

Hidden Diamonds



HANDBOOK

Empowerment of women with migrant and minority backgrounds



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our handbook, "Empowerment of Women with Migrant and Minority Backgrounds." This guide is an essential resource aimed at illuminating the challenges, triumphs and complexities women from diverse migrant and minority backgrounds often encounter. Through this handbook, we strive to foster understanding, promote inclusivity, and encourage a paradigm shift towards equality and empowerment. It explores the key issues such women face, shares inspiring stories of those who have overcome obstacles, and provides tangible strategies to empower not just individuals themselves, but also their wider communities. This handbook, thus, serves as a clarion call for societal engagement to uplift and empower every woman, irrespective of her origin or background.

This handbook is a product of our Hidden Diamond project, carried out between 01.09.2022 - 30.04.2024. The project combined the efforts of 3 partner organizations, reflecting current challenges and trends in the field of adult education from different regions across Europe – South-East (Croatia), Central (Germany), and North (Norway). The project focused on connecting and engaging women from migrant and minority backgrounds to develop and take part in training courses based on their lived experiences.

Across Norway, Croatia and Germany more than 10% of the population have a migrant background. However, in many arenas of public life such individuals are not proportionally visible. Migrant and minority background women are often excluded and rendered invisible even though they represent a great potential for the societies they are a part of. Their unique knowledge, qualifications, language and cultural skills, are valuable resources from which politics, business and science can benefit.

Women with migrant backgrounds are seldom represented in politics, public services, the media or in leadership positions in working life, and thus do not serve as role models for young women with culturally diverse backgrounds. There are many professional fields, and even more socio-political engagement, that women with migrant backgrounds do not consider relevant or accessible to them.

Furthermore, the proportion of women with an immigrant background who have not completed high school is still significantly lower in the three countries than that of women without an immigrant background (for example 25.3% versus 13.1% in Germany, www.destatis.de). In its report "Kunnskapsoppsummering om deltakelse i arbeidslivet for kvinner med innvandrerbakgrunn," the "Institutt for samfunnsforskning" makes clear how strained the inclusion of women with an immigrant background is in the spheres of work and education: "Immigrant women have a lower labor force participation rate than the rest of the population (SSB, 2019). (...) A significant proportion of immigrant women have low education or education from abroad that is not recognized or in demand in Norway."

Education increases the probability of belonging to the labor market for all groups and seems to be particularly important for immigrant women."(Institutt for samfunnsforskning 2020 Rapport 2020:2). Croatia's national minority makes up 9.4% of the population, and those with foreign citizenship make up 1.1%. For a large part of this population, a multicultural society remains merely a theoretical idea, without inclusive policies in everyday life.

On the other hand, there are women with a migrant background in all three countries who are successful professionally and/or socio-politically and can serve as inspiration and role models for other women, thus contributing to an improvement of women's rights.

With the project, we aimed to network successful women with a migrant background and encourage them to act as role models for young women with a migrant background (="hidden diamonds"). Through promoting the social participation of young women they are encouraged to stand up for their own interests. With the help of the project, young women are given a new approach with which to begin their own political or civil society engagement in addition to developing potential future training and career pathways. Such connections created by the project aim to promote inclusion, diversity and equality.

Women with migrant and minority backgrounds encounter a myriad of unique challenges that impede their social, economic, and personal development. These obstacles often manifest in the form of discrimination, cultural alienation, language barriers, limited access to resources, and gender-based violence. Discrimination is an omnipresent issue, stemming from stereotypes and prejudices that work to marginalise and other migrant women. Cultural alienation, another significant struggle, arises from differences in customs, traditions, and societal norms, leading to feelings of being estranged and isolated. Language barriers further compound these issues, hindering communication, education, and employment opportunities. Additionally, limited access to resources such as healthcare, education, and social services exacerbates the economic and social disparities they experience. Lastly, an alarming concern is the prevalence of gender-based violence, which is a pervasive problem in both migrant and minority women's lives. It's crucial that we address these issues head-on, fostering an inclusive environment that respects and upholds the rights, dignity, and empowerment of every woman, regardless of her migrant or minority status.

The Handbook is divided into a theoretical and a practical part, which can be easily recognized by the differing colors. The appendix contains 3 transcribed interviews, which summarise some of the experiences expressed by the 45 women who were interviewed as part of our Hidden Diamonds project. These women with migrant backgrounds have successfully integrated into their new home country and actively participate in professional and social life -- we have called these women the Diamonds. The interviews were used to collect their experiences and their success strategies for a establishing themselves, which were used as the basis for this handbook.



THEORETICAL INSIGHTS



CONCEPTUALISING YOUNG WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

When we look at the question of how empowerment can succeed in working with women with a migration background, we must first address the concept of self-efficacy. After all, self-efficacy is an essential resource in empowerment.

Self-efficacy can be understood as the subjective certainty of being able to achieve something through one's own actions (Schwarzer/Jerusalem 2002). The experience of being able to make a difference yourself makes people stronger and gives them the courage to take on challenges. It also prevents the feeling of being at the mercy of one's own surroundings.

It is therefore the task of professionals to create opportunities in which people can experience self-efficacy. These can be places, projects or opportunities where people can show where their strengths lie and what they are able to achieve.

People as experts in their own lives

Within the concept of empowerment, individuals are viewed as the experts of their own lives - not external professionals such as therapists, coaches or social workers. Instead of "I know what is right for you" there is a shared discussion about the positions and perspectives of a client and the possibly different assessments of the professionals. Pedagogical work is therefore also understood as a "confrontational mirror"; the self-perception of clients is contrasted with the external perception of specialists (Herriger 2020).

The aim is to reduce the power imbalance that often exists in the social sphere and instead establish cooperation on an equal footing, in which people's right to stubbornness is fully recognized, as long as it does not restrict or endanger others.



How can empowerment be implemented in practice?

As described, empowerment of people can take place **on two levels**:

- a) at the **individual level** with the aim of strengthening the resources and self-efficacy experiences of individual people
- b) at the **level of collective self-organization** with the aim of encouraging people to work for liveable living conditions and to create networks in the process (Herriger 2020).

There are now numerous methodological approaches in social work that focus on strengthening resources. This includes, for example, resource-oriented case management, in which advice is consistently geared to people's strengths and support resources are systematically explored and networked with one another (Ehlers/ Schuster/ Müller 2017). But motivational interviewing according to Miller and Rollnick (2015) is also an empowering method through which people are encouraged to change their life situation.

But how can people be encouraged to work towards improving their living conditions?

Here, too, various methodological approaches have been developed in the field of social work, which primarily aim to support people in developing networks that work together on a specific topic. This includes, for example, so-called self-help, in which people who share a common experience or who suffer from the same illness, disability or a similar psychological diagnosis can come together and advise and support one another (Wolf/Zimmer 2012, 57ff).

However, methodological approaches from community work, which go back to Saul Alinsky, are very much based on the idea of empowerment. The aim is to encourage and support people to become active themselves, to make their own needs and interests public and to advocate for their own concerns.



EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AS A TOOL FOR EMPOWERMENT



EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AS A TOOL FOR EMPOWERMENT

Diamond quote 

“

Women and men should be equal and have equal opportunities, fair opportunities. So when I think about women support, it is particularly important to educate women about gender equality, women's rights and discrimination. It is important to support women and empower them to communicate their own ideas with other people.

”

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, beliefs and the moulding of attitudes. It plays a pivotal role in societal development by enabling individuals to grow and thrive. It also empowers people, fosters independence, and contributes to successful lives.

Education is not just a fundamental human right; it is also a potent catalyst for promoting integration, equality, and the creation of inclusive societies that welcome and celebrate diversity. Education therefor stands as the foremost instrument for the empowerment of women and girls and for fostering integration.

Empowering migrant women through education and skill development involves a multifaceted approach that encompasses academic necessities along with social, emotional, and practical facets of integration. Reflecting on insights gleaned from interviews conducted as part of the Hidden Diamonds project, two pivotal factors emerge as contributing to successful integration: 1) active participation in the local community and forging connections with others, and 2) continuous learning and training. Moreover, the interviews underscore the pivotal role of education in securing employment and fostering seamless integration for individuals.



Culturally sensitive and inclusive education

Each person represents a unique set of characteristics, experiences and cultural knowledge. By accepting and respecting these differences, inclusive education strives to create an environment where everyone can learn and thrive, regardless of their cultural background. This approach is particularly important in diverse and multicultural societies where education should be a force that unites and empowers all.

Culturally sensitive and inclusive education is an educational approach that takes into account the specific cultural, linguistic, and social contexts of women with migrant backgrounds. It also considers the diverse experiences of migrant women, as they may come from various countries, regions, and cultural backgrounds and at the same time respects the unique perspectives, strengths, and challenges these women bring to the educational setting.

An inclusive educational approach aims to empower, foster integration, and ensure equal educational opportunities. Moreover, such an educational framework not only enhances the learning journey for these women but also contributes significantly to broader objectives of social cohesion and inclusion within multicultural societies.

When discussing culturally sensitive and inclusive education for women from migrant backgrounds, it's crucial to consider their unique educational needs and challenges in order to tailor education programs that empower and integrate them effectively. These programs not only promote language proficiency and skill development, but also foster cultural competence, awareness of their rights and emotional well-being. Taking into account the specific circumstances of migrant women, these programs empower them to successfully integrate, achieve economic independence and contribute significantly to their host society, thereby enriching the entire social fabric.



Educational programs customized for women embody the following **key principles** aimed at their holistic empowerment and integration.

- ▶ **Empowerment** involves equipping women with the necessary knowledge, skills, and support to access opportunities, engage in society, and make informed choices.
- ▶ **Skills Development** encompasses language proficiency, vocational expertise, and life skills training.
- ▶ **Cultural Awareness and Exchange** mean cultural understanding, empathy, and interaction among all students, fostering mutual respect and comprehension among peers from diverse backgrounds.
- ▶ **Cultural Relevance** ensures that education is tailored to meet the specific needs and objectives of each woman, considering her cultural, linguistic, educational background, and personal circumstances. The curriculum, teaching materials, and activities are culturally pertinent, reflecting the experiences, traditions, and values of the diverse cultural backgrounds of women.
- ▶ **Gender Equality** is an integral aspect of women's empowerment, aiming to raise awareness of cultural or traditional barriers that hinder women from accessing education and progressing.
- ▶ **Orientation and integration programs** often incorporate elements to help women acclimate to the host country's culture, legal systems, and social norms.
- ▶ **Community Engagement** is a vital component of education, involving active participation of women within local communities.



Here's a step-by-step guide on how to create such educational programs

- 1 Conduct a needs assessment:** Engage women through surveys, interviews, and collaboration with leaders to understand their educational needs, challenges, and aspirations.
- 2 Ensure cultural competence:** Train staff to understand and respect cultural norms and values, ensuring sensitivity to community challenges.
- 3 Customize the curriculum:** Design a flexible curriculum that respects the cultural background and values of the participants.
- 4 Address language barriers:** Provide language courses and materials in the mother tongue to overcome language barriers.
- 5 Offer mentoring and role models:** Organize mentoring programs with related role models for motivation.
- 6 Create a safe environment:** Establish a safe, inclusive space that encourages expression and supports network building.
- 7 Flexible scheduling:** Recognize women's potential care responsibilities by offering flexible scheduling and childcare support.
- 8 Provide access to resources:** Provide necessary resources such as computers, internet and libraries for personal development.
- 9 Conduct regular monitoring and evaluations:** Set measurable goals, regularly assess performance using qualitative and quantitative data, and collect participant feedback for continuous improvement.



