



# STEP UP

## MANUAL FOR EDUCATORS



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## PARTNERS



**!fall** is an organisation in southern Sweden whose main objective is to promote integration between cultures and counteract violence between cultures in Sweden and in other countries. By culture we mean individuals. We not only work with the integration of refugees/minorities/immigrants but also, we are working with integration of cultures on different levels.



**FRAMEWORK** is a non-profit cultural association that promotes the continuous improvement and empowerment of individuals and the community, through the establishment of activities for lifelong learning and participation in European initiatives.



**EKO**, EKO, the Entrepreneurship and Social Economy Group, is a Non-profit Organisation seated in Athens, Greece, working in the field of youth empowerment, integration and inclusion and sustainable development. EKO (GR) implements a wide range youth-work activities tailored to serve key needs and aspirations of young people. We aim to empower youth at a personal, social, and professional level.



**ENGO MV International (ENGO-MVI)** was established in 2012 and is a network of 37 NGOs spread across 27 European Union countries, 10 non-EU countries on the European continent, and 8 associate organisations from Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Focused on themes associated with the Erasmus+ programme, such as social entrepreneurship, non-formal education, and sustainability, ENGO-MVI provides an open platform for organisations working in the fields of youth, NFE, sport and culture.

MVI concentrates on three key areas: project activities, education, and policymaking/ advocacy efforts.

## PARTNERS



**Faal Derneği** Faal Derneği is situated in the Çankaya area which is the biggest district in Ankara and was founded at the end of 2013. Faal Derneği is working with Çankaya, Keçiören and Yenimahalle Municipalities, schools, universities, and other youth organizations in its environment to increase impact. The main purpose of the organization is to empower people who can take an active role in society. The mission of Faal Derneği is to foster and support the sustainable development of local communities and individuals' empowerment through education and training, and human rights through international cooperation.



**KulturLife** is a non-profit cultural exchange organization specialised in several areas of intercultural communication. The focus of our project work is on the learning opportunities that arise from meeting people from different cultural backgrounds. In recent years we have implemented many funded European projects in the field of the social integration of minorities.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 The Issue

Migrant women represent around 51,6% of the migrant population in Europe (Migration Data Portal, 2020). When they arrive in Europe, they face additional obstacles to integration compared to migrant men, often having to overcome structural barriers linked to them being both a migrant and a female. While migrant men usually arrive alone, women more often join as a family member at a later stage and are not considered as INDIVIDUALS but as a part of a FAMILY. This leads to their exclusion or limited access to integration support measures, skill assessments and training opportunities (Eurodiaconia, 2018:7). If they lack the competencies needed for the host country labour market, they are precluded from finding suitable jobs.

In many EU countries, refugees and migrants are often hired in unskilled low-paid job positions. This professional downgrading generally leads to lower satisfaction, lower motivation to move to a better place in life and a higher risk of unemployment, which could subsequently lead to poverty, marginalisation and (mental) health issues.

Developing migrants' skills and having their qualifications recognised is a complicated and costly process. It also requires the ability to navigate the system and understand the appropriate training to follow.



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## 1.2 The STEP UP Program



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The STEP UP program aims at increasing migrant women employability skills gradually while raising their awareness on the importance of lifelong learning possibilities. The program is composed of workshops associated with reading materials, exercises, presentations, and other similar digital elements, which the partners will prepare for the project. The participants will be involved in role-play and other real-life activities, simulation and work-based scenarios aimed at increasing participants skills and competences in a practical way. The purpose of the program is also to increase immigrant women's motivation and self-confidence needed to improve their chances for a better job position and foster overall integration to the workplace and community.

Main objectives of the program are to help migrant women in strengthening their employability skills, fostering their awareness on the importance of upskilling possibilities, while getting a step further toward skills and the qualification's recognition. The program offers a new way to build up migrant women's motivation for improvement, using entrepreneurial mind set and sustainability skills as an innovative way for skills identification and screening.

### The program is composed by the following elements:

- short lessons presented via interactive resources, exercises, self-assessment tools, materials for self-study or class activities.
- workshops using role-playing and real-life scenarios to allow participants to practice their skills and support each other in the program.
- assessment tools complementary to the EU Skills profile tool for Third Country Nationals, to facilitate the preparation of CVs that are in line with labour market requests.



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The learning process will start mostly in class and will move gradually online, to simulate smart working conditions and to let the participants improve their digital skills. The learning path divided in small learning units facilitates the assimilation of information and increases flexibility allowing educators to allocate the time for group-based activities or individual study.

The practical activities will offer work-based scenarios, mock job interviews, and other realistic situations they will use to experiment their skills and competences in a practical way. This method together with the tailored support should help the participants in planning a clear career path, ensuring a real analysis of their skills and offer a real possibility for deciding for other upskilling/vocational training.

## 1.3 Introduction to the Manual

This product can be used by NGO, schools, associations and VET organisations to acquire knowledge necessary to use the STEP UP program or just fostering immigrant women's competences. The present manual offers a new possibility for adult educators' professional development fostering their ability to address the learning needs of the target group and their skill improvement to be ready to compete in the 21st century labour market.

There is no singular method that works best to motivate and empower adult migrant women in their personal and professional progression, the educators and facilitators must refine and improve their skills to offer a more tailored support using different techniques and methods, especially in relation with lifelong learning education or upskilling programs.

Developing migrants' skills and having their qualifications recognised is a complicated and costly process. It also requires the ability to navigate the system and understand the appropriate training to follow. In addition, the fast-changing labour market requirement, and ultimately the COVID-19 crisis had a substantial impact on the EU labour market, with many workers losing their jobs or being placed under short-term work schemes. The new Europass platform, launched in July 2020 in the context of the Updated Skills Agenda, and the EU Skills profile tool for Third Country Nationals develops in this direction by giving the support to migrants to 'showcase their skills and qualifications and facilitate their recognition through better information.'

The manual is organised as followed: It starts by discussing the challenges and barriers faced by migrant women, and how they can be motivated to overcome these barriers. Then it moves onto discussing the employability skills preferred in the 21st century, and the importance of recognising and assessing skills. It then highlights the significance of non-formal education in fostering professional development of migrants, and involvement of local level organisations for the success of these programmes. Finally, it presents the competencies required by facilitators/educators working with migrants.

## 2. CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS FOR MIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

### 2.1 Introduction

People may migrate from their own country to another country for various reasons, whereas major reasons can be highlighted as; family reunion, labour migration and forced migration (refugee and asylum seekers). Recent statistics of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimates that there had been 281 million international migrants at global level in 2020, a figure that has increased rapidly over the last few decades (ILO: World Migration Report, 2022). Although international migration can be a mutually enriching process that could bring benefits to both migrants and host countries, the ILO recognizes it as one of the major global issues in the 21st century. Migrants face many challenges in accessing host country labour markets, while their contribution to the labour pool, especially those who provide low-skilled labour, often being unacknowledged and less rewarded. This leads to exploitation of immigrant labour and creation of irregular labour markets. Migrant women, due to their gender-specific roles, tend to face more disadvantages compared to migrant men.

#### **Aim of the chapter**

As stated in the Introductory chapter, this manual attempts to enhance the ability of educators to support migrant women in integrating into the host country labour market. To be successful in this task, it is important for educators to have sufficient knowledge on the challenges these women may face in the labour market due to factors such as their culture, levels of education and psychological attributes.

Accordingly, the aim of this chapter is to provide some understanding on the challenges and barriers faced by migrant women that may affect their employability. Some initiatives to overcome these barriers are suggested towards the end with the hope of facilitating educators in planning their work under the STEP UP project.

## 2.2 Challenges faced by migrant women in the labour market

According to a report published by the European Economic and Social Committee (2015), the labour market tends to be disadvantageous to women, whether they are Europeans or immigrants. Women seem to be concentrated in a limited number of sectors such as health, education, public administration, domestic-related services, and hospitality. Further, they are more likely to have part-time jobs due to their gender-based responsibilities and are over-represented among those working on short-term contracts. The labour market outcomes of immigrant women in the EU have not improved over time, neither overall, nor relative to those of native women and immigrant men. Migrant women have far less potential in entering the labour market when compared to their native counterparts. They are more likely to be employed in insecure and part-time jobs with low salaries and poor working conditions. It has been reported that one out of every four employed migrant women in Europe is involved in an elementary occupation, which requires a low level of competencies. These jobs are often informal and insecure, and are associated with irregular labour markets, which make migrant women at risk of losing their jobs anytime and having no access to social security.

The most obvious barrier for migrant women in entering the labour market is the difficulty to master the language of the host country. This may be attributed to their gender roles, as they are likely expected to bear most of the responsibilities in adjusting to a new country. Usually, if they migrate with their families, it is common that they migrate with young children who need care of a parent, so it is usually the mother who stays at home to take care of the kids, rather than attending language classes offered by the host country. It may take 2 - 3 years for them to find time for language classes, and then they may have to face more competition in entering the labour market.

