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Female TCNs Integration in local Communities
through Employability and Entrepreneurship
Local Oriented Strategies

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Summary of the Transnational research report “Needs analysis and community based socioeconomic ecosystem mapping”

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1. Introduction

The transnational report summarises the findings of all national reports drafted under the framework of the project "ENFEM - Female TCNs Integration in Local Communities through Employability and Entrepreneurship Local Oriented Strategies", aiming to map the needs, the perceptions, the challenges and the expectations of the women TCNs and local actors (authorities, market actors, NGOs, trade unions, employers' associations, TCN organizations, academic institutions) working in the field of local integration, the market, gender and training. In particular, the report reflects the key conclusions reached through the desk and field research that took place in 10 EU countries: Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain.

The transnational report is part of Work package 2 which consists of national reports "Needs analysis and community based socioeconomic ecosystem mapping Data Collection and Analysis" where key findings of literature and policy review, focus groups and online surveys with stakeholders and women TCN are summarised. The report includes success stories of women TCNs' successful integration into the host country and good practices of stakeholders who work with women TCNs. Both success stories and good practices are pedagogical added value for Work package 3 and will be used as a case study.

2. Key findings of the desk research at transnational level

The desk research was conducted in ENFEM partner countries. The aim of the desk research “Reviews on the Literature and Policy on integration” was to investigate the current literature, policies and existing successful theoretical and methodological approaches to the design, development, and implementation of local integration strategies for women TCNs with a focus on skills and capacity development to access the market.

The main investigation areas were socio-economic characteristics of TCNs living in the partner countries, the state-of-the art on gender equality in the field of migrant integration, obstacles faced by women TCNs regarding their integration and access to the labour market, the role of the stereotypes and policies affecting TCNs and their integration in the labour market, women TCNs training and educational needs related to the labour market, approach for the local (regional, municipal) integration strategies.

The desk research is important to realise the situation of the Third Country Nationals (TCNs), and particularly women, and their needs for early socio-economic integration through employability and entrepreneurship. These target groups are one of the most vulnerable population groups in the European Union, facing a lot of discrimination and socio-economic exclusion.

Desk research carried out in partnership countries has revealed a number of key factors related to the integration of women TCNs:

- The analysis revealed that women TCNs face discrimination on various grounds, such as gender, race, ethnicity, and as a result they are restricted to certain sectors with low-skilled jobs. In many cases, they tend to face double discrimination, both as women and as migrants.
- Stereotypes lead to women TCNs working in a female dominated sectors with no or low qualification requirements as hospitality, cleaning and catering, domestic and care services, beauty industry.

- The common barriers that women TCNs face, identified by different partners in different countries, were the insufficient knowledge of local language, lack of childcare services and opportunities to combine childcare with work, mismatch between qualifications/previous job experience and work they find in the host country.
- As regards national policies for the integration of women TCNs, it should be noted that they may vary according to the status of the migrant and may differ between refugees or asylum seekers and economic migrants in different EU countries.
- In most countries, there are no specific policies for the integration of TCN women, only general ones for all migrants.
- There is still a lack of data on the labour market situation of female TCNs. In some cases, data are available either on TCNs in general or on migrants with different statuses (refugees, asylum seekers, subsidiary protection).

3. Key findings reached through the organised focus groups with stakeholders transnationally

To analyse issues related to women TCNs activation in the market as a response to exclusion and marginalization, and how local markets could utilize women TCNs skills and knowledge, taking in consideration gender equality, social inclusion and local needs, focus groups with 5 local stakeholders' members was organized in partner countries.

Each partner organised a focus group in its country with stakeholders' members (public authorities, private employers, chamber of commerce, etc.) to collect their needs and expectation and how these could be a supportive mechanism to improve their capacity to support women TCNs.

Focus groups with stakeholders, organised in partner countries, revealed the challenges faced by both women TCNs and themselves local actors, and what measures are needed for successful integration of this target group.

An analysis of the data collected by the partners during the focus groups highlighted some important aspects:

- The most common recurring challenges faced by women TCNs identified by local stakeholders in different countries were:
 - the lack of knowledge of the official language of the host country;
 - lack of childcare options which lead to difficulties in having work-life balance for women TCNs;
 - non-recognition of qualifications/diplomas obtained abroad which both can be costly and time-consuming;
 - the legalization of documentation;
 - lack of information about migrant rights and supportive network;
 - problems of accessing information on their support, free trainings (due to language barrier, outdated information, etc.);
 - women TCNs need a job "here and now" without possibility to wait for the recognition of qualifications or attending the trainings and gaining new skills which lead them to low skilled and underpaid jobs.

- Most common needs pointed out by different stakeholders in different countries were trainings of the diversity management and inclusion as well strategies and practices on the inclusion of TCN women.
- Stakeholders observed the need for cross-cultural training for women TCNs to avoid discrimination and cultural clashes. Internships or work placements for TCNs were also highlighted as a useful way to improve language, communication, and work skills.