Tailor-made education for women with a migrant background is essential for ensuring that they can fully participate in the educational system and society of their host country. By addressing their unique needs and recognizing their cultural backgrounds, this approach not only promotes their educational success but also contributes to their overall well-being and integration.

Education and empowerment of women with migrant and minority backgrounds is crucial for promoting equity and ensuring that these women have access to opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Examples of education and training programs

Empowering migrant women through education requires a multifaceted approach that leverages various educational tools and resources.

Language Course: Tailored language classes enhance communication and comprehension, aiding integration.

Cultural Competency Workshops: Fosters understanding of host country norms and eases social integration.

Life Skills and Empowerment Training: Offer a wide range of skills, including financial literacy, entrepreneurship, leadership, and advocacy training. These skills can empower women to make informed decisions and pursue economic independence.

Vocational Education: Equips women for economic independence and job opportunities.

Legal Awareness: Empowers women with knowledge of their rights to combat exploitation and discrimination.

Digital Literacy: Vital for accessing information and job opportunities in a technology-driven world.

Financial Literacy: Promotes budgeting and saving for greater financial independence and stability.

Health and Well-being Education: Ensures access to healthcare services and healthy living.

Counselling and Psychological Support: Addresses emotional challenges during migration and resettlement.

Mentorship and Support Networks: Connects them with experienced guides for emotional support and insights.



WOMEN SUPPORT GROUP CROATIA

The women's support group was developed and implemented by DKolektiv as a year-long program for unemployed women. The objectives of women support group were fostering personal growth and development, fortifying self-esteem and self-assurance, and strengthening connections among women as well as with the broader community.

This concept of support encouraged women to recognize their strengths, resources and limits, which had a positive impact on their personal life and relationships and improved their overall quality of life.

A Support group is a place where people with similar problems can share their experiences and help one another in difficult times, thus protecting their health and well-being collectively.

In other words, work in support groups is focused on providing mutual emotional support, creating an environment of acceptance and understanding, and talking about how to face difficult and painful life situations and problems more successfully.

Facilitated by an expert psychologist, the support group operated by encouraging conversations, exchanges and joint learning among participants. The groups were composed of five to seven women who met 2-3 times a month; with each meeting lasted 90 minutes.

The benefits of support group:

- Deeper insights about oneself and others;
- Practicing new ways of self-representation;
- Creating a foundation for building better relationships;
- Emotional support in dealing with stress
- Increasing self-confidence and self-esteem
- A new perspective on different life situations
- Meeting and connecting with other women;
- Time for yourself and a break from everyday life
- Opportunity to get involved in some activities through volunteering



Key Themes in the Support Group Sessions

- Trust and connection in relationship
- Identity and integrity
- Self-confidence and self-esteem
- Awareness of needs and emotions
- Loss and grieving
- Responsibility
- Making decisions and setting priorities
- Stress Management
- Partnership
- Parenthood
- Support and self-support
- Mental health



Voices of Women: Insights from the Support Group Journey

For me, it was a place of honesty and acceptance. We were all very similar and so different at the same time. I spoke freely without fear of judgment. I learned to recognize my emotions better - anger, sadness. Here, I've found very close and dear friends.

S.D., age 52

I experienced mutual learning, exchange and support here. I got a lot of insights about myself. Now, it's easier for me to accept differences. We laughed a lot, even when there were difficult topics.

H.C., age 44

We helped each other by sharing our own experiences. I learned. I opened up. I got stronger. Now I know that if I set boundaries, others will respect them.

Z.G., age 48

I have been unemployed for a long time. At the beginning, I was full of energy and then I volunteered. Over time, I realized that I needed support, that I needed others. I met wonderful women here who motivated me to study even outside the group... They pulled me out of bad moods. I realized that it is important to take care of yourself, not just others. I found inner peace.

D.P., age 42





PEER TO PEER SUPPORT AND ROLE MODELS



PEER TO PEER SUPPORT

Diamond quote 

“

We all have our differences, it's the similarities that make us strong. Supporting each other, sharing experiences and thereby strengthening others that should be the goal for all of us.

”

Purpose, goals and basic principles

Facing each other with similar topics and challenges and understanding each other as experts through our own experiences, is a particularly sensitive and effective method of approaching each other and passing on experiences. Peer to peer support aims to create relationships between similar individuals with the aim of identifying with one another and feeling strengthened in their own life paths (cf. Lindorfer, 2017). Having contact with people from the same cultural or linguistic background can create a feeling of community, cohesion and, above all, trust.

The term “Peer-to-Peer” refers to a form of exchange in which a group of people with a similar cultural, linguistic or experiential background is able to advise, support and interact with one another.

In the context of support programs, peer-to-peer means that people, who experienced similar challenges, are able to help others in similar situations through offering advice and encouragement (cf. Backes & Lieb, 2015).



For example, the women surveyed in the Hidden Diamonds project share many common experiences; e.g. diminishing fluency in their mother tongue, loss of professional status in their country of origin, loss of social networks, or even leaving behind of their own “peer group”, family and/or support system. In the interviews, several common stresses and challenges for women could be identified and generalised. Such commonalities highlight the importance of women as experts of their own lived experiences and thus role models for other young girls with migrant backgrounds. They can serve as positive mentors who can contextualise the experiences and struggles of young women, while also showing possible opportunities for growth and development.

The Peer-to-Peer-Approach can occur in diverse contexts and take a variety of forms. Interactions may take place through one-on-one conversations or in group settings; the contexts of such interactions may come about by chance or through more structured systems such as educational settings. Role models for young women with culturally diverse backgrounds can similarly take different forms. Thus, teachers or social workers with migrant backgrounds may also become valuable mentors. Young women can be inspired and motivated to overcome challenges through connecting with and hearing the stories of successful female role models who share a common cultural community.

Hearing the life experiences of others, whether reflected in the form of biographies, films, lectures or personal stories, can encourage young women to find their way or to pursue their individual goals and ambitions. Encountering images and voices of women who have similar backgrounds and experiences can be decisive for the development of their own identity (cf. Mädchen und junge Frauen nach der Flucht in der Migrationsgesellschaft, 2019). Group projects and community creation, whether physical or digital, can in particular achieve great results for encouraging and giving women with migrant backgrounds confidence in their own strengths (cf. Lindorfer, 2017).

For example, networks, also in digital form (for example Instagram), can create beneficial clusters of role models. Young women with a migrant background or other stakeholders such as schools, teachers, social workers or therapist can fall back on such networks. Group offers with experts could take place in which young women participate or specialist lectures by professionals could be held. A targeted access to role models through purposeful programs, networks or community organisations should be created.



Usage

With Peer-to-Peer projects and offers, girls can be reached who are not always present. Young women with a migrant background are faced with the challenge of finding their own role in family and society and often lack the necessary support. A stable network of experts can be useful not only for the young women, but also for all those involved. Women with a migrant background become visible and their history can have a strengthening effect. Role models should encourage young girls to find their own voice and to be able to develop their potential.

Challenges and limitations

In the Hidden diamonds project, we were faced with a challenge of finding these experts, women who were willing to tell their story and ready to present themselves as peers. The project also needed individuals who could facilitate the project and networks, as well as stabilise and maintain them. A sensitive approach was needed by the project partners in relation to the experts. The placement of the experts required the openness of schools or similar institutions, which was challenging in several cases. Thus, it follows that low-threshold offers of networks and consultations with the experts require good liaison persons to public institutions and require support to maintaining such relationships.

Evaluation

Experiences, opinions and wishes of the participants should be collected through interviews and feedback sheets, and incorporated into the further course of the project. The results should be documented by the project coordinators and presented in the form of a final report. Above all, a final discussion should be held with the experts. In the reflection, the participants should evaluate whether their sense of self-efficacy has changed, how their network may have expanded and whether any new knowledge or skills have impacted on their life.



a

Lectures by women with a migrant background for social workers/trainers/teachers to strengthen intercultural skills

In these, women with a migrant or refugee background report on their own experiences with seeking asylum and migration and tell their own life stories.

b

Building an analogue and digital network of women with migrant backgrounds

Women are supported in building their own network with the aim of providing analogue or digital advice to young women with a migrant background. Peers of the same age visit schools or other public institutions and give lectures to girls. The aim of a social media account, for example, could be to make various topics relating to women and migration visible.

c

Establishment of a mothers' group.

Women who have children with a migrant background meet regularly to advise each other and build a community. Experts from the employment office, child care, school authorities, etc. are invited depending on the the women's needs.



COOPERATION WITH KEY PERSONS IN THE AREA OF MIGRATION

Diamond quote 

“ —

And this woman, she knew her way around and could precisely tell me where I should go and where to get the help I was seeking.

— ”

Purpose, aim and basic principles

Key individuals were identified within the scope of our project as individuals who possess specific knowledge and/or special relationships with a particular group and are accepted by that group. Social work professionals must be aware of 'the significance of bonding, relationship, and network phenomena, as well as the environment in order to successfully integrate supportive interventions (c.f. Gahleitner, Kupfer, Nestmann in „Sozialmagazin 1-2.2023“, p. 7).

Key individuals can be sought or cultivated in various communities, but no matter how one approaches it, it is a detailed and time-consuming endeavour. This effort is especially worthwhile considering the far-reaching effects that can be achieved through contact with such a person. In the following, we illustrate with an example how key individuals can be identified or developed.



Description of the method

Establish and identify key people

In order to identify key individuals within a specific community, professionals must first establish contact with that community. To do so, we often need to step outside the silos of our services, consider processes as a whole, and engage in communication. Taking a closer look at the characteristics of relational social work, we can find a roadmap for our own actions within it.

Don't look at problems as deficits, but make them visible

Problems, conflicts, and unmet needs of other people evoke empathy in us, and in many professionals, a desire to contribute to the solution or even be the solution themselves. However, this can diminish the potential for connection that these occasions hold. Suffering can bond people and create a longing for change. A first step is to bring together those who have a similar problem, such as a woman with a Turkish migrant background who feels lonely in her neighborhood and has limited social connections.

Professionals are aware of her, as well as other women with a similar background in the same situation. The professionals request a space at the local community center and organize a meet-and-greet coffee session. The women get along very well, and the meetings continue.

Community building

Problems, conflicts, and unmet needs of other people evoke empathy in us, and in many professionals, a desire to contribute to the solution or even be the solution themselves. However, this can diminish the potential for connection that these occasions hold. Suffering can bond people and create a longing for change. A first step is to bring together those who have a similar problem, such as a woman with a Turkish migrant background who feels lonely in her neighborhood and has limited social connections. Professionals are aware of her, as well as other women with a similar background in the same situation. The professionals request a space at the local community center and organize a meet-and-greet coffee session. The women get along very well, and the meetings continue.



