

SMART VOLUNTEERING

FOR FEMALE MIGRANTS

Hand in Hand: Social and Economic
Inclusion of Newcomers

09/07/2019

EESC



Co-funded by the
Asylum, Migration and Integration
Fund of the European Union

European Network of Migrant Women

- 50+ members org
- individual members
- 20 EU states
- Brussels office
- Feminist
- International
- Non Partisan
- Secular
- Non Hierarchical
- Migrant WomenLed
- Grassroots
- Members Driven



Why Female Migrants?

- Many third country nationals (TCN) in Europe are overqualified or over-skilled for their jobs and women tend to have particularly low employment rates. Even though they are more educated than migrant men, they experience de-skilling than other women and migrant men (EIGE Report, 2016). Their skills and qualifications are not completely utilised.
- Related to these, a special focus on migrant women's labour integration has been found as indispensable in the EU Action Plan for Third- Country Nationals adopted in 2016.

Why Volunteering?



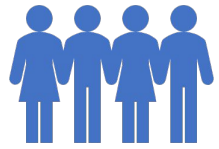
Promoting immigrant volunteering has been on the agenda of many EU states since they have realised the potential and advantages it might bring.



The need to provide immigrants with voluntary work opportunities has also been referred in the Common Agenda for Integration adopted in 2005.

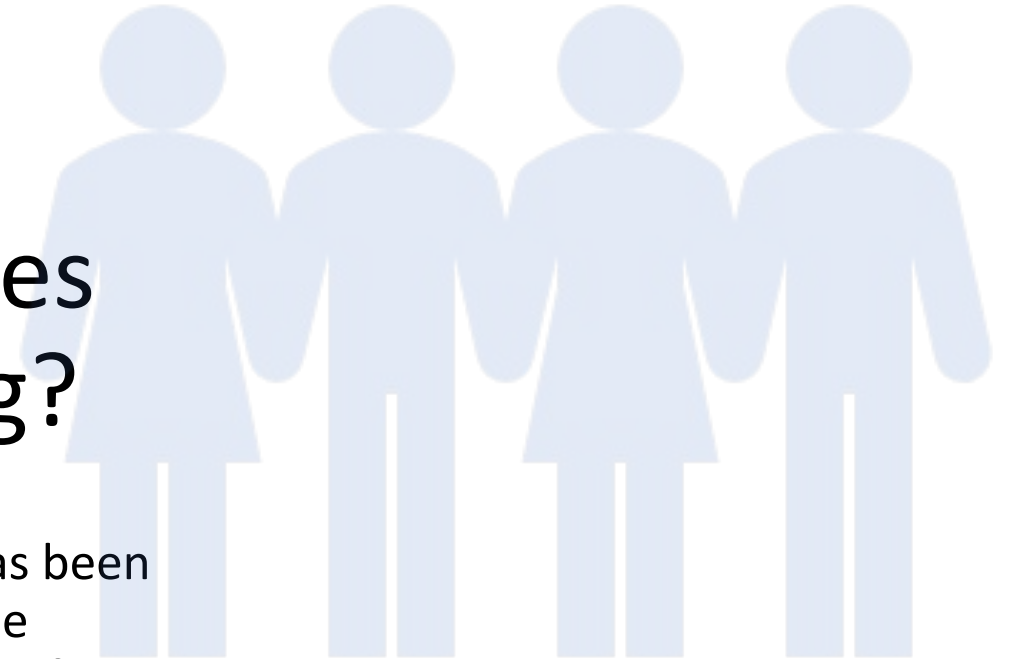


However, 'Immigrant volunteering' has been mentioned mostly in relation to 'increasing civic participation, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue and cultural awareness' (Handbook of Integration for Policy makers and Practitioners, 2010).



Skills and Competences Through Volunteering?

- Volunteering as an integration method has been highly beneficial to any participant and the receiving society. However, there is a lack of knowledge and data about migrant volunteering in European countries.



