

RESEARCH REPORT

**FEMALE REFUGEES for ENTREPRENEURSHIP and
EMPLOYABILITY
(FREE) project**

June 2024

Uzhhorod, Ukraine

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP and EMPLOYABILITY*

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European Union



Female
Refugees for
Entrepreneurship and
Employability



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1. INTRODUCTION

This research was conducted within the framework of the project FEMALE REFUGEES for ENTREPRENEURSHIP and EMPLOYABILITY (FREE) ERASMUS-EDU-2023-VIRT-EXCH of the Erasmus+ programme.

The FREE project aims to promote entrepreneurship and employability for displaced young females in the EU with the goals of improving their social and economic status, helping them to close the gender gap in entrepreneurship, and contributing to post-conflict rehabilitation efforts through virtual capacity-building activities. The programme provides participants with an opportunity to gain knowledge and experience at home and abroad.

The project draws its frame considering one of the priorities in the cooperation between the EU and the Eastern Partnership as supporting and empowering the young generation, especially in terms of developing their skills and promoting employment with the collaboration of six partners from Armenia, Cyprus, Moldova, Italy, Ukraine, and Serbia.

Introduction: This report presents the findings from a survey conducted to research entrepreneurship and employability for displaced young females in the EU, but also in all partners countries (Armenia, Cyprus, Moldova, Italy, Ukraine, Serbia) with the goals of improving their social and economic status, helping them to close the gender gap in entrepreneurship, and contributing to post-conflict rehabilitation efforts through virtual capacity building activities.

As of mid-2022, 103 million people were forcibly displaced globally, including 32.5 million refugees. Gender-related challenges are particularly severe, as highlighted in the 2021 report “The Gender Dimensions of Forced Displacement.” The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has exacerbated these issues, with millions displaced within and outside the country.

The International Rescue Committee (2019) notes a significant rise in global displacement over the past decade, stressing that displaced women face higher rates of underemployment and unemployment. These economic challenges are worsened by legal barriers and psychological distress during their displacement.

Russia’s military aggression in Ukraine since February 2022 has led to the largest influx of war refugees in Europe since World War II. As of December 2023, an estimated 3,689,000 people remain internally displaced in Ukraine (IOM GPS Round 15), and 4,486,000 are abroad (UNHCR, as of March 14, 2024).

The challenges in securing employment for displaced individuals are profound, with displaced women disproportionately affected by the psychological and social impacts of conflict and displacement.

Research objective: The research aims to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by the younger generation of refugee women, including their employment, access to education and healthcare. Using a variety of research methods, including surveys, observations and case studies, the project will use gathered data to develop online courses (MOOCs).

Task: The research objectives will focus on five points and will serve as the main theoretical support for the project:

1. The potential of entrepreneurship to promote women's economic self-sufficiency.
2. The impact of entrepreneurship on the integration of forcibly displaced women into host communities.
3. The effect of entrepreneurship on the social integration of forcibly displaced women into host communities.
4. Common challenges and opportunities for improving employment outcomes among young refugee women.
5. Formulating conclusions and recommendations to inform policies and programs aimed at enhancing the economic empowerment of young refugee women.

List of project members:

1. NGO “YOUTH SPACE” – Ukrainian partner of FREE project.
2. NGO “INFORMATION AND EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT NETWORK” (INEDNET) – Armenian partner of FREE project.
3. NGO NETWORK FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND IDENTITY (“NECI”) – Cypriot partner of FREE project, applicant organisation.
4. NGO “L'ORMA SSD ARL” – Italian partner of FREE project.
5. NGO “BEST-SELLER” – Serbian partner of FREE project.
6. NGO “MilleniuM” Training and Development Institute – Moldovan partner of FREE project.



Armenia



Cyprus



Italy



Moldova



Serbia



Ukraine



2.1. Context and purpose of the research

Project purpose: The project seeks to integrate internally displaced women through employment and entrepreneurship, crucial for post-conflict rehabilitation and intercultural dialogue development. This will help them achieve financial independence and improve their psychological well-being, facilitating easier reintegration into society. Additionally, the project aims to create new jobs in host communities, bridge gaps between different groups, and support intercultural dialogue, contributing to peace and stability in post-conflict regions.

Research analysis: This analysis will examine the challenges and barriers faced by refugee, migrant, and internally displaced women in their host communities, particularly regarding their access to education, employment and healthcare.

Methodology: The research will employ both qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, case studies, and observations. These methodologies will provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand.

Deliverables: The resulting conclusions and findings will offer a collection of best practices, serving as the main source of information for developing the MOOC. All these elements will be presented in the project's Manual.

2.2. Methods of research

This research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, case studies, and observations. Qualitative methods involve interviews and focus group discussions to gather detailed personal insights, while quantitative methods involve structured questionnaires to collect broader data.

The research aims to achieve two main objectives: to examine the employment status of young refugee women and to explore issues of diversity and empowerment.

Qualitative Surveys: The qualitative component included three interviews and one focus group with refugee, migrant, and internally displaced women aged 18-30, conducted by each organisation. These sessions provided detailed insights into their perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to employment.

Focus Group Discussions: Offline and/or online focus group discussions with refugee, migrant, and internally displaced women were held in groups of up to six people. The topics of discussion included attitudes towards measures to support their economic activity implemented by the authorities and NGOs. The data obtained allowed us to identify key factors and barriers to employment.

Quantitative Surveys: The quantitative component involved the development of structured questionnaires and conduction of surveys to collect data on the entrepreneurship, educational attainment, skills, employment history, and current employment status of young refugee women.