How to identify a key person

Identifying an already existing key individual follows a similar process. A professional intentionally enters a field, neighbourhood, or an existing initiative and asks the following questions: What is the purpose of this initiative, and who organized it? Are there one or more individuals who have taken on a problem and actively addressed it? Or perhaps, have other organizations/professionals laid the groundwork and established a self-sustaining action that can be leveraged? If such individuals can be identified, contact can be established. In an introductory conversation, it can be explored whether and how this person would be interested in contributing their relationships, experiences, and knowledge. The person can be invited as a partner to events on an equal footing or consulted in challenging client cases. It is important that their work is acknowledged and appreciated continually.

Challenges

The most significant challenge is gaining access to the key individuals themselves, and perhaps their willingness to cooperate with professionals.

Evaluation

An evaluation should include how an entry point was established and how it can be effectively utilized. It is intended to document which projects and actions have been implemented. By surveying the key individuals, the results can be used to formulate a strategy for acquiring new key individuals in the future.

Major recommendations for implementation

- 1 Organise projects and activities where key persons can be involved
- 2 Involve key persons directly in the planning of projects and activities
- 3 Evaluate and further develop existing projects with key persons



MOVEMENT IN THE WEST GERMANY

The project 'Movement in the West' in the city of Rosenheim serves as an example. Initially launched as a small-scale initiative to promote more sports, physical activity, and community, it became an award-winning project due in part to the involvement of one key individual in a leading role. The key individual in this example was a long-time resident of the neighbourhood with Turkish roots named Özdemir, a father of two daughters, who possessed extensive experience as a soccer coach. He was already acquainted with many of the children and families in the local area, and brought with him the expertise and necessary discipline to professionally establish a soccer team.

His daughters were often in the neighbourhood, and as he cycled to pick them up, he observed other children. He witnessed a lot of bullying, few communal games, and underutilized sports facilities. When he shared this with a colleague, they referred him to one of the project's coordinators from a social organisation responsible for that part of the city. The project was launched through collaboration. In addition to his job, Özdemir volunteered to ensure that multiple soccer groups, consisting of boys and girls of all ages, were formed to engage in recreational play with each other.

He independently organised street soccer tournaments, to which school groups and others could also register. The project grew and won the Bavarian Integration Award. With funding from the so-called "Future Package," a part-time position for Özdemir and salaries for additional coaches could be supported, leading to the inclusion of kickboxing, dance, and basketball programs. Not only are numerous children from one neighbourhood represented, but they are now also interacting with children from the neighbouring area, forming a large group that responsibly manages the spaces, experiences fewer problems, and is able to enjoy leisure time together.



LANGUAGE SUPPORT / DEVELOPMENT

Diamond quote 

“

Without mastering the language, I cannot become a part of this community.

”

Purpose, aim and basic principles

In all the conducted interviews, language learning was emphasized as the key to a successful life in a foreign country. Language is not just a means of communication but also provides the opportunity to connect emotionally with one's environment, makes friends, contribute, and express oneself. It grants the freedom to participate in the lives of others and find one's place, whether in school or work, in clubs, in volunteer work, or everyday life. Therefore, language support is of great importance in the integration of people with a migrant background. Studies show that especially children and teenagers from immigrant families often exhibit language deficiencies and related difficulties in the academic field (cf. Integrationsreport – BaMF; „Sprachliche Integration von Migranten in Deutschland“ 2008, p. 5). Language support should, therefore, be one of the top priorities in all areas.



The language café

Language cafés can be a low-threshold but valuable community resource. They can be provided in kindergartens, schools, community accommodations, clubs, and more.

Key concepts to consider in the creation of a language café:

- **Personnel** - Creating a language café requires someone responsible for implementation and, if necessary, a substitute for childcare, depending on the targeted audience. For mothers with young children, it is often not possible to attend regular language courses, so on-site childcare not only relieves the burden of supervision but may also promote shared topics with other mothers.
- **Space** - A space that can be regularly used and provides an accessible, inviting and comfortable atmosphere.
- **Ambience** - Drinks and possibly small snacks should be offered. In most cultures, sharing meals and drinks fosters camaraderie and is an important aspect of hospitality. This also aligns with the character of a “café”, suggesting a comfortable, informal gathering.
- **Promotion** - The project needs to be advertised in the right places in a way that reduces hesitation and is inviting. Initially, flyers and posters in the targeted audience’s native language can help, but it is more likely to succeed if a key person (see Chapter 2) is involved, someone who may know the individuals, comes from the same language and/or cultural background, and can possibly be present at the beginning. Offering the opportunity to work on official documents and forms together can often be a strong draw for engagement. This can be co-promoted but should not dominate the entire language café, perhaps happening within a fixed time frame at the beginning or the end.
- **Procedure** - The language café takes place within a fixed framework for 1 – 2 hours per week. Conversations take place, minor aspects of the language are learned, official documents and forms are worked on together, and important tasks (e. g. making a call to the kindergarten when a child is sick) are practiced. For further practice, language learning children’s books can be borrowed even by women without children.

Language cafés not only import essential knowledge in inaccessible way, but also promote interaction between women and can create a community that extends beyond the café. Additionally, women are able to be in close contact with social workers or other experts who can identify challenges in their everyday lives and address them directly.



Challenges

Despite language cafés being designed to be highly accessible, various challenges can arise. To make the service as accessible and inviting as possible, it would be ideal to have someone from the same cultural and linguistic background who can serve as a door-opener (see also: key persons). Another challenge directly related to this is the often-widespread fear or reluctance of certain individuals due to cultural sensitivities, gender, origin, and socialisation. When establishing such a language café, it is advisable to involve someone who can provide helpful tips for creating an appropriate context for various potential target audiences.

Furthermore, it's important to note that childcare is often an essential aspect, especially in the context of promoting language skills in women. A survey conducted in 2017 revealed that women in partnerships with minor children were the least likely to participate in language courses (cf. IAB-BAMF-SOEP Befragung von Geflüchteten, 2017).

Evaluation

The primary goal of a language café is to initially impart basic practical language skills and ignite the desire for further learning. This can be directly measured by the participant's increase in language competency. A secondary goal is the formation of a strong community that supports each other. This is evident in the progress of the group, the camaraderie among members, and the stories shared by individuals.



'MAMA LERNT DEUTSCH' GERMANY

A kindergarten with an attached after-school care program has many parents with a migration background, including some mothers from a communal shelter for refugees. The children enter the kindergarten without any knowledge of the German language, and the mothers are in the same situation. The kindergarten reaches out to a youth welfare organisation and requests support. They provide a space, and the organisation provides staff. Once a week for two hours, a language café takes place. Prior to this, it was promoted to the mothers in question with appropriately translated flyers and key persons. The mothers drop off their older children at the kindergarten and then stay alone or with their younger children to have a coffee, get help with official documents and forms, and, in the meantime, learn a few expressions and phrases in German.

While one staff member takes care of the children, another staff member assists the mothers in speaking simple sentences, explains the importance of notifying the school in case of illness, and how to do so, and more. The book "Mama lernt Deutsch" serves as the foundation for this work, and there are also very simple children's books for language learning, which are borrowed not only for their children but also for the mothers themselves. Over time, a close-knit group forms, which also meets outside of the language café.



BREAK DOWN PARTICIPATION BARRIERS IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Diamond quote



“

If you have the opportunity to study here, that already helps because you have the opportunity to exchange with other people, especially German students, they are also important key people at the university who also just show and explain us the life and the system here in general.

**A. Youth migration counsellor came to Germany as an au pair*

”

Purpose, aim and basic principles

Successful completion of school and vocational training is an important indicator of financial security and participation in social life. Young women with migrant backgrounds encounter various barriers to participation throughout various educational institutions, which often lead to lower graduation rates or dropping out of school and training (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2021). Language support is an important starting point for breaking down barriers, but it is not sufficient. This chapter focuses upon typical barriers to participation and examples of possible solutions. One important resource to mention here is the experiences of our "hidden diamonds," these can be made available to girls and young women through direct contact or training by professionals. Successful women with a migrant background can act as door openers, mediating between parents, girls, and institutions, resolving culturally conditioned misunderstandings and seeking perspectives together with those affected. This should enable girls with a migrant background to better develop their potential and stand up for their own interests.



Methods of implementation, approaches to solutions and their potential

Educational background and culturally determined expectations of the educational system:

Parents with an immigrant background bring along expectations and ideas about the educational system from their country of origin. These can be very different from the reality of the educational system of their current host country. For example, parents from Eastern Europe are often used to all school matters being handled there, and they are not needed to purchase materials or help with homework. These parents then appear inaccessible and disinterested to teachers, and misunderstandings may be exacerbated by language barriers. Another barrier, especially for girls, is the low value placed on education in some cultures. Particularly regarding higher education or training, gifted girls also require increased support if, in addition to language barriers, they must fight against the resistance of their parents.

If possible, further training for teachers on cultural sensitivity should be obligatory and held by people from different cultural backgrounds in order for teachers to meet the needs of parents and students adequately. Parents should be given the opportunity to exchange ideas with people from their own cultural background who understand the host country's systems. The resources of the migration counselling could be used for such an offer. An evening especially for parents with a migrant background, which takes place directly at the schools, could create an opportunity for parents or guardians to familiarize themselves with many of the specific requirements of the host countries education system.



Incorrect diagnoses due to life circumstances:

Children with a migrant background often stand out due to maladaptive behaviour and are marked as troublemakers. Often, the reaction is sanctions and/or the parents are urged to make a diagnosis without taking a child's life circumstances into account. For example, symptoms caused through cramped living conditions and a lack of resources for physical or educational activity can easily be misdiagnosed as ADHD (Source: conversation with Hoodo). A trusting, close contact to the parents is a prerequisite to offer tailored support, for example, the affiliation with projects such as Movement in the West (Bewegung im Westen) in Rosenheim, which offers low-threshold and free sports activities.

Lack of language skills as an obstruction to academic potential:

"That I have now not necessarily been able to go to grammar school. I don't want to say now that I would have made it, but the possibility didn't exist at that time. [...] So now it is so that the young people already often, but there. I have had the grades that I go to grammar school, but nevertheless the grammar school would then have said, no so, we don't try that at all."

Many research findings show that children with a migrant background are less likely to attend or complete secondary school and few go on to higher education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2021). One reason is likely that language barriers mask cognitive potential. One solution strategy could be the use of translation tools in non-language subjects. This would enable girls to participate more quickly and adequately in terms of content. Parallel to this, targeted and level-adapted support for language skills is needed. More time for the completing of tasks would also increase the chances of being able to show a student's existing potential, allowing time for the necessary translation work that must be done in order to complete an assignment.



Challenges and limitations in the implementation of ideas

An unclear perspective on whether a family will continue to live in their current country of residence can lead to problems with educational motivation. Integration can become especially challenging in cases where parents often talk about returning home soon.