Partners:
Belgium,
Cyprus, France,
Italy, Spain and
United
Kingdom

The logo for SMART VOLUNTEERING features the word "SMART" in a large, bold, blue, hand-painted style font. Below it, the word "VOLUNTEERING" is written in a smaller, blue, hand-painted style font. A thin vertical line is positioned to the right of the word "VOLUNTEERING".

SMART
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**FOR
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As a multi-agency cooperation project, SMART Volunteering aims to fill this gap by exploring understanding of volunteering among migrant women and the crucial roles of civil society organizations and business actors in creating the conditions conducive to social integration.

Methodology

TARGET GROUP I: Migrant / Third Country National (TCN) Women



Method

Desk Research
Focus Groups
Individual Interviews
Questions-Activities

Participants

Variability in ethnic background
(Highly) skilled migrant women.
Total of 55 women

Analysis

Emerging themes in discussion
Group consensus & dissenting views
Degree of conviction in responses
Key Similarities & Differences



Key Questions

- Main challenges TCN women face in getting access to employment in partner countries
- How volunteering responds to TCN women's socio-economic integration needs
- Main perceptions and understanding of volunteering amongst TCN women



In conducting interviews and focus groups partners aimed at adopting a **FEMINIST**

METHODOLOGY which encourages a more reflexive and reciprocal approach seeking to neutralise the hierarchical power relations inherent to traditional interview structures.

Methodology

TARGET GROUP II: Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) / NGOs



Method

Desk Research
Semi-Structured
Interviews

Participants

Representatives of CSOs/NGOs
Experienced with volunteers
Total of 31 organisations

Analysis

Legal VS Cultural barriers
Most common needs & problems
Gaps between perceptions & needs

Key Questions



- Existing volunteering programs & opportunities available to TCN women
- Perceptions and understanding about volunteering
- Barriers to volunteering
- Transferable skills TCN women can gain through voluntary work
- Legal and administrative framework for working as a volunteer in partner countries

Methodology

TARGET GROUP III: Business Organisations



Method

Desk Research
Online Surveys
Interviews

Participants

Small scale companies
Medium scale companies
Total of 90 companies

Analysis

Legal VS Cultural barriers
Most common needs & problems
Gaps between perceptions & needs



Key Questions

- Perceptions about and barriers to volunteering for migrants & refugees
- Internal Equality policies & protocols on ethnic/racial & women's representation
- Legal and administrative framework for working as a volunteer in partner countries
- Training needs for working with volunteers & ethnic groups
- Barriers faced in working with ethnic minority groups / migrants
- Available mentoring & training schemes within business entities

Conclusions

Migrant women are motivated to integrate into social and economic life if/when they are provided with necessary support and tools. Even though their reasons for moving to Europe vary, they all aspire to study, be trained and get proper jobs suitable to their qualifications.

Training, volunteering, internship, and educational programs can be among the best methods to develop migrant women's skills. However, there should be a combination of training and opportunities to use these skills in the labour market.

Most migrant women believe that volunteering can play an important role in their self-development, access to labour market, engaging in community and coping with uncertainty. This should be recognised by different actors, and volunteering should be easily accessible to all women from different backgrounds.

Helping other people and feeling useful is the biggest reason for TCN women to volunteer, but many volunteering positions do not offer enough opportunities, which demotivates them to do volunteering in long term.

Migrant Women's Skills

Academic Degrees
Working Experience
Vocational Training
Certificates
Different Languages



Migrant Women's Needs

Networking & Contacts
Communication & Interpersonal Skills
Social & Legal Support & Guidance
Certification of existing skills
Professional Language Skills

In the post-migration period the 'dream' objectives of migrant women turn into 'available' objectives due to barriers.