## 2.2 Challenges faced by migrant women in the labour market

In addition, the migrant women may face cultural barriers in undertaking certain jobs. Although they find refuge in a European country, the values and traditions of their native culture tend to remain intact. Further, most migrant men have the opportunity of finding employment through social networks, mostly of their native countrymen living in the host country. Most of the migrant women do not have this privilege, as they may be refrained from socialising due to family conditions, domestic responsibilities, and due to insufficient knowledge of the language that makes it difficult to make new friends in the host country. This makes them isolated from the community and prevents them from finding job opportunities, their rights, access to public services offered by the host country in integrating into the labour market. The ultimate effect can be failed integration.

Level of education, too, plays a significant role in labour market integration. Migrant women may come with diverse educational backgrounds; some may possess only primary education, while some may come with postgraduate degrees. Whatever it is, one of the major issues they face is getting the qualifications and experience they have gained abroad recognised. It can take some considerable time to get their qualifications recognised and this may discourage them in finding jobs that suit their qualifications, pushing them to accept jobs, for which they are overqualified. When migrant women are unemployed or under-employed (in jobs for which they are overqualified), it becomes a loss of human capital for the host country too. As discussed above, the barriers faced by migrant women in the host country labour market may fall into three major categories.

1

**Institutional barriers**

These barriers occur due to lapses in institutional procedures and may result in lengthy asylum processes, delays in issuing work permits, and delays in evaluating foreign educational qualifications. They may affect both men and women equally. But women face extra barriers due to inflexible integration programmes (ex. language classes) that are not compatible with the needs and time schedules of women. These programmes are not designed considering the gender-based responsibilities of young migrant women. In addition, migrant women who are mostly stuck in part-time jobs do not have opportunities for career advancements and full integration into the formal labour market of the host country.

2

**Structural barriers**

Many advanced economies in the world, especially the Nordic countries are facing transitions in their labour markets, where the low-skilled jobs are decreasing, and middle-skilled and highly skilled jobs are increasing. Women face more disadvantaged situations in a technology-intensive labour market, as many migrant women may not have a technology-based education, or any form of education at all. Even if they have received higher education in their countries, it may not be relevant to the labour market in the host country. At the same time, professional women such as doctors may have to do additional exams to work as doctors in the host country, which may take some extra time for them to enter the labour market. The issue is they may not find time to study for exams while taking care of children and domestic chores.

3

**Society-based barriers**

These barriers involve norms and values of migrant families, that decide a woman's place in the family, the labour market, and the society. Some migrant women may belong to families that impose restrictions on their social connections. They may not be allowed to go out and meet new people from the host community and may even prevent them from seeking employment. This may affect their personal development, mental health, and economic independence. More than all, it would affect their integration into the host community, making them feel as outsiders, the rest of their lives.

## 2.3 Psychological perspectives associated with migrant women

In addition to the above barriers, it is worthwhile mentioning the psychological perspectives associated with migration. Research has indicated that both mental and physical health of immigrants tend to decline over time, after they arrive in the host country. This may be attributed to several factors such as language differences, accessing necessary services, getting familiar with the new environment, financial constraints etc.

Women tend to be more vulnerable to negative mental effects of migration, which may vary according to the legal status of the process, and the mode of travel etc. If they attempt to migrate through illegal channels, there is a high possibility that women may experience sexual exploitation during the process. Further, the lengthy migration journeys would restrict or limit their access to essential sanitary and health care services. All these factors may affect migrant women's mental health, which may ultimately function as a barrier to their labour market entrance.

When people face mentally challenging situations, social networks play a major role in helping them to bounce back to normal. Women tend to rely on three types of social support: family, peers, and outsiders. Immigrant women are at a disadvantage in this aspect too, as they lack support of social networks that provide both emotional and informational support. They already miss family support when they migrate to a new destination, may not have peers to support them in the host country, and may not have the opportunity to build up contacts with outsiders who are able to support them. When combined with lack of education, low income, jobs with less prestige, migrant women may become more mentally depressed. They may not even seek help from social services due to fear that it may affect their immigrant status and future job opportunities.

## 2.4 Overcoming barriers in the labour market

What was discussed so far implies that integrating migrant women into the host country's labour market is not a straightforward process. A deeper understanding of the needs of migrant women is required to make necessary adjustments at policy level, structural level, and institutional level. These adjustments should be focussed on facilitating migrant women's participation in the labour market, as it is one of the most effective and practical ways of integrating migrant women into society.

In this regard, migrant women need extra support and guidance through integration programmes to improve their labour market participation. They should have access to awareness programmes to inform them about their rights and avenues to access the labour market, while providing training opportunities to make maximum use of their skills. At the same time, language programmes and vocational training courses must be flexible to be compatible with migrant women's domestic responsibilities to encourage their participation in these programmes.

Another initiation to increase the independence of low-educated migrant women would be encouraging them towards self-employment by providing knowledge on entrepreneurship, while facilitating access to micro credit facilities to start-up a business by themselves. They may also need support and advice in expanding their businesses and becoming professionals in whatever, they do. Grass-root organisations and women's cooperatives can play a huge role in this process. They can promote employability of low-educated migrant women through training them on specific professions such as sewing, cleaning, and cooking, that do not require high educational qualifications. These trainings can be combined with specific programs focusing on workplace culture and language training.

## 2

Creating Social Networks can bring many benefits to migrant women in addition to facilitating their integration into the labour market. The role of social networks outside classrooms and language cafes are more beneficial in providing them much needed mental support, while facilitating their integration into host society.



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However, integrating into a new society requires more than language skills and employability skills. The educators or facilitators working with migrant women should recognise this and should help them build their self-confidence to take charge of their own life. Equipping women with self-confidence would promote successful integration as well as better personal relationships and family life. In conclusion, it should be noted that, none of the above would be successful without participants' (migrant women) personal efforts and positive attitudes.

In sum, this chapter presented the challenges faced by migrant women in a new country, institutional, structural, and society-based barriers they must overcome, including the psychological effects created due to migration. The next chapter discusses how migrant women can be motivated, inspired, and empowered to access the labour market.

## 3. MOTIVATION, INSPIRATION AND RESILIENCE

### 3.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, migrant women face a double disadvantage in the labour market; As migrants and as women. Migrant women need extra support in their integration into the labour market. However, along with this support, they also need to learn how to be motivated and inspired by having resilience skills.

Some of the difficulties that migrant women face in their participation in their communities economically and socially have negative consequences in their lives and make their participation in the labour market almost impossible. Barriers to active participation for all women include English language proficiency or literacy, low level of education and mental health or physical health limitations. For immigrants, these difficulties may be more pronounced and there is also a lack of familiarity with the workings of the legal system, services, public transport, employment, and education in societies. Therefore, it is important to think about these factors before providing migrant women with a sense of inspiration and motivation.

When you support women, you give them more control over their life. By investing in training, mentoring, equity programs, training grants, and promotion to senior positions, they are provided with the development necessary to create a sense of motivation. When subject to strong governance frameworks that are rights-based, accessible, affordable, inclusive and gender-sensitive, labour migration can bring significant benefits to individual women, their families and communities, and sustainable development in countries of origin and destination.

#### **Aim**

The aim of this chapter is to explain the importance of motivating migrant women, encourage them to be resilient towards barriers they face, and convince them that they have the potential to be valid members of society. This would help them to lay a solid foundation in building up their life in the host country.

## 3.2 Motivation

Motivation is an internal process. Whether we define it as a drive or a need, motivation is a condition inside us that desires a change, either in the self or the environment. When we tap into this well of energy, motivation endows the person with the drive and direction needed to engage with the environment in an adaptive, open-ended, and problem-solving sort of way.

Motivation can be defined as the state of energy and enthusiasm that pushes a person to work in a certain way to achieve a certain goal. The motivation that encourages the person to reach the targeted result ensures that the person continues this path with commitment, no matter what difficulties he encounters. Motivation is one of the keys to success. In short, as the answer to the question of what motivation is, the definition of "energy state that enables a person to move forward on the road to success without getting stuck and not to give up" can be given. Motivation appears in all areas of life. Especially in success stories, the motivation of people who reach their goals without giving up and their successes as a result of passing the obstacles on this path are told. Motivation in one's life; It enables people to work regularly, efficiently, and willingly.

However, human beings can easily lose their motivation in difficult situations they face, and therefore their quality of life may decrease. This situation affects human life negatively. While it may be difficult for any human being to be motivated while facing challenging situations, it can be even more difficult for migrant women to be motivated in finding their ideal life in a new country, and to be excited about the future.

The migrant women, who must leave their countries for various reasons, and who try to live in new and unfamiliar countries, make a living and sustain their lives, become more prone to suffer psychological problems in these difficulties. As it was highlighted earlier, they need extra strength and some pillars that they can hold on. Below, you can see the core factors that enhance the motivation of migrant women to build their lives in the new countries they have arrived in.

### **Language**

Being able to communicate in the host country's language is one of the main drivers of the successful economic and social integration of immigrant women. Low levels of language proficiency create high hurdles to participating in the labour market, joining in the political process, and engaging in everyday social interaction. Also, it affects women's motivation level about living in the host country. Having adequate language skills allows immigrants to progress along the job ladder, increases their employment probability, and eases their access to better-paying jobs.

### **Advancement**

A clear path should be set for immigrant women to advance and be promoted in their workplace. They should understand the options available and be included in management and learning training when applicable. People in supervisory roles should help immigrants to feel welcomed and represented in the community. These acts also help to increase the motivation level of the migrants.

