



Volunteer Programme

Research - Focus Groups & Co-creation Workshops



PEPA- Peer Empowerment Programme for Achievement of Migrant Women

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Index

Introduction	5
Desktop Research	6
Bulgaria	7
Background	7
Demographic data and socio-economic profile	8
Educational profile	11
Key findings	12
Priority Needs	13
Key recommendations	14
References	15
Poland	16
Background	16
Selected legal regulations	17
Social welfare/ assistance	17
Social security	17
Healthcare	17
Vocational activation for foreigners co-financed by Euroeapan funds	17
Integation programmes for various groups of foreigners	17
Some selected programmes/ curricula include:	18
Demographic data and socio-economic profile	18
Women	19
Age	19
Gender	19
Country	19
Educational profile	20
Key findings	21
Priority needs	22
Key recommendations	22
References	23
Romania	24
Background	24
Country profile	25
Statistics	25
Asylum seekers	26



Situation on the labour market	27
Migrants by age groups (15-69 years) in 2019 in Romania	27
Migrants by gender – Comparison between 2018 and 2019	29
Key Findings	29
Key Recommendations	30
References	31
Spain	32
Background	32
Socio-demographic data	33
Education	34
Key findings	34
Priority needs	35
Key recommendations	35
References	36
UK	37
Background	37
Demographic data and socio-economic profile	37
Key findings	38
Priority Needs	38
Key recommendations	39
So what can be done	39
References	40
Focus Groups	41
Bulgaria	41
Poland	43
Romania	45
Spain	47
UK	49
Co-Creation Workshops	52
Bulgaria	52
Poland	53
Romania	55
UK	58
Conclusion	59
Social Inclusion	60



Competencies of Educators	60
Learning opportunities for low-skilled/qualified adults	61
Summary	62
Appendix I - Case Studies	63
Case study - UK	63
Case study - Bulgaria	65
Case study - Poland	68
Case study - Romania	70
Case study - Spain	72





Introduction

Peer Empowerment Programme for Achievement of Migrant Women (PEPA) is a two-year project designed to empower migrant women by providing opportunities to support their peers in learning and social activities, and to volunteer in their communities.

As part of the project focus group and co-creation workshops were undertaken with migrant women be especially those with lower educational attainment, on low incomes, social isolated, or in vulnerable circumstances to ascertain the barriers and suggestions for what a 'good volunteering programme' should look like.

Following report brings together focus groups and co-creation workshops from all partner countries.

Desktop Research

The needs analysis for IO1 involved desk research into the resources available in partner countries on how to support migrant women; research identified some promising examples of best practice, but little evidence that these lessons were being transferred from specialist organisations whose work centred around supporting migrant women, and other organisations who support migrant women in a non-specialist capacity.

These organisations are the primary target audience for IO1, although we expect specialist organisations to benefit as well - since they can still learn from others working in similar circumstances and will disseminate the guide to them through local networks.

Bulgaria

Background

Bulgaria is strategically located in the South Eastern corner of the European Union, being one of the gates into Europe along the Balkan and the East Mediterranean migration routes. Prior to 2013, the country was not a preferred entry or transit destination for migrants. Since June 2013, however, the situation in Bulgaria has dynamically changed with regard to the number of undocumented migrants. The majority of undocumented migrants who arrive in Bulgaria try to continue their journey to destination countries in North and Western Europe. The society in Bulgaria is not united in terms of the reception of migrants and the idea of support and facilitate their integration.

We are witnessing very negative and ostentatious expressed moods of small groups of people, who react loudly and threateningly at each occurrence of migrants, but the individual and single manifestations are not a characteristic that applies to our whole society.

The Bulgarian state grants four types of protection:

- Asylum granted by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria to aliens who have been persecuted due to their beliefs or activities in support of internationally recognized rights and freedoms.
- Temporary protection granted by virtue of an act issued by the Council of Ministers for a certain period, in the event of a mass influx of aliens who have been forced to leave their country of origin due to an armed conflict, foreign aggression, large-scale violence or violation of human rights.
- Refugee status granted by the President of the State Agency for Refugees in line with the criteria set out in the 1951 Geneva Convention and the Law on Asylum and Refugees.
- Humanitarian status granted by the President of the State Agency for Refugees to an alien whose life, security and freedom are threatened due to an armed conflict or danger of torture or other forms of inhuman and degrading treatment, as well as for other humanitarian reasons.

Demographic data and socio-economic profile

Full data for 2020 are not available till now. For 2019 the main statistics are:

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN 2019 BY AGE AND CITIZENSHIP OF MIGRANTS 2019

Age in completed years	Immigrants				
	Total	Bulgarian	Other	of which	
				EU	Non - EU*
Total	37 929	23 555	14 374	1 222	13 152
0-4	2 482	2 134	348	11	337
5-9	1 334	970	364	21	343
10-14	823	451	372	11	361
15-19	1 410	639	771	53	718
20-24	2 214	1 104	1 110	92	1 018
25-29	2 782	1 839	943	70	873
30-34	3 343	2 136	1 207	107	1 100
35-39	3 052	1 895	1 157	103	1 054
40-44	2 938	1 613	1 325	122	1 203
45-49	2 491	1 369	1 122	110	1 012
50-54	2 798	1 584	1 214	130	1 084
55-59	3 215	2 015	1 200	106	1 094
60-64	3 578	2 379	1 199	113	1 086
65-69	3 086	2 153	933	94	839
70+	2 383	1 274	1 109	79	1 030

Third country nationals, stateless persons and unknown citizenship are included 13.04.2020

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION* BY AGE AND SEX IN 2019

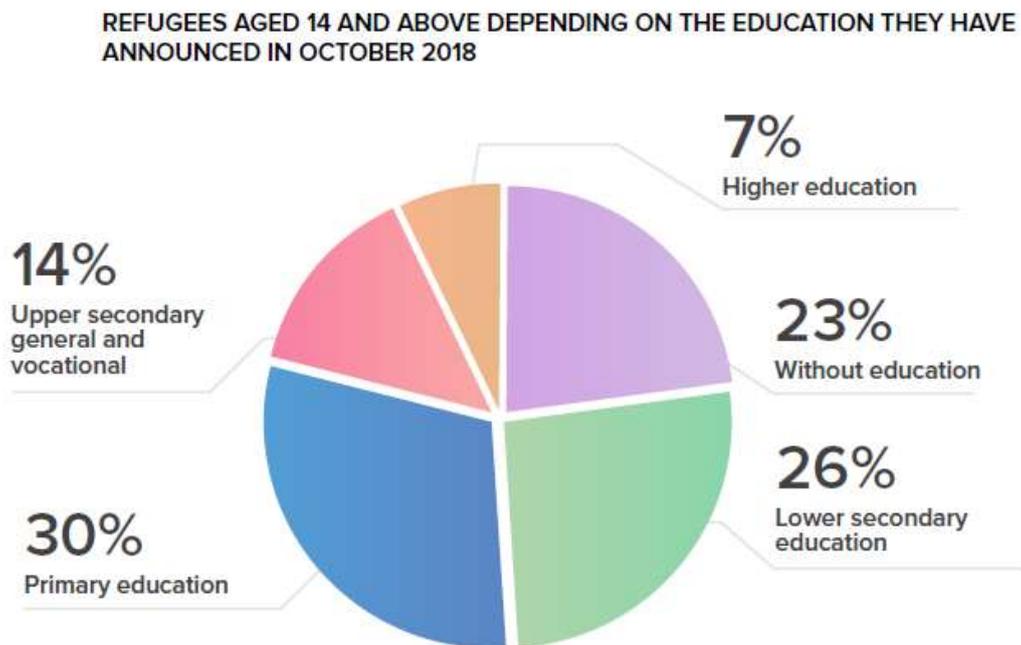
Sex	(Number)		
	Immigrants in the country	Emigrants from the country	Migration increase
Total	37 929	39 941	-2 012
0 - 4	2 482	951	1 531
5 - 9	1 334	1 292	42
10 - 14	823	1 422	-599
15 - 19	1 410	2 671	-1 261
20 - 24	2 214	5 075	-2 861
25 - 29	2 782	5 237	-2 455
30 - 34	3 343	4 980	-1 637
35 - 39	3 052	4 313	-1 261
40 - 44	2 938	3 790	-852
45 - 49	2 491	2 852	-361
50 - 54	2 798	1 987	811
55 - 59	3 215	1 587	1 628
60 - 64	3 578	1 234	2 344
65 - 69	3 086	1 066	2 020
70 - 74	1 433	748	685
75 - 79	597	482	115
80 +	353	254	99

Male	19 089	20 541	-1 452
0 - 4	1 261	490	771
5 - 9	689	670	19
10 - 14	426	725	-299
15 - 19	676	1 296	-620
20 - 24	1 078	2 618	-1 540
25 - 29	1 161	2 646	-1 485
30 - 34	1 465	2 525	-1 060
35 - 39	1 479	2 230	-751
40 - 44	1 639	2 038	-399
45 - 49	1 439	1 626	-187
50 - 54	1 570	1 079	491
55 - 59	1 633	818	815
60 - 64	1 767	628	1 139
65 - 69	1 578	487	1 091
70 - 74	721	339	382
75 - 79	350	213	137
80 +	157	113	44
Female	18 840	19 400	-560
0 - 4	1 221	461	760
5 - 9	645	622	23
10 - 14	397	697	-300
15 - 19	734	1 375	-641
20 - 24	1 136	2 457	-1 321
25 - 29	1 621	2 591	-970
30 - 34	1 878	2 455	-577
35 - 39	1 573	2 083	-510
40 - 44	1 299	1 752	-453
45 - 49	1 052	1 226	-174
50 - 54	1 228	908	320
55 - 59	1 582	769	813
60 - 64	1 811	606	1 205
65 - 69	1 508	579	929
70 - 74	712	409	303
75 - 79	247	269	-22
80 +	196	141	55

*Data on international migration include persons who have declared change of their present address in the country with a new one outside it or change of an address abroad with a new one in the country.

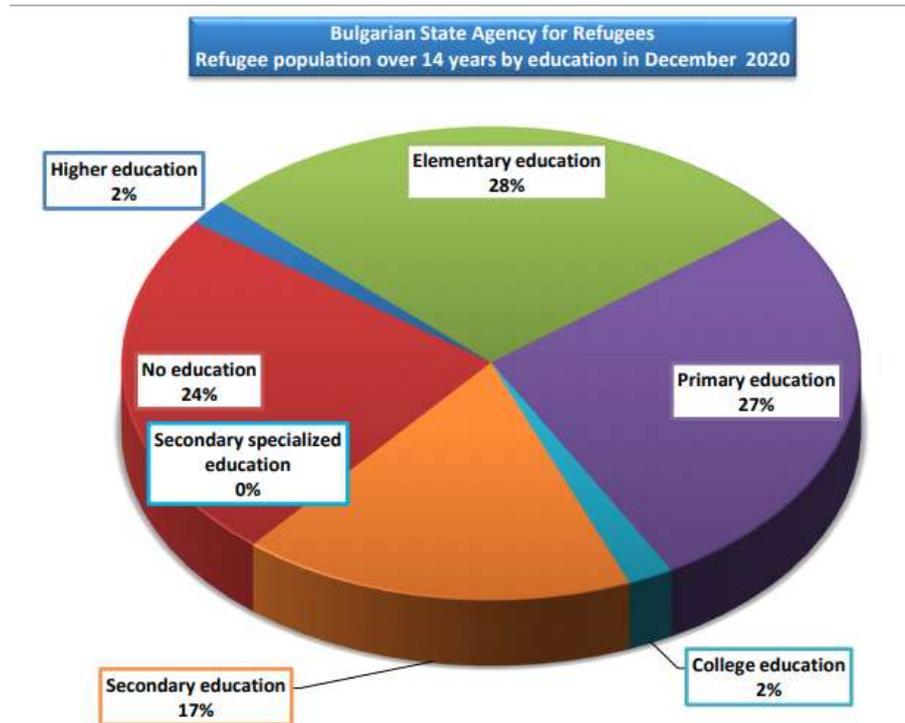
Educational profile

According to CATRO report for 2018 the majority of the individuals are with primary and lower secondary education. This will require additional efforts/ resources for further education, training and qualification on the job on the part of their potential employers.