Lack of knowledge on available
volunteering opportunities
Difficulties in balance between
volunteering & job seeking time
Lack of Required Skills
Lack of inter-agency cooperation




Barriers






Discrimination & Social Exclusion
Family Obligation & Lack of Child Care
Legal & Economic Dependency
Non recognition of existing skills
Lack of Professional Language Skills
Lack of awareness among authorities

Most women, especially newcomers, are left without guidance and cannot easily access information on national system, training and employment opportunities. More coordination between authorities and support are required to help women achieve their goals.

Benefits of Volunteering for Migrant Women

-  **PSYCHOLOGICAL:** Empowerment, Confidence, feeling valued & recognised, Feeling connected to community
-  **SOCIAL:** Eased & improved integration, New friends & contacts, Being socially active
-  **ECONOMIC:** Increased & acquired skills, Job-related networks, Legal & economic knowledge, Confidence in job seeking

Key Challenges Faced by Migrant Women in Volunteering

-  **PSYCHOLOGICAL:** Keeping up the motivation to continue volunteering in long term
-  **SOCIAL:** Lack of time, Burden of Family, Unstructured & inefficient state support
-  **ECONOMIC:** Pressure to find paid jobs, Focus on youth volunteering & lack of opportunities for women above 30 to move from volunteering to employment

Skills Acquired by Migrant Women through Volunteering in CSOs

Communication
Interpersonal
Multi-Tasking
Teamwork
Self-Efficacy



Cultural Awareness
Writing
Digital & ICT
Self Confidence
Time Management

TCN women mostly volunteer to help other newcomers through interpretation & sharing information on legal-administrative system. Ethical reservations of NGOs about unpaid tasks limit the chances of TCN women for whom volunteering is the only opportunity to develop their skills.

Main Barriers Faced by CSOs in Providing Volunteering






Lack of recruitment strategies
to reach migrant women
Lack of time & resources
Lack of information on rules &
regulations on volunteering
Miscommunication







Cultural & religious differences
Lack of knowledge on how to make
volunteering available for TCN women
Ethical considerations of not using
unpaid labour
Lack of language skills of migrant women

There is a shortage of information & lack of awareness about the 'formal' volunteering and the advantages it might bring, among CSOs

Key Benefits for CSOs in Working with Volunteers

-  Combatting stereotypes about migrant communities & migrant women specifically
-  Creating diverse & gender balanced team
-  Contributing to social cohesion in communities
-  Improving self-image in the eyes of partners, funders and communities
-  Volunteering is particularly beneficial for grassroots NGOs

Key Challenges Faced by Migrant Women in Volunteering

-  Unorganised Voluntary Work
-  Lack of social support from organisations
-  Lack of training & skill development in volunteering
-  Financial pressure to engage in paid activities

Training Needs of Business Sector

Gender Equality
Intercultural Awareness
Managing Diverse Groups
Social Inclusion
Interfaith Dialogue



Interviewing Skills
Conflict Management
Engagement with Ethnic Minorities
Intercultural Teamwork
Negotiations Skills

Most private companies believe that business sector does not have sufficient knowledge and awareness of the diverse groups in Europe

Main Barriers to Volunteering Reported by Business Sector

Cultural differences
Prejudice & Lack of Trust
Unreliability
Bad time management



Lack of relevant skills
Language barriers
Different work ethos & culture
Integration Problems

Language barriers, lack of relevant skills and difference in cultures are the most frequently mentioned challenges by the business sector

Diversity in Private Sector: Key Elements

- 78 % of participants have not taken any training programme about working with disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities
- Only 22,2% have training experiences in cultural awareness, disability/accessibility, diversity strategies, disabled migrants and intercultural education.
- Almost 54% have experience in working with ethnic minorities.
- Only 11% have specific strategies to connect to ethnic minorities.
- Communication is encountered as a challenge for companies, as well as for the interns, however, the internship programs do not provide them with such skills.
- Internship programmes focus on professional, technical skills and the number of coaching/mentoring programs remains low.

Despite the striking lack of diversity skills in business community, most do not see the need to improve their cultural & gender equality skills. This can be explained by the lack of sensitivity and of information on the possible contribution these groups can make in the business sector

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