

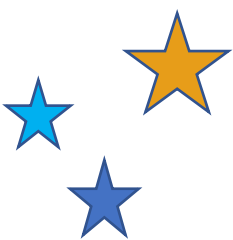


Co-funded by the  
European Union



**Together We Can**

**Evidence Appraisal – Transnational Report**  
**WP2: The "Together We Can" Methodology**



## Contributors

SYNTHESIS Center for Research and Education: Dora Heracleous

VNB: Tino Boubaris, Anke Egblomassé

EXEO LAB: Valeria Lavano, Rocco Dolce, Nicola Vita

RightChallenge: Diana Borges

VAEV: Dana Maleh



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them. Project Number: 2022-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000085184



## Content

<b>Contributors</b> .....	1
<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>National context</b> .....	5
Germany.....	5
Cyprus.....	5
Austria.....	6
Portugal.....	7
Italy.....	8
<b>Legislative context</b> .....	9
Challenges.....	9
Opportunities.....	11
<b>Political context</b> .....	15
Challenges.....	15
Opportunities.....	17
<b>Social context</b> .....	18
Challenges.....	18
Opportunities.....	19
<b>Ethical context</b> .....	22
Challenges.....	22
Opportunities.....	23
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	24
<b>References</b> .....	25

## Introduction

This transnational report constitutes an evidence appraisal and updated analysis of any ethical, legislative, political, and social **challenges** and **opportunities** that might affect the development of the project regarding the inclusion and participation of migrant women in education and employment in all 5 partner countries (Germany, Cyprus, Austria, Italy, Portugal). It is one of the main deliverables of WP2, together with the *Best Practices Benchmark Statement for Local Inclusion Strategies in Rural Areas* and the *Methodological Protocol*, and it will effectively and efficiently inform the design and development of **The Together We Can Learning and Training Scheme** (WP3), that constitutes the main interactive part of the project. Overall, WP2 lays the foundation for knowledge and collective experience that will bridge the methodological gap that exists in adult education with regards to innovative, tailored programmes for the inclusion of migrant women who live in rural areas in education, employment, and training.

This transnational report is highly significant as it will enhance the knowledge of adult educators and trainers, migrant support workers, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders, on current gaps and changes (negative and positive) in policies and practices in Germany, Cyprus, Italy, Austria, and Portugal, that are relevant to the inclusion of migrant women who live in rural areas. It will also strengthen the knowledge of researchers and trainers involved in the design, delivery, and review of the "Together we Can" Learning and Training Scheme (WP3) based on the analysis provided. This process will inform decision-making and programme implementation.

The current evidence appraisal is based on the national reports that each partner organisation submitted, and it involves critically evaluating and analysing information, policies, directives, laws, assessments, research studies, relevant literature, and other sources of evidence to determine their relevance and applicability to the training scheme's goals and target population. It goes without saying that having this robust evidence appraisal -at the translational level- before the beginning of the training scheme, it will only benefit the consortium and target groups as it will enhance the scheme's effectiveness, improve decision-making, and ensure that interventions and strategies are based on sound evidence and best practices. Moreover, the limitations that each partner-country has should be taken into serious consideration before developing the content of the learning and training scheme in order to achieve maximum impact for the beneficiaries. All these factors when are considered will contribute to the training scheme's overall quality, credibility, and ability to achieve desired outcomes.

Methodologically, each partner had to complete a national report based on a template provided by SYNTHESIS Center for Research and Education, and then all the results were put together in this transnational report which will be translated in German, Greek, Italian and Portuguese. The basic elements are relevant to: the national context of each partner-country with regards to integration and inclusion of migrant women (in rural areas); the legislative context, including considerations and changes that may negatively and positively impact the implementation of the project and the training scheme; the political context, including considerations and changes that may negatively and positively impact the implementation of the project and the training scheme; the social context, including considerations and changes that may negatively and positively impact the implementation of the project and the training scheme; and the ethical



context, including considerations that may negatively and positively impact the implementation of the project and the training scheme.

### **A few words about the *Together We Can* project**

The *Together We Can* project aims at developing activities and outputs that will improve the field of adult education in offering adequate learning and training opportunities to vulnerable women who live in rural areas and support the communities in which those women live, to become local learning environments that promote their inclusion and engagement. This is with a view to identifying and developing practices and strategies for their inclusion at a local level. It is hoped that this project will be a practical and constructive basis for action in empowering all (migrant) women. In general, the project intends to:

- Create solid theoretical and methodological support frameworks that will address the needs of migrant women who live in rural areas.
- Bridge the gap that exists in adult education with regards to innovative, tailored programmes for the inclusion of rural women migrants and their active involvement in education, employment, and training.
- Empower communities, motivate, and educate them, towards more tolerant and inclusive attitudes that will enhance the communities' resiliency and continuity while encompassing rural women migrants as equal members of the community.
- Contribute towards measurable change in practices, attitudes, policies, processes of local formal and informal stakeholders towards rural women migrants.
- Promote tolerance, inclusion, justice, and equal rights while combating racism, prejudice, bias, and xenophobia on a local level.

## National context

In this section, the national context of each of the 5 partner-countries that compose the *Together We Can* consortium will be presented so as the readers can deepen their understanding of the diverse cultural, social, and economic backgrounds in which migrant women integration is taking place. This knowledge can enhance readers' cultural competence and sensitivity when working with migrant populations, enabling them to provide more effective and inclusive services.

### Germany

In 2021, around 3.2 million third-country national women were living in Germany, and almost 11 million women with a migration background. Most of them have their own migration experience. The most common residence titles for third-country national migrant women are family reasons as well as reasons of international law, humanitarian, and political reasons. Overall, migrant women represent a heterogeneous group in terms of region of origin and residence status. Regarding their level of education, women who are third-country nationals have very different educational qualifications, which can be seen as a sign of the heterogeneity of this group. However, data on labour market participation show that migrant women with similar educational backgrounds face gender-specific challenges in accessing the labour market and participate in the labour force much less frequently than third-country national men. A major gender-specific integration challenge lies in the dilemma of reconciling family and work or participation in support measures such as integration courses. Although there are special integration courses for women and for parents in which special time requirements are considered, evaluations and studies indicate that further expansion of childcare services is necessary.

The recognition of qualifications is also an important goal in overcoming key barriers to integration for migrant women. Immigrant women usually have qualifications in education, childcare and health professions, but cannot use them due to high recognition requirements in Germany. This results in difficulties for migrant women in accessing gainful employment with adequate qualifications and a significantly lower employment rate overall. In the area of health, access barriers that can result from language barriers are known. In the area of housing, it is evident that almost one third of all third-country national women live in cramped housing conditions. In the area of political and civic participation, barriers such as care and household obligations, lack of language skills, and limited legal opportunities (voting rights) have a negative impact on the political engagement of migrant women.

### Cyprus

In Cyprus, migrant women make up more than 55% of the total migrant population with the majority coming from countries outside the EU (Migrants and Refugees Section, 2020). Migrant women face many challenges which are exasperated by the lack of concrete policies and strategies for the integration of migrants into the labour force by the Cypriot government (Stavrou, 2007). Additionally, Cypriot integration processes are gender-blind excluding issues relating to female migrant precarity and the specific needs of women migrants. This not only limits the opportunities for migrant women in the labour market, it leads to weaker social



integration as well as higher risk of Sexual and gender-based violence, labour exploitation and trafficking (Angeli, 2020a & 2020b).