### **Communication**

Effective communication is essential for both individual and community success as it can help people reduce misunderstandings, develop solid relationships, and establish themselves as active members of the community. For migrant women, learning to communicate effectively requires time and practice to master as they are in challenging positions in different countries. However, it's essential to understand what to say and how to say it so they can contribute to collaborative efforts in the community, and workplace. Therefore, migrant women should have effective communication skills to feel more motivated in the host community.

### **Training**

Training is important because it represents a good opportunity for people to grow their knowledge base and improve their job skills to become more effective in the community. It helps migrant women to feel community engagement and involvement in community services, works together with host citizens, reaches integration, strengthens voices, and increases social equality.

### **Involvement**

Immigrants face barriers to fully participate and thrive in their communities and the economy. Immigrants (especially immigrant women) who do not feel like they belong to society and as a part of society tend to isolate themselves from society and become withdrawn and lose their motivation to live, produce and create. For this reason, it is necessary to increase the inclusion of immigrants in society and increase their education and reach all immigrants.

## 3.3 Fostering Resilience

Resilience gives individuals the strength to endure and struggle in the face of difficulties. Those who have this power can recover more quickly from the negative events they have experienced and can return to their old lives. They can even bring the stress they experience into a situation that will benefit them. This concept, which is also defined as the ability of the person to cope with negative situations such as obstacles and difficulties and to be successful, can be stated as the positive psychological capacity of the individual to recover from setbacks, uncertainty, conflict, failure, and increased responsibility. This meaning emphasises the importance of interpersonal and social resources and challenges.

This is of utmost importance since women who migrate without proper documentation face both internal and contextual challenges. In this sense, they may need some extra support to adjust into the host country. There are many ways that can nurture resilience in people's lives.

### **Mindfulness Practices**

These practices and spiritual actions such as yoga and meditation or prayer can also help people connect and regain hope, which can provide strength in dealing with resilient situations in their lives. It has also been scientifically proven that these mindfulness practices have great contributions to realising the moment, gaining personal awareness, coping with stress and anxiety, being grateful, focusing, learning and memory development, that is, a healthy life. Migrant women can participate in activities where such practices are carried out so that they feel a sense of belonging to their new environment, country, and society, and can take an important step in coping with the stress and anxiety of adapting to society.

### **Self-discovery**

People often find they have matured, especially after dealing with a problem or tragedy. They stated that they established better relationships and felt stronger even when they felt vulnerable at that moment. In fact, this means increasing self-worth and self-esteem for people. In this way, immigrant women can realise that they are no different from other individuals in society, that they belong to the new society as much as they do, and that they are an indispensable part of that society.

### **Negative emotional avoidance**

Alcohol and substance use is one of the avoidance behaviours in the face of difficulties, the person may think that he/she feels better with instant pleasure in the use of these substances, but then it will grow back with more negative minds, thoughts, and emotions. These are masks that cover the moment. It will be a healthier behaviour to direct the body to find and use resources for stress management.

### **Prioritise relationships**

Establishing meaningful relationships with sympathetic people can make migrant women feel that they are not alone in challenges. In this sense, if they share their feelings with the people they love and value, they will take steps to support their flexibility. In general, immigrants try to isolate themselves from the pain of the traumatic events they have experienced, but it should be remembered that there are people who care about them, and their support is of great importance. With a little shared link-building time frame, they will feel better.

### **Participating in a social support group**

Being present and actively participating in a specific purpose group, such as non-governmental groups, faith-oriented groups, or social responsibility groups, alongside the person will help them regain their hope for the future and activities that will bring them happiness. It will also be good for their feelings of cooperation and sharing and will help them increase flexibility.

### **Taking care of health**

In addition to personal care, it is important to protect mental and physical health. Stress is emotional, mental as well as physical. Feeding positive life factors such as proper nutrition, adequate and quality sleep, regular exercise, and physical activity will strengthen individuals against feelings such as stress, anxiety, worry and depression.

### **Taking a step towards goals in order to find the purpose of life**

What is the meaning of life, what are we living for, do we have goals in our life and are these goals specific, realistic, achievable, measurable, and attainable in a certain period? Setting and developing goals for migrant women triggers the urge to cling to life. In this way, they can easily move towards the steps they want.

### **Proactive thinking and behaviour**

It is important to acknowledge emotions in difficult times, but migrant women should ask themselves, “What can I do about this problem in my life, how can I feel as an individual in my new society?” Migrant women who ask the question are closer to finding solutions to these problems. Taking the initiative will provide motivation in times of stress and will make them rise again in times of pain. Try to see things as they are: There is a tendency to catastrophize negative events and magnify negative situations in people, especially immigrants who have escaped from a traumatic environment and come to a new country and experience difficult situations. If they try to look at the situation from the top by removing themselves from the situation and perceiving the situation objectively, they will realise that the distress is getting smaller instead of growing. Writing a future disaster scenario will not help anyone much. If they feel overwhelmed, they should remember that this feeling is temporary and not an indicator of their life. Maybe they can't change a stressful event, but they can change the way you interpret and respond to the event.

### **Positive attitude**

It's hard to have a positive attitude when life sometimes goes wrong. But an optimistic outlook also allows you to wait for good things to happen. Instead of worrying about the things that may happen in the future, one should focus on what is being accomplished, and try to picture it in the mind.

### **Experiencing the past and guiding the future**

By knowing who or what helped them in difficult times before, they can learn how to respond effectively to new difficult situations. Where did they become stronger, what did they experience, and what did they learn? These questions can help them to find their way.



### **Getting support**

Getting help when they need it is crucial to building the resilience of migrant women. For most people, using their own resources and the strategies we mentioned may be enough to build their resilience. But at times, immigrants may feel challenged and stuck, or they may encounter resistance and be unable to cope with the situation. In case of such a need, they can get support from the experts in order to move forward and get rid of the complex wool ball in their minds. Establishing a therapeutic relationship in this process is important in making them feel good. In many countries, there are training, and activities aimed at providing special motivation and resilience to immigrants.

Considering all these points, empowering, motivating and providing resilience to migrant women will enable them to develop their skills needed for the labour market in the host country. This chapter attempted to discuss these aspects. The next chapter presents the employability skills desired by the current labour markets.

## 4. EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

### 4.1 Introduction

The present chapter will offer an overview of employability skills required by new entrants to the workforce and why they are important. This knowledge is useful for practitioners and educators to deliver the messages correctly through appropriate learning programs that would suit the current labour market demand.

A rising unemployment rate is an ongoing challenge, and the Covid-19 pandemic has made it even worse. There is indeed a lot that needs to be done to change this, but there are a lot of opportunities on the horizon. Expanding sectors like greening, energy and ICT have created new jobs and professions. The novel skills and values of the modern workplace calls for a new syllabus of upskilling to gain and enhance certain skills and practices that are currently in demand. The goal is to help those who are new to the workforce, to find their place in the local society, and to fulfil their self- potential.

#### **Aim**

This chapter aims at creating awareness and enhancing knowledge on today's employability skills and helping educators to get familiar with the EU level frameworks regarding the entrepreneurial, social, green, and digital skills.

## 4.2 What are employability skills?

Employability skills can be defined as the transferable skills needed by an individual to make them employable. Good technical understanding and subject knowledge are the qualities listed by employers of their potential employees. They are the core skills and traits needed in nearly every job and enable you to thrive at your workplace. Employability depends on your knowledge, skills, and attitude and how you reflect upon them and present them to your potential employers. Following are the top 10 employability skills that are currently acknowledged as golden assets to stand out as an employee, most of which are soft skills that can be sharpened individually.

### **Top 10 Employability Skills - highlighted by a range of UK-based companies.**

1. Communication and Interpersonal skills
2. Problem solving skills
3. Being initiative and being self-motivated
4. Working under pressure and ability to meet deadlines.
5. Organisational skills
6. Team working
7. Ability to learn and adapt
8. Numeracy
9. Valuing diversity and difference
10. Negotiation skills

However, today's rapid technological advancement poses an ongoing challenge for the future of work as there is a mismatch between the digital skills required by industries and education. This emerging learning deficit has put a greater risk on socio-economic problems by exacerbating inequalities and unemployment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated some of these structural changes by hastening the adoption of new technologies, transforming work preferences and practices, and changing consumption habits. For individuals, firms, and societies to benefit from these transformations in the world of work, there is an urgent need for upskilling and reskilling for growing jobs and sectors, in the digital and green economy.

## 4.3 Key Competencies in Three Broad Categories by OECD

Competencies are the ability of a person to meet various demands imposed by different situations. It needs more than knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD,2005) suggests three broad categories of key competencies.

**Ability to use tools interactively** -To be able to use a wide range of tools for interacting effectively with both physical (informational technology) and socio-cultural environment (use of language). The employees should be able to understand such tools well enough to adapt them for their own purposes.

- Ability to use language, symbols and text interactively
- Ability to use knowledge and information interactively
- Ability to use technology interactively

**Ability to interact in heterogeneous groups** - Important trait to have in an increasingly interdependent world where individuals need to engage with others especially in a diverse community with a range of different backgrounds.