Best Practices: Best practices were studied by selecting specific projects from various organisations, including NGOs and community centres, that either successfully facilitated employment for young refugee women or encountered significant challenges. Detailed case studies and documentary analysis provided insights into the factors that contributed to their employment. Each organisation selected several cases of young refugee women to showcase both successful employment examples and cases with significant difficulties. This selection allowed for a diversity of experiences and a deeper understanding of the issues. Some organisations focused on stories from community centres and NGOs, contributing a comprehensive view of their efforts and outcomes.

Observation: Each organisation conducted systematic observations, which involved the collection and analysis of statistical data in employment centres, with a particular focus on young refugee women in their communities.

Analysis: Using the results of qualitative and quantitative surveys, case studies, and observations, a comprehensive understanding of the employment status of young refugee women was developed. This allowed for the identification of common challenges, success factors, and opportunities for improving employment outcomes among this demographic group. Based on the research, conclusions and recommendations were formulated that will be used to develop policies, programmes, interventions and online courses (MOOCs) aimed at empowering young refugee women economically.

Data analytics (general information): The research included 115 questionnaires (general data from all partners), 6 personal interviews, 6 focus groups and examples of 18 best practices.

These 115 questionnaires include 20 questionnaires from NGO “YOUTH SPACE”, 11 questionnaires from NGO “INEDNET”, 22 questionnaires from NGO “NECI”, 30 questionnaires from NGO “BEST-SELLER”, 12 questionnaires from NGO “MilleniumM” and 20 questionnaires from NGO “L'ORMA SSD ARL”.

All research method templates for collecting information are available in Chapter 6 - “Annexes”. There you can find the questionnaire (Annex 1.), The focus group report template (Annex 2.) and The best practices template (Annex 3.).

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3. MAIN RESULTS

3.1. Quantitative data analysis (survey)

All research partners conducted a survey among 115 respondents aged 18 to 30, and it is important to note that 92% of respondents were women with refugee/migrant/IDP status, and the rest of the respondents were interested in being part of the research.

Personal interviews were also conducted to better understand the needs and problems of female refugees/migrants/IDPs. Read more about personal interviews on the section “3.2. Qualitative data analysis (interviews)”.

For a detailed analysis of the needs of refugee/migrant/IDP women, all research partners conducted a focus group with various representatives. For more details on focus groups, see: 3.3. Indicators of the results of the structured focus group survey.

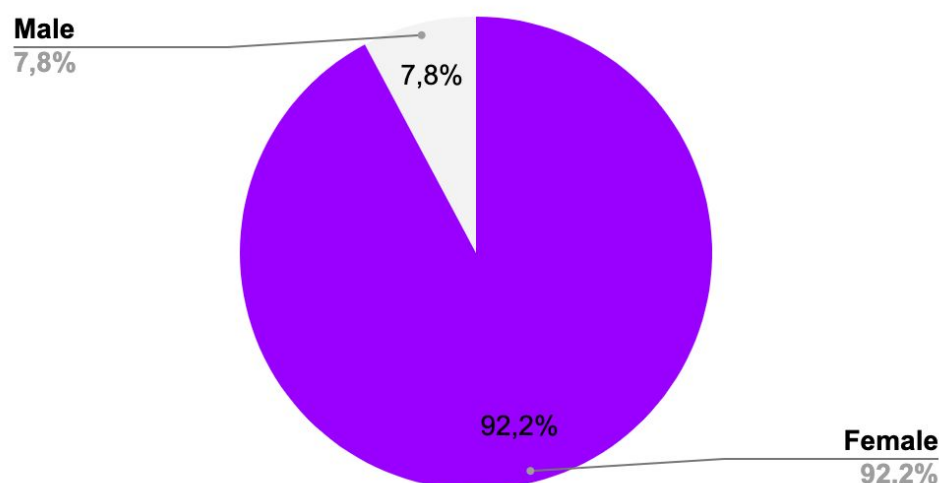
Based on the surveys, it was possible to form the main thematic blocks covering different areas of activity: analysis of the current situation and employment, entrepreneurial skills and initiatives to empower inclusion (education, language training, healthcare) and active participation (volunteering, community service, cultural integration programmes). Each of these blocks directly affects life if you are an IDP, migrant or refugee.

Therefore, within the framework of this study, each of these factors was analysed to identify the main needs of refugee women and internally displaced people (IDPs are mainly considered for Ukraine).

To begin the study, we collected demographic information about each participant, such as age, gender, nationality, country of birth, country of residence (region for IDPs), level of education, current status, the biggest challenges they faced in keeping a job, and topics/activities important for employment.

To maintain the confidentiality of these participants, specific names will not be provided.