In general, the importance of training for stakeholders and women TCNs, the need to design programmes according to the needs of the target group and the involvement of the business community, as well as the commitment of a multi-stakeholder network of policy makers, civil society organisations, employers, trainers and the women TCNs themselves were highlighted.

4. Good practices of stakeholders

4.1. Pedagogical added value of good practices

Good practice is generally defined as a method that has been reliably shown, through experience or research, to achieve a desired result. The aim of good practice is to identify examples of successful activities and operations in organisations that can be replicated by others to improve their performance.

Analysing good practices provide an opportunity to learn from lessons learnt and to continue learning how to improve and adapt strategies and activities through feedback, reflection, and analysis, to implement larger-scale, more sustainable and more effective changes.

Therefore, during the focus groups with stakeholders, partners identified and described the good practice examples. The produced good practices will be used as case studies for training purposes, as a guideline to better understand the formula for the good practices implemented by stakeholders' organisations to integrate women TCNs in the labour market.

Collected good practice examples are structured around general information about the organisation or enterprise that is implementing the good practice to integrate women TCNs, followed by a brief description of how the practice works in a real-life setting, key achievements, and best tips for other stakeholders who might want to follow the example.

4.2. Key findings of good practices

The good practices gathered by the partners revealed not only successful long-term initiatives, but also short-term practices that could be translated into long-term practices by applying the lessons learnt.

Most of the good practices collected, was running by the non-governmental organisations working in the field of social inclusion or migration. One of the practices was carried out in the company.

The initiatives are diverse from the networking projects to courses and counselling provided for TCNs for their inclusion into the labour market and research scholarships which aims to increase the empirical data on refugees.

The common success factor mentioned in several initiatives related to courses and professional trainings was the importance of trainer having cultural sensitivity, pedagogical knowledge as well as being expert in the field. There were also highlighted the benefits for the companies, which carry out the initiatives targeting different social groups such as migrants because by promoting equality in access to professions and job openings, the company assumes a commitment to minorities and acts with social responsibility, resulting in more committed, involved, and productive teams which can lead to increased profits.

5. Key findings reached through the organised focus groups with women TCNs

Each partner organised a focus group in their country with women TCNs to collect their needs and expectation with regards to their training opportunities and how these could be a supportive mechanism to their successful integration into the labour market.

A focus group method used was a structured interview, conducted by a facilitator among a small group of women TCNs who were asked about their educational background, the barriers they face in the host country, their integration expectations and training needs.

During the focus groups with women TCNs were identified their needs to successfully enter and stay in the labour market, the obstacles they face and the solutions to overcome them. The results gathered by partners revealed some important aspects:

- The most common barriers mentioned by women TCNs in different partner countries were also identified by the stakeholders:
 - The lack of language knowledge while free or affordable courses are limited.
 - Lack of public or low-cost childcare services especially important for single or working parents.
 - The complexity of the process of recognising academic qualifications obtained abroad and the undervaluing of work experience gained in their home countries.
 - Lack of information on the available training opportunities for migrants, affordable courses.
 - Lack of information on how to start a business and legal aspects of employment procedures.
 - Lack of support network.
 - Some women felt discrimination, especially Muslim women because of wearing the *hijab* and their religious beliefs.

- Women TCNs expressed an interest in participating in a training where they can improve their skills and acquire new ones, which they see as essential for getting a job in the host country. The learning topics they found useful were:
 - Digital, soft and communication skills.
 - Design thinking and marketing.
 - Practical information on starting up a business.
 - Intercultural communication.
 - Labour rights related information.
 - Practical skills for entering the labour market.
- They believe that internship and observing different workplaces would help them to broaden their network, build contacts with employers and acquire job skills.

Overall, though different partner countries offer the training opportunities for TCNs, women TCNs face barriers such as lack of childcare services, information on where to seek for support, not knowing about the affordable courses which hinders them from acquiring essential skills needed for the labour market in the host country. Furthermore, women TCNs recognized that the training programmes offered by public entities do not always meet their needs. Therefore, integration strategies should include learning skills that would meet TCNs needs and facilitate their integration into the labour market.

6. Success stories of women TCNs

6.1. Pedagogical added value of success stories

Storytelling is an effective teaching pedagogy and learning process. According to Jill Eck¹, much of the success of storytelling as a teaching pedagogy depends on the relevance of stories to learners. In addition, Eck's analysis suggests that learners have shown evidence of transformative learning and the ability to transfer and possibly apply what they have learned in the real-life setting.

If educators and students practice reflective learning through storytelling, the result will be more meaningful, challenging and stimulating learning. In addition, reflexive learning through storytelling has the added benefit of fostering transformative self-knowledge and personal growth. By sharing stories and listening to others, learners process information at a deeper and more meaningful level, thereby creating new knowledge and practices.

The success stories of women TCNs offer the opportunity for other women TCNs to learn from their experience and unique insights. Therefore, partners have collected and described success stories of women TCNs who have successfully entered the labour market or set up their own business.

The produced success stories will be used as case studies for training purposes, as a guideline to better understand the formula for the success of women TCNs in the labour market and to motivate women TCNs in similar situations.