In the case of Germany, children of refugees are first placed in special German classes because schools do not feel able to adequately include children with little knowledge of German in regular classes. This segregation does not do justice for many children and inhibits their integration into the German education system. It would make sense to assess the children's competencies before they start school to be able to offer them tailored support.

For first born children this can be especially difficult as parents lack support and knowledge of educational systems:

“

“It was difficult, during the schooldays, I was always the first child with the next school level, and my parents didn't understand the school material.” (Interview quote).

”

Evaluation

A medium-term indicator of the successful dismantling of barriers at schools would be if, in percentage terms, more girls with a migration background went to secondary schools, achieved higher degrees, and completed qualifying vocational training. This would already become clear in the class photos - a look at the annual report of Rosenheim's high schools makes it clear, that the class composition is far from diverse.



Key people as mediators:

Key people can mediate between the ideas of teachers/coaches and parents, so it would be good if schools or adult education institutions had contact with key people from the students' countries of origin who they could ask for support if necessary.

Intercultural training:

In-service training on cultural sensitivity for teachers so that they can respond to life circumstances and recognize obstacles (e.g. swimming for Muslim girls)

Making experiences of asylum and migration tangible:

In order to increase understanding among fellow students, the experiences of seeking asylum and migration must be made tangible. It shouldn't be a taboo topic. Personal stories have a special impact here. Programs like "Witnesses of Flight" offer workshops and discussion groups for all ages, as well as training for professionals. It would be desirable for these formats to be widely used and become standard practise in schools.

Peers:

People with a migrant background often have great reservations about professional support and mistrust of institutional systems. Openness to professional support can be encouraged by compatriots, be it professionals with a migrant background or key people as a link.

Mutual cultural learning should be an integral part of educational institutions. Existing formats such as storytelling in the morning circle can be used for this purpose by consciously addressing differences and similarities in such stories. Sponsorships: For participants in adult education training, intercultural sponsorships between participants with a migrant background and others make an important contribution to mutual understanding and integration.



Talent scouting:

The search for and promotion of talent through the targeted integration of sports clubs, theatre and music programs, for example, promotes self-efficacy, enables experiences of success and can connect individuals with established clubs and organisations in the host society.

Girls' groups:

They are a protected space in which bullying experiences and problems in the family can be discussed. Such groups have been particularly successful when the supervisors themselves have come from a migrant experience, as is the case in the Fürstätt student café. This increases the confidence of the girls, who are more likely to open up, and also makes it easier to work with their parents. Attractive joint activities such as cooking, baking and creative design are suitable as a “hook”. This means that products from different cultural areas can also be produced and presented/sold at school events.

Peer disseminators, like older mentors who have already built a life here, can serve as role models and help others pursue their own goals, if necessary, even against the resistance of their families of origin. Social media with suitable platforms can also serve as important mediators and a space for role models to engage with young women (migrant daughters on Instagram). Mentors are provided as standard to refugee children in Sweden and the Netherlands, for example, and provide great psychosocial support (Alhaddad et al., p. 2.).

Create opportunities to connect female students with and without a migrant background and support them educationally.

Train teachers with refugee experience and employ them as (support) teachers in schools (e.g. Refugee Teachers Program).



YOUNG WOMEN GET INVOLVED GERMANY

In the project “Mädchen mischen mit”, trainers support young women with a migrant background in trusting their own abilities, breaking down prejudices and making new encounters and friendships with their peers. Young women with a refugee or migrant background are often exposed to racist hostility. Sexism and rigid gender roles often prevent them from pursuing their goals independently. In the project, young women are encouraged to go their own way and to have equal rights in society.

The project aims to strengthen young women's social and democratic skills as well as their self-confidence. The concept for the group meetings is based on a program model developed by IRC to empower young women and to counteract discrimination based on gender or origin. In the workshops, participants learn, among other things, how to maintain and promote friendships, deal better with stress and strain, and find and develop positive role models, personal strengths and their own goals. The focus is on dealing with discrimination, gaining the confidence to show civil courage, and promoting mutual respect and tolerance.

The project also takes into account the social environment of the young women. Parallel to the workshops, activities are offered for family members and other caregivers. This ensures that all girls can safely participate in the program and that their newly acquired skills and knowledge can be supported and deepened in their family environment.



WITNESSES WITH REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS GERMANY

The German association “Zeugen der Flucht” enables direct conversations between refugees and interested groups (e.g. school classes). The club members are young people with and without refugee experience who came together in 2016 due to increased media and political attention characterized by prejudice and fear surrounding topics such as immigration and refugees.

The refugees talk about their personal experiences in front of groups and answer all the questions: What was life like back home? Why did they get lost? How do you feel about your new life? What are dreams for the future? Everyone answers the questions differently, giving an insight into the different lived experiences of refugees.



INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT MENTORING SUPERVISION



INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT MENTORING SUPERVISION

Diamond quote 

“

Build confidence so others dare to try!

”

Purpose, objectives, key principles of Individual support and Mentoring:

Mentoring is a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or knowledgeable person, known as a mentor, provides guidance, support and advice to a less experienced person, known as a mentee, to help them grow personally and professionally. Mentoring involves sharing knowledge, skills and perspectives to empower the mentee to achieve their goals and reach their full potential.

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) gives the following definition of mentoring: “Mentoring is a learning relationship, involving the sharing of skills, knowledge, and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing, and role modelling. The relationship may cover a wide variety of contexts and is an inclusive two-way partnership for mutual learning that values differences.” (<https://www.emccglobal.org/leadership-development/leadership-development-mentoring/>)

The program is used to address the unique challenges and barriers these women face in a new and often unfamiliar environment. Its primary aim is to empower them by providing guidance, support, and resources to enhance their skills, improve social integration, advance their careers, and boost self-confidence. By doing so, the program seeks to achieve lasting positive changes in their lives, including economic independence, social inclusion, and overall well-being. Moreover, it plays a crucial role in fostering diversity, inclusivity, and community cohesion by connecting women from different backgrounds and promoting understanding and collaboration. Ultimately, the program aims to empower these women to lead fulfilling and independent lives while contributing to a more inclusive and diverse society.



Individual support and mentoring programs - objectives

The mentoring program for migrant and minority women has a multifaceted set of objectives. It seeks to empower these women by developing essential skills for employability and independence while fostering their social integration through mentorship in cultural adaptation. The program also focuses on facilitating career advancement, building self-confidence, promoting cultural sensitivity, and providing networking opportunities for empowerment. Additionally, it encourages advocacy and leadership within their communities and strives to empower participants to actively shape their destinies. The program emphasizes awareness of unique challenges and inclusivity while aiming for a lasting, sustainable impact that extends beyond the mentoring period.

Mentors should **recognize the importance of work-life balance** for women and provide support in managing competing responsibilities. Mentors can share strategies, tips, and personal experiences to help mentees navigate their personal and professional lives effectively.

Mentors and mentees should be **encouraged to embrace diversity** and foster an inclusive environment. Recognize the unique challenges faced by women from different backgrounds and provide mentorship that is sensitive to these experiences.

Note: The implementing institution/advisory council should regularly **assess the effectiveness** of the mentoring program by seeking feedback from both mentors and mentees. This feedback should be used to make improvements and ensure the program remains relevant and beneficial.

Description of the method (steps or components): *explain in detail the working method/empowerment process; list the steps or components involved in the implementing method and provide clear explanation of each step; if necessary, describe the specific techniques, tools, or activities used within each step.*



Mentoring roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of mentors are essential in a women empowerment project as they provide guidance, support, and encouragement for women to reach their full potential. Mentors help women overcome obstacles, gain confidence, acquire skills, and expand their networks. Through their advocacy, mentorship, and role modeling, mentors contribute to dismantling gender barriers, fostering gender equality, and creating positive change in society.

Mentors provide support and guidance to women in a women empowerment project. They offer a safe and non-judgmental space for mentees to share their challenges, aspirations, and ideas.

Mentors can help identify areas where mentees can improve as well as provide guidance on acquiring new skills. They may advise training, recommend educational resources, or provide hands-on support to enhance the mentees' professional capabilities, boosting their confidence and marketability.

Mentors are also able to help women build professional networks and connections through advocating for the mentees' interests and empowering them to overcome barriers. Mentors can encourage mentees to voice their opinions, champion their ideas, and challenge systemic inequalities. They may also empower mentees to recognize and utilize their own strengths, while helping them navigate bias, and advocate for gender equality.

Mentorship supports the personal and professional development of women while assisting them in setting goals, creating action plans, and monitoring progress. Such role model relationships can create a supportive and inclusive environment where women can thrive. Mentors should foster trust, confidentiality, and mutual respect, allowing mentees to express themselves freely. Mentors promote a culture of empowerment, ensuring mentees feel safe to take risks, embrace challenges, and learn from both successes and failures.

During a workshop at LoPe, mentors described the following qualities as most important to the success of the mentoring relationship:

- Encourage women to have goals
- Sharing of experiences
- Have regular thematic evenings
- Be open and create a trustful environment
- Build confidence so others dare to try
- Tell them you believe in them
- Be realistic, let them know there will be struggles
- Form meeting places for women to get together and help one another (these places should be supported by the government with funding)



The role and responsibilities of mentees

By actively engaging, setting goals, being open to feedback, taking initiative, and reflecting on their growth, mentees maximize the benefits of the mentoring experience. These responsibilities empower mentees to take charge of their own development, make the most of the opportunities provided, and ultimately achieve their personal and professional goals.

-  Mentees should actively engage in the mentoring relationship. This involves being present, attentive, and responsive during meetings and interactions with the mentor. Actively participating in discussions, asking questions, and seeking guidance demonstrates commitment and a willingness to learn. They should take responsibility for their own learning and development, and should actively seek knowledge, explore resources, and engage in self-directed learning.
-  Mentees should take an active role in setting their goals and identify their strengths, weaknesses, and areas of growth, and articulate clear and achievable objectives.
-  They must be open to receiving feedback from their mentors, actively listen, be receptive to constructive criticism, and view feedback as an opportunity for improvement.
-  Mentees should take initiative and demonstrate a proactive approach in pursuing opportunities. They should be resourceful, take responsibility for their actions, and be willing to step out of their comfort zone.
-  They should reflect on their experiences, identify lessons learned, and evaluate their own performance. Self-assessment allows mentees to take ownership of their growth and make informed decisions.
-  Mentees should also actively build a positive and professional relationship with their mentor. This involves showing respect, maintaining regular communication, and honouring commitments. Building trust, demonstrating integrity, and being appreciative of the mentor's time and expertise contribute to a fruitful and lasting mentoring relationship.



Designing a Mentoring Program

In the case of a six-to-seven-month mentoring program, for example, the first two months are usually spent on creating the foundation for mentoring, while monitoring progress usually occurs from the second month through to the fifth month. It is important to determine the beginning and end of a mentoring relationship in order to monitor the process and evaluate the results.

The intensity and frequency of the mentoring sessions can be discussed and set by the mentoring pairs. It is recommended that mentors and mentees dedicate three to five hours per month to mentoring. The time breakdown may be a meeting lasting 1 to 1.5 hours with additional time for follow-up tasks.