The majority of migrant women are employed in low or unskilled jobs, in sectors such as the hospitality industry, health, retail services, as domestic workers in private households, and in the sex industry (cabarets, night clubs, pubs, etc) (KISA, 2009). Migrants are dependent on the employer due to the migration model linking work and residence permits to a specific employer which in many cases leads to the exploitation of their working and human rights. Domestic workers and workers in the sex industry face an additional form of discrimination as they are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior and not the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. This weakens their position as workers because, the Ministry of the Interior lacks the competence and skills required for labour matters (KISA, 2009) as well as having no access to trade unions and little access to NGOs (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2015).

The Cypriot government fails to protect migrant women, leaving them especially vulnerable due to the lack of dedicated programmes, the overall fragmented approach to policy implementations and the limited visibility of migrant women in data and statistics in Cyprus due to the government's gender-blind approach. In addition, a Migration Policy Group Migrant Integration Index (MIPEX) study conducted in 2015 concluded that "Cyprus discourages integration, as it fosters unfavourable conditions for migrant workers to gain long-term access to the labour market and few real opportunities to participate in democratic life" (Angeli, 2020a). In that sense, training programmes like the one suggested by the Together We Can project are of utmost importance for the successful integration of migrant women, regardless of their legal status.

## **Austria**

Austrian integration policy has placed a strong emphasis on prioritizing the integration of migrant women for several years. They have recognized the importance of this issue and have dedicated increased funding specifically for initiatives aimed at supporting the integration of migrant women (European Migration Network, 2022). The topic of social and economic inclusion of migrant women in Austria was studied within the framework of the European Migration Network (EMN) from 2016 to 2021. The study aimed to identify the key challenges and opportunities for the integration of migrant women and assess the extent to which their particular situation is taken into consideration in integration policies and measures, with a focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study found that while the immigration of migrant women from third countries to Austria decreased after reaching a peak in 2017, the percentage of female third-country nationals in the female population slightly increased during the period under review. The main reasons for women coming to Austria were categorized as "other" reasons (including refugees and humanitarian reasons) and family reasons. Integration challenges were associated with these immigration reasons and with gender, as well as citizenship and country of origin. Intersectionality, which considers how gender overlaps with other personal characteristics, played a significant role in the integration of migrant women.

In terms of employment, female third-country nationals faced significant disadvantages compared to men. The labour market participation rate for women from third countries was considerably lower than that for men, as well as lower than the rates for Austrian women and men. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the employment challenges for female third-country nationals, leading to a significant decrease in their activity rate. Patriarchal structures,

gender-specific distribution of roles in housework and childcare, and the reinforcement of traditional gender roles due to the pandemic were identified as overarching challenges for the integration of migrant women in Austria. These factors also increased the risk of domestic violence. The economic and social consequences of the pandemic disproportionately affected migrant women due to the intersectionality of gender and citizenship.

Austrian integration policy has prioritized the integration of migrant women for several years. The Federal Chancellery, responsible for integration, aims to promote gender equality and equal rights for men and women through self-determination and independence. Gender mainstreaming strategies and gender-specific measures are employed, and compulsory measures are implemented. However, labour market integration of migrant women is mentioned less frequently in key policy documents compared to other areas such as civic integration, empowerment, language training, health, and protection against violence. The study revealed an increase in funding for specific integration measures for migrant women at the national level over the review period. Various integration measures for women are implemented at local, regional, and national levels. However, non-governmental organizations emphasize the importance of informing the target group about these services and providing comprehensive support for effective utilization. Based on indicators such as mentions in literature, positive evaluations, awards, and expert confirmation, three measures were identified as "good practice" in Austria's integration efforts for migrant women.

In conclusion, the study highlights the challenges faced by migrant women in Austria, particularly in terms of employment and gender-specific roles. Although integration measures and funding have increased, there is room for improvement, especially in addressing labour market integration. Comprehensive support and targeted information dissemination are crucial for effective utilization of integration services (Heilemann, 2021).

## Portugal

The most recent collection of literature has given preference to a masculine understanding of migratory routes, characterising men as the primary providers of food and women as dependents on the added family. However, recent migration patterns show that more women are migrating on their own, and a woman can serve as a role model for family migration strategies. (Wall et al., 2008). There are currently data on the role of women in contemporary migratory movements in the field of migration sociology. Approximately 20 million foreigners (5,1 percent of the total population) currently reside in continental Europe, with half of them being women (Wenden, 2005). In Portugal, women make up 54% of the foreign population, a proportion that has grown over the past few years.

Brazilian, Ukrainian, Cape Verdean, Romanian, Angolan, Guinean, British, Chinese, French, and Spanish were the top ten nationalities in Portugal at the start of this decade. After a dramatic transition in 2020, the ten nationalities with the highest population are currently Brazilian, British, Cape Verdean, Romanian, Ukrainian, Chinese, French, Italian, Indian, and Angolan. A total of 662 095 foreign nationals with valid residency permits were residing in Portugal as of 2020, according to the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF). This figure corresponds to 6,4% of the nation's overall population.





Despite the rise in female immigration, little is known about the goals and current migration routes of women. All studies centre on the "familiar" migration process, which sees men immigrate first, followed by women and children, occasionally after many years and only when the minimal conditions for the added family's subsistence are guaranteed. According to a qualitative analysis of the life paths of migrant women in Portugal, their labour migration patterns have become more diversified. The pattern of the man migrating first, followed by his wife and children, remains, but is accompanied by a new set of routes: in some cases, the woman migrates first or with her husband or partner, always as part of a family migration plan; in others, the woman migrates alone (or with her children) and has a more personal migration plan.

It is essential to mention the effects of changes in family structure to explain the greater diversity of women's migratory paths. On the one hand, there is an increase in single-parent families and divorce rates, which often force women to work more to make ends meet or to leave the family behind. On the other hand, this is due to the emergence of new models of married life based on equality, shared responsibilities, dual employment, and family companionship. These models diverge from the male breadwinner model and the strong gender distinction between households.

There are numerous action plans in Portugal that aim to clarify public policy and specify what benefits resident immigrant women might receive directly or indirectly. The express conclusion of the Strategic Plan for Migration (2015-2020) (Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 12 12 B/2015) is that "equality between men and women should be promoted in all priority axes". In addition, it states that in integration and training, "measures to promote gender equality and strengthen the civic, personal and professional integration of immigrant women in Portuguese society" will be strengthened. In terms of specific measures, it is important to highlight the ninth, which calls for "promoting the participation of immigrant women in the social movement" and suggests "mobilising immigrant women to participate in the social movement", as well as "informing immigrant women about their specific rights and responsibilities as women".