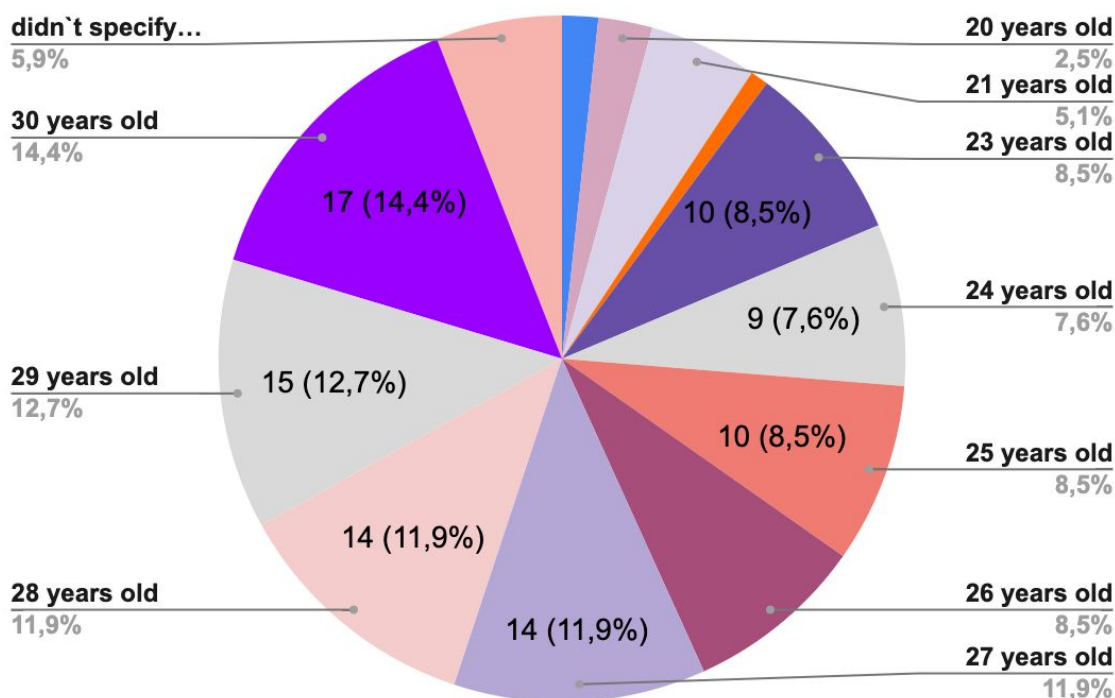
Gender of the research participants:



Of course, the main target audience of the survey was female refugees, but all interested persons in the age group of 18-30 could participate in the survey.

For example, after collecting all the data from partners, it was possible to assess that about 7% of male respondents were interested in this research and provided their valuable thoughts on this topic.

Age of the research participants:



The sample of age responses shows a clear prevalence of ages between 23 and 30. Seven participants have chosen not to disclose their age, indicating a privacy preference.

Thus, the main respondents are concentrated in the 23-30 age group, which is generally a good indicator, since the target audience of the research is 18-30 years old.

Nationality and country of birth:

The nationalities of the participants for Ukraine (NGO “YOUTH SPACE”) are actually Ukrainian internal displacement.

For NGO “INEDNET” (Armenia), is mainly Armenians from displaced Artsakh (Nagorno_karabakh) region and a small percentage of Syrian, Italian and Russian participants.

Cyprus partner NGO “NECI” has attracted a large number of participants from Africa (Gambian, Cameroonian, Nigerian, Ugandan and Congo), as well as several from Lebanon, Ukraine and Cyprus.

The NGO “L'ORMA SSD ARL” highlights that the nationalities of the participants are mostly from Slovakia to Ukraine, with some other smaller percentages of African, Russian and Palestinian participants.

The NGO “BEST-SELLER” covers such nationalities as Serbians, Turks, Tunisians, Macedonians and Georgians.

The NGO “MilleniumM” survey participants are mostly Ukrainians and a small percentage of Moldovans.

The Ukrainian NGO “YOUTH SPACE” identifies the following main regions where IDPs are currently located: Zakarpattia, Lviv, Kirovohrad and Dnipro regions and three countries of residence - the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

The Armenian NGO “INEDNET” indicates Armenia as the residence country and a smaller number of residents in Lebanon and Russia.

For NGO “NECI” (Cyprus) the country of residence of the participants is Cyprus.

For the Italian NGO “L'ORMA SSD ARL” the country of residence of the participants is Italy, specifically from the northern regions (Lombardy) and Centrals (Lazio).

The Serbian NGO “BEST-SELLER” indicates Serbia (Belgrade, Novi Pazar, Vojvodina) and Russia as countries of residence and a small number of residents in Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.

For NGO “Millenium” (Moldova) the main country of residence of the participants is Moldova and for a small number of participants Ukraine.

Analysis of the current situation and employment:

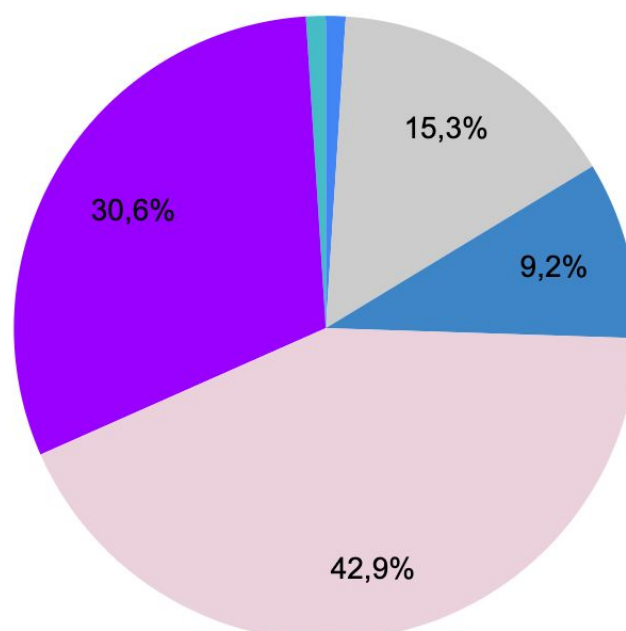
First of all, we need to understand the level of education, current status, main challenges faced by refugee/migrant/IDP women in finding a job and what topics or activities would be important for employment.

Level of education:

Each respondent indicated the status of their education: 30,6% have higher education (master's degree), and 42,9 % have higher education (bachelor's degree), and the other 26,5% consist of the following levels of education: incomplete secondary education, secondary education, college education, and higher education (doctorate).