Considering the relatively small number of refugees remaining in the country, it is important to explore their own willingness and motivation to work. Two sources have been used for the purpose from CATRO: on the one hand, the social information of SAR about the integration, profiles which they are preparing to describe refugees' previous professional experience and acquired skills, and on the other hand the social notice on the right to work. Social documents issued by SAR after the third month of asylum seekers' application procedure, which serves as a proof of their right to work.

According statistical data for 2020



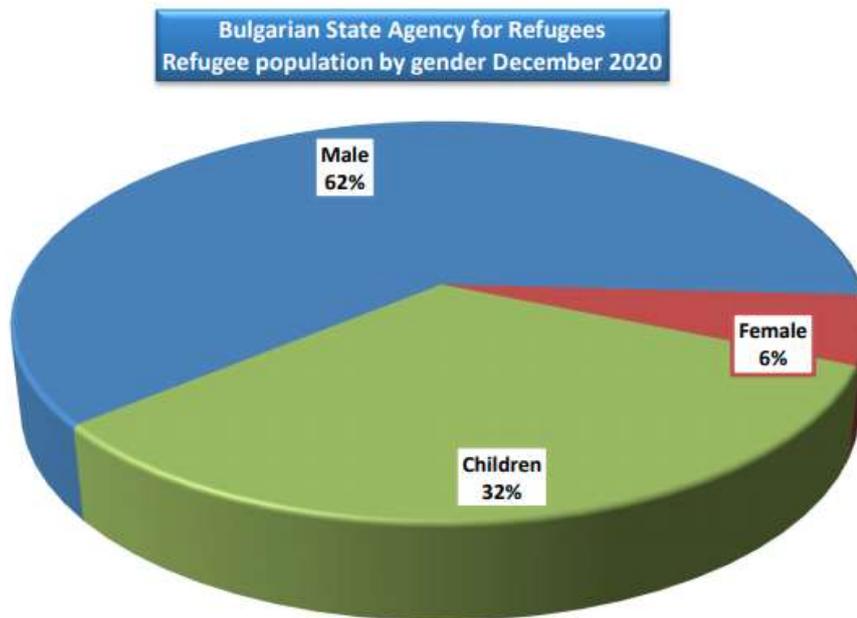
Key findings

Bulgaria is still considered a transit country and only a relatively small number of the refugees (couple of hundreds) are willing to stay permanently and settle down in the country. Although this fact has been confirmed by all relevant studies about refugee integration in Bulgaria, the low number of people deciding to stay in the country should not discourage and/or prevent employers to consider them as a possible target group for employees especially at the backdrop of a dramatic skills shortage.

Moreover, asylum seekers receive the right to participate in gainful employment activities three months after their asylum application, regardless of their future intentions. Often asylum seekers in employment may change their wish to continue their route to another European Member-State and decide to stay in Bulgaria alternatively. However, in order to facilitate the process of integration, companies should be informed about the countries of origin, and the corresponding cultural, linguistic and religious specifics. The Top 5 countries of origin as per 2020 are as follows:

TOP 5 COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN IN THE PERIOD 01.01.2020 – 31.12.2020 г.

AFGHANISTAN	1 736
SYRIA	1 089
IRAQ	239
MOROCCO	114
PAKISTAN	85



Priority Needs

Woman refugees in Bulgaria face numerous obstacles to integration such as not knowing the local language, lacking a support network which they can rely on for help, being generally unfamiliar with the country, its culture and the social security and other services offered to them. The State provides little assistance to those who seek or receive asylum. Even where help is available, it remains inconsistent and sporadic. A key factor of integration is employment.

According to the Adecco Group White Paper, for refugees to integrate and contribute to the economy and the social system of their host country, a combination of factors must be present, including: early integration and employment but also integration that fulfils education and employment potentials; transparency improvements concerning skills and qualifications; concentrated effort in language, skills and qualifications; networking on national, regional and

company level; increasing refugees participation in the labour market. Deeply concerned that young refugee women are at a higher risk of human rights violations, given their higher vulnerability to different forms of violence against women, such as rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

This also involves interplay of different actors: state, municipalities, companies, NGOs, support networks.

Key recommendations

The group of migrant women, single mothers or caregivers, are particularly vulnerable to poverty and exclusion, and likely to be left out of the itineraries and routes for labour insertion that are made by employment agencies that do not incorporate a vision of gender. The administrative situation is one of the variables that have a significant influence on the lives of people who decide to emigrate.

It determines the access to the social security and health insurance systems, since it is possible to contribute to social security, which in turn allows access to a minimal protection, creates a feeling of acceptance, empowerment and equality and influences their physical and emotional quality of life, and that of their families. Noting that education, accommodation, employment and health care, including access to psychosocial support, are not only rights but also serve to facilitate social inclusion of woman and help reduce their risk of exposure to violence, exploitation and abuse, including gender-based violence and discrimination.



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Poland

Background

Ensuring the effectiveness of migration and minimizing its possible negative effects definitely depends on the appropriate state policy implemented by the government administration and local governments, social organizations, local environments and workplaces.

In Poland, in 2020, the government began creating a new migration policy of the country, so that it would be better adapted to changing conditions. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 epidemic has stopped its further elaboration.

Poland's accession to the EU resulted in an increase in the arrivals of foreigners to Poland. According to the respondents, foreigners staying in Poland are mainly Ukrainians, Vietnamese, Chinese and Belarusians. At the same time, it was noticed that Poles opened up to foreigners.

In the vast majority of cases, international migration is related to the experience of difficulties. Adapting to a new social and institutional context is a long process. The cultural diversity of migrants makes them more likely to be discriminated against and abused. The position of a woman in these conditions is even more complicated. Not only women migrating alone, but also members of migrant families experience difficulties.

Migration offers women new financial, professional and personal opportunities. On the other hand, as women, they are more exposed to the risk of abuse or violence.

Countries from which migrant women are recruited are characterized by "a lower level of economic development than in rich countries and related problems on the labour market, difficulties in supporting families and a low standard of their living, lower than in rich countries with dynamically developing economies." (Z. Kawczyńska-Butrym, 2009)

Statistical research shows that migrant females organize themselves into smaller communities. They build relationships and support systems with greater ease and more rapidly. They prefer to use networks based on relationships between women.

It was also noticed that migrant women in Poland are mainly inhabitants of regions that have been or are still strongly influenced by Christian traditions. However, it does not guarantee

easier adaptation to the new environment. It is worth noting that it fosters adapting to social conditions and facilitates the use of one's own cultural capital.

Selected legal regulations

Social welfare/ assistance

Social welfare system provides assistance to foreigners who stay in the territory of Poland and meet the following conditions:

- have refugee status or subsidiary protection;
- have a permanent residence permit or a long-term EU residence permit;
- have a temporary residence permit for the purpose of family reunification;
- have the right of residence or permanent residence in the territory of Poland and are citizens of EU/ EFTA Member States or members of their families.

Social security

Foreigners are subject to social security benefits.

Healthcare

The right to healthcare benefits is granted to foreigners living and staying in the territory of Poland on the basis of work visa, majority of temporary residence permits or permanent residence permit. The prerequisite is compulsory health insurance or insurance of one's own volition. Foreigners' family members who live on the territory of the Republic of Poland can be insured as well.

Vocational activation for foreigners co-financed by European funds

In 2017, Poland negotiated with the European Commission the possibility of extending ESF support to a wider group of people. From 2018, various forms of professional activation (including training, internships, job placement, career counseling, support for geographical mobility, eliminating barriers for people with disabilities) and financial aid for setting up a business may also be used by immigrants, returnees to Poland or those planning to return to the country and repatriates.

Integration programmes for various groups of foreigners

Only foreigners covered by international protection in Poland and their family members are entitled to take advantage of integration programs. Other foreigners can benefit from

integration assistance as part of projects implemented by voivodes and non-governmental organisations, which are co-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the state budget.

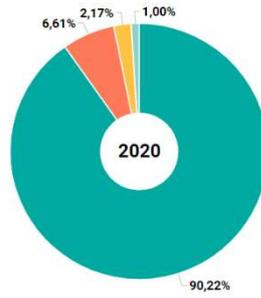
Some selected programmes/curricula include:

- advice and assistance in administrative and legal issues, employment rights, integration, health, psychological and social care, childcare and family reunification;
- educating foreign children, adolescents and adults (tuitions, sports and other activities developing skills and raising self-esteem, excursions, kindergarten and after-school activities), activities supporting foreign students studying in Poland;
- learning Polish at various levels (including specialist courses);
- increasing foreigners' competences and legal awareness in order to facilitate access to the labour market, courses on the rights binding in Poland, living conditions and the ability to deal with everyday situations;
- supporting independence and self-sufficiency, including vocational activation, assessment and development of competences, career counselling;
- activities oriented on integration with Polish society and activities addressed to the receiving society, promoting integration and mutual understanding, in the form of e.g. cultural, educational and other events depending on the situation in a given region;
- promotion of services offered (leaflets, website, websites of different integration actors and other forms of media promotion).

Demographic data and socio-economic profile

In recent years, Poland has become a more frequent destination for economic migrants. According to estimates, the share of foreigners in the Polish labour market is over 5% per year, with less than 1% in 2013. The number of working migrants (women and men) is estimated at approx. 1 million people, most of whom are Ukrainian citizens (2020). In Poland, a circular model of migration (for a period not exceeding 1 year) is noticeable. This affects the changes in the number of migrants in Poland and makes it difficult to measure its scale.

Below are the basic data on women - migrants in Poland in 2020 (Source: <https://migracja.gov.pl/en/statistics/scope/poland/type/statuses/view/charts/year/2020/>)



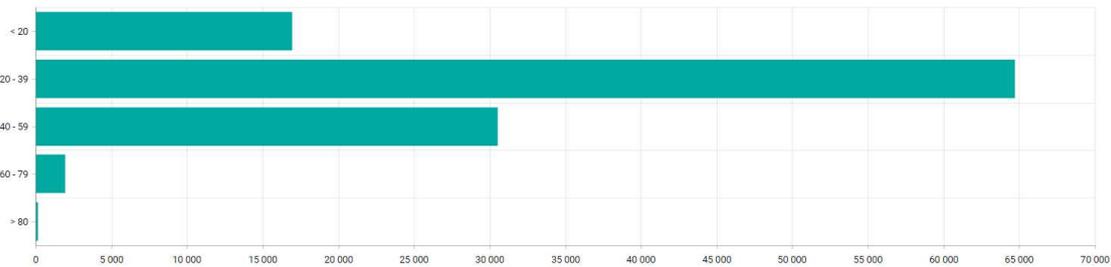
Women

Number of women - foreigners with currently valid documents entitling them to stay in Poland in 2020 by the duration of stay.

- Temporary Residence
- Permanent Residence
- EU long-term resident stay
- International protection

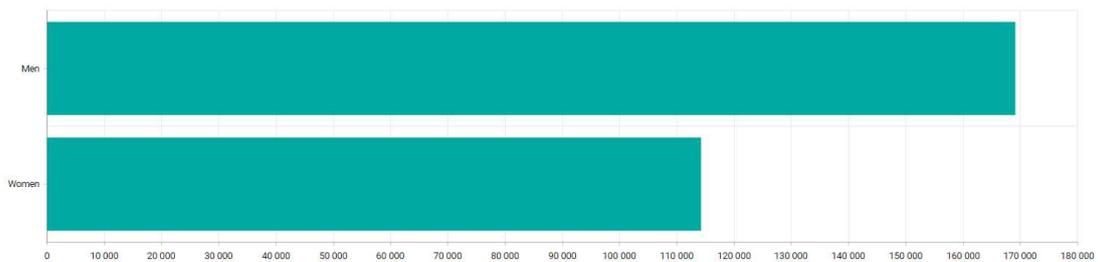
Age

Number of women - foreigners with currently valid documents entitling them to stay in Poland by age.