## **Italy**

Migrant women in Italy live in quite a difficult context, especially nowadays. The national government has passed to a right-wing party that is not very friendly with immigration. Moreover, migrant women have to face a double difficulty to integrate into society: the first is that they are migrants, so they face integration problems related to language and culture, the second is that they are women so finding the right job for them tends to be more difficult than a migrant man. Although Italy is considered a racist country, there are many associations and initiatives concerning the integration of migrants into society. Fewer are those dedicated specifically to migrant women, which is why the objectives of this project can have a significant impact on society. Another obstacle is the culture and religion of migrant women, according to which they are forced to stay at home to look after their children and family, with no possibility of finding work and being independent. For decades now, Italy has been a popular destination for migrants who want to change their lives and settle down. For this reason, although the political context does not help and prejudices and stereotypes still exist, Italy is ready to integrate migrant women in the best possible way. The mix of cultures is an added value that Italians, especially the new generations, are slowly discovering. Assuming that the female unemployment rate in Italy is in itself very high, it can be stated that for migrant women the difficulty in finding a stable job is even higher. The main sectors in which migrant women work in Italy are as agricultural laborers (very often underpaid and exploited) and as carers for the aged people. A large number (especially the younger ones) end up in organised crime and are forced into prostitution.

## Legislative context

In this section, the readers will grasp a better understanding of several challenges and opportunities that the policy frameworks and legal measures offer to migrants in general, and to migrant women in particular, in all partner countries. By reading this section, readers can gain insights into legislative changes governmental approaches, priorities, and strategies for migrant integration, helping them understand the broader context and framework within which integration efforts are conducted.

## Challenges

Frequent **changes or uncertainties in immigration policies** is one of the main challenges that is observed across all 5 partner countries. These changes create an environment of instability for migrants. Unclear pathways to legal status or sudden policy shifts can make it challenging for migrants, and migrant women, to plan for their future, hindering their ability to fully integrate and contribute to their host society. These changes are stronger in the southern European countries, like Italy, Portugal and Cyprus, where frequent changes in immigration laws or policies make it more difficult for migrants, especially women, to obtain work visas or legally reside in the aforementioned countries.

Particularly, in Italy the history of Italian laws is indicative of the various restrictions that migrants have to face upon arrival and/or while residing in a country. The introduction of laws to regulate the flow of migrants in Italy occurred with the "Martelli law" n.39 of 1990, which regulated the incoming flow of migrants for the first time. A turning point came in 1998 with the introduction of the "Turco-Napolitano law", which defined a greater definition of migration flow planning, which was integrated into national foreign policy through a system of privileged quotas in favour countries that collaborated in the repatriation of immigrants expelled from Italy. In addition, the "Consolidated Act on Immigration" was created, which focused all national regulations on this sector, helping to simplify and streamline of Italian regulations in this field. In 2002, with the Bossi Fini law, more restrictions were introduced on the previous law, such as greater control over arrivals in Italy and a reduction in the duration of the residence permit from three to two years. This affected the situation of migrant women in Italy greatly, and in addition to ethical and social difficulties, political ones were also added. In general, the Italian government's intention is to adopt instruments to favour the entry of those who come to Italy for work. The visible restrictions of Italian laws can create significant barriers to legal migration, and migrants may resort to irregular or undocumented status. This can push them into the underground economy, where they may face exploitation, low wages, unsafe working conditions, and limited legal protection. This cycle of vulnerability impedes integration and reinforces social disparities.

Part of the constant changes of immigration policies is family separation as stricter immigration laws may impose more rigorous eligibility criteria or longer waiting periods for family reunification. This can result in prolonged separation of families, causing emotional distress, hindering social integration, and impeding the well-being of migrants. In that sense, **family reunification** constitutes one of the main challenges at the legislative level observed in all 5 countries, and especially in Germany, Portugal and Cyprus. Family reunification is a crucial



aspect of migration policies that recognises the significance of maintaining family unity and preserving social connections. It refers to the process of allowing migrants who have settled in a new country to be joined by their family members, including spouses, children, parents, and sometimes other relatives.

Particularly, in Germany there are considerable restrictions in family reunifications as tens of thousands of families separated by flight and persecution are currently waiting to be reunited in Germany. Above all, legal regulations prevent their family reunification from taking place quickly, legally, and humanely. For war refugees who receive subsidiary protection, for example, reunification is limited to 1,000 persons per month and is subject to additional conditions. In the case of unaccompanied minor refugees who had to flee alone from countries such as Afghanistan or Somalia due to the threat of forced recruitment or forced marriage, the parents, but not the siblings, have a right to family reunification. Long procedures due to a lack of digitalisation and slow-working authorities sometimes delay family reunification by several years and keep those affected in a seemingly endless state of waiting. In the coalition agreement of 2021, the Federal Government promised to remedy the abuses described above, to facilitate family reunification with beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and the reunification of siblings, and to accelerate and digitise procedures. However, the implementation in legal regulations has so far failed to materialise.

Similarly in Cyprus, access to family reunification remains a lengthy procedure for refugees. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (98% of Syrians present in the country) are not eligible for family reunification and often resort to irregular means to obtain reunification with family members. Equally, family unity is not upheld for relationships formed after entry to Cyprus, leaving spouses of refugees without a legal status or access to rights and including families who have been living in the country for many years. This results in numerous obstacles especially for migrant women who are heavily dependent on their spouses for survival. On the same line, naturalisation process has become more difficult to access for the majority of refugees, including for those who have been living in Cyprus for well over 10 years, were born in the country or arrived at a very young age. In many cases, the decision rejecting the application mentions that the refugee does not have sufficient ties to the country or is a burden for the state. Such findings are generally not justified, indicating an overall strict and negative attitude toward granting nationality to refugees. Furthermore, in practice there is no access to long term residence or any other permanent status.

In Portugal naturalisation processes and criteria are rarely considered good practices as the person who applies for family reunification must have lived in the country legally for a year before applying for a family reunion; s/he must meet financial or lodging requirements; the application process is lengthy and expensive; and/or the permit must be issued or renewed. For access to family reunion, no language competence test or other integration test is required.

The restrictions at the legislative level result in numerous other challenges that affect the lives of migrant women (especially those who live in rural areas) and their active participation to training programmes, such as the *Together We Can* programme. This **lack of integration opportunities** is visible in Portugal, where the continuous legislative restrictions can result in a number of challenges, such as budget cuts or cuts in funding for education, employment and training programmes. This phenomenon is more visible in rural areas where limited resources are available to support projects. This can lead to a reduction in the quality or quantity of

services provided to migrant women, making it more difficult to achieve project objectives. Moreover, reductions in funding for social support services, such as childcare and transport, may make it more difficult for migrant women to participate in projects. This can limit the number of participants and make it more difficult to achieve project goals. Largely, changes in policies, laws or funding that limit the resources available to support migrant women in rural areas can adversely affect project implementation.

On the same note, in Cyprus the new integration plan raised lots of concerns from civil society organisations. NGOs criticised the consultation process that took place in advance of the adoption of the plan by the Advisory Board, with an unrealistically short deadline for submission of comments. The final version of this draft plan was adopted by the Advisory Board on the Integration of Migrants (The Advisory Board was established in 2007 and consists of representatives from the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, the Ministry of Health, the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, the Union of Cyprus Communities, the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsperson), the Pancyprian Federation of Labour, the Cyprus Workers Confederation-SEK, the Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus, the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation, and the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry), after which implementation started, even though it was never submitted to the Council of Ministers for official adoption. This of course created tensions at the legislative level, but the real effects are only experienced by migrants who have limited opportunities to participate in integration activities that will benefit their lives.