Mentoring models proposed for Hidden Diamond's Project

Out of six mentoring models that have been identified, LoPe suggests implementation of the following three models in the project:

Traditional or one-to-one mentoring: This is a traditional hierarchical mentoring process in which one person is more experienced and is mentoring an individual with less experience. This type of mentoring can also be understood as more of a “teacher” or “guru” style; the mentor behaves more as an expert due to their specialist experience or knowledge.

Peer mentoring: Individuals with a similar status or position in the project can mentor each other. Here, the focus falls more on mentoring skills, relationships and organizational development than on a traditional approach. This type of mentoring still requires one mentor and one mentee, even though they may be peers. Mentoring sessions can be conducted in pairs or small groups.

Mentoring circles: In an effort to create safe mentoring opportunities for all, partner organizations can turn to mentoring circles. This is a form of group mentoring that may encourage participation from all levels and demographics. At times, mentoring circles can be used to target a specific group of mentees. The mentoring circle proposes topics of interest for group discussion and growth. By initiating mentoring circles, we can create intentional networks to help mentees grow, share experiences and develop in a number of ways.



Benefits of the Mentoring Program

A mentoring program yields a plethora of advantages. It empowers participants by fostering skills development, boosting confidence, and aids career advancement; leading to economic independence and social integration. Through culturally sensitive and networking opportunities, women can connect with mentors and resources, expanding their social and professional networks. Additionally, mentoring encourages advocacy, leadership, and personal autonomy while promoting awareness of unique challenges and inclusivity. With a focus on sustainable impact, these programs aim to create lasting positive changes in the lives of women and contribute to diverse, cohesive, and inclusive communities, ultimately benefiting both individuals and society as a whole

Key challenges in supporting young women through individual support/mentoring

“Supporting women through mentoring is valuable but has challenges. Both mentors and mentees must maintain open communication, set clear goals, be proactive, and adapt as needed. Ethnic, religious, and generational backgrounds impact relationships; embracing cultural sensitivity, empathy, and trust is vital. Challenges include unconscious bias, scheduling conflicts, time constraints, unrealistic expectations, and over-dependence. Also, unfair manipulation, resentment, and ineffective pairings can occur. Strategies include bias awareness, structured schedules, goal setting, mentoring program support, and self-awareness to ensure effective and successful mentoring for women.”

Mentoring Complete identifies a number of key challenges in building mentoring programmes as well as ways to overcome them:

Unconscious Bias: When we meet people, we often judge them based on what we see, such as their age, the way they dress, skin colour, attractiveness, etc., this is also known as rapid processing. Rapid processing occurs when our brains make quick judgements of people and situations around us, often without realizing it.

Some tips for addressing personal biases include:

Acknowledge your bias. It can be difficult to recognize personal biases, especially unconscious biases, but, there are resources available which are designed to assist us in identifying our biases. Project Implicit has a number of tests based on topics ranging from race to obesity which can help bring unconscious biases to light.



Willingness to examine our own possible biases is an important step in understanding the roots of stereotypes and prejudice. Personal biases can be combatted by getting to know people on an individual level. Once you become aware of potential biases, practice self-monitoring. Through self-monitoring and self-regulation, you can interrupt biased thinking and generate non-discriminatory behaviour.

Admit mistakes. Don't be afraid to acknowledge, and apologize for, mistakes. Everyone makes a misstep on occasion, use mistakes as an opportunity to better yourself and strengthen your relationship with others.

Meeting as Scheduled: Both mentors and mentees have commitments and responsibilities, both of which serve as convenient excuses for postponing a mentoring meeting. However, mentors and mentees must also remember their commitment to the program and to each other.

Strategies for overcoming this challenge: Treat the meetings as you would any workplace meeting. Don't think of it as an extracurricular activity. And if you're still struggling after trying these strategies, get your mentoring program manager involved. As an objective third party, this person can hold you and your partner accountable.

Time Constraints: Both mentors and mentees often have demanding schedules, making it difficult to find regular and consistent time for mentoring sessions. Balancing professional and personal commitments can be particularly challenging for women who may also bear a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities. Flexibility and understanding from both parties can help accommodate these time constraints.

Unrealistic Expectations: Overloading the mentee with information and expecting the mentee to become the mentor's clone are two examples of unrealistic expectations that can have a negative impact on the relationship. Conversely, the mentee may expect the mentor to provide more support and direction than is reasonable under the circumstances.

Strategies for overcoming this challenge: Set mentoring objectives and goals at the outset, ideally during the first one to two meetings. This way, everyone is in agreement regarding expectations.



Over-dependence on the Mentor/Mentee: In this situation, a mentor may come to rely on the mentee for emotional support rather than focusing on the mentee's needs. A mentor may also expect the mentee to accept everything the mentor has to offer instead of letting the mentee find her own path.

Strategies for overcoming this challenge: Mentors must keep their egos in check and remind themselves that the relationship is about the mentee, not the mentor. Mentees need to remind themselves that they are the ones who need to do the "heavy lifting." They need to make their own decisions and remember that their mentors are merely a source of support and feedback.

Resentment or Jealousy from Others: Mentoring is a much sought after activity because of its positive effect on people's professional development. Unfortunately, many mentoring programs cannot include everyone due to size limitations. As a result, those who participate in such programs may experience resentment from those not in the program. This is demonstrated when peers either criticize the program or express their resentment that the mentee can leave work to attend a meeting.

Strategies for overcoming this challenge: Education is the best recourse. Mentors and mentees can share information about the program (e.g., handouts, articles like this one, websites) to peers and significant others. Ideally, the organization itself should be transparent regarding the program, including how to get involved.

Ineffective Mentoring Pairs: A pair may not work out for a variety of reasons: lack of commitment on the part of one of the parties, learning styles don't match, a change in job assignments, and, sometimes, the pair just doesn't work well together.

Strategies for overcoming this challenge: If faced with this situation, one or both parties should speak to the mentoring program manager (MPM) as soon as possible. The MPM might be able to help the pair reconnect or find their way. But if the MPM agrees that the match isn't working—and can't work—then the match should be terminated under the program's "no-fault opt out."

Mentors should avoid the following pitfalls:

- "I can help" – Avoid stepping in to fix problems for the mentee.
- "I know best" - Share your experience, but don't tell the supervisor what to do.
- "I can help you move forward" - Don't be tempted to do favours for the mentee that you wouldn't do for others.
- "You need me" - The goal is independence, not dependence. The goal is for the mentee to get stronger, not to feel better about his/her weaknesses.



Monitoring and evaluation of women empowerment through individual support programs

The saying "*If you don't know where you're going, how will you know if you've gotten there?*" emphasizes the importance of having clear goals and objectives. Without well-defined goals, it becomes challenging to measure progress, assess achievements, or determine success. By conducting a comprehensive evaluation, mentoring program administrators can ensure that the program is meeting its intended goals and positively impacting participants' personal and professional development. Regular evaluation and continuous improvement will lead to a more effective and successful mentoring program over time.

How and when to monitor and evaluate a mentoring program

In the beginning of the mentoring process, it is important to define the organization's goals and objectives for the mentoring program, as well as individualized goals for each mentor and mentee pair. Monitoring involves gathering information about the program, its implementation, and outcomes, whereas evaluation is a systematic review and collection of data[1]. As in any project, monitoring and evaluating this process highly depends on the goals and objectives set at the beginning. Assessment of the mentoring process can then happen at different stages:

- Pre- and post-tests can be used to see the direct outputs of mentoring sessions or the process overall.
- Partner organizations should conduct a midterm evaluation meeting with mentors and mentees. This can be helpful as it allows participants to share their stories of success and failure, as well as analyse how the process is going, where they stand and if any adjustments are needed. Group discussions (keeping confidentiality in mind), interviews or questionnaires can also be used.
- The final evaluation can again include interviews or questionnaires, based on the pre-test questions and pre-set indicators.
- A follow-up evaluation is recommended after a few months to analyse the realistic impact of the mentoring process.

[1] <https://study.com/academy/lesson/mentoring-programs-monitoring-program-evaluation.html#:~:text=In%20all%20these%20real%20life,director%20and%20the%20company%20management>



When should you survey mentors and mentees?

Together mentorship platform identifies several key times that you should survey mentoring participants. These include:

During registration - it helps to get to know more about participants and what they want to achieve in the program. This information is critical to making a good mentor match.

After they are matched - ensure they are happy with the pairing and gather information about their expectations for the mentorship.

Mini surveys after each session - it's good to connect with mentors and mentees after each session. This allows them to reflect on the session and consider how they are progressing through the program.

Midway through the program - asking mentoring participants some questions at the halfway point of the program is another critical time to gather information.

At the conclusion of the program - learning more about their experience throughout the program as a whole is valuable information that can be used to improve the program and report to leadership on the success of the workplace mentoring program.

Who should monitor and evaluate the mentoring program?

It is important to determine how the mentoring program is evaluated and by whom. Whenever possible, it is advisable to use an external evaluator who can also evaluate the Mentoring Program Coordinators' role in the process and recommend changes for the future, where relevant. If this is not possible, the Mentoring Program Coordinator or other staff from partner organizations familiar with the program can act as evaluators.

Ideally, both quantitative and qualitative data should be collected. Qualitative data may include, for example, open-ended responses to questionnaires, written reports from participants and data from interviews or focus groups. Quantitative data may include structured survey results and human resources data, for example, on the characteristics of the mentorship pairs (e.g. gender, professional backgrounds, etc.) and promotions.



EXAMPLES OF SESSIONS AND METHODS

A mentor's role is to support the mentee's agenda, not to drive it. At the beginning of the mentoring relationship, the mentee will be asked to identify her/his key objectives for the process. As a mentor, the responsibility is to be the guardian of those objectives, ensuring that the focus of each mentoring session takes the mentee closer to, not further from the desired outcome.

Example of mentoring sessions

Every session is designed to empower mentees to set clear and achievable goals aligned with the project's mission. The timing for each session/segment is approximate and can be adjusted based on the mentees' engagement and level of interaction during the session. Mentors should encourage an open and supportive environment, allowing mentees to share their experiences and insights throughout the session.

Initial Mentoring Session: Once the mentors and mentees are introduced and matched to one another they should plan an initial mentoring session between them. The session should focus on building rapport, setting expectations, understanding the mentee's goals and aspirations, and establishing a foundation for a successful mentoring relationship. The initial mentoring session sets the foundation for a productive and supportive mentor-mentee relationship. It's essential to foster open communication, trust, and a shared commitment to women's empowerment. Mentors should, be receptive to each mentee's needs and goals, providing guidance and encouragement throughout their individual journey.

Other mentoring sessions should focus on setting goals, building skills, building confidence. When establishing mentoring circles focus should be placed on bringing together a small group of women with similar interests or aspirations.