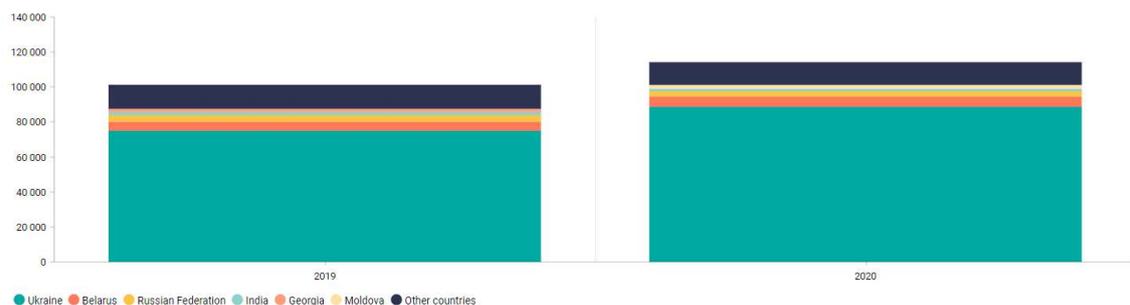
Gender

Number of women - foreigners who currently have valid documents entitling them to stay in Poland in 2020 was 114 179 people.



Country

Number of women - foreigners with currently valid documents entitling them to stay in Poland in 2019 and 2020 by the country of origin.



Due to the distances and family ties, Poland has traditionally been a destination country for citizens from Ukraine (especially western, sometimes also in the middle) for many years. It was noted that in the context of places of origin from Ukraine to Poland, the inhabitants of small towns, villages and towns with less than 50,000 inhabitants were the most numerous group.

Women's migration strategies are influenced by their stage of life, related to their age and family situation (being in a relationship, especially the presence of children requiring care).

Regarding the motivation of migrant women, women see that they can be an independent entity in the migration process or may migrate as a family member. It is worth underlining that a significant percentage of women migrate for family reunification or family formation.

For some women, migration is a form of escape from tensions and conflicts in the family or a symbolic beginning of a new life after the breakdown of a relationship or marriage.

Migrant women often have temporary difficulties in accessing the labour market. This has an impact on the situation of addiction to the spouse.

A specific case of the lack of subjectivity in the migration decision is the refugee situation. Refugees do not plan their migration, its direction and purpose. Therefore, they do not implement an earlier stage, which is important for their successful existence in exile e.g. learning the language of the country of residence or expanding migration networks.

Migration is accompanied by additional stress resulting from changes in the environment, separation from loved ones, uncertainty, risk related to the financial situation, language and cultural barriers. Moreover, forced and illegal migrations are associated with traumatic experiences preceding and accompanying the journey.

Educational profile

It is noted in publications and research that Poland (mainly among asylum seekers) is rarely chosen as a destination for emigration. Much more often it is treated as a temporary place to collect funds necessary for further travel. As a matter of fact, this significantly reduces the motivation of migrants for pro-integration activities. It also happens that economic migrants do

not make efforts to integrate into the society (e.g. the cost of language learning, regulation of residence status, confirmation of professional qualifications, legal employment).

The publications also emphasize that the command of the language of the country of residence is lower among women. If migrant women remain outside the labour market, they do not have the motivation to learn, but also the possibility of practising it (they are isolated from the society) or even participating in courses (due to childcare and financial constraints).

However, it has been noticed that over the last twenty years, educated women with high qualifications have increasingly migrated to Poland. These changes are more dynamic among women. For example, in the period from 2000/2001 to 2010/2011, the number of women with higher education increased by 79% (OECD Report). It is natural for incomers that even if a woman initially gets a job below her qualifications, she struggles to return to her profession, especially if she plans to stay longer in Poland.

Migrant women are seen as women who find it difficult to break out of the domestic work sector. Migrant women are traditionally employed in care areas (caring for children, the elderly). However, it is worth noting that these are often people with medical education, e.g. nurses or doctors, but also psychologists or physiotherapists, and educators, e.g. teachers or qualified carers. In their countries their professions are badly/ worse-paid, so emigration allows them to raise the standard of living using the qualifications already acquired. Language is referred to as the barrier. It is also worth noting that women, when applying for a job, have to compete with male migrants and with local citizens.

Key findings

Females migrating to Poland face numerous obstacles hindering their integration into the society. As a result of spontaneous decisions, sometimes not well-thought or adversely – forced actions, they do not undergo the prior learning process e.g. picking up the local language, getting know the culture of the country they are coming to, or doing some recon on the labour market. They lack supportive migrant networks which they can rely on and which can provide them with the social security, trainings, coaching work-related sessions and other services. The state does not help asylum seekers sufficiently. Hence, a crucial factor is support from any organisations which dedicate their main activity to refugees, migrants and other ethnic minorities, fight their discrimination, to fully integrate them into local communities and help them find a new, safe

place. It is also connected with a tailor-made package of trainings or workshops which may equip migrant women with a set of key competences and reinforce their position, which will surely improve their employability.

Priority needs

Challenges and Risks:

- Lack of interest in supporting foreigners/ migrants/ people from minority ethnic backgrounds on the part of entities implementing projects supported by the European Social Fund.
- Lack of systemically understood, broadly understood integration programs for foreigners who are not beneficiaries of international protection in Poland. Inclusive projects are not enough, they are not implemented on an ongoing basis.
- Negative social phenomena as a result of the lack of systemic integration activities (stereotypes, prejudices).

Key recommendations

- Continuous form of any comprehensive programmes co-financed by EU, which are addressed to migrants/ refugees or individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Stationary information desks/ online assistance centres providing asylum seekers with information on health care system, social security system, job/ career opportunities/ access to integration programmes offered by private organisations (incl. those co-financed by European Social Fund), opportunities for vocational activation, etc.
- Widely accessible database of any organisations providing help and assistance to migrants/ refugees, which offer a wide variety of activities (incl. growth of social competences, professional development, career guidance, crash language courses with a cultural module, rights and privileges (law) etc.) for this vulnerable group, and which can be incorporated into the training modules of governmental programmes (when possible).
- Widely available database of any governmental programmes providing help for the above mentioned groups.
- Special role-play “multibackground-oriented” trainings for employers/ entrepreneurs/ managers (participating in recruitment procedures) aimed at breaking stereotypes relating to migrants/ migrant women, thus giving potential candidates a feeling of acceptance, empowerment, equality and equity.

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Romania

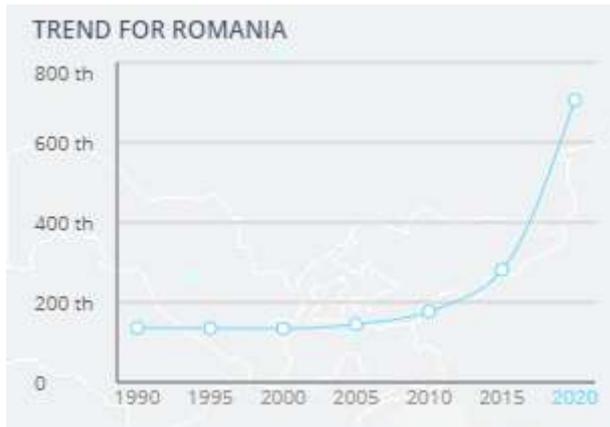
Background

This desk research aims to provide an overview of the current situation regarding socio-demographic characteristics of foreign citizens legally residing in Romania. In addition, it briefly approaches the characteristics of migratory flows from our country, analyses trends and changes that have occurred or that will change the composition, number and profile immigrant population. The analysis is based on the most recent official data obtained from the website of The General Inspectorate for Immigration, namely from 31 December 2019. In addition, for the comparability of data, they were supplemented with information, data statistics from Eurostat or/and other international reports.

In Romania, the debates and research on migration focus mainly on the emigration of Romanian people and almost not at all on immigration to our country. However, the accelerated growth in recent years of the number of immigrants from Romania and especially reaching 3,4% of the population with a background of migration indicates the need for studies on this topic.

Until 1989, when communism ended in Romania, the immigration process was monitored by our government in a very strict way, being a rather secretive affair. The migratory flow was not significant migratory by 1989, but after this year Romanian borders became more permeable. We can mention two major groups legally entering Romania at that time: voluntary migrants and forced migrants. Within the first category we can add the students, the family members of already settled immigrants, economic migrants, businessmen and in the context of Romania's accession to EU, foreign workers. Within the second category, we can talk about asylum seekers and refugees, people with subsidiary or temporary protection (<https://migrationonline.cz/en/immigration-and-the-integration-of-immigrants-in-romania>).

Source: https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_t=2020&cm49=642



Foreigners with the right to stay in Romania represent a category of persons who, although they benefit from a status comparable to that of Romanian citizens, they encounter numerous obstacles caused by not having knowledge of the Romanian language, the impossibility to communicate or understand the message of the written texts, the absence of

support-information regarding the rights and obligations or services to which they may have access. Lack of information, linguistic barriers and cultural issues they face lead to non-access to their rights, the process of integration and implicitly to the social, economic and cultural life being more difficult in this case.

Country profile

According to the press release published by INSSE (National Institute of Statistics) in August 2020, containing provisional data for the last year, the resident population on January 1, 2020, was 19.318.000 people, decreasing by 965.000 people compared to January 1, 2019. More than this, the urban population, as well as the female population are the majority (54.1%, respectively 51.1%). On January 1, 2020, the resident population in the urban area was 10.449.000 people, decreasing by 0.1% compared to January 1, 2019 and the female population on January 1, 2020 was 9.872.000 people, decreasing by 0.4 % compared to the same date of the previous year.

Romania continues to be a country of emigration, the emigration phenomenon being the second main cause of the reduction of the country's population. The balance of international migration in 2019 was negative, the number of emigrants exceeding the number of immigrants by almost 31 thousand people (- 30,591). During 2019, men emigrated in a higher proportion than women (54.3%). And among immigrants, men were the majority (53.7%). (https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/com_presa/com_pdf/poprez_ian2020r.pdf)

Statistics

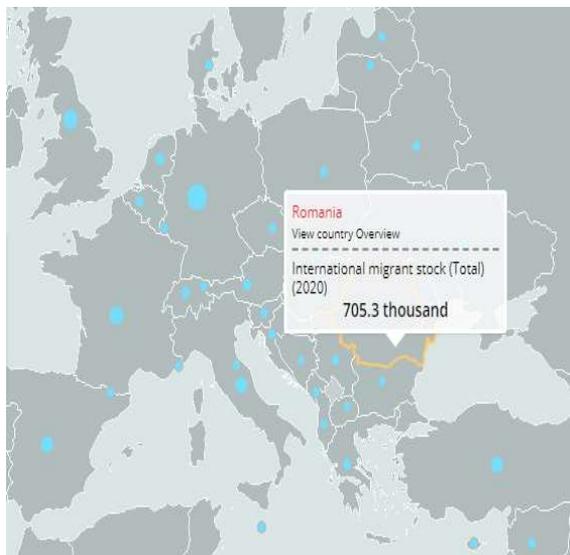
The dynamics of the migration phenomenon, in 2019, in our country, was marked mainly by the evolutions registered in the conflict zones, whether they were of an armed, social or political nature, close to the European space, especially on the territories of Syria and Iraq. A feature of

the year was the temporary change in the migration route of the Western Balkans as a result of measures ordered by the authorities in the affected countries such as Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary (<http://igi.mai.gov.ro/sites/default/files/MA51final.pdf>).

The latest data provided by the Romanian General Inspectorate for Immigration are from December 2019, including information regarding the number of third-country nationals residing in Romania, as well as information on the asylum applications processed in the administrative phase and the number of refugees participating in the integration programme.