In Austria, the most recent legislative challenges were relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic. While there was political awareness of the specific impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, there was a lack of specific national integration policies or targeted strategies to mitigate the negative impact on the integration of migrant women. Instead, policies related to women and integration are considered cross-cutting issues in all political decisions and measures to tackle the pandemic. Although there have been new measures introduced to inform migrant women about COVID-19 and expand existing services to cover additional topics and needs, there is no concrete information available regarding the development of new policies or further advancement of existing policies specifically for the integration of migrant women. This lack of specific attention to the integration of migrant women in response to the pandemic is a potential negative factor that may hinder the implementation of the project in Austria.

## Opportunities

Legislative changes hold immense potential to shape the lives of migrants and pave the way for their successful integration into host societies. By enacting laws that provide opportunities and protections, governments can foster an inclusive environment that recognizes the valuable contributions migrants make to their new communities. Embracing legislative changes that support migrant integration is not only a matter of fairness and human rights but also an investment in social cohesion, economic prosperity, and cultural diversity. In Germany, a new legislation has recently been adopted called **Chancenaufenthaltsrecht (Right of “residence of opportunity”)**. But what does it stand for? People who have been living in Germany on a tolerated basis for at least 5 years on 31 October 2022 are to receive an 18-month probationary residence permit to fulfil the other requirements for a right to stay during this time. The aim of



the right of opportunity residence is to give people who have found their centre of life in Germany over their long period of residence the chance of legal residence.

Migrants can apply for the right of residence if:

- They have lived in Germany for at least 5 years on 31 October 2022 on a tolerated, permitted or residence permit basis,
- They are committed to the free democratic basic order,
- They have not committed a criminal offence (except for convictions for minor offences),
- They have not repeatedly made false statements about their identity and thereby prevented deportation.

As of 30 June 2022, a total number of 247,290 migrants were living in Germany under the toleration statuses, many of them for many years or decades. This shows that the right of “residence of opportunity” will positively affect many migrants with a previously insecure status. Migrant women can apply individually or being included as a family member into this new regulation. Since the right of “residence of opportunity” includes access to labour market which has been very much limited for tolerated migrants, and regarding the fact that the German labour market requires a high number of additional staff at different levels, this legislation might lead to a win-win situation for the society, the labour market, and the migrants affected by the law.

Similarly in Portugal, residence authorisation processes were adjusted to allow undocumented migrants access to more opportunities. Particularly, a new category of legal permit was developed in 2001. According to the Decree-Law No. 4/2001, it was a temporary residency authorization that, in practice, was a work permit given to foreign nationals who were living without having legal documents in Portugal if they had an employment contract with an employer. By transposing Council Directive No. 2003/109/CE of November 25, 2003, regarding the status of long-term residence for TCNs (Third Country Nationals), Law No. 23/2007 of July 4 defined the requirements and processes for obtaining the status of a long-term resident. More stringent requirements were implemented along with the legalisation of the long-term resident status. The requirements, such as the evaluation of language ability and the fees involved in obtaining the licences.

In 2003, a factor of positive discrimination was introduced when it was established that TCNs from PALOP (Portuguese-speaking African countries) only required six years of legal residence to apply for a permanent residence authorization, instead of the requirement of eight years imposed on all other TCNs. When it was determined that TCNs from PALOP (Portuguese-speaking African countries) only needed six years of legal residence before applying for a permanent residence authorization in 2003, as opposed to the eight years required of all other TCNs, a factor of positive discrimination was introduced.

On a similar note, to reflect the progress in the access to Portuguese nationality and naturalisation processes, significant revisions were made to the law in 2006 (Organic Law no. 2/2006, of April 17, reinforced by Decree-Law no. 237-A/2006, of December 14, which approved the Regulation of Portuguese Nationality). These modifications made the legal framework for requests for nationality by naturalisation more adaptable, facilitating access to naturalisation for vulnerable children and youths who can now demonstrate their residency in Portugal through their years spent in the educational system (rather than through years of accumulated residence permits). The amendments improved the law's accessibility and inclusiveness for immigrants' children born in Portugal and so facilitated immigrants' greater assimilation.

Further to that, legislative changes can foster opportunities for the development of projects and training programmes, such as the *Together We Can* project. Particularly, in Austria there are plans to **expand and further develop integration measures** specifically targeted at migrant women. There is recognition of the relevance of the issue, as women with a migrant background have been particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The areas of focus for these integration measures include the labour market, education, health, and protection against violence. Additionally, a dedicated women's advice center is planned to be established in the Vienna Integration Centre to provide support for female refugees and immigrants. Moreover, the availability of dedicated funding to support integration actions for women is also welcomed by civil society organizations. Overall, these legislative considerations demonstrate progress in recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by migrant women and aim to develop gender-sensitive integration policies and measures in the case of Austria.

Under this umbrella, legislative changes in Portugal offer opportunities to migrant women who live in rural areas as increased funding for education, employment, and training is expected to provide more resources to support projects like the *Together We Can* project. Moreover, simplified administrative procedures related to work visas and residence permits makes it easier for migrant women to stay and work legally in Portugal.

In Cyprus, **extended access to employment sectors** will be beneficial for migrant women who live in rural areas. Particularly in 2019, the Minister of Labour, Welfare, and Social Insurance extended access for asylum seekers to additional employment sectors. Currently, some permitted fields of employment for asylum seekers are in agriculture and the food industry (in restaurants, hotels, delivery services) which is very important for migrant women who live in rural areas as their participation to *the Together We Can* training programme will increase their opportunities to successfully find a job (if they don't have one already) and become more active in their local communities.

In all countries, there are national laws that support and protect migrant women which are very important as their implementation allows migrant women's active participation and inclusion in host societies. These laws include the: 1. International Protection Laws that make specific provisions for the protection of migrant women who are victims of gender-based violence or persecution. 2. Laws against gender-based violence (in the case of Italy it is known as the 'Femicide Law'), that provide prevention, protection and support measures for victims of gender-based violence and promote awareness-raising and training at the national level. 3. Labour and equal opportunity laws: Italian labour and equal opportunity laws include provisions protecting the rights of migrant women in the labour context. This includes the prohibition of gender discrimination in the workplace, access to health care and equal pay for equal work.

At the **European level**, all partner countries have ratified a number of directives that protect and support migrant women at the legislative level. Yet, there may still be room for further improvements and considerable legislative changes. Below some EU-based directives are listed that can support migrant women:

- Directive 2004/38/EC (Free Movement Directive): This directive establishes the right of EU citizens, including migrant women, to move and reside freely within the territory of the European Union. It ensures that migrant women have equal access to social rights, including education, healthcare, and employment opportunities in their host countries.



- Directive 2011/98/EU (Single Permit Directive): This directive aims to simplify and streamline the procedures for granting third-country nationals (including migrant women) legal residence and work permits in EU member states. It ensures that migrant women are granted equal treatment in terms of working conditions, access to social benefits, and vocational training.
- Directive 2006/54/EC (Equal Treatment Directive): This directive prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex in relation to employment, working conditions, and access to vocational training. It ensures that migrant women are protected from gender-based discrimination and have equal opportunities in the workplace.
- Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe): The Istanbul Convention is a treaty aimed at preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. It sets comprehensive standards for member states to address gender-based violence and protect the rights of migrant women, including provisions for support services, legal protection, and access to justice.
- Directive 2012/29/EU (Victims' Rights Directive): This directive establishes minimum standards for the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime, including migrant women who may be victims of gender-based violence, human trafficking, or other forms of exploitation. It ensures that migrant women have access to appropriate support services, legal assistance, and compensation.