LOPE'S SUCCESS STORIES

LoPe's microintegration method is used when working with migrant women, to prepare them to be active participants in mentor programs. The method focuses on individual capacity building and empowering of migrant women which enables them to engage in activities as equal partners. The following modules are used:

Tool 1: Identity - My story

Do I identify with my past? Do I carry a lot of unnecessary baggage? Due to their own experiences of war and conflict, Several of LoPe's counsellor's can relate to the backgrounds of the organisations users. By sharing their stories, experiences and memories, they are able to de-sensitize and invite users to also share their stories. At the same time, these counsellors can be examples that it is possible to start over and succeed in a new society. You can retain your identity, and see that it is possible to navigate within two cultures - this can be a great resource and a sought-after skill in a society where multiple cultures now exist side by side.

Tool 2: "My life - my responsibility" - change of focus

For those who have experienced challenging life situations self-pity can be a paralyzing barrier to self-help and personal development, often causing individuals to take on the role of a victim in many areas of their life. This can be experienced through perpetual focus on unfair treatment and past experiences. An important role for the counsellor here is to help participants see that such a role can be paralyzing and thus make it challenging for them to take control of their own lives.

Tool 3: "Welfare is charity put into a system"

What individual attitudes must be in place in order to maintain good welfare systems? Here, it is important to have insight into and understanding of a system that is largely based on trust. We must awaken a desire in others to contribute to local communities. At the same time, it is important to dare to reflect on our own and others' cultures.



Tool 4: Physical health and nutrition

The connection between physical and mental health is well documented. In addition, inter-Scandinavian research has shown that nutrition among immigrants represents a challenge in terms of increased incidence of diabetes and other lifestyle diseases. By raising awareness and introducing healthy nutrition, it is possible to prevent many of the unfortunate consequences of a poor diet.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- <https://www.thrivewithmentoring.com/>
- <https://girleffect.org/>
- <https://mowglitweets.medium.com/empowering-women-through-mentoring-7943239cbe55>
- <https://www.togetherplatform.com/blog/mentorship-program-survey-questions>
- <https://www.togetherplatform.com/blog/how-to-measure-your-workplace-mentoring-program>
- <https://www.togetherplatform.com/blog/mentorship-program-survey-questions> <https://www.togetherplatform.com/blog/how-to-measure-your-workplace-mentoring-program>

In Norway:

- <https://www.minmentor.no/>
- <https://globalesandefjord.no/historier/gjor-en-forskjell-bli-mentor/>





THE TRANSFORMATIVE ROLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING



THE TRANSFORMATIVE ROLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING

Diamond quote



“

Volunteering has shown me what it means and why it's important to have support and people you can always talk to. Now, I want to inspire people and show them what can be achieved through active community involvement.

”

Empowering Women through Community Engagement and Volunteering

In an increasingly diverse and interconnected world, the empowerment of women with minority and migrant backgrounds has become a pressing concern. Such women often face unique challenges related to cultural adaptation, social inclusion, and economic independence. However, through community engagement and volunteering, we find two powerful tools that can pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future for these women. Community engagement and volunteering, in this context, can break down barriers, bridge cultural divides, and help women from diverse backgrounds lead more fulfilling lives, making the integration process easier for them.

Community engagement refers to the process of involving and interacting with individuals, groups, or organizations within a specific community to collaboratively address issues, share information, and make decisions that affect that community. It is a two-way relationship where community members, stakeholders, and organizations work together to identify and solve problems, build consensus, and improve the well-being of the community as a whole. Community engagement can take various forms, such as public meetings, surveys, focus groups, workshops, public discussions, and similar activities. One of the crucial forms of community engagement is volunteering. In the context of empowering women with minority and migrant backgrounds, community engagement serves as a bridge that connects women to their new communities. It breaks down the barriers of isolation and fosters a sense of belonging. Through community engagement, women have the opportunity to voice their concerns, share their experiences, and actively participate in shaping the communities they now call home.



Volunteering, as a form of community engagement, plays a crucial role in strengthening relationships among people and building communities. It contributes to creating a more compassionate, resilient, and inclusive society. The definition of volunteering varies around the world, depending on the different contexts in which each society exists. However, in developed democracies, there are common elements that define volunteering. It is understood as an activity undertaken by an individual's free will with the intention of helping others or society as a whole, without seeking financial gain. Participation in volunteering activities is open to all, regardless of age, background, social status, societal position, education, physical or mental abilities or personal beliefs. For this reason, it is considered an excellent tool for empowering marginalized and socially excluded individuals, including women with migrant and minority backgrounds.

There are numerous opportunities for volunteering, with various forms and time commitments required for different activities. The benefits of volunteering are immeasurable. Volunteering brings multiple advantages to the community, the beneficiaries of volunteer services, the organizations that involve volunteers, and the volunteers themselves. When women engage in volunteering, they not only contribute to their communities but also develop essential skills, gain confidence, and expand their social networks. This, in turn, leads to increased self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment. Volunteering can help women build the foundation they need to pursue education, employment, or entrepreneurship, further contributing to their economic independence and empowerment.



There are several key aspects of community engagement and volunteering that we find fundamental for empowerment of women with migrant and minority backgrounds.

-  Volunteering serves as a vital path for women from minority and migrant backgrounds to integrate into their new communities. By actively participating in local initiatives, they immerse themselves in the fabric of a community, build connections, and form meaningful relationships. This not only helps them learn about the culture of their new homeland but also fosters a sense of belonging and integration. Through community engagement and volunteering, women can engage with their surroundings in a way that transcends mere residence, allowing them to contribute to and participate in the social and cultural life of their communities.
-  For migrant women, volunteering can offer an immersive language-learning experience that goes beyond formal language classes. Interacting with others in volunteering activities provides real-world, practical language skills that are essential for daily life, seeking employment, and advocating for their rights. Language proficiency equips them with the tools to navigate complex bureaucratic systems, access healthcare, and actively participate in civic and economic life.
-  Volunteering creates an environment for cultural exchange and mutual understanding. Women from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to share their unique experiences, traditions, and perspectives with the community. This not only enriches the cultural tapestry of the community but also fosters tolerance and breaks down stereotypes. By participating in the community, these women become ambassadors of their heritage, contributing to a more inclusive and tolerant society.
-  Volunteering acts as a bridge to support networks, which are especially crucial for migrant women facing unique challenges. In these settings, they can connect with individuals who have shared experiences and can provide guidance and emotional support. Voluntary roles often involve collaboration and teamwork, strengthening the bonds between participants. The sense of community and support networks built through volunteering can be a lifeline for women navigating the complexities of a new environment.



- Volunteering offers the opportunity to gain valuable skills and experiences. These newly acquired skills not only enhance their personal growth but also improve their employability. Whether through administrative roles, project management, or specialized tasks within the volunteer organization, volunteering can serve as an essential stepping stone toward financial independence. By breaking free from the cycle of economic disadvantage, women can increase their self-sufficiency and contribute to their families and communities.
- Engaging with the community empowers women to become advocates for inclusivity and challenge discrimination. By sharing their stories and first hand experiences, they are able to help foster greater understanding among the wider community and those in positions of power. Their voices become influential in advocating for policies and practices that respect the rights and dignity of individuals from diverse backgrounds, thus contributing to the creation of a more inclusive and open society.



Women from minority and migrant backgrounds who actively participate in volunteering and community initiatives serve as inspirational role models for their children and future generations. They set an example of active engagement, demonstrating the value of embracing one's heritage and participating in community-building efforts. By doing so, they inspire young girls to aspire to leadership roles, take pride in their cultural identities, and actively contribute to shaping their communities, perpetuating a cycle of empowerment and positive change.

Empowering women with minority and migrant backgrounds is not just a social responsibility; it is an investment in a brighter, more inclusive future for our communities. By embracing community engagement and volunteering, we can break down barriers, bridge cultural divides, and provide opportunities for personal and professional growth. These women, armed with newfound skills and confidence, become active contributors to society, enriching our communities in immeasurable ways. It is through these transformative tools that we can pave the way for a more equitable and inclusive future, where every woman has the opportunity to thrive and make a lasting impact. Therefore, below we present an example of best practices for involving women with migrant and minority backgrounds in community engagement and volunteering, with the aim of demonstrating the various opportunities these tools can offer us.



MAKING IT MATTER

THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING ON SOCIAL INCLUSION

The Impact Measurement Tool Manual is designed to measure the impact of volunteering on youth with fewer opportunities, tracking the benefits of volunteer experiences and their influence on overall well-being. [1]

It comprises two components, one tailored for individual assessment and the other for organizational level of evaluation.

- 1 The "You Matter" tool for young volunteers - aims to self-assess the impact of volunteering on inclusion on an individual level, focusing on a) self-esteem, b) relationships with others, c) community relations, and d) knowledge and skills.
- 2 The "Making it Matter" tool for organisations - allows evaluating the impact of volunteering on youth inclusion at the organisational level.

Benefits for volunteer involving organisations

- Development of more inclusive volunteer programmes in line with the needs of disadvantaged youth
- Increase engagement of disadvantaged youth in volunteering;
- Contributing to social inclusion
- Fostering social capital development

Benefits for of youth with fewer opportunities

- Gaining insight into their abilities
- Strengthening a sense of belonging and integration
- Supporting professional development
- Encouraging active participation in society

The methodology of implementing the measurement tool is based on applying written instructions from the manual to organisations, particularly in inclusive volunteer programmes. The tool is designed to fit a variety of individual contexts and different disadvantaged youth groups.

Short video for the introductory part which is available [HERE](#).

[1] The Manual was produced through Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic partnership project "Making it matter - the impact of volunteering on social inclusion" lead by DKolektiv (Croatia) and in cooperation with partners: CEV (Belgium), Volunteer Ireland (Ireland), BBE (Germany), FriSe (Denmark), Slovene Philanthropy (Slovenia)



UKRAINIAN SOCIAL CLUB CROATIA

Ukrainian Social Club is a program that provides support in social integration to displaced people from Ukraine by building a network of solidarity, support and friendship between the citizens of Osijek and Ukraine. The main goal of the program is to provide support to refugees to engage actively in their community, and to organize self-initiated activities. The Ukrainian Social Club was created as a response to the increasing number of persons from Ukraine who found themselves in Osijek due to the war situation. The Social Club was conceived as a place to meet, get to know each other, exchange experiences and support between Ukrainians themselves, but also with the local population.

Considering the fluidity of the Ukrainians' needs, the program took place in several phases:

1

Informal gatherings of Ukrainians, local residents, and representatives of civil society organizations, for the purpose of getting to know each other, to connect, share experiences and to provide support.

2

Mapping the needs of Ukrainians and specific actions in accordance with the mentioned needs (by organizing various thematic gatherings)

3

Empowering and increasing capacity of people from Ukraine so that they themselves can be actively involved in the work of the local community, for the benefit of the displaced Ukrainians, and for the benefit of the local community.

Benefits of this approach

The innovativeness of this program is manifested in a change of paradigm in which the user of the program itself becomes an initiator of the program and is empowered to actively participate in the creation of positive changes in society. The basis of this method is empowerment of displaced persons so they themselves become active participants in the local community and can take the initiative to solve social problems themselves. Unlike the institutional approach, this approach is based on two-way communication between hosts and refugees, which creates an equal and dignified relationship. This way, Ukrainians are not considered beneficiaries, but partners and collaborators who help make the local community a better place for everyone.