In the field of migration, during 2019, the immigration police managed the establishment in Romania for over 137.500 people. At the end of 2019, according to the IGI records, in our country were 84.228 third country nationals with a right to stay in Romania, the majority coming from Moldova, Turkey and China, but also 53.331 from EU/SEE/CH, mostly from Italy, Germany and France. The main purposes for which foreigners have established their residence in Romania are: employment, related to the right to family unity, studies, scientific research.

(18th of February 2020, <http://igi.mai.gov.ro/ro/comunicat/evaluarea-activitatii-politice-c8%9Bi%8%99tilor-inspectoratului-general-pentru-imigr%C4%83ri-%C3%AE-n-anul-2019>)



The image from Migration Data Portal, shows us the total number of international migrants, meaning that in 2020, Romania reached an approximate number of 705.300 migrants.

Source: https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_&t=2020&cm49=642

Asylum seekers

During 2019, Romania received 2.592 asylum applications from asylum seekers from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Algeria and other countries. Of the 1.183 asylum applications processed during the same period, 563 were admitted and either granted refugee status (287) or subsidiary

protection (276). In the same vein, 79 requests for family reunification were approved, 16 rejected and 46 still pending.

793 refugees and persons with subsidiary protection were participating in the governmental integration programme in 2019, most of them from Syria (349), Iraq (136) and Afghanistan (51). Besides the activities carried out by the integration officers, a series of programmes run by NGOs were funded through the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, with the aim of supporting the integration of refugees and migrants across the country. These funds have been oriented based on geographical regions in Romania and help provide activities and services that cover language and culture, (limited) support for housing, education and employment, access to social services and long-term residence/citizenship. (<https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/2019-statistical-data-on-migrants-and-refugees-in-romania>)

Situation on the labour market

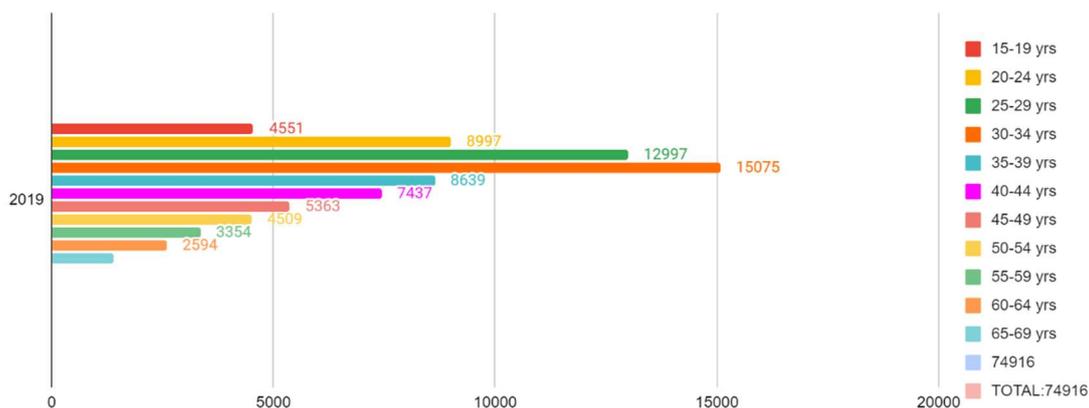
The Inspectorate General for Immigration were registered 33.634 requests regarding the release of the employment permits on the territory of Romania, this number being 21.514 higher than the one that was registered in 2018, resulting in an increase percentage of 177.5% from one year to another. The majority of the requests were registered in Bucharest – 10.803, followed by Ilfov – 2.970, Constanța – 2.861, Timiș – 1.818, Brașov – 1.601, Cluj – 1.208, Iași – 1.117 and Prahova – 1.039.

Concerning the work permits, in 2019, there were issued a number of 29.800 for workers coming from Turkey, Nepal, India and Vietnam, being concentrated in the capital, Bucharest or in the neighbouring areas, mainly in Ilfov and in other two big counties, Constanța and Timiș.

The Romanian labour market has attracted, especially individuals from the Asian continent, mostly from Vietnam – 6.282. In addition, the force market also attracted citizens of Nepal – 4.324, India – 4.100, Turkey – 3.448, Moldova – 3.389 and Sri Lanka – 3.156

Migrants by age groups (15-69 years) in 2019 in Romania

In the graphic below, we can see the migrants from Romania distributed by age groups (15-69 years). Most of the migrants are in the age groups 20-24 (8.997), 25-29 (12.2997), 30-34 (15.075) and 35-39 (8.639).



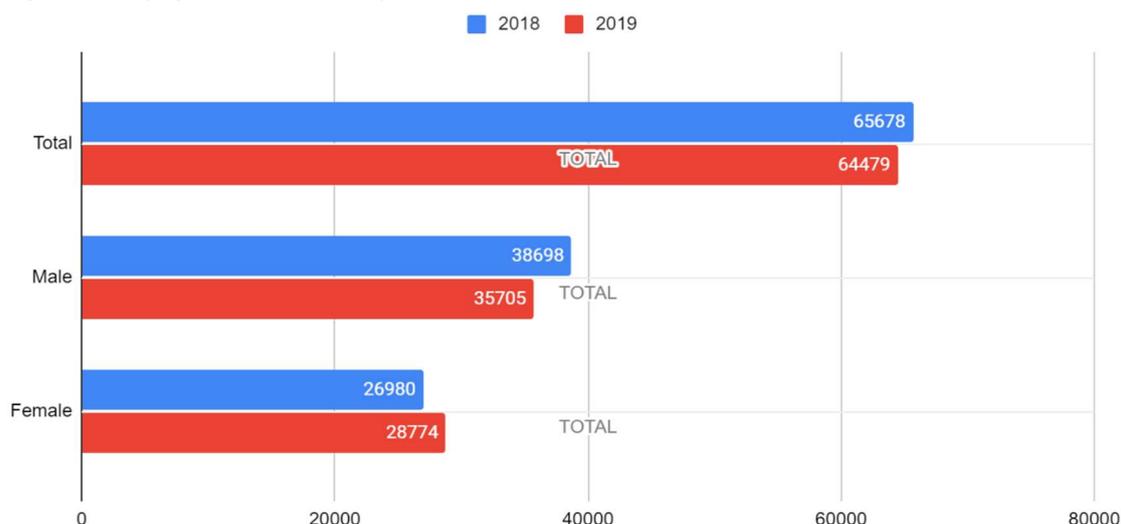
Source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/>

More than this, we can observe in the table below that the highest numbers are maintained in the categories mentioned above (between 20 and 39 years). For example, the number of migrants aged between 30-34 has doubled in 5 years (2015-2019).

Year	Year				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Age groups					
15-19 yrs	3481	3893	3860	4066	4551
20-24 yrs	7169	7734	7438	8121	8997
25-29 yrs	9242	9207	13641	11005	12997
30-34 yrs	7141	6825	11135	10847	15075
35-39 yrs	7059	5791	8833	7537	8639
40-44 yrs	4551	4412	6209	5964	7437
45-49 yrs	4119	4259	5281	5011	5363
50-54 yrs	3152	2817	3811	3880	4509
55-59 yrs	3031	2851	3578	3241	3354
60-64 yrs	1913	1944	2543	2439	2594
65-69 yrs	878	985	1318	1264	1400

Source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/>

Migrants by gender – Comparison between 2018 and 2019



Source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/>

According to United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in Romania were registered the following numbers and percentages:

Total number of international migrants at mid-year 2020 (UN DESA, 2020)	705.300
International migrant stock as a percentage of the total population at mid-year 2020	3.7 %
Total number of emigrants at mid-year 2020 (UN DESA, 2020)	4.000.000
Net migration (immigrants minus emigrants) in the 5 years prior to (UN DESA, 2019)	-370.000
Share of female migrants in the international migrant stock at mid-year 2020 (UN DESA, 2020)	45.1 %
Share of international migrants 19 years and younger residing in the country/region at mid-year 2020 (UN DESA, 2020)	44.8 %
Share of international migrants 65 years and older residing in the country/region at mid-year 2020 (UN DESA, 2020)	7.4 %

Source: <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/>

Key Findings

- Migrant women can be labour migrants, family members or refugees.
- Migrant women can be and are subject of discrimination and racism.
- There is limited information regarding the profile of the immigrants in Romania.

- The number of the women labour migrants are increasing, this phenomenon being called “feminization of survival” as feminized migration is a product of the growing presence of women in global capitalism’s circuits of mobile labour, including poor and disadvantaged women from the developing world.
- Migrant women often take on family and child care obligations.
- Migrant women are encountering barriers as both migrants and women.
- Women born outside the EU are both more likely to be overqualified for their job and less likely to be in employment.
- Migrant women encounter difficulties regarding the recognition of their skills, as studies underline that women in developing countries are more likely than men to have skills that are not formally certified by diplomas.
- Migrant women with higher qualifications often deal with underemployment - working in a lower skilled position than what they are qualified to do.
- Migrant women often have limited language skills and don’t not benefit as frequently from skills assessment, re-training measures and other integration programmes.
- Women arriving as asylum seekers may also have to spend long before having a clear opportunity to stay or work.
- Migrant women benefit from less integration support than men concerning the language training and the access to the labour market.
- Migrant women encounter numerous obstacles caused by not having knowledge of the Romanian language.
- Lack of information, linguistic barriers and cultural issues they face lead to non-access to their rights, the process of integration and implicitly to the social, economic and cultural life being more difficult in this case.

Key Recommendations

- Offering socio-psychological support.
- Guidance, coaching and mentoring and other support services for social-professional integration.
- Providing courses or training (ICT skills for women with low computer knowledge, language skills improvement courses, entrepreneurship courses, etc.).
- Promoting access to rights for migrant women, fighting discrimination.
- Promoting social participation and personal and economic empowerment of migrant women.



- Increasing health care opportunities.
- Disseminate good practices among immigrant communities.
- Organizing trainings for employers.
- Collaboration with national and local organizations and institutions.

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Spain

Background

Spain is located in south-western Europe and its immigration has traditionally been low. However, immigration has grown exponentially in recent years. An increasing number of migrants are attempting to enter the country by sea in boats known as 'pateras'. Since 2006, the number of immigrants arriving by sea has been steadily increasing and in 2020 reached 40,000 people¹.

Evolution of the number of migrants coming to Spain 1998-2018



Most of the migrants arrive to the Canary Islands, as these islands are close to Africa, but they also can arrive through the Mediterranean Sea, to Gibraltar, Valencia, Alicante or Barcelona. Most of the migrants arriving by this means of transport come from Africa and include women and unaccompanied minors. It is a very dangerous journey in inhuman conditions, in unsafe and overloaded boats, and many migrants die before they reach their destination.

Over the years, the European Union has developed laws to regulate migration. Besides, each country has created its own legislation to control migrants entering the country. In Spain, the law is called "Ley de Extranjería" and regulates the situation of migrants, as well as establishes their rights and obligations.

This law establishes that immigrants have the right to move freely, have access to education, a home and the health system. Among others, the law also establishes that if the migrant has a family with children under the age of 18, they can come to live in Spain under the same conditions as the migrant. Concerning women, there are specific laws to protect migrant women

¹ <https://www.canarias7.es/canarias/llegada-pateras-canarias-20201231171017-nt.html?ref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>

who have suffered gender-based violence, allowing them to receive support and to be applied the current law on gender-based violence applicable in Spain.

Socio-demographic data

According to the INE (Instituto Nacional de Estadística), since 2013 the migration has increased, reaching in 2019 the quantity of 750.480 migrants². Almost half of them (374.445) are women and arrive to the country in an irregular situation. As stated by the investigation “Extranjeros, sin papeles e Imprescindibles: Una fotografía de la inmigración irregular en España”³, migrant women are usually older than men.

This graph represents the age of immigrants who have arrived in Spain. The blue line represents men, while the purple line represents women. Although the age of women has always been higher than that of men, this difference has been increasing.