- Ability to relate well to others
- Ability to cooperate
- Ability to manage and resolve conflicts

**Ability to act autonomously** - Individuals need to be able to take responsibility for managing their own lives, situate their lives in a broader social context and act autonomously.

- Ability to act within the big picture
- Ability to form and conduct life plans and personal projects
- Ability to assert rights, interests, limits and needs



Figure 4.1; Extracted from: <https://www.orleanstheschool.in/orleans-mentors>

Figure 4.1 above displays a variety of social and emotional skills needed to be developed in adult learners. They can be categorised as:

- Character skills: social and cultural awareness, leadership, adaptability, persistence, being initiative, and curiosity to learn.
- Competencies: critical thinking and problem-solving skills, creativity, communication skills, and collaboration. Adult learners have the potential to strengthen their soft skills while raising their awareness on the importance of lifelong learning possibilities. Thus, increasing their motivation for improvement and enhancing their employability skills in the process. Through structured programs, adult students will have the opportunity to stay up to date based on business sector's expectations in terms of social and transversal skills to be possessed to be more employable and better integrated in society too.

## Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is a concept adopted to facilitate continuous adaptation of new skills, new know-how and new competences. The Council of the European Union in May 2018 has recommended eight key competences that are fundamental to achieve a personal fulfilment and satisfaction, to develop oneself and relate to others, and to learn how to learn and keep being employable for a lifelong learning. These key competences are a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The Eight Key Competence for Lifelong Learning are: i) Literacy competence, ii) Multilingual competence, iii) mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering, iv) digital competence, v) personal, social and learning to learn competence, vi) citizenship competence, vii) Entrepreneurship competence, and viii) cultural awareness and expression competence (European Commission, 2019, p.5).



Element via Canva

The World Economic Forum has defined 16 skills needed for the 21st century. They are grouped into three main categories:

- **Functional literacy:** How students apply core skills to everyday tasks (Literacy, numeracy, scientific literacy, ICT literacy, financial literacy, cultural and civic literacy)
- **Competencies:** How students approach complex challenges (Critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, communication, collaboration)
- **Character qualities:** How students respond to their changing environment (curiosity, initiative, persistence, adaptability, leadership, social and cultural awareness).

## EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework

The European Commission (2016) developed EntreComp (European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework) to bring forward a shared definition of entrepreneurship as a competence, and to bring consensus among stakeholders in establishing a bridge between the worlds of education and work. This framework presents 15 key competencies under three main categories: into-action, ideas and opportunities, and resources. They involve competencies such as taking the initiative, planning and management, learning through experience, ethical and sustainable thinking, self-awareness, and mobilising others.



Figure 4.4; Extracted from: [https://entre-comp.eu/read\\_news.php?id\\_news=7&lang=EN&activo=](https://entre-comp.eu/read_news.php?id_news=7&lang=EN&activo=)



4

## LifeComp: The European Framework for the Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competences

The EU Science Hub's Joint Research Centre, in collaboration with the European Commission's Department for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC) developed the LifeComp; the European framework for the personal, social, and learning to learn key competence. This is an essential guideline towards achieving the competences for social inclusion and civic participation in society.

**LifeComp** lays out nine competences that can be learned by everyone whether in formal, informal, or non-formal education. It aims for new entrants to the labour market to unleash their dynamic potential, self-regulate their emotions, thoughts and behaviours to build a meaningful life, cope with complex situations, to become thriving, responsible citizens and become reflective lifelong learners.

As displayed in figure 4.5, the nine competencies presented under this framework consists of: i) self-regulation, ii) flexibility, iii) wellbeing, iv) empathy, v) communication, vi) collaboration, vii) growth mindset, viii) critical thinking, and ix) managing learning.

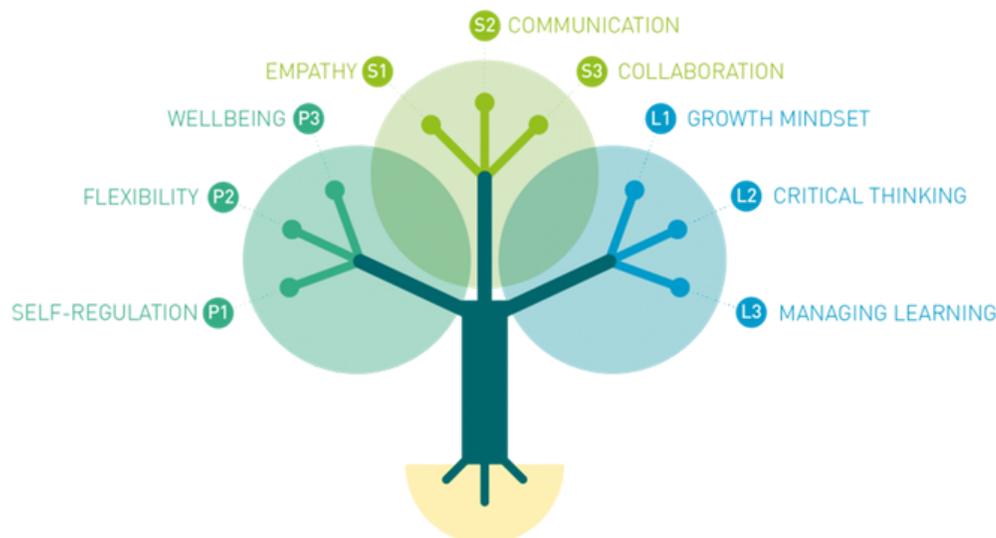
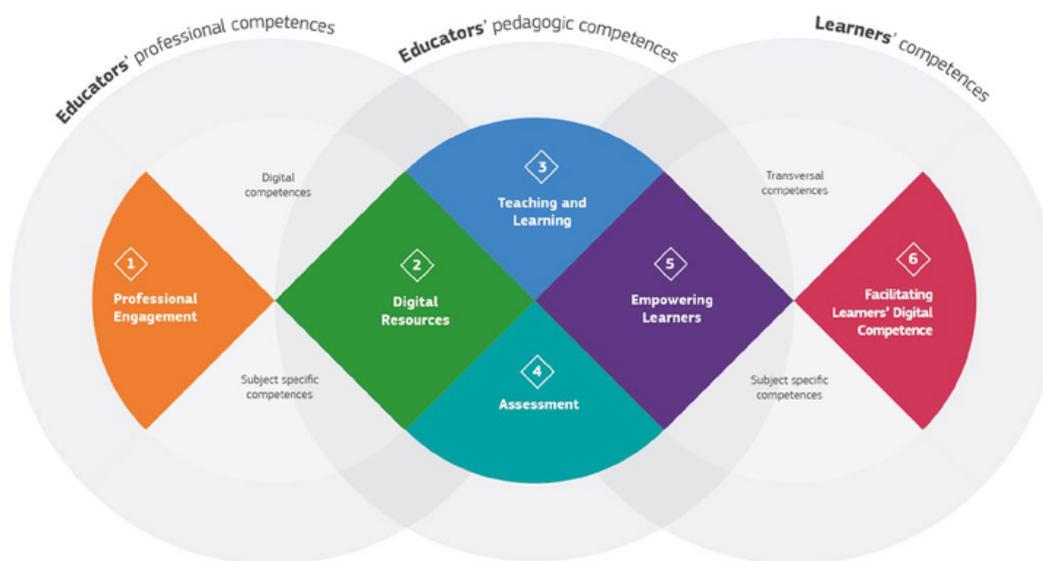


Figure 4.5; Lifecompcapabilities: Extracted from: [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp_en)

## 4

## DigComp: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens

Digital competence is one of the key competences for lifelong learning, which needs confident, critical, and responsible use, and engagement with digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society. It includes five broad categories of competencies: i) information and data literacy, ii) communication and collaboration, iii) digital content creation (including programming), iv) safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity), and v) problem solving and critical thinking.



As seen in Figure 4.6, an educator's pedagogic competencies are organised as: professional engagement, digital resources, assessment, teaching and learning, empowering learners, and facilitating learner's digital competence.

## GreenComp: The European Sustainability Competence Framework

GreenComp is a reference framework for sustainability competences. It provides a common ground to learners and guidance to educators, presenting a common definition of what sustainability as a competence necessitates.

GreenComp identifies a set of sustainability competences to feed into education programmes to help learners develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that promote ways to think, plan, and act with empathy, responsibility, and care for our planet and for public health. It is designed to be a non-prescriptive reference for learning schemes fostering sustainability as a competence.



Figure 4.7; Extracted from: [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework/greencomp-conceptual-reference-model\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework/greencomp-conceptual-reference-model_en)

As seen in figure 4.7, the GreenComp consists of 12 competencies organised under four main aspects related to sustainability: i) embodying sustainability values, ii) embracing the complexity in sustainability, iii) envisioning sustainable futures, and iv) acting for sustainability. Although these competencies are grouped as above, all 12 competencies (for example, critical thinking, problem solving, adaptability, collective action, and individual initiatives, are interrelated and interconnected with each other.

## 4

## Employability skills framework

The US Department of Education presents a framework that defines nine major skills needed for employability in today's world. These skills are categorised into three major areas: i) applied knowledge, ii) effective relationships, and iii) workplace skills.