VOLUNTEER'S VALUES DIARY

The Volunteer's Values Diary[1] was primarily created as a tool for tracking volunteer's tasks, achieving objectives, and cultivating knowledge and skills among long-term volunteers. Diaries were used as more than just a record-keeping tool; they gave volunteers a valuable space to think about their experiences, helping them reflect on the details of their volunteering accomplishments. The diaries also functioned as a reminder of the important benefits and values of volunteering. By regularly looking back on their experiences, diaries can help volunteers better grasp the significant influence of volunteering on both themselves and their community.

Using the Volunteer's Values Diary has numerous advantages for both volunteers and the organizations overseeing their activities. Here are some key benefits:

- **Reflection:** The diary allows volunteers to contemplate their experiences and learn from them, fostering personal growth.
- **Goal Tracking:** Volunteers can monitor and document the achievement of their goals over time.
- **Knowledge and Skill Development:** By documenting their activities, volunteers can track their progress in acquiring new knowledge and skills.
- **Motivation:** Writing about achievements and successes can boost volunteer motivation and strengthen their engagement.



The entire Volunteer's Values Diary, ready for printing and use, can be found [HERE](#).

It is formatted for easy printing and practical utilization, providing a user-friendly platform for capturing the richness of any volunteering journey.

[1] Volunteer Value Diary is a product of the project "VIV - Volunteering inspired by values" funded by the Erasmus + KA2, small scale partnership program. The project coordinator was Centro Servizio Volontariato di Padova e Rovigo (Italy), while the partners were Croatian Volunteer Development Center (Croatia) and Associação Mais Cidadania (Portugal).





WOMEN'S NETWORKING AND COOPERATION



WOMEN'S NETWORKING AND COOPERATION

Diamond quote



“

I've managed to connect with people, and I've realized that being connected to others is a crucial factor for success.

”

Migrant women often face unique challenges when navigating unfamiliar environments, making the role of networking critically important. Networks provide an essential support system, often facilitating access to resources, employment opportunities, and social integration. They serve as platforms for migrant women to share experiences, exchange knowledge, and offer mutual assistance. These networks can take various forms - from informal community groups to formal organisations - all aimed at empowering migrant women and assisting them in overcoming obstacles they may encounter.

“Studies have shown that building and maintaining professional networks are highly important to career success because they provide access to mentors and other career supporters with helpful knowledge, strategic advice, and emotional support. At the same time, however, research shows that these same core professional networks are often less powerful and effective for women than for men in terms of the career benefits they provide” (source: <https://www.ebs.edu/en/news/ebs-generated-research-attracts-attention>)

Women are still less good at networking than men. This chapter of the Hidden Diamonds handbook provides best practice examples on how to connect socially successful women with a migrant background with one another and across national borders, to learn from their experiences and to develop methods together. This differs from classic mentoring projects, in which individual women enter partnerships with others to promote them. If this partnership fails, it is often the case that the mentoring also ends. The collaborative nature of networks means that mentorship can be more sustainable and can have a greater impact.



Networking as a tool for women empowerment

In the Grenland region in Telemark, Norway, 75% of jobs are found through pre-existing networks. If you are new to the area and do not have a network, your chances of finding a job or integrating into Norwegian society are very low.

Making connections in a new area can be a daunting task, but there are several strategies that can help. Firstly, joining local clubs or societies based on your interests can provide an opportunity to meet like-minded people. Volunteering for community projects is another useful approach, as it not only allows you to network, but also to make a positive contribution to society. Attending local events or gatherings, such as fairs or festivals, can also provide a platform to connect with local individuals. In addition, attending language exchange meetings or classes can help you improve language skills, making it easier to communicate and connect with a community.

These are all good examples of networking with the local community. In LoPe, the focus has been on business and higher education networks. As mentioned in the introduction, women in general do not have as strong network system in comparison to men, and this is even more pronounced for women with a migrant background. We have therefore implemented the following networking strategies in LoPe.



MICRO-NETWORKING, ONE-TO-ONE, FACE-TO-FACE NORWAY

LoPe works with integration on a micro level and this is reflected in our small scale networking activities. We organise face-to-face micro-networking meetings.

Face-to-face networking remains a powerful tool in an increasingly digital age. It offers individuals the opportunity to build stronger connections by allowing for a level of rapport and trust that is often harder to establish through digital communication channels. Face-to-face interactions provide non-verbal cues such as body language and tone of voice that add to the depth of communication. In addition, such encounters often lead to serendipitous conversations and unexpected opportunities, reinforcing the importance of face-to-face networking in personal and professional development.

How do we do this? How do we connect our users with a key business contact?

It's a lengthy process. And it presupposes that organisations already have their own network of people to draw on. It is often businesswomen within our own networks who agree to meet with one of our participants. We often begin by inviting the two women to a kind of brainstorming session. The goal is to build a relationship between the two women, and hopefully spark a connection which leads to our migrant woman being connected into wider networks which the more connected businesswoman has access to. We rely on a snowballing effect, where by one contact can lead to several more, until, over time, an isolated individual is able to gain a sustainable and resource filled network. It is also important to keep the boundaries of mentoring flexible and easy especially for the time constrained businesswoman



MIGRA DIAMONDS GERMANY

In addition to classic networks such as clubs, initiatives, etc., digital networks can also help women to support each other. Digital networks can be easily established via social media; it is best to use the medium that the respective age group uses the most. In Rosenheim, a social network in Instagram called Migra Diamonds is currently being founded. It is aimed at (young) women with a migration and refugee background. Events that are interesting for the target group are regularly posted on the Instagram page, as well as tips, information and encouraging stories about different women. There is also the opportunity to contact some women who have a migration background themselves and who offer peer-to-peer advice online or in person. The network also organizes events every two months that are attractive to the target group and to which everyone is invited, such as concerts, lectures, cinema evenings, intercultural dinners, etc. In addition to peers, the network also includes professionals who provide advice in the region.



PHOTOGRAPHIC DIARIES 2018 GERMANY

The “Photographic Diaries” project was launched in 2016 by the photographer Patricia Morosan, supported by the Artistania eV association and financed by the Paritätisches Bildungswerk. The project was designed as a creative space for women in which they could use photographic means to take a different look at their biographies and reflect together on their “careers”. Photography served primarily as a tool to initiate narratives and distance oneself from one's own experiences.

For this purpose, those involved in the project keep a photo diary. The women were asked to photograph their everyday life in Berlin from different perspectives. Each participant received a small camera. They were also asked to answer around 20 questions using photos and images. Almost every photo the participants took became a topic of discussion, either in collective or individual conversations. At the end of the project, we were able to design and print a photo book for each participant. The photo books and photos created in the workshop were presented in an exhibition.





WORKSHOPS



WORKSHOP 1

WHO AM I?

Aim

To foster awareness on personal attributes, competences, values and inspire self-reflection

Activities/ tasks

1st step:

Each participant needs to get A4 paper and 7-8 crayons of different colours.

Distribute A4 papers to the participants and offer them crayons in various colours (eg you can put the crayons on a large piece of white paper on the floor).

2nd step:

Instructions to participants:

Take a few minutes and think about your positive qualities, abilities, skills, talents, values and beliefs... This could be something you are good at, your special skill or talent, something you like about yourselves. These can be values or beliefs that are important to you (eg I am a good friend; I am honest and fair) etc.

Take an A4 sheet of paper and one crayon. Begin by drawing a circle in the middle of the page and writing your name inside. Draw a line from the circle almost to the edge of the paper. At the end of that line, write your first ability/skill/knowledge/value that you especially value in yourself. Then take another crayon, draw a new line and write another ability. Try to list at least 5-6 of your positive qualities.

3rd step:

After everyone has done the task, you can tell them that they now have their own personal sun. Invite the participants to show their drawings and tell what they wrote about themselves.

4th step:

Invite participants to show their drawings and share with others what they have written about themselves.

5th step:

Discussion (*Note that everyone should be given the freedom to decide how much they wish to share with the group)



Learning outcome

Better recognition and identification of personal strengths and talents. Increased self-esteem.

Materials

A4 paper
Different colours of crayons

Discussion

Part 1

Do you like your "personal sun"? How do you feel about this task? Did you have a hard time remembering what you are good at? What was easy for you in this task? Which of the above characteristics do you know from before? Is there something that you have now become aware of or are more familiar with? How do you feel now about your drawing and what you have realized about yourself?

Part 2

What do you think; does society affects women's self-perception? What would you say, are there certain social expectations or stereotypes that influence how women see their roles and abilities? How do cultural norms and traditions shape the way women perceive themselves? In what way can a woman's migrant or minority origin affect her perception of herself (positively, negatively)?

What messages do different forms of media (TV, magazines, social media) send about gender roles and how do media messages about gender roles affect women's self-confidence?

Duration

90 - 120 minutes



WORKSHOP 2

UNCOVERING GENDER BIAS: UNDERSTANDING INEQUALITY

Aim

To encourage understanding of widespread gender biases and inequalities in various aspects of life.

Activities/ tasks

1st step:

Short introduction to gender inequality in today's world (economic, social, and cultural). Present statistics that highlight gender differences. You can use data of EUROSTAT[1] or Europe Institute for gender Equality (EIGE)[2] or national statistical data.

2nd step:

Discuss the statistics and barriers that prevent women from achieving equality in society. Invite participants to comment on the statistical data and share their opinions and experiences with different forms of gender stereotyping.

3rd step:

Please select one of the options for this step.

Option A): Ask participants to share their personal stories about dealing with inequality and prejudice against women (this option is more suitable for groups where trust has already been built).

Option B): prepare a case study in advance to illustrate the gender inequality and its consequences. this option is suitable for groups where trust has already been built

Option C: Share participants into small groups of 4-5 members; ask them to share their personal experiences when they felt prejudice or inequality. Invite them to prepare a role play s their personal and professional life.

After that, the facilitator opens a discussion about inequalities and prejudices against women based on participants experiences, and writes on a flip chart the identified areas of gender inequality.



[1] <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/equality/database>

[2] <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs>



Activities/ tasks

4th step:

Divide the participants into small groups. The task of the small groups is to identify strategies and practical tools to combat gender inequality (at the individual and political level). Encourage participants to discuss and come up with solutions together.

Presentation of tasks of small groups and conclusions reached. Afterwards, ask the women to think about what they can do to achieve more equality for themselves and what support they need to achieve this.

Provide information about organizations and institutions that support women's empowerment and equality. Encourage women networking as a place of support and empowerment.

Learning outcomes

Recognition of different manifestations of gender inequality in everyday life (social norms and prejudice, pay gap, underrepresentation in leadership roles, unequal distribution of household chores and caring duties etc.) and identification of various tools for gender equality.

Materials

Presentation with statistical data on gender equality; flip chart paper; markers

Discussion

What do you recognize as the causes of gender inequality and what perpetuates gender inequality in today's society? How do social expectations, gender roles and norms contribute to the maintenance of inequality?

What are the economic consequences of gender inequality and how does economic inequality in economic opportunity reinforce wider gender gaps?