The success stories collected are structured around the background information of woman TCN, insights on what led them to the successful integration into the labour market and how they overcame the challenges in this area, their plans and recommendations for other women TCNs who want to succeed in the labour market in host country.

¹ Eck, J. (2006) An analysis of the effectiveness of storytelling with adult learners in supervisory management.

6.2. Key findings of success stories

The success stories of TCN women gathered in different countries shed light on their path to successful integration in the host country. The biggest challenge they encountered were lack of host country language knowledge. In addition, they identified the lack of support on behalf of the education system and the public institutions in general. Some of them felt discriminated against because they are migrant women. The key to their success therefore started with learning the language of the host country and attending a range of training courses to acquire soft, communication or digital skills. Skills development and education have generally contributed to their success.

7. Key findings reached transnationally through the online survey for stakeholders

Each partner had disseminated the questionnaires to at least 15 EU wide stakeholders. The questionnaire aimed to find out about the extent of market participation, social inclusion and gender-sensitivity of policies and programmes to secure women TCNs access to employment and entrepreneurship, and how integration strategies focused on skills development and capacity building could reinforce and materialize their scope in promoting women TCNs integration in the EU's communities and markets.

The questionnaire consists of 19 closed or open-end questions and is divided in 5 parts:

- I. Profile of the stakeholder
- II. Overview of local market needs (for the stakeholders in the employment sector)
- III. Labour market situation with regards to employment of Women TCNs
- IV. Overview of women TCNs integration programmes and policies (to secure their access to employment and entrepreneurship)
- V. Improvements of women TCN employment policies.

The survey for stakeholders carried out in the partner countries broadly reflected the findings of the focus groups and desk research. The skills identified as the most valuable for successful labour market entry for women TCNs and the barriers they face confirmed the previous findings.

The data collected revealed the need for more practical knowledge transfer to TCN women about their labour rights, their rights to work; the need for accessible courses; and the need for more skills for local actors to work with TCN women. The results show that they have limited knowledge and skills on local planning and developing strategies for the integration of TCN women into the labour market and knowledge on diversity management.

8. Key findings reached transnationally through the online survey for women TCNs

Each partner had disseminated the questionnaires to at least 20 women TCNs. The objective of the questionnaire was to map out the specific character of the current marginalisation of TCN women from the labour market (as well as the impact of such an exclusion on those women's social life), to better address it.

The questionnaire consists of 27 closed or open-end questions and is divided in 6 parts:

- I. Background Information
- II. Employment status of women TCNs
- III. Entry to the labour market (for employed women TCNs)
- IV. Challenges related to employment of women TCNs
- V. Skills and competencies of women TCNs
- VI. Support of women TCNs integration into the labour market

The data collected from the questionnaires for women TCNs helped to identify the barriers, their needs and expectations for the successful integration into the labour market. The results revealed that barriers mentioned by women TCNs themselves reflects the results of focus groups both with stakeholders and women TCNs which were the language barrier, lack of qualifications and skills for professions in demand, difficulties in finding support on employment, lack of recognition of qualifications earned abroad and family commitments and role. The skills they consider as most needed for them to join the labour market were digital, communication, soft skills, marketing, design thinking and ideation, starting up a business.

Some partners faced obstacles in collecting the expected number of completed questionnaires due to the low level of digital or linguistic skills of TCN women which also reflects the need for them to acquire such skills.

By comparing the results from the questionnaires in partner countries it was noticed that the great majority of women TCNs had limited knowledge of integration measures provided by the public or NGO sector as well as the legal requirements for starting a business in the host country.

As much as training and employability skills are important for the integration of TCN women, it is equally important to strengthen the network of local actors working to facilitate the entry of TCN women into the labour market to ensure that the support system effectively reaches its target group.

9. Transnational level conclusions

The national reports developed by the partners revealed that both women TCNs and stakeholders perceive barriers to the socio-economic integration of this target group, highlighting the challenges they face in the labour market. The analysis of desk researches, focus groups and questionnaires for stakeholders and women TCNs has shown that the policies on the integration are tailored for migrants rather than specifically women TCNs, and that these policies need to be tailored to meet the needs expressed by TCN women, who are at a more vulnerable position as they tend to face double discrimination.

The most common needs emphasized by women TCNs - learning the language of the host countries, gaining knowledge and skills for jobs in demand such as digital and soft skills or starting up a business, as well as having the opportunity to do internships which would give them practical skills in the workplace, ensuring childcare services, speeding up a recognition of qualification obtained abroad, etc.

As much as training and employability skills are important for the integration of TCN women, it is equally important for the stakeholders to improve their knowledge on the integration of female TCNs. There were emphasized the importance of improving the accessibility of the information related to the support measures (and institutions that provide services to assist them in getting a job) provided in the countries, and the information about their rights in the labour market. It was pointed out that it should be strengthened the network of local actors working to facilitate the entry of TCN women into the labour market to ensure that the support system effectively reaches its target group.

For further information check full version of Transnational research report "Needs analysis and community based socioeconomic ecosystem mapping".



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