The nine main skills consist of:

- Personal qualities (ex: working independently, taking initiative)
- Interpersonal skills (ex: leadership, negotiation)
- Applied academic skills (ex: reading and writing skills)
- Critical thinking skills (ex: problem solving)
- Resource management (ex: managing resources and people)
- Information use (ex: locating and managing information)
- Communication skills (ex: verbal communication, active listening)
- Systems thinking (ex: understanding and using systems)
- Technology use (ex: understanding and using technology)

## 4

The various models presented under this chapter clearly illustrate that these models have several common competencies. It indicates the significance of having some background knowledge on employability skills and facilitating development of these skills among migrants, especially women. At the same time, it is equally important to recognise, assess and validate their prior skills to introduce them into the labour market of the host country. The next chapter is focused on these aspects.



Figure 4.8; Extracted from:<https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/multimedia/employability-skills-framework>

## 5. SKILL ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION

### 5.1 Introduction

The integration of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, has long been a policy priority at the European Union (EU) level, and labour market integration is widely regarded as a key indicator of long-term, successful integration into wider society. The EU Common Basic Principles of Immigrant Integration, for example, states that “employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contribution that immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible” (European Commission, 2005). The successful labour market integration of immigrants can also be seen as an opportunity to close labour and demographic gaps in the context of an ageing society.

The successful integration of third-country nationals (TCNs) for example, is a matter of common interest to all member states as their employment rates remain below the average of host-country citizens. Many TCNs are overqualified or over-skilled for their jobs or work in less favourable conditions when it comes to wages, employment protection, and with less career prospects. The issue of wasted potential is particularly important for refugees, who may not have necessary documentary evidence of their previous learning and qualifications, may have had their education interrupted or may not have participated in formal education.

Therefore, facilitating the validation of skills and recognition of qualifications of migrants is crucial to ensure that individuals' skills are used to their full potential.

#### **Aim**

The aim of this chapter is to present different methods of assessing skills, introduce some existing tools and best practices to increase awareness and competences of educators, and to offer suggestions and tips on when and how to use them.

## 5.2 Different assessment methods

### Self-evaluation

A good self-evaluation gives individuals the best opportunity to reflect on their current performance, evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and improve themselves. Self-assessment tests are not tests in the traditional sense of the word. There is no desired outcome or mastery of something to measure. There are no right or wrong answers. Know that self-assessment tests are also more than just personality tests; the self-assessment can serve as a guide to choosing a lasting career path.

Important elements of self-assessment tests include:

- Values – The things most important to you
- Interests – What you enjoy doing most
- Personality – Your individual traits, needs, attitudes, motivations
- Aptitude – Activities you are good at, be they in-born or skills you've acquired.

There are many methods that can be used for self-evaluation:

**OECD Skills Profiling Tool** - These tests focus on the top soft skills most often cited in job posts: customer and personal service, time and self-management skills, motivation and commitment, and creative thinking. (Ref: <https://oecd-skillsprofilingtool.org/>)

**Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)** - Based on Carl Jung's theory, which speculated that there are four principal psychological functions by which humans experience the world: sensation, intuition, feeling and thinking. A free online test can be done through: <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>

**Strengthsfinder** - Provides the most comprehensive guide to the topic, outlining your top five talents and how they influence your life choices and everyday decisions, including the way you work. To take the Strengthsfinder test, you must either purchase a Strengthsfinder book or an online code from the Gallup website (Ref: <https://www.gallup.com/home.aspx> ).

**Keirsey Temperament Sorter** - According to Keirsey Temperament Theory, people have four temperaments: guardian, artisan, rational and idealist. Temperaments explain a person's nature or behaviour. Each temperament or the behaviour types are again divided into four character types for each (Ref: <https://profile.keirsey.com/#/b2c/assessment/> ).

**Big Five Personality Assessment** - Also known as the five-factor model (FFM), is based on the common language descriptors of personality. It divides people into five personality traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. It can help you identify your learning styles and working preferences (Ref: <https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/IPIP-BFFM/> ).

**Holland Code** - Determines your suitability with different careers based on the six occupational themes: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional (RIASEC). You can take the Holland Code at college career centres and at the Open Source Psychometrics Project website (Ref. <https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/RIASEC/> ).

## 5.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (Rpl)

The OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers highlight the importance of the recognition of prior learning and validation of general competences of adults. It further emphasises that RPL would enrich upskilling and reskilling programmes as they help offer more personalised learning pathways to adults.

Most recognition systems that are currently used mainly cater to professional and technical competences and career advancements. The recognition of general competences is more beneficial for job-seeking adults, who are new in the labour market with educational qualifications received in a foreign land, and who are looking for a change in their current field of employment.

The European Union has numerous initiatives to promote RPL and provide access to lifelong learning by creating new opportunities to obtain qualifications. At the same time, the EU recognises the value of existing human capital, especially the minority and underprivileged groups such as migrants and those lacking in basic skills.

### **The European context: policy and practice**

There have been several EU policy responses to the issue of skills recognition among immigrant communities. The European Commission's Action Plan of 2016 provides a common policy framework to help Member States to further develop and strengthen their national integration policies for migrants from third countries. It also describes the policy, operational and financial support which the Commission will deliver to support them in their efforts.

The *New Skills Agenda* for Europe launches several actions to ensure that the right training, the right skills and the right support is available to people in the European Union, including immigrants. This includes the following aspects that are of relevance to immigrants:

- **European Qualifications Framework (EQF);** a common reference framework developed to foster mobility of learners and workers across borders and systems. The core of the EQF lies in its eight reference levels defined in terms of learning outcomes, i.e., knowledge (theoretical and/or factual), skills (cognitive and practical) and autonomy/responsibility that individuals should possess at the end of a learning process. The EQF encompasses all levels of qualifications acquired in general, vocational, and academic education and training, both initial and continuing.
- **EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals;** Supporting early profiling of the skills of refugees, migrants and citizens of non-EU countries who are staying in the EU.
- **CEDEFOP;** European Centre for Development of Vocational Training support on modernising vocational training systems, careers and professional transitions, adult learning and learning on the job, analysis of professional qualifications and forecasts and mismatch between the supply and demand competences.

There are also several mechanisms which facilitate EU cooperation on immigrant integration more generally, including National Contact Points for Integration, the European Migration Forum, the European website on Integration and a European Inventory which is updated regularly to provide an overview of good practices in skills validation. There are also EU indicators of immigrant integration, in the fields of employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship, which were adopted in 2010 through Council Conclusions.

While several multilateral frameworks for the recognition of qualifications and skills have been implemented in recent years, recognition systems continue to differ a great deal from one country to another owing to variations in the following areas:

## Group assessment

- Group work is a method of instruction that gets students to work together. There are various benefits and challenges that come with preparing, developing and facilitating group work with teaching and learning practices.
- As an assessment task, groups often develop or create a product or piece of work to demonstrate learning and understanding of a particular concept. The assessment may be on the final product or understanding, or on the process of developing that product or understanding.
- Whilst the benefits of group work are well documented, the challenges of allocating marks and feedback to individuals within that group can be a challenge.

## Peer assessment

Assessment of students' work by other students of equal status. Students often undertake peer assessment in conjunction with formal self-assessment.

They reflect on their own efforts and extend and enrich this reflection by exchanging feedback on their own and their peers' work. With practice, students can engage in the learning process and develop their capacity to reflect on and critically evaluate their own learning and skill development. Examples may include:

- **De-identified formative feedback** – Ask students to give formative feedback on a number of other pieces of student work. The work should be de-identified so that neither the student submitting the work nor the peer marking the work is identifiable.
- **Rate or review student presentations** – Use the audience to rate and review student presentations on a topic, either in a classroom setting or a presentation delivered on-line.

- Definition of regulated and non-regulated professions, and the type of recognition procedures used in each case.
- Methods for assessment and recognition of formal learning.
- Partial recognition of formal learning and bridging courses.
- Development of practices for the recognition of informal and non-formal learning.
- Involvement of employers in the recognition process.

In addition to these issues, there may be barriers to effective skills recognition and labour market integration within Member States. Examples of this include limited capacity to effectively address skills recognition, or cope with demand, and smaller Government budgets to support this kind of work.

### **Common elements of successful skills recognition systems**

Some initiatives have already been set up to document projects focused on the labour market integration of migrants, where the International Organisation for Migrants (IOM, 2015) has documented some national good practices adopted at country level to meet the complex labour market demands. A review of key literature reveals some common elements of effective skills recognition systems:

- An early offer of skills assessments to asylum seekers with good prospects of being allowed to stay.
- Recognition of 'soft' and informal skills, particularly alternative methods of assessing informal learning and work experiences; and
- Bridging courses to develop country-specific skills. (Think Tank European Parliament, 2013). Among the EU initiatives, the STEP UP project focuses on the **EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals**, which "supports early profiling of the skills of refugees, migrants and citizens of non-EU countries who are staying in the EU" (European Commission, 2017). The purpose of this tool is not to recognise or authentication of qualifications, but can be used to:
  - support further assessment.
  - form a basis for offering guidance.
  - identify up-skilling needs.
  - support job-searching and job-matching

The Skills Profile Tool is specifically designed to be used by:

- national authorities responsible for reception and integration of refugees
- reception centres
- employment assistance services
- education and training advisers
- social services
- NGOs and charitable organisations offering services to refugees and other citizens of non-EU countries.