Education level of research participants:

- incomplete secondary education - 1%
- secondary education - 15,3%
- college education - 9,2%
- bachelor's degree - 42,9%
- master's degree - 30,6%
- doctorate - 1%



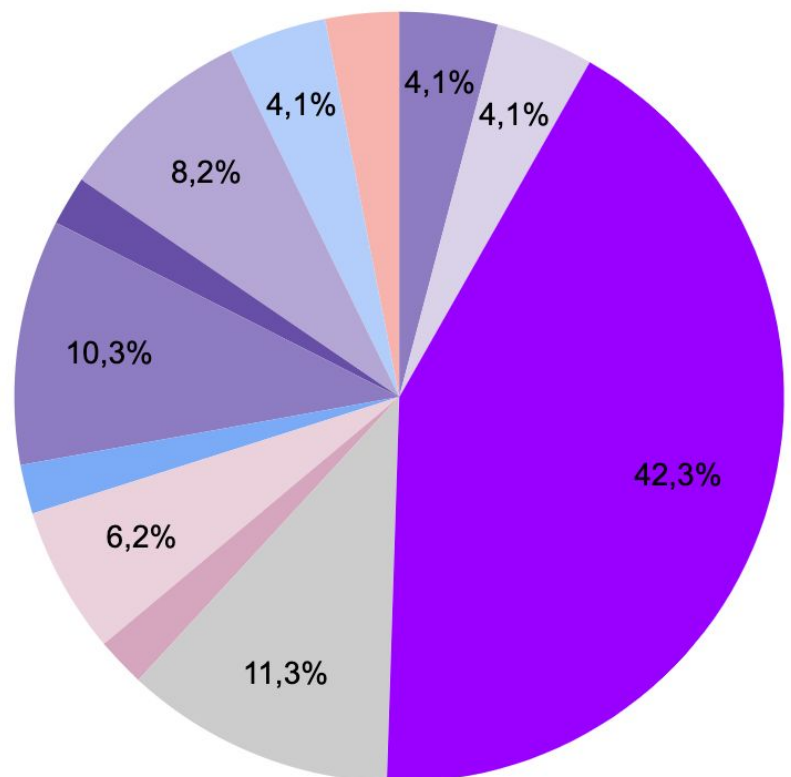
Employment status:

Since the main target group was from 18 to 30, the current situation of each is slightly different, but this is correspondingly better because it is possible to cover different aspects and indicate all the needs at each level.

The main results of the respondents' current situation: 42,3% - working full-time (30 hours or more per week), 11,3% - working part-time; 10,3% - self-employed full-time and able to support themselves and/or their family and other 36,1% include the following statuses: in school full time, in school part-time, working seasonally, working casual hours, temporary jobs or odd jobs, self employed full-time but not making enough to live off, staying at home to take care of my family/friends, unemployed and looking for work, being under the care of the state

Current status of the research participants:

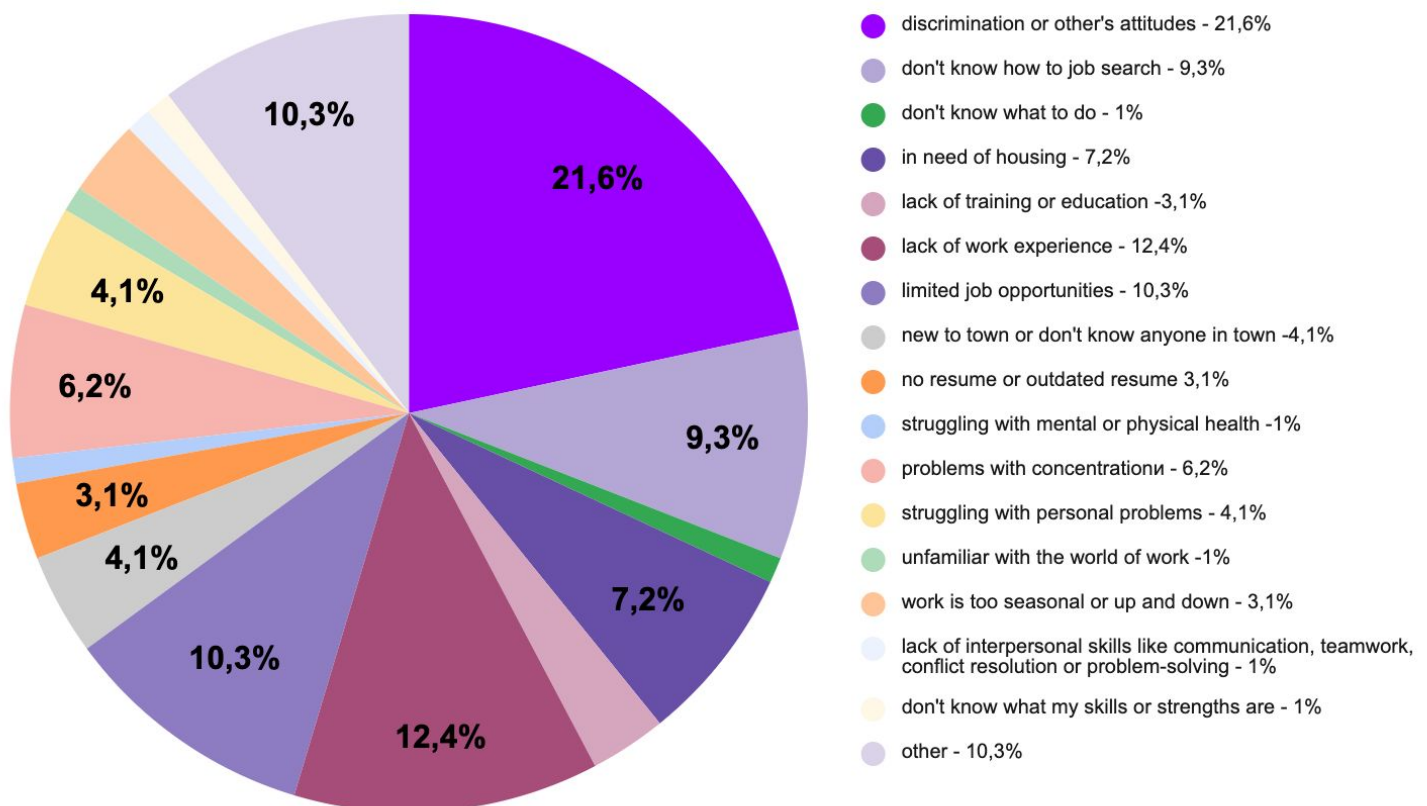
- in school full-time - 4,1%
- in school part-time - 4,1%
- working full-time (30 hours or more per week) - 42,3%
- working part-time - 11,3%
- working seasonally - 2,1%
- working casual hours - 6,2%
- temporary jobs or odd jobs - 2,1%
- self employed full-time and able to support myself and/or my family - 10,3%
- self employed but not making enough to live off - 2,1%
- unemployed and looking for work; unemployed and not looking for work - 8,2%
- staying at home to care for my family/friends - 4,1%
- being under the care of the state - 3,1%