Graphic from INE: “*Edad Media de los Inmigrantes procedentes del extranjero según sexo y nacionalidad (española/extranjero)*” (Average age of immigrants from abroad according to sex and nationality (Spanish/foreign).) <https://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Datos.htm?t=29280#!tabs-grafico>.

Contrary to general beliefs and what has been stated above, the majority of migrants entering Spain come from Central and South America, far outnumbering migrants from North Africa. It also shows that many of the migrants from these countries are fleeing the crisis in their countries, whether political, economic or both.

² <https://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Datos.htm?t=24282#!tabs-tabla>

³ <https://porcausa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/RetratodelairregularidadporCausa.pdf>

According to the report, migrants that enter the country regularly are more likely to work in the service sector, especially in the restauration sector, while irregular migrants typically work in domestic activities, such as cleaning and the care of children and the elderly. The works migrants do, are usually work that require very low or no qualification.

Other research by ENRED Consultoria shows that, although women are more likely to work in unskilled or low-skilled jobs, they are less likely to be unemployed. People working in the restaurant sector change employers more often than those working in domestic activities. Nationality also influences the type of work they do, as some migrants have a better reputation and are eligible for more responsible jobs.

Education

Nationality has a big influence on their education level. Some of the immigrants coming from South America have secondary education, but most have only primary education. Even if their educational levels are basic, they are overqualified for some of the jobs they apply for. Migrants from North Africa are often unskilled and many of them are unemployed.

On the other hand, there are migrants from the European Union, for example, from the United Kingdom or Germany, who are usually older and decide to come to Spain not only to work but also to study or to enjoy their retirement years. From Europe, there are also many migrants from Romania, who have secondary and/or higher education and usually emigrate to improve their employment situation and tend to be highly mobile in their jobs.

Key findings

In Spain illegal information is a very serious problem. Being one of the routes from Africa to Europe, the country receives many migrants from Africa; some of them stay in the country, but others try to go to other European countries. Those who stay must legalise their status through the laws that apply to migrants, the 'ley de extranjería'. Most migrants who enter the country do so to join a family member who has previously come in search of work or with a work contract.

Migrants may encounter some problems in their first contact with the country, such as language. Some already know the language, as Spanish is also spoken in Central and South America. However, those coming from non-Spanish-speaking countries face the problem of learning the

language, as without it they would not be able to communicate. Another difficulty encountered by migrants is the cultural differences, especially for those who come from Africa.

Priority needs

In all cases, women are mainly engaged in domestic activities, caring for the elderly or cleaning. In some immigrant groups, such as North Africans, it is more likely that they do not work at all, because they are usually at home, taking care of the children and the house. In all cases, the fact that many of these women cannot live on their own, as their salaries are not legalised - many household cleaning activities are paid illegally - or are not sufficient, makes them susceptible to situations of sexism and gender-based violence.

Even if they know that they live in situations of gender-based violence, they may not be aware of existing tools to fight against it. In some cases, they may not know the language, which makes it even more difficult for them. In this sense, these women could sign up for language courses to learn the language. If they have some knowledge of the language, they can report these abuses and be protected by the law.

Key recommendations

According to the report of La Cruz Roja, "*Taller de sensibilización mujeres inmigrantes*" (*awareness-raising workshop for immigrant women*), a key factor for the women to be integrated in the community is to have a job, not only on the traditional "feminine" sectors. Women should be encouraged to work for themselves, to be entrepreneurs or to join NGOs. The migrants are in more risk of exclusion if working in groups and might feel excluded.

This report also claims that women should not be discriminated in these groups, and they should be given the same amount of work as the others. On the same line, women are treated badly by their superiors, should be fearless to report it. A conciliatory climate between the Spanish workers and the migrants should be created, in a way that is less competitive and more respectful towards each other. This can be made through trust-building exercises and mediations between the members of the group.

Women should be granted their fundamental rights to education, health and a place to live in good conditions, especially those who are in risk of exclusion and poverty. They are not usually involved in trade unions and they do not usually have favourable environments to work, to have

children or to continue with their studies, if they want to. The combination of all these factors makes it very difficult for them to reach better positions at work or change their jobs, which leaves them with almost no expectations to prosper.

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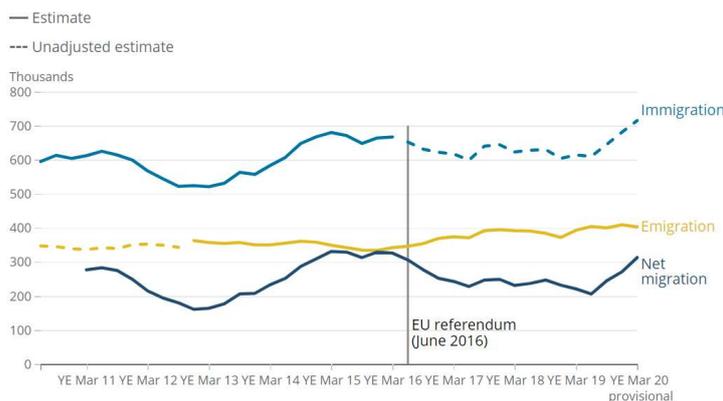
UK

Background

Migrant women face persistent disadvantage in the labour market, sometimes referred to as a “double disadvantage” based on being a women and being a migrant. They generally have lower employment and higher unemployment rates than both - foreign-born men and native-born women, and actually the gender gaps are often larger for immigrants than for the native-born. In virtually all countries, migrant women have higher unemployment rates than their native-born peers.

About half of the people who migrate in the world today are women. An estimated 95 million women are international migrants. In some places, including Europe, women have surpassed the number of men migrating.

Demographic data and socio-economic profile



In 2019, people born outside the UK made up an estimated 14% of the UK’s population, or 9.5 million people. In 2019, 52% of the foreign-born population were *women or girls*.

In the year ending March 2020, long-term international migration continued to add to the UK population. Our current best estimates show that around 313,000 more people moved to the UK with an intention to stay for 12 months or more than left the UK (net migration).

Over the year, around 715,000 people moved to the UK (immigration) and around 403,000 people left the UK (emigration).

Key findings

- It is common for migrants to switch between regular and irregular migration status over time. Women with irregular immigration status are particularly at risk of human rights violations, in addition to discrimination and exclusion from rights and services.
- Isolation, poverty and household role are particular barriers to accessing services and to integration for women migrants.
- Women migrant workers earn money not only for themselves and their families, but through financial and social remittances promote independence, education, rights and choice for women in their country of origin, as well as contributing to the UK economy.
- Many women migrants participate in the business sectors and professions but the most common forms of work are in the service and agricultural sectors, domestic work and caring, sex work and entertainment
- Many women migrants find work in low-skilled occupations which expose them to severe forms of discrimination and abuse, risk of poor health and safety at work, as well as the potential for unfair dismissal.
- Migrants who come to the UK from a third country (outside the EEA) to join a spouse are usually women. 75% of those admitted to the UK in 2013 as a spouse were wives. The overwhelming majority of women migrants joining as a wife or fiancé are granted temporary immigration status in the UK. The majority of these women migrants arriving as wives or fiancés are from Asia. The top individual countries of origin for these women in 2013 were: Pakistan, India, the USA, Bangladesh, China and Thailand.
- In the UK since 2004 applicants for citizenship are required to demonstrate knowledge of English. The courses are offered free and the applicant can retake the exam unlimited number of times.

Priority Needs

Mastering the host country's language and accessing its labour market are 2 key steps of the integration process for all migrants. But migrant women also often take on family and child care obligations which may hamper this process. Consequently, they have worse employment outcomes in comparison with migrant men and native-born women. This is because migrant women face challenges and barriers as both migrants and women; a double disadvantage that is consistently confirmed by research.

Despite having a share of tertiary-educated similar to that of native-born women and migrant men, women born outside the EU are both more likely to be over-qualified for their job and less likely to

be in employment. The latter is partially due to difficulties they encounter getting their skills recognised, as studies underline that women in developing countries are more likely than men to have skills that are not formally certified by diplomas.

Key recommendations

Integration of migrant women into the labour market can be fostered through coaching, mentoring and other support services.

However, national and often regional differences remain considerable, reflecting both the specific characteristics and dimension of the residing immigrants and of past and present immigration flows, the legal framework, the structure of national welfare regimes and the national integration models which vary from the search of a common national identity serious deficit. Women refugees, for example, may feel more isolated and yet have greater responsibilities because of traditional culturally-ascribed roles; some of the literature is beginning to take note of this and to acknowledge that there needs to be an explicit gender dimension to research and policy-making which looks at the specific factors which exclude women, such as lack of female only provision in areas like language training and child care. Too often integration processes take place in the context of organisations and groups which are dominated by men.

So what can be done

- Local schemes to promote linguistic ability and fluency in the host language.
- Public officials (e.g. in job centres), NGOs and other bodies acknowledging the impact of cultural and religious factors and understanding how these, and how migrants understand their ethnic identity, might impact on their willingness or ability to enter the labour market; in general public sector officials need to understand that long-term work is more significant as an outcome than short-term 'fixes';
- Developing targeted local interventions;
- Local schemes to identify skills gaps or gaps between migrants' aspirations and the reality of the local labour market, and to work on new skills development or to upgrade skills or existing qualifications to be able to match host country requirements;
- The development of a local brokerage role involving local employers and NGOs as appropriate which can match workers to job opportunities with upskilling and development of a knowledge base as necessary;
- Using local community organisations, including refugee community organisations, to bridge between migrants and other local residents, to help identify labour market opportunities and promote the process of integration in the workplace;

- Providing targeted business support for migrants wishing to become entrepreneurs or otherwise self-employed, making use as far as possible of more extended economic and social networks of co-ethnic and other entrepreneurs to support business development;
- Offering particularly intensive forms of support for refugees becoming involved in very local employment, education and training schemes as a step towards labour market participation;
- For those at the stage of very early employment experience, also providing support through temporary (but regulated) employment agencies, schemes for job matching and the use of designated consultants to seek vacancies, and broker migrants into work;
- Develop an individual workplan for each migrant helped.

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Focus Groups

The overarching aim of the project is to increase the social inclusion, integration and empowerment of women migrating into the EU, especially those with low or unrecognised skills, members of families migrating, and asylum seekers; these groups are particularly likely to be excluded from society, education and employment.

Focus groups captured migrant women's experiences of volunteering.

Bulgaria

Background of participants: Syrian Community

The majority of the participants of this focus group understood that volunteering is a way for them to gain opportunities that shape their experiences without remuneration.

- Type of volunteering work
 - Red Cross.
 - Charitable organisations.
 - Caring for the elderly.
 - Serving their expat community.

"I find it great to devote some of my time to take care of elderly, which struggle to go outside alone or do their grocery shopping. It is a way for me to serve the community of the elderly and gives me a great personal feeling, that I have done something good for the society. I also really like gaining this experience, because it teaches me patience, kindness and understanding skills, that I very much need in my career as a pharmacist."

- Barriers to participation in volunteer work
 - Lack of time due to childcare responsibilities.
 - Lack of the language skills needed to be involved in certain activities, related to their career or personal interests.

"I have very much interest to participate in volunteer work, but since I moved to Bulgaria recently, I have not yet found an organisation that organises activities that I am interested in."

- Why is volunteering work important?

- Development of experience they can build through it.
- A way of integrating within the society.
- Satisfaction of their psychological needs of being a good citizen and benefitting the society.

➤ Language skills

Topic discussed extensively amongst the participants. While many of the women started learning the language a few years ago, they found it difficult to find an organisation that provides this service. They mentioned that this delayed their integration in the society.

“We all know the difficulties we face once we arrive in Bulgaria. It is difficult, especially when you do not read, speak, or understand the language. I try to help our community where I can, but more needs to be done in terms of t municipal or governmental level for migrants.”

➤ Prior education

Bulgaria is getting more and more advanced in recognising foreign education, however challenges still remain.

“When trying to find evening education, taught in English or any other language, it was almost impossible. It is not a common practice in Bulgaria to provide education for the older generations. I think that this is something that needs to be improved.”