How effective are existing policies and laws in promoting gender equality?

How do media portrayals and representations of gender reinforce stereotypes and contribute to inequality? How can the media instead be a force for promoting gender equality? How can education be used as a tool to combat gender inequality and empower individuals to create more just societies?

What steps can societies take to ensure a fairer future for all genders? What can you do?

Duration

90 minutes



WORKSHOP 3

PEER TO PEER – MAKE LIFE PERSPECTIVES VISIBLE

Aim

Women develop their life prospects and are inspired/ encouraged by successful women with a migration background.

Activities/ tasks

1. Preparation

Depending on the group size, we are looking for 2-4 women with a migration background who are professionally, culturally or politically successful. The workshop will be fleshed out together with them. A booklet with blank pages will be prepared for all participants.

2. Storytelling

In the workshop, the women report on their own biographies.

- How did you come here?
- What challenges have you personally encountered?
- Were you able to overcome these challenges? And how?
- Who or what drove or motivated you?
- Were there specific factors that helped you overcome the challenges?
- What institutions, people, professionals and friends supported you or had a lasting influence?
- What are you doing now?
- What do you recommend to women here?

3. Questions

Participants are invited to ask questions.



Activities/ tasks

4. Development of life perspectives:

The group is divided into smaller groups, one peer works with a small group to develop their perspectives on life. Each woman receives a booklet with the following questions on different pages. The women are asked to answer the questions in writing.

- What do you want to achieve in your life (professionally/personally)?
- How can you achieve it (steps)?
- What might be stopping you?
- Who or what can support you in breaking down the obstacles?
- What specific next step do you plan to take?
-

The peers go around and support the women in answering.

At the end, the women present to each other what they have achieved. There is applause.

5. Design of the booklets

In the larger group, the women receive pens, markers, stickers, colourful paper, glue, etc. and are invited to make the outside and inside of the notebooks attractive and give them a title.

6. Conclusion

The workshop leader explains the purpose of the booklets: Here the women can continue to add to their goals, what they want to achieve and what they have already achieved. On one page they can create a resource card where they can write down what and who can support them.

Learning outcomes

- Development of life perspectives
- Encouragement from peers with similar biographies
- Making support factors and opportunities visible

Materials

Empty booklets for all participants, working materials such as pens, markers, stickers, colourful paper, glue, etc.

Duration

180 minutes



WORKSHOP 4

FIND SOLUTIONS WITH DESIGN THINKING

Aim

Women with a migrant background work together to develop solutions to everyday problems and thereby promote a sense of self-efficacy.

Activities/ tasks

Workshop 1

1. Identification of a common question

Ask the women what current challenges and concerns they have in their everyday life. Have them write the answers on cards and tape them to a board.

Cluster similar answers together. Then ask the women to choose one cluster or topic that affects many of them E.g. supporting the children with their homework.

2. Development of ideas

Divide the group into small groups of 3-4 women. Specify the problem. Ask participants to come up with ideas to solve the problem. The ideas should be as concrete as possible and relate to local and feasible possibilities.

- How could the problem be solved?
- What exactly would the offer have to look like to be truly helpful?
- Who or what could be used to support this solution?
- How could one gain supporters?
- What could the women themselves contribute?

Within their small groups the women then discuss, visualise and document their answers on posters so that they can be easily understood.

3. Presentation of ideas

The participants present their results to the rest of the group. The other participants ask questions and add to the ideas.

It is considered which of the ideas the group could tackle together. Steps and tasks are specified and distributed. It is agreed what the participants will do until the next workshop. Tasks are defined that are realistic and can be completed by the participants.

Each participant is given a partner with whom they can complete a task together with. They agree on how they will remember and support each other.



Activities/ tasks

Workshop 2

1. Presenting the results

At the beginning, introduce the problem and the tasks again. Then give the participants time to write down on a poster with their partner what their task was and what the results were. Then ask the pairs to present the results.

2. Reflection

Reflect on the process together with the group. Write the questions on flipcharts so they are visible.

- What were the results?
- Were they able to develop new ideas?
- What was helpful?
- To what extent can you use the approach to solve problems in everyday life?
- What is still a hindrance?

Learning outcomes

- Develop strategies to solve everyday problems
- Experience of self-efficacy

Materials

Poster, pens, markers

Duration

2 Workshops approximately, 120 minutes



WORKSHOP 5

TO BE A VOLUNTEER - VOLUNTEERING AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

Aim

To empower women with migrant and minority backgrounds with the knowledge, skills, and motivation needed for impactful volunteering, fostering a culture of active civic engagement and social responsibility.

Activities/ tasks

1.Introduction: What is Volunteering – Discussion with PowerPoint Presentation (PPT)

Welcome and introductions – the circle of introduction.

Overview of workshop objectives (PPT) and discussing participants' expectations.

Discussion about previous volunteering experience with participants and discussion about their concept of volunteering.

Explaining the key terms (volunteering, volunteer, volunteering organizers) and presenting various forms of volunteering (PPT)

2.Benefits and values of Volunteering – gallery, working in pairs, plenary discussion

Exploring and discussing the benefits of volunteering on 3 levels: personal, organisational and community - The facilitator puts three big papers on the walls. Each paper presents a topic: Personal benefits; benefits for organizations; Benefits for community. The participants are asked to walk around to each paper and write everything that comes to mind regarding each topic. After the activity each set of benefits are discussed with the help of PPT.

Discussing the key values of volunteering (Volunteer Code of Ethics) – Facilitator divides participants in pairs. Each pair gets 1-2 key values to define and discuss. After, each pair shortly presents their definition back to the larger group.

3.Motivation – brainstorming, plenary discussion; PPT

Facilitator leads a discussion about different kinds of motivations when talking about volunteering, the facilitator writes the ideas on a flipchart; participants are asked to share their own motivations; the discussion is followed by PPT.



Activities/ tasks

4.Volunteering in practice – PPT, Quiz, plenary discussion

Facilitator introduces participants to the volunteer management cycle and coordinator roles via PPT.

The presentation should focus upon raising awareness of volunteer rights and obligations, legal requirements for organisers including contracts and records. Participants are then divided in 3 groups take part in a quiz about volunteers' rights and obligations. After the quiz is done, the facilitator can then go through each question explaining the right answers.

Presenting competences volunteers can develop through volunteering (Certificate of Competencies Acquired through Volunteering). The facilitator then presents the document and discusses with the group the competences participants would like to acquire through volunteering and how can they do so.

5.Volunteering as a tool for social inclusion – PPT and discussion

Discuss how volunteering can help break cultural barriers and empower women, present good practice examples of volunteering as a tool for social inclusion - PPT Presenting the suitable volunteer opportunities in local community.

Learning outcomes

- Awareness of the importance of volunteering for individuals, organizations, and society.
- Recognition of the benefits of volunteering on individual and community level.
- Ability to actively reflect on the needs and motivations for volunteering.
- Ability to find suitable volunteer opportunities in the local community.

Materials

PowerPoint presentation and projector/TV; working materials such as papers, markers, flip-chart sheets, post-it notes, and similar supplies.

Duration

120 minutes



Discussion

- Do you have volunteering experience?
- Why do you think people volunteer?
- What do you think the benefits of volunteering might be for you personally?
- What are the benefits of volunteering for the community?
- If you were to volunteer, where would you like to volunteer?
- In what ways can volunteering empower women with migrant backgrounds in their new communities?
- How can volunteering help break cultural barriers and foster understanding between different communities?



WORKSHOP 6:

FROM INSIGHT TO IMPACT

Aim

To empower women with migrant and minority backgrounds by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed for effective community engagement.

Activities/ tasks

Introduction – Discussion with PPT

Welcome and introductions.

Overview of workshop objectives

Icebreaker – building a perfect neighbourhood: The participants are divided in teams and provided with flip chart paper and a variety of small objects and craft supplies (post it, colour papers, toys, Lego...) Their only task is to create a perfect neighbourhood, but they should do it as a team. After the game the facilitator can then begin a discussion of how each group conceptualised and portrayed their perfect neighbourhood.

What is community engagement? – Discussion with PPT

Discussion with participants, presentation of examples of community engagement

Mapping the needs of our community – brainstorming

Ask participants to write possible community problems they wish to solve on post-it notes. Display and group each post-it-note on a flip chart according to similar categories. Ask participants to choose 5 key issues from the list they want to address, and based on that, divide the group into 5 to discuss each issue. Bring the groups back together to present and discuss their issue and any key solutions.



Activities/ tasks

Analysing the problem - The Problem Tree method, group work

The facilitator draws an illustrative example of a problem tree on the board/flip chart and explains the rules of this method using an easy example from everyday life.

The rules are as follows:

The tree trunk represents the problem we want to solve.

The branches of the tree represent the consequences of the mentioned problem.

The roots represent the causes of the mentioned problem.

Fruits represent possible solutions to problems.

Afterward, the facilitator divides participants into groups and provides each group with the legend of the tree. Each group has the task to think about one problem in their communities and to try to solve it with a tree method. During this exercise participants discuss the causes and consequences of their problems, possible solutions and potential stakeholders who could support them in solving their problem. After the exercise the groups share their work with the rest of the group.

Creating an action plan – group work

After presentations, groups have a chance to regroup and to go deeper into solving their problems. The facilitator provides the group a template of an action plan. Participants are asked to think of concrete actions for solving their problems, according to SMART methodology. After the group work participants should present their work back to the group.

3. Finishing with peer-to-peer support – plenary discussion

Now participants have a chance to give each other the feedback on their future plans of action. The facilitator concludes the session by summarising the key insights from the workshop and encouraging participants to network and exchange contacts for future actions. Resources and information for further support are distributed.

Learning outcomes

- Participants will gain a deeper understanding of community engagement and its relevance for women with migrant and minority backgrounds.
- Participants will gain a heightened awareness of community needs and challenges
- Participants will improve their ability to identify available community resources and partnerships.
- Participants will gain skills for the development of concrete action plans to address and identify needs, fostering a sense of purpose and direction.



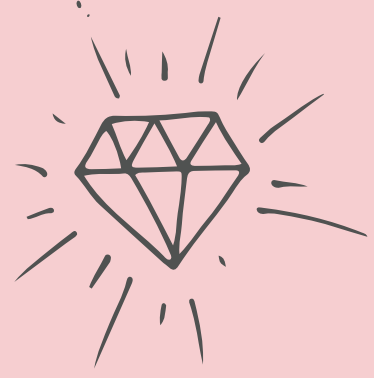
Duration

120 minutes

Discussion

- Why do you believe community engagement is essential for fostering positive change?
- Can you share an example from your own experience where community engagement had a significant impact on addressing a local challenge or need?
- In what ways can understanding and addressing community needs lead to stronger, more resilient neighbourhoods?
- How do you think cultural competence contributes to the success of community engagement efforts, particularly in diverse communities?
- What challenges might arise when trying to mobilize a community, and how can these challenges be overcome?
- In what ways can community members empower one another to take on leadership roles within the community?





LITERATURE AND RESOURCES



LITERATURE AND RESOURCES

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