The biggest challenges they face in finding or keeping a job:

When determining the results of the survey on the biggest challenges, we received very different answers, which is understandable, since everyone faces their own problems when looking for a job,

Biggest challenges of the research participants:

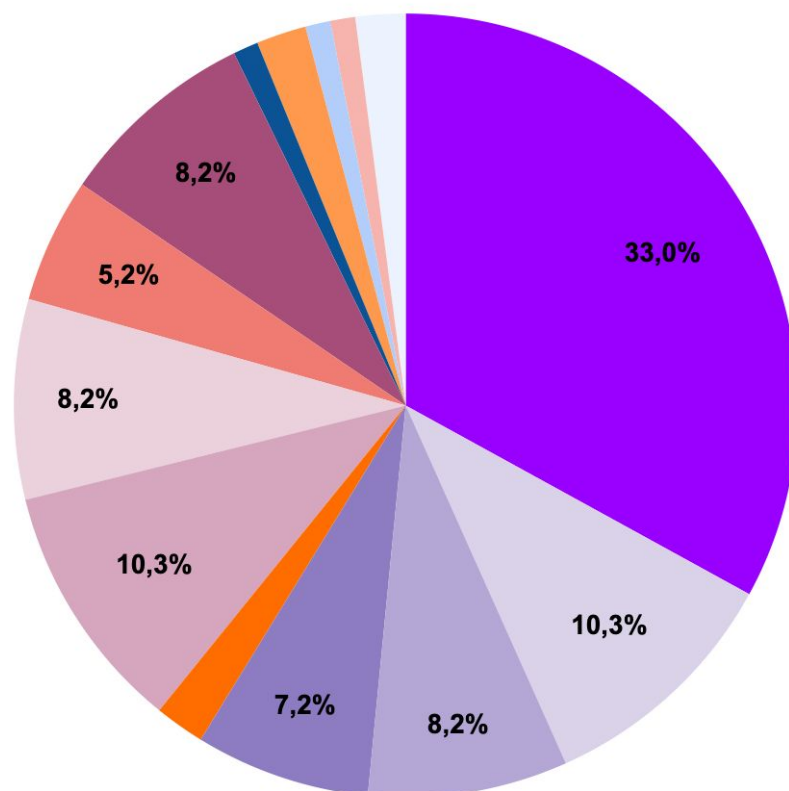


but there were also several common answers, so, here are the 5 most marked categories: discrimination or other's attitudes 21,6%, lack of work experience 12,4%, limited job opportunities - 10,3%, don't know how to job search - 9,3% and in need of housing - 7,2%. However, 10,3% of respondents indicated this challenge as “other”, which has the right to exist, since we are presenting the most typical challenges faced by refugee/migrant/IDP women, so the category “other” can be considered as a personal specific experience of the respondents.

Topics/activities important to employment:

One of the main issues that is important for understanding the needs of refugees/migrant/IDP women: “*What topics or activities would be important to employment?*”

Topsics/activities important to employment



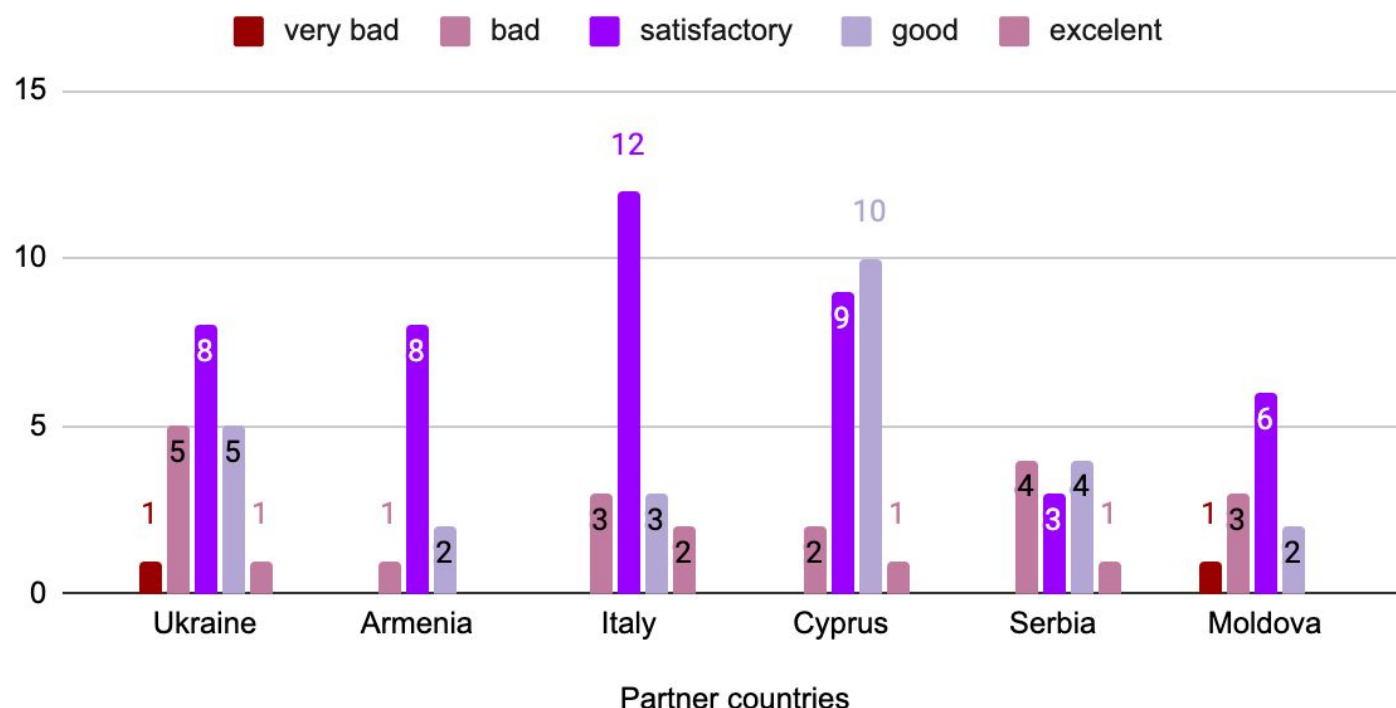
33% of respondents see a need to improve their skills in writing a good resume and cover letter - these are the primary topics of interest to refugees/migrant/IDP women.