In conclusion, migrants find volunteer work very attractive and want to participate in, however they face many difficulties that are related to language, time management and awareness of what the opportunities for them are. There is a general impression that the participants want to volunteer, not to only for the purpose of gaining personal and professional experience, but to fulfil their social needs and responsibilities and “do good” for the society.

Poland

Background: Ukrainian community

All participants understood what volunteering was. It is a way to support yourself, arrange your time, develop and raise your self-esteem.

- Type of volunteering work
 - Helping the elderly
 - Supporting poor families and children in need

“When we can help someone, we always do. The more that we are one team here, we always help each other for example to pick up a child from kindergarten, drive to hospital, do shopping, help with documents, e.g. submit an application for a residence card, translate something, help to understand.

We have groups via Messenger, WhatsApp. We often support each other by sharing important information on those groups.

I know how hard it is at the beginning, when you don't know where to go to get the right documents or how to speak Polish. I've been here the longest. I try to help and share knowledge that I have as much as I can. I also respond on some social network's online groups connected with legal issues and share my knowledge, so that people arriving were not deceived.”

- Barriers to participation in volunteer work
 - Limited time, main focus is on finding work.
 - Caring for disabled children.

“As for us, most of us don't have time for this. There is a very big problem with that. When we have time we try to spend it with our children. Because development and what we give them is very important to our children.

On the other hand, the lack of information about such activities was highlighted. Women jointly agreed that they could get involved in the activities that local community can benefit from, in the form of fundraising, food preparation, but such information is not reaching them. They also



don't know where to search for such information. One of the women declared her willingness to help children in the orphanage, because she has a higher pedagogical education.”

In summary, there is a need for volunteering, but not so much from the need to gain professional experience, but out of the need of the heart and helping others. Supporting women in a similar situation, but also the local community.

Romania

Background: Ukrainian/Moldavian community

➤ What is volunteering?

"In simple words, it's something which makes you a better person. You learn to think about others before you think about yourself. You understand the harsh realities of life. You develop empathy towards people who are less fortunate than you. Volunteering is serving people without any selfish motives, without any expectations! You don't need to move mountains for it, It is as simple as helping a blind person to cross the road. You don't need to be rich to volunteer, you just need a loving heart."

"For me it is a way to put something back in to my community and also to have an influence on my community and shape it as a place where I am happy to reside. I volunteer at events also and that is just for fun and because I love doing it. It doesn't really mean anything for me to do it, I just enjoy the experience."

"Volunteering is the practice of providing time and skills for the benefit of other people and causes rather than for financial benefit. In an employment-related context, volunteerism is concerned with the methods and tools employers use to support employees that want to volunteer."

"Giving yourself of your time and energy for a cause that you care about. In fact, I've just signed up for a volunteer project that involves children and literacy. You don't get paid and don't expect to be paid, but you want to feel productive and good at the end of the day that you've helped someone."

➤ Type of volunteering work

- Community service/volunteering: cooking or community development,
- Helping elderly people.
- Religious gatherings.
- Environment (managing working in green spaces).

➤ Importance of volunteer work for you or for the people you work with?

- Development in their community, in the following areas:
 - creating and developing a networking in the community

- developing their soft skills and mostly their language skills
 - it gives satisfaction on both way-first, on personal level because it gives an encouragement and fulfillment of being active and, on the community level to create an impact and to encourage others to take part in the community.
- Barriers to participation in volunteer work
- Language - although usually women coming from Republic of Moldova are speaking Romanian language, the accent is different and the vocabulary is with Russian influence from that part, so it can create a discrepancy between the natives and the foreigners.
 - As for the ones coming from Ukraine, since they speak little Romanian or not at all, is not easy to integrate, considering that most of the volunteering opportunities in Suceava, Romania, are related.
 - Lack of many volunteering opportunities, which sometimes is a barrier for volunteering for many people.
- What would a good volunteer programme be like for you?
- A good volunteer programme would be the ones that are related to migration and labour market because it would be more engaging for them.
 - Volunteering programmes that are related with women empowerment and inclusion is also desired by the participants in our focus group.
 - Volunteering program that would have more language involvement would be desired.

Spain

Background: women of Russian and Ukrainian origin

- What does volunteer mean to you?
 - Helping people to do things they cannot or do not know how to do by themselves.
 - Doing service without getting anything in return.
 - Helping when there is a misfortune, earthquake, flood...
 - Supporting people.

- Type of volunteering work
 - Refugee camp, elderly people, with minors.
 - Helping people who are unemployed and looking for work.
 - Helping them with their CVs, giving English or Russian classes.
 - One-off things, e.g., a flood.

- Importance of volunteer work for you or for the people you work with?
 - Experience, some people are not as well off as you are. Some people have many problems, for example, disabled people with mental or psychological problems. It also helps you to see how you shouldn't live.
 - Personal satisfaction, if you serve others you feel good. They consider that this can be selfish. It gives you meaning in your life.

“People who receive help: Most are grateful, but not everyone appreciates it, some people take advantage of the goodwill of volunteers. Resources don't reach everyone. Sometimes people come who are outside the target group of the volunteer. For example, one person explained that she worked with teenagers with problems and older women also came for help. Some people use resources that do not belong to them, who take advantage of them. There should be more regulation in this respect. “

- Barriers to participation in volunteer work
 - Lack of time, usually they are very busy with work, families, studies.

- Lack of language. Other people say that you can always communicate in some way. But it depends on the information you have to give, gestures don't always help.
 - Legal impediment: for minors.
 - Exam to get the Spanish nationality: There are also culture, history, politics and economics exams. There are courses to prepare for it or a manual that you can download from the internet and study on your own. You don't have to pass this exam if you have official studies in Spain.
- What would a good volunteer programme be like for you?
- Ideal volunteer programme with women, women's empowerment, abused women.
 - Teaching Spanish to people coming to the country.
 - Women with disabilities.
 - Certificates, it might be a good idea, especially at the beginning.
 - Paying expenses.
 - Lack of responsibility, they don't give you enough autonomy or responsibility, even if you have experience. They don't ask you for advice.

UK

Background: south Asian community

Most participants understood that Voluntary Work is “opportunities to gain experience but you do not get paid”.

- Type of volunteering work
 - Working in a pharmacy, hairdressers, care worker and helping in the community.

“I am interested in working in a school as a teacher so I would definitely volunteer as an assistant teacher because I want to get that experience”.

- Importance of volunteer work for you or for the people you work with?

“If you are looking for a job, it will help you gain experience and make you more confident”.

“It can help you find a job, gain experience and get qualifications”.

“To get a feeling of satisfaction and being valued.”

- Barriers to participation in volunteer work
 - Childcare,
 - Lack of language,
 - No confidence,
 - Availability of voluntary work in the sector I am interested in.

“I feel a barrier for me is I have recently arrived in this country. I don’t know where to go to find information to find voluntary work and I am not familiar with locations”.

- Mental health

“When you are not working and you are at home, you are thinking too much about everything but when you work, your mind is occupied and you don’t feel stressed.”

- Physical fitness

“When you work you are also exercising and moving around”.

- Time Management

“You have to manage your time with household responsibilities as well as your job”.

- Qualifications

“Some organisations can provide you with a certificate as proof you have been involved in work experience”.

“I have a Masters from my country but this has not benefitted me because when I apply for a job, I get turned down because I have no experience”.

“Even though we are educated, our qualifications are not recognised in this country”

- Participants lacked knowledge of Rights to work and Legislations.
- Settlement visas, permission to work in this country and how they can be barriers were mentioned.
- Legislations such as DBS Checks, Safeguarding, Health and Safety were a few of the issues discussed.

An awareness that training in these areas is crucial in order to understand job roles was recognised by the group.

- What would a good volunteer programme be like for you?

- Childcare facilities.
- Training.
- Help towards travel costs.
- Professional development and flexible hours.

“It would be a great help for me if I can be offered hours that suit me like between 9am – 2pm because my children are at school”.

“Gaining a qualification whilst volunteering will help me further my career and find a good job”.



In conclusion, there is a substantial need for voluntary work to help migrant women gain employment. Some of the barriers faced by them include: lack of experience, language and qualifications.

In order to move forward, problems with childcare, becoming more informed about legislations, obtaining qualifications and gaining experience in chosen fields of employment must be addressed.

Co-Creation Workshops

Bulgaria

Topic: Breaking the barriers to voluntary work for Migrant Women

The participants in this co-creation session shared a view that women of migrant background or ethnic minority are facing more and more difficulties when trying to set up or access volunteering opportunities. There are many reasons for that, but the most commonly mentioned were related to:

- Access to network in order to set up an organisation.
- Recruitment of volunteers of migrant background.
- Training of the volunteers.
- Impact measurement of the organisation.

Thus, with their input a good practice programme would include a methodology to develop migrant woman's network and help for them to form relationships and partnerships with multiple organisations across Bulgaria. They find it important to also spend time on creating awareness for the existence of a women migrant volunteer group. The participants believe that it is difficult to recruit volunteers of migrant backgrounds and for this they would need help from other organisations.

➤ **Language barrier**

To break barriers in the migrant women community, there is a need to develop more language learning opportunities amongst the migrant women. The language skills they can learn can help them to not only be able to pursue more jobs that might be more relevant to their education, skills, experiences and passions, but it can also break the barriers that make them not feel included in the society.

➤ **Cultural barrier**

Furthermore, through creation activities, such as organising events related to cultural awareness, learning how to cook with Bulgarian products or understanding the history behind Bulgarian music, migrant women can participate in events that can help them further integrate easier in the society.

Poland

Background: Representatives from organizations involved in the support of migrant women

Is it more difficult for migrants / ethnic minority women to access volunteering opportunities than the general public?

Co-creation session participants think that it is more difficult for migrants / ethnic minority women to access volunteering opportunities than the general public. The reasons for that are connected with deeply rooted fear of otherness which is still vivid in Polish society. Our society is quite homogeneous. It is slowly changing now, but for lots of people it's still hard to accept newcomers. That is why the access to volunteering opportunities might be limited. People expect volunteers to be Poles and they have problem to believe in migrants' qualifications and good intentions.

➤ **Please rank the following that would be most helpful in helping you to setup a volunteering programme for migrant / ethnic minority women?**

- Developing networks and partnerships with various institutions and organizations, representing different fields of interest, to cooperate, support and exchange practices.
- Increase society's awareness regarding such activities and it should be done both on a local and national level.
- Common Policy & Procedures as it is easier to follow some guidelines developed by others and learn from their experience and good practices.
- Training - they would be eager to participate in some workshops on a topic of setting up a volunteering programme for migrant women. The last one is safeguarding.

➤ **Issues faced when trying to access volunteering opportunities?**

- Language and everyday vocabulary.
- Family and health commitments.
- Personal motivation.
- Relevant opportunities and accessibility, where there is a will, there is a way. If a women really wants, she will find an opportunity and access.

➤ **Aspect of volunteering most important to a migrant learner**

- Inclusion and integration with a local community.
- Increasing self-esteem.
- Satisfaction and gratification.
- Language skills.
- Expanding knowledge and gaining experience.
- Development of interests.

➤ **Length of programme**

A volunteering opportunity should last at least 3 months. As representatives from organizations say, one month of volunteering is not enough, both for the organization and for migrant women. Within one month it is not possible to get to know all the aspects of work, organizational culture and atmosphere, connect with other people involved, gain enough confidence to implement tasks on their own. Ideally, a volunteering should be extended up to six months or even more.

It is important only for some of their service users to get accredited qualifications. Many of them do not need any type of certification.

➤ **Specific skills and competences to develop**

- Skills related to developing networks and partnerships with various institutions and organizations, representing different fields of interest. It is important for them to cooperate, support and exchange practices with each other as well as connect groups of migrants.
- Communication and motivation skills and competences to encourage migrant women to be more active.
- Skills connected with running a local campaign to increase society's awareness regarding volunteering.
- Competences allowing setting up a volunteering programme for migrant women.