It is obvious that many stakeholders, as listed above can use this skills recognition tool in their work with migrants. As discussed under this chapter, recognition and validation of prior skills is important in fostering professional development of migrants. The next chapter describes the cardinal role played by the non-formal education sector in promoting employability and professional development of migrants.

## 6. NON-FORMAL EDUCATION TO FOSTER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 6.1 Introduction

*“Non-formal education refers to planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competencies, outside the formal educational curriculum.” Council of Europe*

Non-formal education has been developed as a concept since the late 1960s. It introduced an alternative educational approach to formal education and constitutes an essential component in the learning process, in parallel and beyond the education offered by a state for their citizens. Formal education has proven to be too strict and inefficient to cover citizens needs as it did not really include any type of experiential learning process, was not open to large audiences due to the standard formatting and was delivered in non-flexible educational milieus.

Non-formal education emerged as a solution to tackle all needs that society was facing and formal systems failed to deal with. Gradually Non-formal education developed to become a process which intended to involve specific marginalised and vulnerable groups in a more interactive way of teaching and learning. It became possible to utilise new modern tools and innovative methodologies, audio-visual materials, and interactive approaches to learning and thus it has proven more effective and with immediate results in the life- learning process.

Via the funding and implementation of several types of Erasmus+ projects, the European Union has pinpointed and reinforced the importance of non-formal education components in lifelong learning processes. On the other hand, Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the broader discourse at the global level explain the scope and usefulness of soft skills. These skills are the outcome of a broad but also specialised knowledge acquisition which refer to dexterities, work habits and character traits considered by all kinds of experts and stakeholders such as educators, school reformers, policy makers, university professors, entrepreneurs etc. – to be critically essential as achievement factors and success prerequisites in a challenging and globalised work universe. This is even more true for the pursuit of contemporary careers in the global labour market.

### **Aim of the Section**

- To introduce the concept of non-formal education as an effective tool for learning and employability
- To discover the multifaceted aspects of non-formal education in professional development
- To foster the knowledge of soft skills as essential elements to enter the labour market
- To understand the relevance of non-formal education as a powerful tool in the current society

## 6.2 Why is it important?

Non-formal education fosters the development and improvement of different skill sets specific to the nature and concept of non-formal learning. Its main characteristics are outlined below:

- It addresses to people of all ages while not having an already made structure.
- It may be short and/or low intensity; its typical structure is based on short courses, workshops, or seminars
- It does not lead to the formal qualifications defined by the State per se
- It targets specific programs, both young people and adults, contributing to their development in the framework of literacy and education not taught in school, as well as in programs that tackle skills such as life, work, social and cultural development. (ISCED, 2011).

In parallel to its positive impact on the different layers of society, non-formal education proved to be effective by having a higher engagement in other spheres as well. Moreover, non-formal learning increases job opportunities and self-employment through personalised training.

Indeed, Non-formal education helps individuals to develop at a personal level:

- To grow according to their pursuing of skills and interests
- To strengthen their ability to learn and foster an understanding of citizens' role in society.
- To improve the decision-making process
- To increase self-confidence, much needed towards a balanced and decent life.

At a national level, since non-formal education tackles a variety of skills, it contributes to a country's social and economic development. Non-formal education allows young people to develop values, skills, and competencies that are distinct from those developed within the framework of formal education. These skills include among others interpersonal, team, organisational, and conflict management skills, intercultural awareness, leadership, planning, organising, coordination, practical problem-solving skills, teamwork, self-confidence, discipline, and responsibility.

## 6.3 How can non-formal education foster employability in the labour market?

Non-formal and informal education are two subjective processes. However, it is hard to certify the competencies of the learning process of individuals based on a set of skills since every individual develops different skills in an alternative way. The European Union is heavily investing in projects based on non-formal education. The validation of soft skills is a fundamental aspect of the process. On the one hand, it increases the chances for social inclusion via self-empowerment. On the other hand, developing soft skills implies better employability possibilities while opening new professional opportunities.

Soft skills are meant to tackle different aspects, i.e., work ethics, attitude, and communication skills. Emotional intelligence and other personal attributes are targeted as well. The UNESCO report on "Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2012" suggests three categories of skills that everyone needs to acquire:

- Foundational skills which include literacy and numeracy and constitute a prerequisite for further education.
- Technical skills which are required to do a job, e.g., operating a machine or accounting.
- Transferable skills including creativity and communication skills.

Another categorization refers to the most popular 21st Century skills the "Four C's", also known as learning skills. These are:

- **Communication:** conveying ideas quickly and clearly
- **Critical thinking:** solving problems, among other qualities.
- **Creativity:** thinking outside the box
- **Collaboration:** working together to achieve a common goal.

## 6.4 Non-formal education methodologies used in fostering soft skills?

As previously described, non-formal education is one of the most efficient ways to develop soft skills. In a highly competitive labour market, soft skills play a fundamental role in distinguishing candidates and making a difference during recruitment. The most valuable regarding employability and most required soft skills in the context of HR selection process are the following:

### Communication

Communication is “the process by which messages or information is sent from one place or person to another, or the message itself” (Cambridge Dictionary).

Nowadays, it is essential to have good communication skills, especially for women constantly facing inequalities in the labour market. Both women and men face various challenges in their work environment; women and other vulnerable people struggle to acquire a similar status as their colleagues' status. Developing communication skills allow them to create a better working environment and to avoid misunderstandings. While talking about communication, it is important to highlight that it refers to both verbal and, most importantly, non-verbal communication- the latter considered to constitute the main component of transferring messages and promoting understanding while communicating with others (Albert Mehrabian).



Element via Canva

There are different methodologies to improve communication. One well known methodology is the following:

### *Moving Debate*

Moving debate is a simple methodology that allows participants to express their ideas and have a constructive dialogue understanding different perspectives and eventually changing their opinions. Its main objective is to develop communication skills, allowing a person to deliver a message containing one's opinion - and to develop public speaking at the same time.

While using this method the facilitator divides the room with a line where one side will be AGREE, and the other will be DISAGREE. The facilitator [AK1] calls out a contradictory and ambiguous statement for a debate. Participants have a few minutes to think about whether they agree or disagree with the statement and then position themselves on the chosen side. Participants are then called upon to explain/justify their position. While debating, participants are free to change sides without any restrictions.

### **Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking refers to the deep understanding of a concept and the ability to analyse, interpret and evaluate an issue proposing different solutions. While rationally discerning and judging an event, it is then possible to find potential solutions, developing other soft skills such as problem-solving. The following example is a well-known method of enhancing critical thinking.



## Six Thinking Hats

Six Thinking Hats is an effective and creative methodology that helps the participants to develop rational and critical thinking while approaching a situation. Furthermore, it is possible to implement it in groups, thus developing at the same time other important soft skills such as Communication and Cooperation.

Participants must brainstorm about a chosen topic. Afterwards, they are required to draw six hats with different colours. The colour of each hat represents a different situation participants must analyse without any biases:

- **Blue Hat:** organisation and planning
- **Green Hat:** creative thinking
- **Red Hat:** feelings and instincts
- **Yellow Hat:** benefits and values
- **Black Hat:** risk assessment
- **White Hat:** information gathering

During the process of filling all the hats, participants acquire a clearer understanding of all the multifaceted aspects of the situation they are asked to analyse.

## Creativity

Creativity is one of the most powerful skills, as well as one of the most required ones in the labour market. It refers to the ability to create new and innovative ideas and find solutions to complicated matters. Creativity implies thinking out of the schemes while looking at a situation from a different perspective. An exercise to promote creativity is given below:

### *4 Lines 9 Dots Puzzle*

The main goal of this activity is to connect a square with nine dots (see the picture) with four straight lines without lifting the pen. There is only one main rule: two dots can be connected only with one line. During this process participants' creativity skills are enhanced.

## Collaboration

One of the most common ways to foster collaboration is through Team building activities. Team building is becoming an essential component in the work environment used by most companies to foster cooperation.

Team building refers to a process where people must work together in order to achieve one or more goals. In doing so, natural roles arise spontaneously, helping team members to understand their strengths and weaknesses and to improve their personal skills. Some examples of team building are various games such as Escape rooms, role plays, building items, etc. An example of team building under the name of "Perfect Square" is given below:

### *Perfect Square*

The main goal of this activity is to create a perfect square with a rope while being blindfolded. The participants stand in a circle and hold the rope. They need to communicate with each other trying to form a square while being blindfolded. When everyone agrees, they must lay the rope on the ground and see the result.

In sum, this chapter discussed the significant contribution that non-formal education can make in fostering the employability of migrants. As we already know, non-formal education occurs at an informal level and may need the support of local level organisations for their success. The next chapter discusses how local level engagement can foster these programmes.

# 7. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL ENGAGEMENT FOR PROGRAMMES' SUCCESS

## 7.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have described numerous challenges faced specifically by migrant women. In general, integration success consists of the elements of:

- Willingness of migrants to integrate
- Structural preconditions of the host society
- Willingness of the host society to integrate and include migrants

The challenges of migrantwomen, which form special integration hurdles for them, are:

- Lower formallyaccepted qualifications,
- A role model that tends to hinder a professional career
- The obligations for unpaid familywork.