Among other topics, the following 5 main ones can also be identified in which respondents are most interested: how to approach employers and teamwork, communication and conflict resolution skills for the workplace - are both covered by 10,3%, the same situation for the topics: how to do interviews and work-life balance - 8,2%; volunteer or job shadowing to explore different careers covered by 7,2% and stress management - 5,2%, but it is also important to note that topics such as: using social media in your job search and transportation solutions for job search and getting to work will reach 2,1%.

Entrepreneurial skills and initiatives to empower inclusion: (education, language training, healthcare):

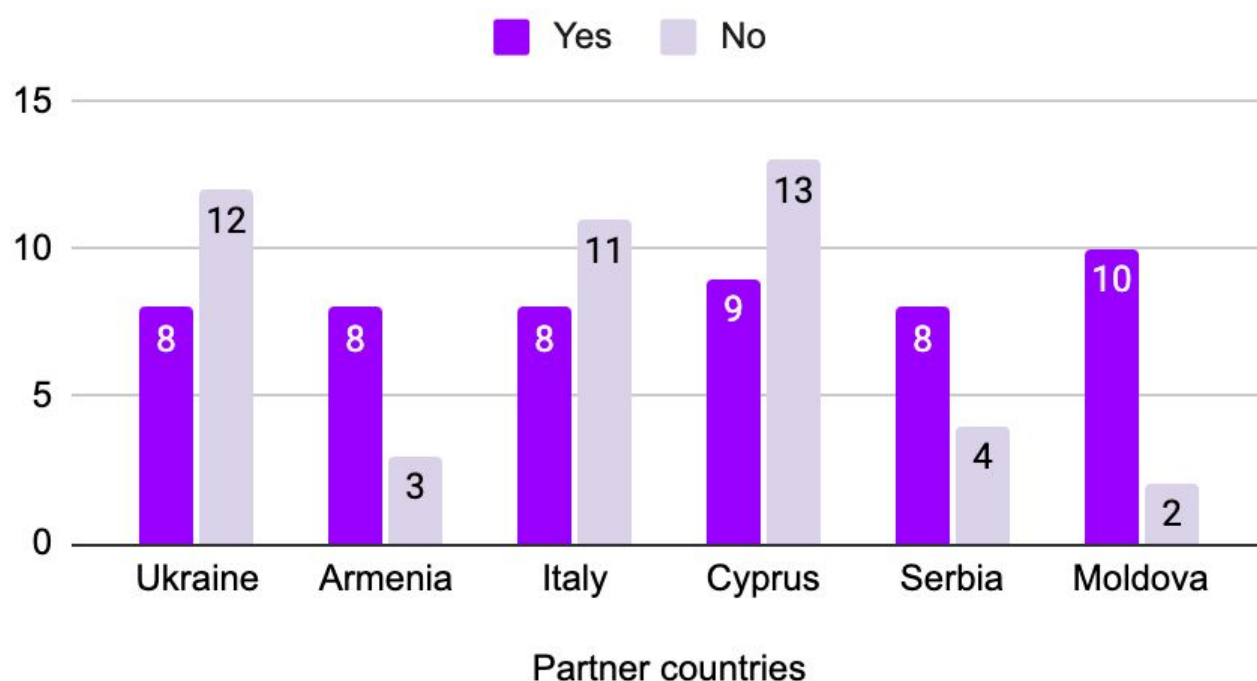
Healthcare: On average, the quality of healthcare received by respondents at this point in time is quite positive.