It is important to note that legislative changes alone may not be sufficient. Implementation, enforcement, and active collaboration with civil society organizations and migrant communities are equally crucial.

## Political context

Being aware of the political context of a country is paramount when assessing opportunities and challenges in implementing integration programmes. The political landscape profoundly influences the formulation and execution of policies affecting migrant communities. Understanding the government's stance on migration, its commitment to social inclusion, and its approach to multiculturalism helps tailor integration initiatives accordingly. Knowledge of political dynamics enables stakeholders to navigate potential obstacles, identify allies, and build partnerships for successful program implementation. Moreover, grasping the prevailing ideologies and public sentiment surrounding migration aids in crafting effective communication strategies to garner support and address misconceptions. By taking the political context into account, integration programmes can be thoughtfully designed and aligned with the country's values, fostering more inclusive societies and increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes for both migrants and the host community.

In the *Together We Can* case, national reports highlighted the challenges faced by migrants (and particularly migrant women) living in rural areas, such as access to education, healthcare, employment, and social services. Additionally, these reports showcased successful integration initiatives, programs, or policies that have yielded positive outcomes. By reviewing such information, we were able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape, identify gaps, and learn from successful practices.

## Challenges

A common denominator in all partner countries is a **profound hostility towards refugees and migrants** as it is reflected in the rise of far right and populist movement at national, regional, and local level. In Italy, Cyprus, Germany, Portugal, and Austria there is a strong anti-immigration sentiment or political rhetoric that creates a hostile environment for migrant women and migrant population in general. Let's explore in detail how nuanced this far-right rhetoric actually is. Germany as a federal republic with 16 member states does have a high number of state elections (sometimes up to 5 per year). The election campaigns do not reflect only regional topics, but as well those of national interest such as migration. With a rising number of voters tending to far right and/or populist parties, other parties (specifically moderate and liberals) tend to partly adapt at least populist opinions in their campaigns to collect votes from the right edge. This development can also be considered in local elections and politics, specifically in the Eastern part of Germany. In the region where the *Together We Can* training programme is going to be implemented, there seem to be no such challenges by now, but it must be taken into consideration that negative political connotations toward migrants may have a negative impact on the project success at longer term.

Similarly, the Italian government has recently passed to a right-wing party which comes together with the adoption of more restrictive rules regarding the care of migrants in the country, and this could be an obstacle for the development of the project. The laws are aimed at limiting illegal landings in Italy, mainly by punishing traffickers with stronger penalties. In Cyprus there is also a visible hostility towards receiving new asylum seekers that results in poor political choices which are reflected in laws and processes. According to the ECRI Report on Cyprus (published on 7 March 2023), information about services, such as registration with the Labour





Office, access to the NHS and provision of medical card, and accommodation, provided by the authorities often contains errors, e.g., phone numbers and opening hours of public services. One further difficulty is that most public services needed by migrants are increasingly only available online and then usually in Greek only, or at best, in English as well. All in all, challenges such as learning the language, transportation, bureaucratic procedures, limited childcare arrangements and lack of translated documents are just a few of the problems observed.

The same goes for the remaining three countries, Austria, Cyprus, and Portugal, where anti-immigration sentiments profoundly impact the political landscape. They can be seen in the rise of populist and far-right political movements. These groups often capitalize on fear and resentment towards migrants, framing them as a threat to a nation's cultural identity and economic stability. In their political discourse, they may advocate for stricter immigration policies, border controls, and even the deportation of undocumented migrants. This kind of rhetoric not only galvanizes a particular voter base but can also force more mainstream political parties to adopt tougher migration stances to remain competitive. As a result, migration becomes a divisive issue that influences electoral outcomes and policy decisions, ultimately shaping the direction of a country's politics. Secondly, anti-immigration sentiments.

Moreover, there are several **obstacles** that migrants face in **accessing the labour market**, such as language barriers and long distances from the place of employment, at times without reasonable public transport. In Cyprus, migrants are moreover often referred by labour authorities to jobs which are inappropriate for them, for example because of lack of childcare possibilities. If they repeatedly turn down job offers, their benefits may be discontinued. Migrants are given no chance to explain why they are not in a position to accept certain job offers, in which case they may be considered as wilfully unemployed with the loss of benefits as the result, according to the NGO Caritas.

In Italy, this is manifested in the so-called 'Lotta al Capolarato', i.e., fighting the exploitation of migrant workers in the agricultural sector. According to the Italian trade union confederation FLAICGIL, about 420,000 people are illegally employed and exploited in intensive agriculture throughout the country. For the workers, this exploitation means, economically speaking, being paid less than the statutory minimum wage, with a wage of EUR 3.50 per 300 kg crate of tomatoes. Most of these workers are migrants. If a migrant wants to earn money in Italy, most jobs are in agricultural fields. To find work in this sector, migrants must contact the 'Caporali', who send them to the fields and control them while they work. The corporals exploit the migrants with false contracts and very low wages for their hard work. These conditions cause migrants to live in inhuman conditions, mostly in ghettos. The dwellings in these ghettos are often made of recycled materials or are in abandoned houses. These structures are totally unhealthy and host up to 3,000 people in summer. This exploitation makes it very difficult for migrants to integrate into the host country and its society.

In Cyprus, a notable challenge is that **access to education** is more difficult and complicated for adult migrants. Even though the Adult Education Centres, which function under the auspices of the MoEC, offer afternoon classes for learning Greek as a second language, access to securing a spot for these classes is difficult. This is due to a lack of information, capacity limitations, lack in procurement of translated documents as well as strict bureaucratic procedures, which discourages migrants from participating. Also, access to tertiary education institutions is limited for migrants, especially for those who would like to continue their studies as they need the necessary resources to subsidise their tuition for private universities and public universities require Greek as a foreign language as a prerequisite for entry. Problems are more apparent among applicants and beneficiaries of international protection who already possess academic qualifications or who were forced to discontinue their studies. The procedures for recognition

of their degrees and other educational skills and qualifications, are very difficult and some degrees or qualifications are not acknowledged by the state.

## Opportunities

One important element that promotes opportunities for migrants is the **simplification of labour market access and employment processes**. Regarding economic policies in Germany, there is a large pressure on political actors to widen the opportunities for migrants to enter the labour market, to meet the urgent workforce needs of both SMEs and large industries. Besides the necessity to solve long-term pending residential issues, the abovementioned “right of residence of opportunity” is partly a political concession to these labour market needs. Similarly, in Cyprus since 2021 simplified employment processes are in place as the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance announced through a decree that employers can hire asylum seekers immediately by simply submitting a declaration of temporary employment, while in Italy a measure was introduced to simplify and accelerate the procedures for issuing work authorisations authorization (which can be granted 'in any case if the information on the obstacles has not been acquired by the police headquarters' within the 60 days provided for by Article 22 of Legislative Decree 286/1998).