Integration is a task that affects society and the people involved at all levels, from the individual to the group to the community, the state and supranational organisations. While the structural preconditions are usuallycreated at the state and supranational level, the local and communal level play a decisive role in functioning integration. Especially for the challenges that affect migrantwomen in a particular way, local networks of committed citizens can make a special contribution.

In the following, five key areas describe the extent to which local networks of committed individuals can contribute to achieving integration successes, making society more open and social, and strengthening equal rights for men and women, also in the area of migration. These areas are:

- Confidence building
- Childcare
- Education
- Role models
- Empowerment

The first area is the most important one, which is also the central strength of civil society organisations and their volunteers in the followingareas of life. There is simply no substitute for a personalapproach by a warm, open and committed person from one's personal environment!



## 7.2 Confidence building

The role of women in society varies in different cultures. Even though most cultures have organised themselves patriarchally in the past, there were egalitarian efforts in most European states in the 20th century, which can be observed above all in the introduction of women's suffrage. Finland was the first European country to give women equal voting rights in 1906, followed by a whole series of northern European states after the end of the First World War. However, religious movements have hindered equal rights in most states, and a strengthening of religion is usually accompanied by a worsening of the role of women.

Especially in the case of refugee women from strongly patriarchal cultures, addressing them directly through state actors is problematic because they are often pushed out of public life in their countries of origin, but also in their families (who fled with or even before them). State actors have little opportunity to reach these people with their initiatives. Even if the structural preconditions for special support for migrant women mentioned in the introduction are in place, there is a great danger that these offers will not reach the target group and will not be taken up by them because they are simply unaware of them, or these efforts are hindered by the male members of their families.

Since state actors can create offers but cannot build bridges and thus cannot achieve enough in this area, it is up to representatives of civil society to point out the opportunities that egalitarian societies offer especially for women in direct contact with migrant women. One example of such an initiative is a sewing workshop in Kiel, which was founded in the premises of a refugee facility in 2015. Here, many migrant women come together with women from the local society to first receive support in doing household chores within the framework of the traditional image of women. However, the direct communication from woman to woman in the context of this workshop offers very good opportunities to talk about other aspects of life in Germany. For many of the migrant women this was the first opportunity to talk to women from the majority society in an uncontrolled and unobserved way and to learn about the differences in how they organise their everyday lives and family life. At the same time, the possibility to sell the products made in the workshop afterwards for a profit has given the women a new role, a new self-confidence, and a new weight in their respective families.

This is a good example of how migrant and women's organisations can work together to reach out specifically to migrant women.

## 7.3 Childcare

In the wave of refugees in the years after 2015, it was initially mainly men who travelled to Europe alone, while the women followed later by way of family reunification. In the current influx of refugees triggered by the war in Ukraine, this is different for the first time, and it is predominantly women who initiate the flight movement because the men are not allowed to leave due to the war. In the first wave of refugees, it proved to be very problematic that the women who joined them together with their children were not available for integration courses because no childcare was organised. In addition, the existing childcare options were not known and were not used by the migrant women.

The underlying structural problem, namely improving childcare to integrate women into the labour market, must be addressed by state actors. However, even in regions where these opportunities exist, there is still the second hurdle to overcome, namely directly approaching migrant women so that they are aware of the offer, trust it and make use of it. At the same time, the migrant women must be relieved of the concern that childcare will lead to cultural alienation between the migrant women's culture of origin and the culture of the host society. No woman will willingly place her child in a form of care if there is a risk that it will alienate her child from her and her own values. Therefore, interculturally active organisations need to support state actors in making care services culturally sensitive and give the representatives of migrant organisations the opportunity to help shape this care (while respecting the values of the majority society).

Civil society organisations that have a good understanding of the different cultures and can build bridges from one culture to another without at the same time building retrogressive structures and endangering the successes of equality are particularly suitable for this task.

A good example of this is the childcare that is set up in Kiel by a migrant organisation. Here, multilingual staff, most of whom have a migrant background themselves, take care of the migrants' children in a culturally sensitive way while they attend language or integration courses. This service is funded by the state.



## 7.4 Education

In most European countries, women now have a higher level of education than men. However, this does not apply to migrant women, especially those from the refugee waves of 2015–2020, because of the patriarchal culture that dominates in their countries of origin. Many migrant women from these countries have had no or only a very rudimentary school education. For example, 16% of females, but only 6% of male refugees who sought asylum in Germany in 2016 had no previous schooling. This means that they lack the essential prerequisites to be successfully integrated into training or employment in their new home country. Only in some very poorly paid sectors do employment opportunities arise, but these are not associated with any opportunities for advancement. Here, too, it is first the state's task to finance and make accessible offers, for example, for literacy training for these women. However, these offers can only provide formal access; The actual acceptance of these offers requires confidence-building measures and personal support. Neither of these can be provided by state actors.





For example, there is an initiative to prevent dropouts, which has set itself the goal of specifically assisting migrant women in difficult training situations. These difficulties exist in two areas. Firstly, the learning progress of migrant women in training is slowed down due to lower language skills, which makes it difficult to successfully complete exams, even if the practical skills have been acquired to a sufficient extent. Holding exams in a simpler language would lead to more equal opportunities here. On the other hand, migrant women in difficult situations often do not receive the support from their families that they need in order to face the challenges with motivation and determination. The task of civil society here is, on the one hand, to specifically reduce learning deficits, but especially to build up the self-confidence to successfully follow the chosen path to the end through human attention. Migrant women participating in this programme report that in the context of this initiative they felt for the first time that someone took time for them and stood by them in a benevolent and empathetic way.

Such initiatives strengthen the dimension of the host society's willingness to integrate mentioned in the introduction. This is quite crucial for migrant women to take the risk of moving away from their own patriarchal culture and building their own professional future. Since this is primarily an interpersonal interaction, such an initiative can be supported by state actors (and in many cases it is), but it is carried by volunteers who, out of intrinsic motivation, try to promote the fate of migrant women and their chances of a professional career.



## 7.5 Role models

In order to follow a new path, it is helpful to have role models in front of one's eyes who have already successfully followed this path. However, in the field of promoting migrant women, it is not about particularly popular figures present in the media, but about very 'simple' people from the immediate environment. For young girls, these are, for example, their classmates at school, where they perceive a different image of women in society than they are used to from their families. So, at this stage of development, it is possible to shape the education system so that migrant women take their role in society, and this is happening. In fact, the average educational level of migrant women is higher than that of migrants one generation after migration. However, it is more difficult to reach those migrant women who are no longer of the appropriate age to attend formal school. In many cases, however, these women will have children who, thanks to compulsory schooling, will come into direct contact with the new environment at a certain age.





The task of civil society institutions in this context is to reach the mothers of these children through a targeted approach in school or kindergarten and to make them offers on how they can better support their children on the one hand, and at the same time experience for themselves that new paths are also open to them. Talking from mother to mother now creates a basis of trust that cannot be established by state actors in this way. What would be desirable here, therefore, would be parent initiatives that specifically make it their task to contact parents in order to enable them, on the one hand, to give their children a good career path, but which, on the other hand, can also serve them as role models for a different way of dealing with each other between the sexes. There are several government initiatives aimed at integrating migrant organisations more into the school process so that schools can learn from this expertise. However, these initiatives depend on the efforts of teachers on the one hand, and on the existence of such civil society organisations on the other. A nationwide programme in Germany aims to increase the proportion of migrant kindergarten children in order to improve their chances when they start school. The problem here, however, is the fear of alienation of migrant parents described above. It is the task of civil society organisations to reduce this fear on the one hand and on the other hand to provide culturally sensitive training to the professionals in the day care centres in order to reduce this fear.

The task of civil society institutions in this context is to reach the mothers of these children. If these efforts are successful, they will on the one hand give the migrant women more time to take care of their own education and career, because the children are looked after in the day-care centre, and on the other hand increase the school prospects of the children of migrant families, because one can contribute to an equalisation of learning opportunities at a very early age.



## 7.6 Empowerment

What the preceding initiatives have in common is that existing projects and support opportunities aimed at migrants should make a special effort to reach those migrant women who, for various reasons, are not reached by assistance-integration services. Here, special confidence-building measures are required in the immediate environment of the migrant women, which can thus only be provided by civil society initiatives supported by them in the plan.

However, it would be simplistic and stereotyping to see all migrant women in this light. Rather, there is a whole range of opportunities for migrant women themselves to get involved, especially at the neighbourhood level, for example in sports clubs, who are not only seen here as recipients of integration efforts, but as active shapers in the development of a civil society network. In order to promote this process, it is important that civil society organisations actively strive for the most diverse composition of their volunteers. This can be done, for example, by offering multilingual services, advertising these services in institutions for refugees or at foreigners' authorities.

At the same facility for refugees where the sewing workshop described above was set up, an intercultural festival was organised at which associations from the neighbourhood presented themselves and offered opportunities for participation. With this measure, on the one hand, the participating associations were able to gain new committed members, and on the other hand, the migrant women were reached where they spend time anyway. While male migrants can be reached more easily in public spaces and can thus be motivated more easily to take the step into a club house or the meeting place of an initiative, the special security needs of migrant women and possibly also their less familiarity with the surroundings must be considered if they are to be integrated in the same way into clubs and initiatives.