➤ **Greatest challenge in setting up volunteering / peer support programme?**

- Low migrant women's motivation.
- Too small number of migrant women wanting to run peer support programme.
- Insufficient human resources of the organization.
- Financial issues.

Romania

Background: Representatives from organizations involved in the support of migrant women

Is it more difficult for migrants / ethnic minority women to access volunteering opportunities than the general public?

Our co-creation participants consider that migrant women or those coming from an ethnic minority find the process of accessing the volunteering opportunities more difficult than the general public. The main reason is the mentality or the conception of the Romanian people regarding the ethnic minorities, namely the Roma people, which is a widespread minority. They stated that we live in a traditional and conservative society and this is the manner in which people react to the "new". Otherwise, in Suceava, Romania, we have a lot of young people from Republic of Moldova studying at University of Suceava, and they have the opportunity to access volunteering programmes in the educational environment, but there is no

➤ **Please rank the following that would be most helpful in helping you to setup a volunteering programme for migrant / ethnic minority women?**

- Among those four possibilities given, our participants considered that forming networks, by collaborating with various institutions, organisations or local/national authorities can be helpful in the creation of volunteering programmes for the vulnerable groups. In Romania, there was little or no emphasis regarding the involvement in volunteering programmes of the migrant women or of the Roma women, namely concerning their socio-professional inclusion. Therefore, the need to develop national policies in this regard was highlighted.

➤ **Issues faced when trying to access volunteering opportunities?**

- Accessibility is one of the key-issues that migrant or Roma women are facing in our country, and namely in our area.
- Lack of relevant volunteering opportunities, but also the prejudice and the discrimination that are facing those minorities, which are vulnerable groups through definition explain the fact why migrant women and ethnic minorities have difficulties in engaging in such activities.

As a consequence, our participants stated that the lack of their motivation can be included in our list of key issues, meaning that they need support in their socio-professional inclusion. There are a few organisations that work with migrant women, and this is why we can add to our list the lack of support services.

➤ **Aspect of volunteering most important to a migrant learner**

- Being part of a group.
- Expanding their network.
- New experiences.
- Cultural exchanges.
- Development of skills necessary in the labor market.
- Accessing support.
- Better integration in the society.
- Learning the local language.

➤ **Length of programme**

In Romania, organisations are providing volunteering contracts for minimum three or six months. Minimum three months should last one volunteering stage, our participants commonly agreed. At the beginning, the volunteer must adapt to the new environment, to integrate to the group, then he/she starts to learn, to develop skills, to achieve knowledge regarding a specific field/domain. In our country the volunteering stages are recognised by employers as professional experience and in this regard is very important to be accredited by the providers. This is the main reason why young people start early the volunteering stages: to gain experience.

➤ **Specific skills and competences to develop**

- Skills related to developing networks and partnerships with various institutions and organizations, representing different fields of interest. It is important for them to cooperate, support and exchange practices with each other as well as connect groups of migrants.
- Communication and motivation skills and competences to encourage migrant women to be more active.
- Skills connected with running a local campaign to increase society's awareness regarding volunteering.



- Competences allowing setting up a volunteering programme for migrant women.

- **Greatest challenge in setting up volunteering / peer support programme?**
 - Not enough number of migrant women who are active in peer support facilities;
 - Financial resources.
 - Supervision.
 - Training programme.
 - Small number of people in human resources of the organization possible combined with economic issues.

UK

All participants agreed that it is becoming harder to setup voluntary programmes due to 'red tape'. The cost implication for checks including DBS and safeguarding outweighs the benefits.

➤ **Specific skills and competences to develop as part of 'good practice' programme.**

- Guide on Recruitment and retention of volunteers
- Marketing guide
- Templates
 - Volunteer agreement
 - Initial recruitment
 - Contact details
 - Previous experience
 - DBS
 - Disabilities
 - Skills analysis
 - List of checks required
- Training
 - Safeguarding
 - Health & Safety
 - Policy & procedures
- Impact measurement
 - Volunteer tracking
 - Follow up calls during volunteering
 - Exit interview
 - Feedback from supervisor / manager

Conclusion

Peer Empowerment Programme for Achievement of Migrant Women (PEPA) will be designed to be especially beneficial to those with lower educational attainment, on low incomes, social isolated, or in vulnerable circumstances. Data from across the EU shows that women migrating into the EU have worse employment, integration and learning outcomes than migrant men, or women born in the EU; these disparities are the result of a complex of factors including loss of social networks as a result of migration (especially for refugees), limited education and employment opportunities for women in their country of origin, lack of literacy and local language skills, and limited funding and infrastructure for migrant support in their new home countries.

Peer support and volunteering have been shown to significantly improve migrant women's outcomes for integration, learning and employment, as well as helping them to build new social networks, gain confidence, and improve their mental and physical health. Another considerable benefit is that it creates capacity in third and public sector organisations supporting migrants, who are often under-resourced, while also giving migrant women a social purpose during (sometimes lengthy) periods of waiting for settled status, during which they are not eligible to work or enrol in formal learning. Above all, peer support and volunteering give migrant women the chance to achieve things by themselves and for themselves in a sustainable way, rather than be passive recipients of external support that is only available for a fixed period of time.

Case studies in Appendix I demonstrate the benefits of a good volunteer programme and the positive impact it has to the lives of migrant women.

Peer support and volunteering opportunities need to be carefully planned and of a high quality to maximise the benefit to participants; although this does take place, there are no tools to disseminate good practice from organisations which work well with migrant women, to organisations which have less or no experience. PEPA aims to increase the number and quality of peer support and volunteering opportunities for migrant women, across partner countries and the EU with a Good Practice Guide showcasing set up of a good volunteering programme.

Social Inclusion

The overarching aim of the project is to increase the social inclusion, integration and empowerment of women migrating into the EU, especially those with low or unrecognised skills, members of families migrating, and asylum seekers; these groups are particularly likely to be excluded from society, education and employment.

PEPA project takes a holistic approach to social inclusion for migrant women, combining education and vocational training with more and better opportunities to volunteer and to help other migrant women in similar circumstances, rather than focus narrowly on education, volunteering or employment in isolation. As well as increasing bridging social capital - helping migrant women to integrate and form social connections across their new home communities, the project will also draw on and strengthen bonding social capital, increasing social connections and cooperation between migrant women to enhance well-being and self-efficacy, whilst also creating new capacity for organisations, many of them small and poorly funded which work with migrant women.

Independent adaptation in a new social and institutional environment is a very difficult and long lasting process, especially when people do not know the cultural code of the given country and have communication problems due to the language barrier. Immigrant women in Europe are often discriminated and their rights are permanently abused. Females have more problems than males when adapting to new surroundings.

Competencies of Educators

Although there is evidence of excellent, innovative practice in peer support and volunteering for migrant women in many member states, this practice often takes place at the micro level in small third sector organisations, and is not widely disseminated. In addition, there are organisations working with migrant women, but not specialising in supporting this group, who do not have the skills or experience to begin peer support or volunteering activity tailored to the needs of migrant women, or who do not understand the value of these activities.

Best Practice Guide will identify and enhance best practices across all kinds of organisations working with migrant women, in different ways and to different extents, to ensure that the

cutting edge activities of specialists can be replicated through accessible outputs to support training and education to improve competencies.

Learning opportunities for low-skilled/qualified adults

Many migrant women enter the EU from countries where education for women is minimal, especially for members of poorer or rural communities; any skills or qualifications they do have may not be recognised in their new home countries, or easily applied. As well as low skills, low self-efficacy and traditional gender roles may result in some migrant women lacking the knowledge or confidence they need to engage effectively with learning opportunities. A further barrier is that education opportunities may begin at a level above existing competencies, or require a level of native language comprehension that newly arrived migrants do not possess.

There is a strong evidence base that shows how peer learning and volunteering increase self-efficacy and encourage migrant women to become involved in organisations and communities, and peer learning provides a 'bottom rung on the ladder' of education, creating opportunities for informal learning between women of similar backgrounds, to increase their skills to a level where they can engage with more formal learning.

Women migrating from extra-EU states are a large and diverse group. Those with recognised skills and qualifications may gain immediate access to the local high-skilled jobs market, but many others, those with low or unrecognised skills, members of families migrating, and asylum seekers have significantly lower levels of employment than third country migrant men and native-born women, are more likely to be overqualified for the jobs they find (EWSI 2018), and take longer than migrant men to fully integrate into the labour market (OECD 2018).

Unpaid care commitments may also make it more difficult for migrant women to access learning, including language learning, to increase their employability. These barriers can leave migrant women trapped in a mutually reinforcing cycle: lack of integration hinders their finding employment, but it is harder to integrate without the opportunities for social contact, language acquisition and cultural immersion that employment provides. Employment and language skills also allow migrant women to make an economic contribution to society rather than relying on

state benefits, and to help address the growing labour and skills shortage in the EU (EESC 2015, OECD 2018).

Summary

Combination of focus group and co-creation research carried out with migrant women and representatives from organisations involved in the support of migrant women has resulted in an outline for a best practice guide, to be used by practitioners who support migrant women in a non-specialist capacity.

In summary of the focus groups and co-creation workshops, following key issues were highlighted as important in supporting a good volunteering programme:

- Development of language and everyday vocabulary
- Training
- Supervision
- Marketing
- Templates
- Volunteer tracking
- Policy and Procedures
- Good practices

Appendix I - Case Studies

Case study - UK



Name: Kiran Zamir
Sector: English tutor
Country: UK

I arrived in the UK in 2011 with Bachelor of Arts degree. I had no work experience or qualifications in the UK. In 2014 I took part in 'Preparation for Work' programme to help me to find a job. As part of the programme I had to undertake 2 weeks of mandatory voluntary experience. I really didn't have any idea of what I wanted to do except 'Admin'. I didn't know what that encompassed but was really determined to find work in this sector. 3 days into the voluntary position, I knew this WASN'T what I wanted to do!

On successful completion of 'Preparation for Work' programme I decided to continue with voluntary work to gain new skills with Go-Woman! Alliance's (GOAL). As part of their voluntary programme I was encouraged to try different roles in the organisation. I supported English and computer teachers in their classes. To my surprise I really enjoyed working with women; those that had little to no English language from ethnic minority backgrounds.

I was supported by the teachers to work with small groups. My role included: marking students work, introducing simple topics such as phonics, assisting in speech and listening improvements' assisting and introducing daily tasks such as how to arrange an appointment with the GP and at the end of each session give a full debrief to the teacher.

Alongside volunteering I took the opportunity to gain some qualifications in CACHE Level 2 Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools Diploma Level 3 Supporting Teaching and Learning. I used by my learning in the classroom into successfully completing the qualification.

The qualifications in turn helped me to strengthen my delivery in class. It showed me how to break down concepts of learning/teaching to help enable the learner to understand and that repeating a few times may be required in several different formats to help consolidate their learning. I also learnt how to manage different abilities group in a classroom setting.



The most useful aspect of volunteering was that it initially informed me of what I DIDN'T want to do and what I was good at. It helped me to develop my inter-personal skills that I felt I was lacking and that needed brushing up. It also opened up the opportunities for CPD with formal training. In addition, it refined my communication skills as I sometimes needed to interpret things in Urdu.

My experience of volunteering has been that it helped me to increase my confidence. It enabled me to become a supportive team player who can work in a team and independently. It gave me the opportunity to work with all age groups with different backgrounds, which led to enhancing my inter-personal skills. It aided me with my organisational skills as I needed to manage my time with my volunteering and studies. Furthermore, it will also helped me to further my career by giving me the opportunities for various training and formal learning.

I am currently completing my second year in "Studies in Primary Education" at Newman University. My aim is to successfully complete my degree and apply for PGCE in order to become a qualified teacher.

Case study - Bulgaria



Name: Anna Yordanovich
Sector: Support
Country: Bulgaria

My name is Anna Yordanovich and I lived in Bulgaria for more than 35 years.