Similarly in Portugal in 2022, the Portuguese Parliament approved the amendments proposed for Law 23/2007, (commonly known as the Law on Foreign Nationals) due to intense work in all Government areas. Anyone intending to enter the national territory to look for work now has access to a new, specialised visa. The visa can only be used nationally and is valid for 120 days until it expires. The visa gives the right to request a residence permit when a working relationship has been established and formalised during that period, with the intention of streamlining procedures. The visa includes scheduling the granting of residence permits with the required services, within the 120 days the visa is in effect.

In all countries, Germany, Portugal, Austria, Cyprus and Italy, changes in employment and labour market processes for migrants are crucial for fostering both social inclusivity and economic prosperity in host countries. Firstly, ensuring fair and equitable access to the labour market for migrants promotes social cohesion. When migrants have the opportunity to work and contribute to their host society, they are more likely to integrate successfully, build connections, and participate in the community. This, in turn, can reduce the risk of social isolation, discrimination, and marginalization, ultimately strengthening the fabric of the society as a whole. When migrants are treated with respect and have access to decent employment opportunities, it sends a powerful message of inclusion and equality.

Secondly, from an economic perspective, adapting labour market processes for migrants can be a strategic move. Migrants often bring diverse skill sets and a willingness to work in sectors where there are labour shortages, such as healthcare, agriculture, and hospitality. Harnessing this potential can alleviate labour market imbalances, boost productivity, and support economic growth. Moreover, migrants' contributions to the economy through taxes and consumer spending can have a positive impact on public finances and local businesses. Thus, ensuring migrants have opportunities in the labour market isn't just a matter of humanitarian concern but also an essential driver for sustainable economic development.



## Social context

Understanding the social context is paramount when implementing training programmes aimed at migrant inclusion. Migrants often arrive in a new country or community with diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, and experiences. The social context provides critical insights into the unique challenges they may face, such as discrimination, language barriers, and limited access to social services. By comprehending the social context, we can tailor our inclusion training to address these specific challenges. For instance, in a community with a history of xenophobia, training programmes can focus on fostering tolerance and cultural understanding, while in regions with high linguistic diversity, language proficiency training may take precedence. Without this contextual awareness, inclusion efforts risk being one-size-fits-all, which can be ineffective or even counterproductive.

## Challenges

One of the most important challenges that migrants in general face in host countries is **racism, discrimination, and social isolation**. For example, in the case of Germany, racism and discrimination prevent people from developing individually and realising their full potential. Racism and discrimination undermine cohesion, devalue people, threaten their security as well as their sense of belonging and thus run counter to the idea of an equal and diverse society as laid down in the Basic Law. In the field of education where the Together We Can project is included, discrimination takes place primarily based on origin, e.g., in the process of selecting applicants, because of an ascribed origin from countries other than the host, e.g., the Middle East and North Africa or Turkey. According to reports, women wearing headscarves with names that read Turkish had to apply four and a half times as often as equally qualified women with typical German names and without headscarves in order to be invited for an interview. For more highly qualified jobs, they even had to apply almost eight times as often. Likewise, other studies, for example by the Social Science Research Centre Berlin (WZB), show that people of the Muslim faith and Black people have a significantly higher risk of discrimination and are significantly disadvantaged when applying for a job.

Similarly in Austria, migrant women frequently encounter discrimination rooted in their origin, gender, and parental status, leading to unequal treatment across multiple domains, including the labour market, education, health, and housing. These discriminatory practices impede their successful integration into society and hinder their access to equal opportunities. Patriarchal structures and gender-specific roles limit women's self-determination, impose multiple burdens related to household, family, and education/work, and increase the risk of violence. The same applies to Italy where migrant women live in a difficult social context. Finding work and integrating into society is not at all easy for them. According to data provided by Istat - in 2019, 40.6 per cent of foreign women aged between 15 and 29 are neither working nor studying (the so-called Neet condition), compared to 22.3 per cent of their Italian peers. Only 52% of the migrant women who were interviewed have a paid job compared to 73% of migrant men. Migrant women have higher education than migrant men, which should compensate for less work experience. However, it is estimated that over 97% of the salary gap (which amounts to 'only' 7.4%) is attributable to gender discrimination among migrants, in the absence of which women should earn almost as much as men.

This is equally visible in Germany where social isolation is evident in rural areas with limited opportunities to connect with others. In the counties of Diepholz and Nienburg where the

project is going to be implemented locally in Germany, many migrant families who came as refugees have been placed in small villages or former farmhouses that apart from school buses, often lack proper opportunities of public transport. This affects specifically migrant women with family duties (household, childcare). Other than their husbands who might have the opportunity to work, the women often stay at home with very few social contacts, less opportunities to learn the German language, and very limited access to the host society and social services.

The same goes for Cyprus and Portugal where social isolation of migrant women often results in the lack of social networks and support systems. Migrant women often struggle to establish new connections due to cultural differences or discrimination. This isolation can be particularly pronounced for those who are refugees or asylum seekers, as they often face additional challenges related to legal status and uncertainty about their future. Without a supportive social network, these women experience emotional distress, depression, and a sense of powerlessness. Addressing the social isolation of migrant women requires a multifaceted approach that includes language support, community integration programs, and efforts to combat discrimination and xenophobia.

In Cyprus the situation is heightened because of lack of coordinated action. In Cyprus the immigration model has been dominantly separatist, foreseeing little intercultural interaction between communities, while at the same time favouring assimilation where contact is unavoidable. There are no formal governmental strategies or mechanisms in place to promote social integration. When it comes to accessing services and becoming self-oriented, newly arrived migrant groups usually face problems which in time minimise their likelihood of meaningful interaction with their host societies. Furthermore, there are no official mechanisms in place for welcoming migrants into the community. Such actions are usually carried out by non-governmental organisations through EU co-funded programmes and through provisions of their own.

## Opportunities

As it was mentioned above, one of the most important elements that support migrant integration is the **support coming from the community and/or civil society**. In Germany, many volunteers are committed to refugees and migrants in their community or neighbourhood. They give the "welcome culture" its face, they give hope and trust, create everydayness and are helpful to refugees and migrants in their everyday arrival. Volunteers get involved in many ways and help shape the situation on the ground. Volunteers question bureaucratic processes and get involved. This makes them an indispensable lobby for refugees and migrants. The support from volunteers – mostly organized locally, with the help of umbrella organisations such as social welfare institutions, churches, volunteer agencies, refugee councils, or local municipalities, were a key factor for the successful integration of more than 900.000 refugees in the years 2015-2016, and of 1.3 million refugees from Ukraine in 2022 in Germany. For the successful implementation of the project, it will be helpful to make use of the respective local volunteer networks, i.e., in focus groups.



Similarly in Portugal there is a strong presence of NGOs and volunteer groups. Immigrant Associations are privileged spaces for organising cultural and community belonging events, in which migrants are not merely recipients, but actors in the defence of their rights and the promotion of social welfare conditions.