Civil society initiatives that have already set themselves the goal of promoting the integration of refugees can play a special role here. They can act as intercultural mediators between the existing initiatives and the migrant women. The result of these initiatives would be a greater degree of participation in society, combined with the social benefit of making the creative potential and experiences of migrant women more useful for the host society.

This chapter presented the important role played by local level organisations for the success of migrants' labour-market integration programmes. Along with the support of these local level organisations, educators' competencies play a major role for the success of these programmes. The next chapter is focussed on these aspects.



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## 8. COMPETENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATORS

### 8.1 Aim of the chapter

Today, around the world, people are continuously on the move. They are migrating to escape poverty, improve their livelihood and opportunities, or escape conflict and devastation in their own countries. Women represent almost half of the 244 million migrants and half of the 19.6 million refugees worldwide. Refugees, migrant women, and girls face many challenges and risks in transit, including family separation, psychosocial stress and trauma, safety and security, health complications, particularly for pregnant women, physical harm and injury and risks of exploitation and gender-based violence. Women often serve as the main caretakers for children and elderly family members, further deepening their need for protection and support.

The UN Declaration of Human Rights states that all human beings have the right to an "Education [that] shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among ...racial or religious groups." (UDHR, Article 26). That is why educators play a critical role in helping migrant women.

The aim of this chapter is to define the competencies required by educators working with migrant women. Further, it analyses mentoring programs, defines the role and nature of mentor and mentee, and provides some recommendations for educators working with the target group.

## 8.2 Competences Of educators working with migrant women

To be successful as an educator working with migrant women requires a specific set of competencies. We defined 6 important competencies<sup>3</sup>, as follows.

- **Acceptability:** They do not show favouritism or discrimination against migrant women. The content of education and the way it is delivered must be relevant, and acceptable for all, including minorities.
- **Language skills:** educators need to speak the Migrants' language fluently. It helps to understand them properly.
- **Availability:** There must be enough educational institutions and trained teachers, as well as educational materials so that education is available to all.
- **Accessibility:** the institutions and programmes must be: - Accessible to all, without discrimination, including marginalised groups; - Physically accessible within a safe and reasonable distance and accessible to those with disabilities.
- **Adaptability:** education must be flexible and able to respond to the needs of migrant women in different social and cultural settings.
- **Feminist perspective:** strengthen the role of women and gender equality. Enhance knowledge on women's rights and work for the transformation in terms of gender roles.



## 8.3 How Migrant Women Can Help Each Other To Integrate: Analysis of Mentoring Program

The European Union with its inclusion policies on refugees and asylum seekers has become the home to many disadvantaged groups, such as migrant women and individuals from civil war-torn nations. Many of them are poor and resource-constrained and have trouble adjusting to life in the Member States because of unfair or inadequate welcoming policies. The number of asylum seekers, refugees, and unaccompanied foreign minors arriving in Europe, particularly in Italy, has increased at an exponential rate. This has altered the types of interventions required from both a numerical perspective (in terms of the number of people to be received) and from the typological diversity of the situations to be addressed. Services provided in the country of resettlement to refugees and other types of migrants include language instruction, social and cultural orientation, vocational training, and assistance in gaining access to basic services like health and education. The integration process involves many actors since it is recognized as a process that occurs at the individual, municipal, and national levels.

Civil society organisations actively seek out volunteers to serve as mentors because they support refugees who have been resettled. Depending on the sort of mentoring program they take part in, mentors have different roles to play in helping refugees integrate. Some of these, including learning a new language, receiving professional tutoring, and assistance with locating housing, have defined goals. For vulnerable sectors of the refugee community, such as young people and women, specific mentoring programs are provided. Other initiatives offer generic aid, addressing broader needs and working in some way to influence public opinion and immigration laws.

### **The role and nature of mentor and mentee**

Mentorship is a powerful yet still evolving tool. In a mentoring relationship, the mentee and the mentor agree upon the work program's goals at the outset of the relationship. In terms of soft skills, it is specifically a transfer of knowledge and methodology. a friendship that begins in a formal, academic setting before evolving into something more casual as the two people get to know each other. The transfer of information and knowledge is based on mutual respect, trust, and understanding.



It should be stated that a mentee is the family member or refugee family member involved in the mentoring process to make these two figures clear. On the other hand, mentors are members of the host community who assist refugee families in integrating into that society. As a result, they turn into genuine resources and a tool for communication between the parties. People from the surrounding communities, including those who have already been resettled through prior programs and are therefore bilingual and bicultural, help refugees by "filling gaps in the provision of integration services and/or extending the type and nature of integration support offered to refugees.

Setting limits on the kind of support that mentors can give their mentees is one of the mentorship programs' biggest challenges. This is because mentors fill a role that has traditionally been performed by the state or other authorities and assist in bridging the gap between refugees and local communities. They do this by offering informal, individualised support in accessing services, assisting refugees with any day-to-day challenges they may encounter, listening to them, and assisting them in better understanding the culture and values of the host society. They also foster social connections but may also refer them to other service providers.

The difficulty is in preventing social exclusion and fostering. Volunteers, thus, "perform a key supplementary role in enabling reception, adaptation, and long-term settlement, as well as in supporting the establishment of friendships and ties in the new surroundings," on the one hand. However, if they have previously been resettled refugees, it can make their job easier and they can serve as "a vital training and support resource, both for the arrivals and for the organisations and services that care for them." These considerations lead to the conclusion that mentoring should be seen as a "mutually advantageous relationship," benefiting both the mentee and the host community.

#### Some facts about women mentoring women & recommendations

- Mentor women can be either native women who were long-term residents or locals;
- Some of them are people who had lived abroad themselves and so they had first-hand experience of some of the issues migrants could face when they arrive;
- Mentor women can come from a variety of backgrounds some of them with volunteering experience who now call the host country 'home';



It is also necessary to use monitoring, which helps calculate the progress of the work of mentors and mentees, their continuous learning, the increasing evolution of their needs, and involvement in a process of continuous and mutual reflection, as well as to ensure corrective actions for the continuation of the objectives. A regular report on the development of both sides can also be a subsidy, however, it might add to the job of the mentors, who are typically volunteers. In earlier mentorship projects, both mentors and mentees were required to prepare written reports detailing the discussions held in each meeting and their reactions to them. A lively exchange of experiences between mentors and mentees is another tool. Mentors and mentees can stay in continual communication by phone, email, and social media to reduce physical distance. The sensation of having someone who could encourage, empower, and support each small step ensures that women learn new things, and are successfully integrated.

It is recommended that the survey on the perception of the value and impact of the program is conducted by capturing participants' opinions and comments before and after the mentorship experience. In this way, the risk of losing out on potential benefits of the intervention is lowered as compared to a sole final evaluation.

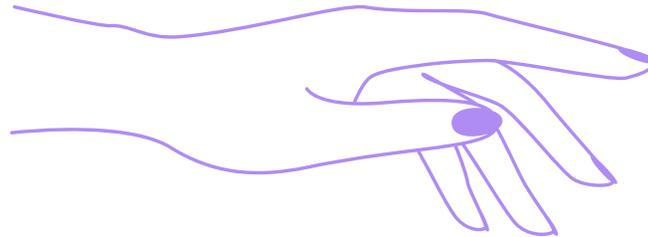
Thus, by offering individualised and focused support for integration, and by evaluating the quality of the mentoring connection between mentors and mentees, these tools become crucial to the program's success.

Since mentoring programs typically last for several months, it is crucial to monitor progress, adapt the program's structure as needed, and ensure that the activities are still relevant considering the beneficiaries' requirements and the shifting conditions of the environment.

For these reasons, it would be better to add professionals to the mentor role to help with course coordination and assistance.

Finally, while it is true that the efficacy criterion is the major focus of the evaluation of mentorship programs, it would be beneficial to document the design and implementation of activities with an eye toward replication. This test will aid in understanding how to create and carry out effective mentoring programs in the future.

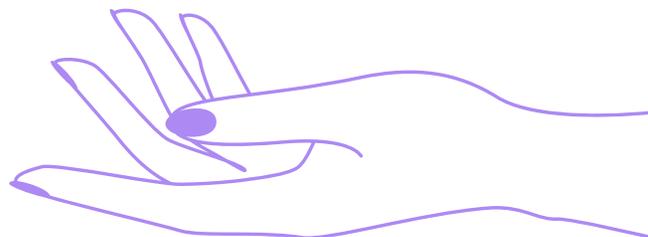
## CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD



This manual was developed with the objective of providing the background knowledge to VET organisations, NGOs, local level organisations, and anyone who is working with migrants, helping them to enter the labour market of their host country. Special attention was given to migrant women due to their dual disadvantage situation; being a migrant as well as being a woman.

Accordingly, we presented the barriers and challenges faced by migrant women in accessing the labour market and how they can be motivated to overcome these barriers. Then we presented the employability skills needed for the 21st century labour market, learning needs to acquire these skills, and the importance of recognising the prior skills. Role of Non-formal education and local level organisations, along with the competencies required by the educators/facilitators were discussed towards the end of the manual.

We hope this manual will be a useful tool for facilitators in providing better support for migrants, especially women entering the host country labour market.



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