks (online banking, online shopping, taking online appointments, working from home, studying from home, being connected to family by using social platforms to communicate), even those who were not so digital had to self-train to become digitized. The labour market needs more and more digital skills and competencies and therefore more social educators trained in entrepreneurship that can increase professional migrant women integration and their contribution as for the development of countries economies.

Recommended methods for working with migrant women:

- Motivational activities, training, counselling and visits to businesses to facilitate their consolidation and growth.
- Supporting entrepreneurs by carrying out viability studies of their projects, focusing on the person, their resources, needs, skills and talents, in order to advise them on the start-up and consolidation of their projects.
- Tailored and results focused training.
- Access to financing
- Administrative support, e.g. registration of the business project at the Entrepreneur Service Point to register with the Tax Office and Social Security.
- Counselling on tax obligations for entrepreneurs.
- Counselling on work permits procedures.

The delivery of entrepreneurship training - and the related further support services such as coaching, mentoring and business development for migrants can be done either through:

- Mainstream programmes are initiatives that target all the future entrepreneurs, rather than a specific group. Start-up incubators are an example of these programmes. The added value of mainstream programmes is that they support entrepreneurs with different profiles and backgrounds.
- Targeted programmes focus on a specific group. Targeted support can help migrant entrepreneurs to overcome the group-related specific challenges and tackle their economic and social exclusion.



Tailored and mixed entrepreneurship programmes are typically more effective than generic measures because they are adapted to address specific needs, but they are more costly to develop and deliver.

Here are different types of support that migrant entrepreneurs need in early stages of business development and growth. Those types can be sorted in three groups:

- Support to improve business-related skills and competences: business training, legal advice mentoring and coaching;
- Support to develop non-business-related skills and competences: networking and transversal skills;
- Support to satisfy tangible needs: access to finance and provision of facilities.

The use of participatory methods, techniques and tools is very important for participants to gain a clear understanding of the learning content.

The two most important conclusions:

- a) There's a lack in migrant women's digital skills (low-digital skills) that should be treated to attempt helping them for their professional integration;
- b) In spite of the existence of a large range of different resources for professionals regarding entrepreneurship and regarding gender, however, our investigations came to the conclusion that many of the senior professionals working directly with migrants, haven't received any specific and updated training regarding this arena. We need to produce updated and highly adaptive tools that gather the topics of entrepreneurship and gender to be taught in a dynamic way, and in a transversal way.



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