In total and spread throughout the country, there are more than a hundred Immigrant Associations and representing different countries of origin: Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Russia, China, among others. The Portuguese state provides support to these associations, namely through technical and financial aid to develop programmes, projects and actions that fall within the objectives of the Immigrant Associations Support Programme. Moreover, the establishment of APROXIMA COMMUNITIES, MEERU APROXIMA seeks to break down the social isolation that migrant households, refugees, and asylum seekers experience. By enlisting volunteers, it stimulates community activities, a proximity monitoring scheme, and intercultural awareness-raising, creating real connections of love and belonging.

Again, in Cyprus, the efforts by civil society actors in support of asylum seekers and other migrants have become all the more indispensable. The orientation and practical services offered to them by, for instance, the MiHub migrant information centres have become crucial for migrants, as have those offered by Caritas Cyprus. Orientation services typically concern registration with the Labour Office, access to a health insurance card and accommodation, as well as preparing CVs for the local labour market, all of which, apart from knowledge of procedures, require linguistic skills not possessed by most asylum seekers. Moreover, in Austria, Germany, and Cyprus some municipalities and smaller rural communities have attempted to establish networks of collaboration and create communication channels between the local community and migrants which will be helpful for the goals of the *Together We Can* project. Municipalities in Portugal, under CLAIMs (Local Support Centre for the Integration of Migrants), have established reception, information, and support offices/spaces whose mission is to support the entire process of reception and integration of migrants, liaising with the various local structures and promoting interculturality at a local level.

In Italy, for years now, large numbers of migrants have been hosted and integrated into Italian society. For this reason, the Italian social context offers opportunities for inclusion on various levels, and this could certainly promote the implementation of the project. In Italy, there are several training centres that offer support to migrant women in education and vocational training. These centres focus on providing language skills, vocational skills and integrated support to foster the socio-occupational integration of migrant women. Some of the known training centres are: 1) CTPs - Permanent Territorial Centres: CTPs are training facilities present in several Italian cities. They offer vocational training courses for different sectors, including specific courses for migrant women. Courses may concern, for example, the Italian language, literacy, job placement, business creation and much more. 2) CPIA - Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti: CPIAs are centres dedicated to the education of adults, including migrants. They offer literacy courses, Italian language courses, qualification and secondary school diploma courses for adults. Some CPIAs may provide specific programs for migrant women. 3) Associations and NGOs: Numerous associations and NGOs in Italy are involved in helping and training to migrant women. For example, Caritas Italiana's 'Women's Integration' programme offers specific training for migrant women, including language courses, vocational training and support for job placement. 4) Local projects: In many Italian cities, there are local projects and initiatives that focus on the empowerment and integration of migrant women

through training. These projects may be run by local authorities, social cooperatives or non-governmental organizations.

Another important opportunity that could enhance the participation of migrant women in the project is **public transportation aid** as it is manifested primarily in Germany and Portugal. Particularly, in Germany, the Deutschlandticket (D-Ticket for short) is a monthly or season ticket for local public transport valid throughout Germany. It is only available as a monthly subscription and costs 49 euros per month in the general version currently. The permanently designed ticket was introduced on 1 May 2023. The federal and state governments contribute to the financing, bear 3 billion euros per year as loss compensation for the transport companies. The D-Ticket can be helpful for many migrant women to visit relatives in other parts of the country at low cost. Where public transport options are available, it can facilitate access to education and employment, health care and social life. In many places, the ticket is offered as a social ticket or job ticket at even lower prices. In Portugal, the Social+ Pass, available in the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto, is aimed at people on lower incomes. The discount to be applied is 50% for those receiving the social insertion income or the solidarity supplement for the elderly. Monthly passes in the Lisbon and Porto metropolitan areas are cheaper if bought as a family. Both the Navegante Família (Lisbon) and Andante Família (Porto), allow each household to pay a maximum of the equivalent of two individual passes.



## Ethical context

Understanding the ethical context of a community is paramount before implementing migrant inclusion training. This awareness encompasses a deep appreciation of the cultural, social, and moral values that shape the community's identity. Without this foundational knowledge, migrant inclusion efforts can inadvertently perpetuate biases, reinforce stereotypes, or even cause harm. For instance, what may be considered a well-intentioned training module in one community might be deeply offensive in another due to differences in cultural norms and values. Thus, recognizing the ethical nuances within a community ensures that inclusion initiatives are not only effective but also respectful of the people they aim to serve.

Furthermore, an ethical understanding of the community's context underscores the importance of fostering genuine connections and trust. When organizations or institutions take the time to appreciate the ethical intricacies of a community, they signal a commitment to respecting its values and traditions. This, in turn, can lead to stronger partnerships, increased cooperation, and more successful integration efforts. Ultimately, awareness of the ethical context serves as a moral compass, guiding the development and implementation of migrant inclusion training that promotes not just tolerance, but true acceptance and collaboration within the community. So, let's discuss the challenges and opportunities that the five partner countries bring to the fore for the successful implementation of the *Together We Can* training programme.

## Challenges

The most challenging situation that all countries face to a lesser or greater extent is that of **exclusionary practices** that are highly multifaceted, and they can take the form of reinforcing stereotypes, biases, patriarchal structures, re-ethnicization, cultural insensitivity, etc. In Cyprus, it is quite challenging to manage the reinforcement of stereotypes that exists across all spheres of society. Lots of services and institutions often reinforce stereotypes or perpetuate biases against migrant women, and this contributes to their marginalization and hinders their integration into the community. It is thus important to challenge and address any implicit biases that may exist within the programme's content or delivery. What we have codified as exclusionary practices, such as tokenism, unbalanced power dynamics, lack of shared decision-making and inequality in opportunities, are rooted in deep-seated biases, stereotypes, and cultural norms that can marginalize and discriminate against migrant women, making them feel like outsiders in their host communities. Ethical exclusion manifests through prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviours, and unequal access to opportunities, such as employment, education, and healthcare. It also extends to cultural insensitivity, where the values and traditions of migrant women are disregarded or dismissed. These exclusionary ethical practices not only hinder the social and economic empowerment of migrant women but also perpetuate inequality and undermine the principles of inclusivity, diversity, and human rights that should underpin any just and equitable society. Addressing these ethical barriers is essential for fostering a more inclusive and welcoming environment where migrant women can fully participate and contribute to their new communities.

In Italy and Portugal, cultural sensitivity could be improved, and we must take in into consideration if we want to tailor a training programme that will address the needs of migrant women. It is essential to understand and respect the different cultural facets of the participants, considering their experiences and cultural backgrounds. Failure to understand and respect

cultural differences may lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and discrimination, which can negatively affect the integration process.

In Germany, it is evident that re-ethnicization is an obstacle to integration. Often, perceived discrimination leads individuals to identify more strongly with the discriminated own group, which is put in a better light by a new comparison with other groups. This reevaluation of the characteristics of the own group ensures a positive social identity. Re-ethnicization, i.e., referring to an imagined own group, is a particularly suitable strategy for migrants who are victims of discrimination to protect their self-esteem. This can lead to new obstacles for integration, since the individual might tend to avoid contact to persons representing the “other” group.