I originally came from Germany, where I was born and raised. At the age of 33, I immigrated to Bulgaria, with my husband. Currently, I am living in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, where I help people in need. The help I provide is not only limited to people with special needs, but I also help migrant women who are in different stages of their lives. Some of them who have just moved here, and are in need to understand the culture, learn the language, need help finding a place to live or a job to feed their family. Others, who already live here for many years and like to have a group of women, that can be there for moral and mental support. My time is devoted to supporting all of them.

When I first moved to Bulgaria, I experienced some of the struggles most immigrants always face, including not knowing the Bulgarian language. Almost nobody in Bulgaria speaks the German language, so I had to catch up quickly with my language skills. I felt the language barrier as soon as I stepped foot in Bulgaria, because to prepare the immigration paperwork for example, and to be admitted to the country, I had to complete files that were written in Bulgarian. The Bulgarian language also uses a very different alphabet because they write using the Cyrillic alphabet, which at that time I did not understand. My husband, who was Bulgarian, really helped me to integrate into the Bulgarian society.

Learning the language also meant that I could be more involved in the society. Understanding and speaking Bulgarian meant that I could communicate with the people around me, friends, and my husband's side of the family. In the 80's there were very few people who also spoke the English language. There were no courses that I could visit to learn the language. I needed a private tutor, an old lady, who was coaching me daily on the language. It took me many years to become fully confident in the Bulgarian language skills. I had to be confident and to be able to speak the language, or I wouldn't have been accepted in the society.

There were many difficulties I experienced, even during grocery shopping, because most labels are written only in Bulgarian language. For a foreigner, even these daily situations feel stressful.

With time I became acquainted with the culture, the language and the lifestyle. I even wrote a few courses, that I share also with migrant women in my society. Those courses relate to the language and also life-threatening situations. I have received certificates that allow me to provide special care and providing first aid support. Those courses helped me a lot with my work, I wanted to be of service to migrant women.

In the past, I always wanted to become a lecturer and to graduate with a PhD in a Bulgarian university. There were difficulties for me to follow my dream career because the local education institute at that time, was not able to understand and recognise the certificates of German education I previously have had, and thus there were administrative challenges. There were many conditions that I could not fulfil as a migrant woman. Unfortunately, there were not many support opportunities for women; especially migrant women in Bulgaria, that I could reach out to for help.

I decided to continue providing my help for people in need. Up to this moment I have not had any difficult situations with my employer, because they require experience and language skills, which I currently have. I proudly can say that I have now my own place to live and speak the language fluently. While most of my network and friends includes Bulgarian people, when I meet with migrants, and especially women, which speak a different language than Bulgarian, whether it is English or German, I always like to talk with them and offer my help, because I think one of the most important things in life is the personal ambition to help others, by sharing with them your experience and providing them your guidance.



Name: Marrie Peggy
Sector: Fitness
Country: Bulgaria

My name is Marrie Peggy and I have been living in Bulgaria for more than 1 year. I originally came from France, where I was born and raised. At the age of 34, I immigrated to Bulgaria, with my husband and my daughter. Currently, I am living in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, where I work in an international company. I also interact with many migrant women who currently live in Bulgaria.

We decided to immigrate to Bulgaria, to be closer to my twin sister who I was apart from for 20 years. My sister opened a fitness studio in Bulgaria, where I currently work with her. My husband decided not to instantly look for a job in Bulgaria, but to travel and explore the beauty of the country. He is now slowly starting to look for a place to work. Bulgaria has a lot of opportunities, as there are many international companies looking to grow. Although if my husband was working we could live a better life and be able to afford more. I found the salary that I receive very competitive. My daughter is currently studying in a high school, which teaches many subjects in French and is very expat oriented. I am very happy that this opportunities are there for all of our family members.

When I first moved to Bulgaria with my family, I experienced some of the struggles that I think most immigrants face, including not knowing how to speak the language, understand and write the Bulgarian language. We felt the language barrier straight away because I needed to prepare our immigration paperwork for example, and to be admitted to the country. We had to complete files that were written in Bulgarian. The Bulgarian language also uses a very different alphabet because they write using the Cyrillic alphabet, which up to today I do not understand.

Never mind the administrative struggles, I actually felt very welcome into the country, because most Bulgarians speak English and were very kind to translate documents for us. Of course, we felt the need to adapt, and the adaptation period was long. During this time, we started to form our social environment and met a lot of migrants from France which moved to Bulgaria recently. We formed a community amongst us and started helping migrants which moved countries recently. We really love Bulgaria and what we currently have in our live.

Case study - Poland



Name: Hanna
Sector: Administration
Country: Poland

I came to Poland 3 years ago. I have higher education. I am a film and television producer. My parents and grandparents worked in this industry. In Ukraine, in Kiev, I worked in the profession for 3 years. Then I ran my advertising agency company for 10 years. The trip to Poland forced the closure of the activity.

Coming to Poland is closely related to the fact that my child was diagnosed with autism. We found a contact for a Foundation. We moved to Poland with the whole family; my husband and three children. We were driving with the approach, if something does not work out, we turn back. The reality in Poland was difficult. We came to the country leaving everything behind. Our work and family.

My husband worked in the IT industry in Kiev, he developed websites. In Poland, he started physical work in a factory. We had no choice. He needed a job for money and documents. I was left without employment. The children went to school and kindergarten, and I had nothing to do.

When I arrived, I didn't know any Polish words. Slowly, step by step, I was learning everything. I turned to a person from the Foundation. I began to observe his work and help people in similar situations. I read a lot on legal matters: Polish regulations, legal acts, I went to ask questions about various issues in offices. I found out myself, broadened my knowledge. The foundation started to recruit more families, and I helped them with everything.

My volunteering was unofficial. I helped others with good hearts, because I know how difficult it is when you come to another country and know nothing. I also found a lot of benefits for myself. It helped with my self-esteem, belief that I had knowledge to share.

My presence at the Foundation was so obvious that at one point I was offered a job. To be able to take it, I had to translate my university degree. Now, I'm in charge of administrative matters. This job suits me very well. Coming to Poland and working with people here strengthened my



self-esteem. I can see a big change in myself. I feel better here as a woman. I am proud that I have learned to deal with legal matters. Some people think I have legal education.

If I start studies in Poland, it will be related to pedagogy, because working for the Foundation means also working with children.

I am not thinking of returning to work as part of my Ukrainian education. I would have to think about moving to a big city, but my family is doing well here. However, my mother writes scripts and I helped her translate the text into Polish and send it here. So this is an element of reference to the professional past in Ukraine.

Case study - Romania



Name: Guseinova Leila
Sector: Civic, social-cultural and youth organization
Country: Romania

FTRP (Federation of Young Romanians everywhere) organizes annual university fairs in Moldova, in Chisinau and Balti, where we learned of the University of Suceava (USV) and GIRB. GIRB volunteers helped me adapt faster in a foreign country and helped me with any problem I had. So I decided to be part of this small and friendly group.



For over year and a half I have been part of the organization. I have participated in various projects, writing trainings, graphic design and PR projects. I decided to get more involved with the graphic design, namely applications like Adobe Illustrator, Canva, Adobe Lightroom.

The coolest and most useful aspect of volunteering is that I've made new acquaintances, tried and learned to work as a team, be selfless, empathetic and help my colleagues.



Thanks to volunteering I realized that graphic design is something cool and useful, but with more experience it can also bring material benefits.



Name: Doloșcan Mihaela
Sector: Civic, social-cultural and youth organization
Country: Romania

As a future student in a new city and a foreign country I needed support and help. The Initiative Group of the Romanians of Bessarabia offered support to all the "freshmen", so I was able to adapt to a different lifestyle but I was also able to access a volunteering opportunity.

Volunteering offers a lot of useful stuff. I learned first of all how to adapt to a new country. Another useful thing I've been able to learn is teamwork and its "magic", I say this because a team without a leader can exist, but a leader without a team cannot exist. By practicing volunteering I learned how to: write a project, to interact with potential partners, to write a budget, to be a good leader, to appreciate the team, to be MYSELF.



The most useful aspect of volunteering is the experience that a person can live throughout his or her work.



easily, as I am already known with the field.

Being a student at the Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences, gaining this experience will help me in the future to engage in an institution, for example, in the field of youth. This is also the purpose for which I started volunteering. The experience gained within GIRB will help me adapt to the job I want much more

Case study - Spain



Name: Paula Navarrete
Sector: NGO
Country: Austria

I have a university degree in Tourism and Destination Planning and am currently living in Klagenfurt, Austria.

Two months ago, I started a long-term European volunteering (1 year) within the European Solidarity Corps programme. I decided to come to Austria with the main motivation to learn German and live one year in this country.

The volunteering I am doing takes place in an NGO called IniciativAngola and my tasks in the NGO are very varied: helping in the management of their social networks, doing handicrafts such as creating candles or making postcards, organising events (with the pandemic situation it is a bit complicated), helping in a shop that sells handmade products, going to high schools to show what I am doing and many other activities. In most of the activities I work with Angolan women. With this programme, I have a private German teacher who teaches me 4 hours a week and little by little I am learning.

The main barrier I have encountered has been the language, in Klagenfurt, they speak German with Slovenian dialect, many people speak in Slovenian and sometimes it is very difficult to understand what they are saying. A suggestion to deal with this problem is simply to listen and not to get nervous about not knowing anything because as the days go by you realise that you are learning little by little.

Every day I learn new things that I know will help me both personally and professionally in the future. When you find yourself in an unknown place with everything new to learn, you learn a lot about yourself as well as about others.

I have only been here for 2 months, but for the moment I recommend this experience to everyone who is hesitating whether to do it or not. In the beginning, there are a lot of doubts in your head, but until you do it you don't realise what you would have missed out on for fear of experiencing unknown things.



Name: Sara Moretton
Sector: NGO
Country: Spain

My name is Sara, I am Italian, but I live in Spain. Volunteering has always been a part of my life. Both informally and more formally, it is something for which I have always advocated, a value and an opportunity that I have always attended to try to improve the world in which I live. With this attitude, it is how life has opened the door for me to know cultures different from mine, such as the case that I am going to talk about: the Romani culture. I started in Italy to be more interested in the issue of the Roma people, since in my country they are highly discriminated against.

Thanks to a European program called "Dik I na Bister!" for the recovery of the historical memory of the Roma people, to which I was invited by a Roma friend, I was able to get in touch with the leader of the "Nakeramos intercultural association" in Barcelona, called María Rubia. Thanks to this friendship, I began to collaborate with the association in my free time. They needed help with the organizational and technical part, in addition to the translation and interpretation into English to speak with partners from other countries. Thanks to this experience, I have been able to access the reality of the Spanish Roma, also known as "*gitanos*" or "*kalò group*", in particular the world of women from the largest ethnic minority in Europe.



With Roma and not Roma women during the International Day of Romaní language in Barcelona

At the work level, I had the opportunity to develop various skills: project management in the social field, photo and video making, boosting active participation among young Roma and not Roma, intercultural competences, etc. But what I have gained the most from this volunteering is, undoubtedly, cultural enrichment.

I did not know anything about Roma women, except what can be heard from the very stereotypical comments of those who do not belong to this culture. I have discovered a very rich and diverse female world, with its own traditions and I have been able to see other points of view and ways of facing the patriarchal system that, as women, we all share. I have discovered that there are Roma feminist movements with their own path, that more and more Roma women are accessing to education and going to university, despite the difficulties they have to



face for belonging to an ethnic minority whose culture is not even mentioned in history books at school. I have appreciated some deeply rooted values in the Roma culture, such as those of family, oral narration, the “*phenjalipen*”, the concept of “sisterhood” among Roma women.

To conclude, it has been a great experience to relate to alterity, to break down barriers, to learn not to judge and to listen and value the visions of others. I could also get access to an enormous knowledge about Roma history and meet holocaust Roma survivors from different part of Europe and EEUU. Without a doubt, the experience has made me a better person. A cultural and really democratically enrichment without equal!