In Austria, ethical considerations are rooted in the need for a socially inclusive and non-discriminatory society. Migrant women in Austria face higher levels of discrimination, with unequal treatment in various areas such as the labour market, education, health, and housing. This discrimination hinders their integration process and undermines their opportunities for social and economic inclusion. Additionally, gender-specific strategies and measures to promote gender equality are essential components of national integration policy in Austria. Gender mainstreaming is integrated into all policy measures, ensuring that the differences between men and women are systematically considered. Upholding ethical principles, including equal rights and non-discrimination, is crucial for fostering the social and economic inclusion of migrant women in Austria. An overarching challenge highlighted by representatives of the Federal Chancellery, the Austrian Integration Fund, and non-governmental organizations is the presence of patriarchal structures and gender-specific distribution of roles. These structures restrict self-determination and impose multiple burdens on migrant women, encompassing household responsibilities, family obligations, and the intersection of education and work. Furthermore, the risk of experiencing violence is heightened. To avoid attributing gender discrimination solely to cultural differences, it is crucial to back discussions with relevant data and research. Taking a comprehensive and evidence-based approach is essential in addressing these ethical considerations effectively.

## Opportunities

A diverse society should be based on recognition and appreciation of all people. This means **promoting diversity** and respecting the differences of people and their life designs. Nevertheless, we recognise that access barriers and power differences exist between different social groups. Social categories such as "gender" or "origin" still have a major impact on people's individual biographies and often limit the professional opportunities and participation chances of people who are discriminated. This applies specifically to migrant women, who are often exposed to intersectionality, being discriminated as migrants, as women, as (potential) mothers etc. In Germany, the VNB actively promotes diversity as part of its organizational development. This includes staff training activities as well as diversity training for individuals and organizations. How to deal with intersectionality on a practical level might help migrant women to gain resilience against discrimination. This should be considered to become part of the training programme of the project.





In Portugal, in response to existing issues and emerging migratory trends that indicate the feminization of migration in Portugal, the EPDI (Project Team on Intersectional Inequalities) was established in 2019 (Deliberation No. 227/2019 of the Board of Directors of the High Commissioner for Migration, I.P.). With a focus on circumstances where various inequities cross, it attempts to create and execute gender-sensitive policies for the integration of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

By giving priority to ethical considerations, in Austria and Cyprus, partners and their network emphasize civic integration, women's empowerment, and the promotion of equality which constitute important elements when working with such vulnerable populations, like migrant women who live in rural areas. Equally in Italy, promoting diversity as an overarching ethical principle adopted by EXEO LAB means that empathy and respect, inclusion and diversity are promoted, recognizing that everyone has their dignity and value as individuals and a unique story and a wealth of knowledge and culture to share.

## Conclusions

This transnational report aimed at appraising the latest changes at the legislative, social, political and ethical level in all five partner countries, but also documenting transformations at the local and national level in societies that have been affected to a greater or lesser extent by migration waves in the last decades. For example, since 2015, geopolitical unrest in the Middle East and North Africa prompted a surge in the numbers of arrivals in Southern Europe of asylum seekers trying to reach Northern European destinations, and new waves of immigration from North and Central Africa, Latin America and Asia to Southern Europe is taking place since 2010s. Taking these into consideration, it is evident that the *Together We Can* consortium has both challenges to deal with, such as changes or uncertainties in immigration policies, obstacles in family reunification and naturalisation processes, lack of integration opportunities, hostility towards migrants, exclusionary practices at different levels, racism, and discrimination. These challenges should be taken into consideration when designing the learning and training material and implementing the training programme because they will help researchers, trainers, and facilitators ensure that the work we are doing is both relevant and engaging.

Further to that, in this transnational evidence appraisal, partners identified opportunities that are currently relevant in their countries and from which they can benefit during the implementation of the training programme. In essence, a deep understanding of challenges and opportunities allow for the creation of more meaningful and impactful inclusion training programmes that not only empower migrant women but also foster social cohesion, ultimately benefiting both migrants and the receiving community.

## References

- Angele, M. (2020a). Addressing the gendered dynamics of asylum seeker and refugee integration provision in Cyprus. GLIMER - Governance and the Local Integration of Migrants and Europe's. Retrieved July 19, 2023, from <https://www.glimer.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/WP6-Policy-Brief-Cyprus.pdf>
- Angeli, M. (2020b). Integration into the Labour Market and Skills Training of Migrants in Cyprus. GLIMER - Governance and the Local Integration of Migrants and Europe's Refugees. Retrieved July 19, 2023, from <https://www.glimer.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/WP5-Report-Cyprus.pdf>
- European Migration Network. (2022). Retrieved July 19, 2023, from [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-09/EMN\\_STUDY\\_integration-migrant-women\\_23092022.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-09/EMN_STUDY_integration-migrant-women_23092022.pdf)
- Heilemann, S., 2021. Integration of Migrant Women in Austria. Policies and Measures. International Organization for Migration (IOM), Vienna. Retrieved July 19, 2023, from [emn-study-2022-integration-of-migrant-women-in-austria.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/2022-09/emn-study-2022-integration-of-migrant-women-in-austria.pdf)
- KISA. (2009). THE POSITION OF MIGRANT WOMEN IN CYPRUS. KISA. Retrieved July 19, 2023, from [https://kisa.org.cy/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/The Position of Migrant Women in Cyprus September 2009.pdf](https://kisa.org.cy/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/The_Position_of_Migrant_Women_in_Cyprus_September_2009.pdf)
- Migrants and Refugees Section. (2020). Migration Profile: CYPRUS Executive summary. Retrieved July 19, 2023, from <https://migrants-refugees.va/it/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/09/2020-CP-Cyprus-EN.pdf>
- Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.o 12-B/2015. (2015). In Diário Da República. Republica Portuguesa. Retrieved July 19, 2023, from [https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/42225/Plano+Estratégico+para+as+Migrações+\(PEM\)\\_RCM.pdf/b6375f51-53e2-4d88-9783-81cf1c7bb91c](https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/42225/Plano+Estratégico+para+as+Migrações+(PEM)_RCM.pdf/b6375f51-53e2-4d88-9783-81cf1c7bb91c)
- Stavrou, P. (2007). Employment situation of migrant women. Eurofound - European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Retrieved July 19, 2023, from <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/article/2007/employment-situation-of-migrant-women>
- Trimikliniotis, N., & Demetriou, C. (2015). Migrants and their Descendants: Social Inclusion and Participation in Society. FRANET. Retrieved July 19, 2023, from [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/social-inclusion-and-migrant-participation-society\\_cy.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/social-inclusion-and-migrant-participation-society_cy.pdf)
- Wall, Karin, Nunes, Cátia and Matias, Ana Raquel (2005), "Immigrant Women in Portugal: migration trajectories, main problems and policies" (Working Paper), Lisboa, ICS-UL. Retrieved July 19, 2023, from [http://www.ics.ul.pt/publicacoes/workingpapers/wp2005/wp2005\\_7.pdf](http://www.ics.ul.pt/publicacoes/workingpapers/wp2005/wp2005_7.pdf).
- Wenden, Catherine Withol de (2005), *Atlas des migrations dans le monde – réfugiés ou migrants volontaires*, Paris, Éditions Autrement, Collection Atlas /Monde.





# Together We Can



Verein Niedersächsischer  
BILDUNGSINITIATIVEN e.V.



SYNTHESIS  
CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION



CREATING SYNERGIES



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them. Project Number: 2022-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000085184



Co-funded by the  
European Union