Quality of the medical care:

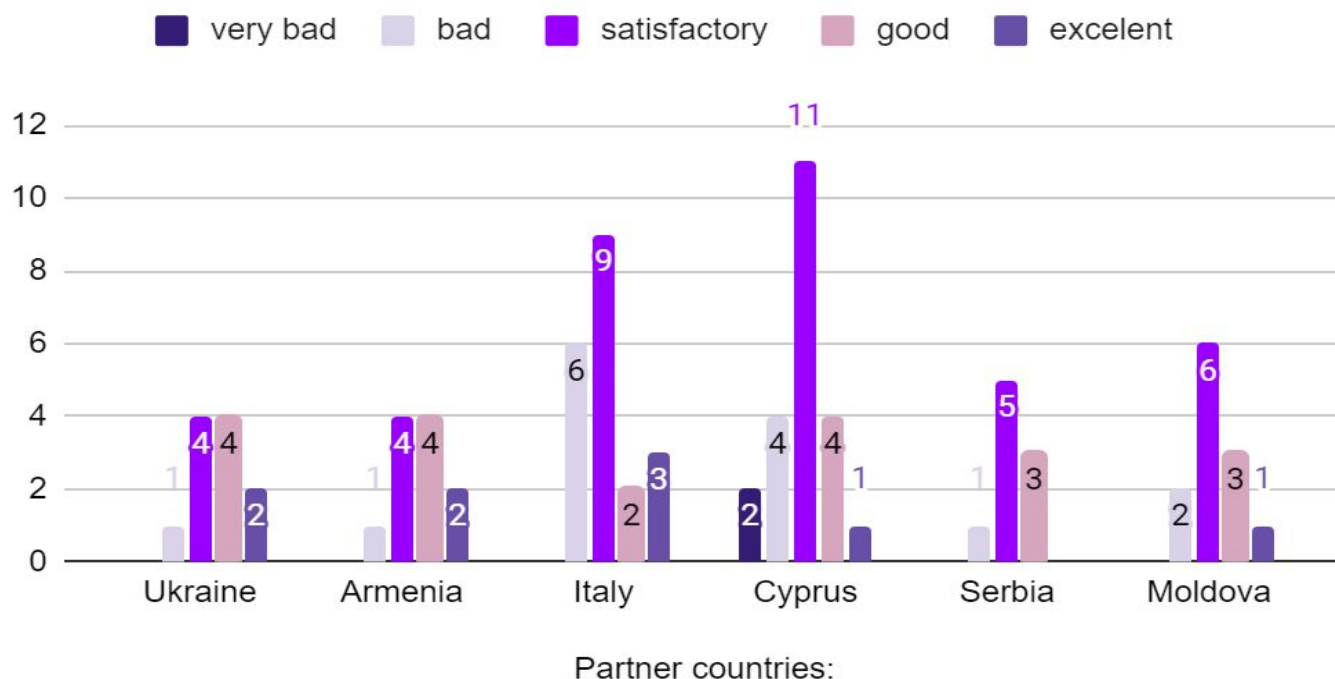


Language training: Taking into account the language training, which the majority of respondents were not involved in, however, satisfactory prevails among the quality indicators, and if we consider those who were involved, they provide positive feedback (satisfactory, good and excellent).

Involment in language courses:

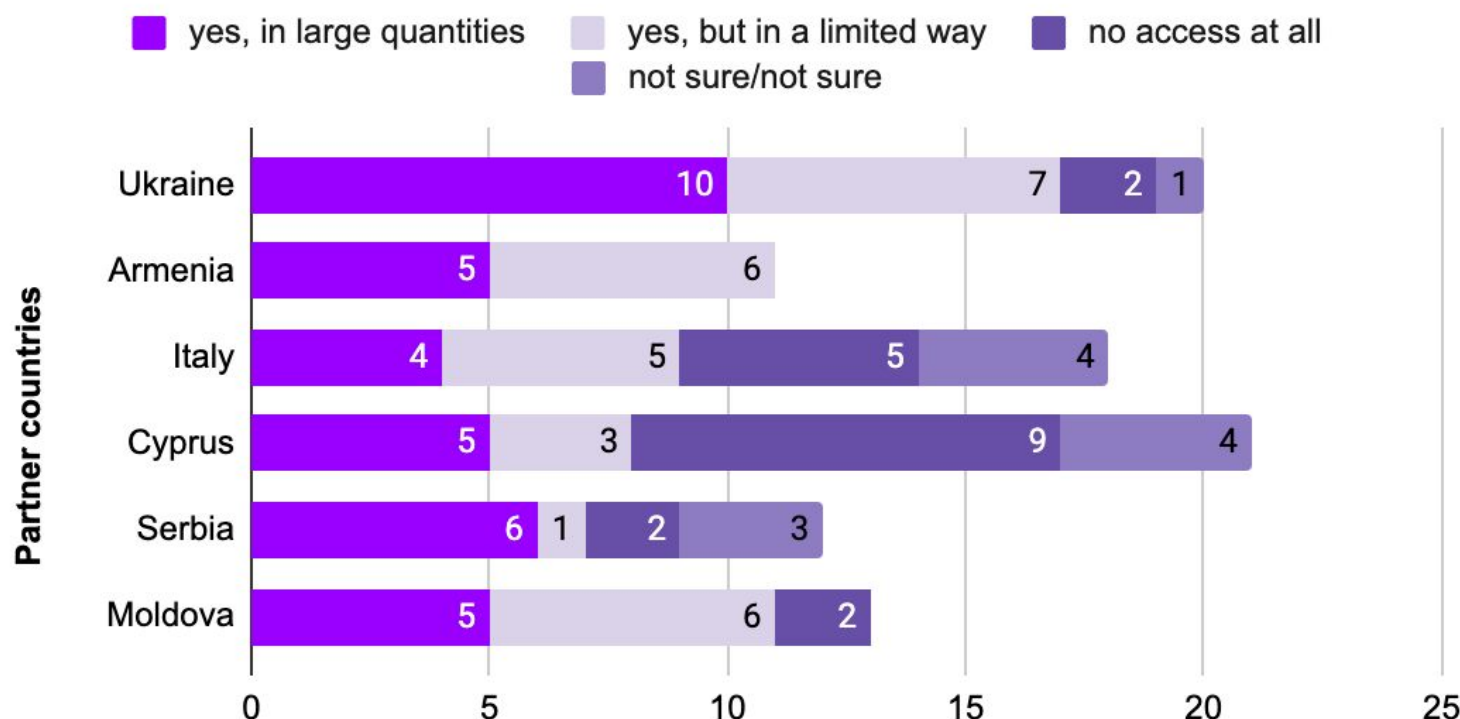


Quality of the language training:



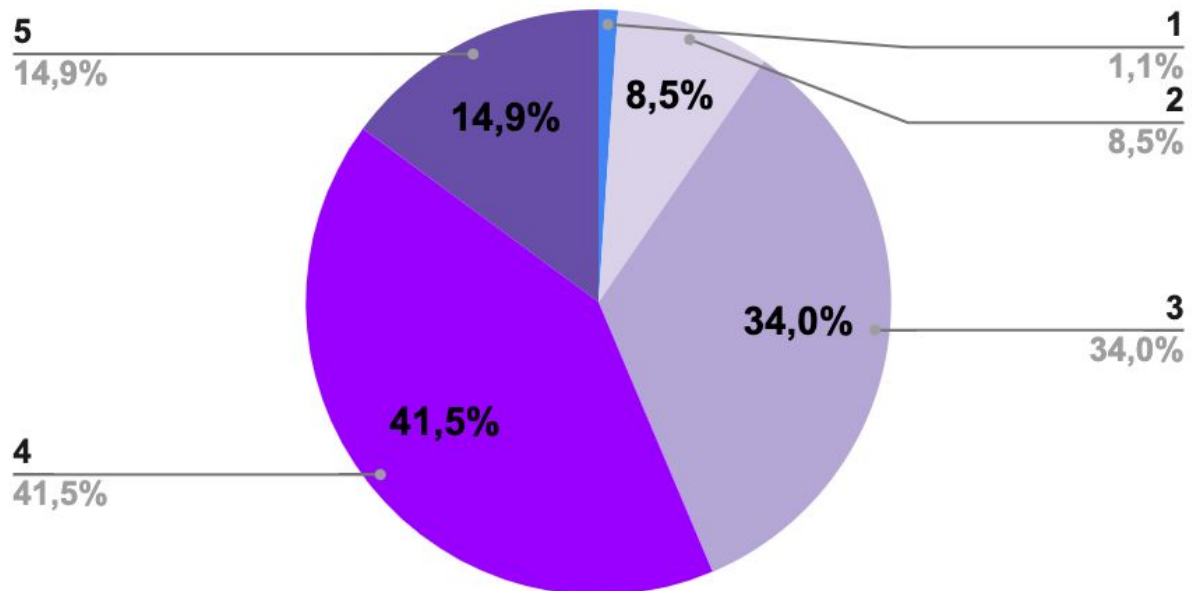
Education: As we can see from the diagrams, which take into account indicators from all partners, there is access to non-formal education, both in large numbers and in limited access, but this is a good indicator, since without access to such education, there are significantly fewer answers from respondents.

Access to additional educational resources(training, activities, workshops, online courses):

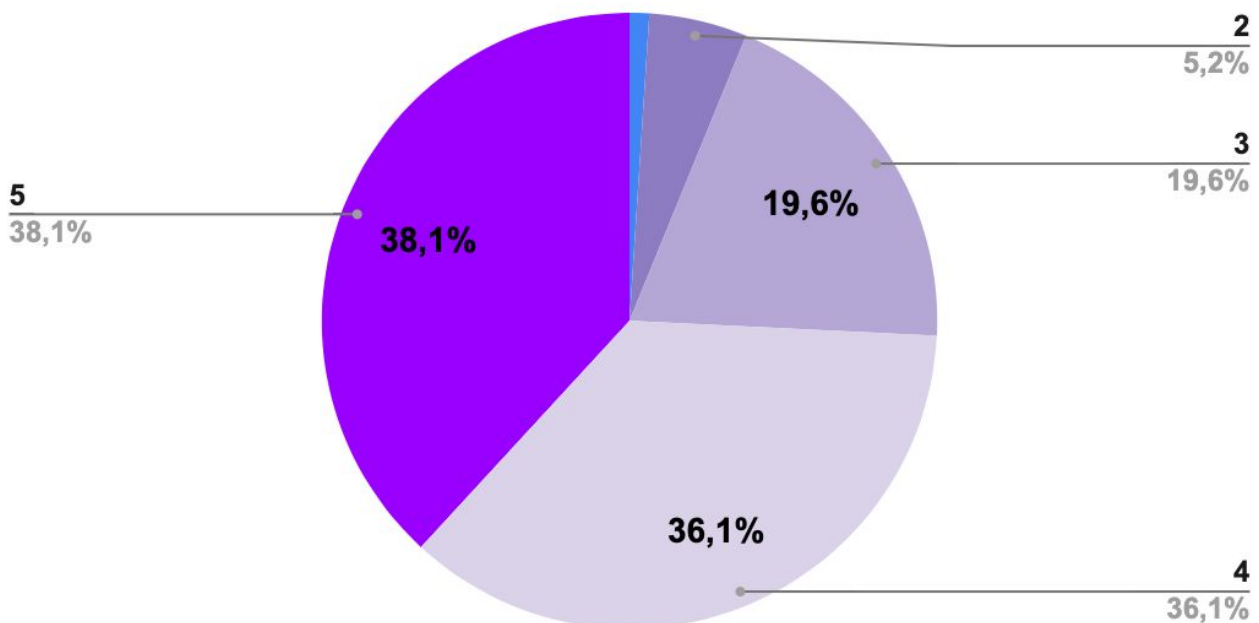


The questionnaire also helped us to explore the following factors: people management skills, how well they collaborate with others, and leadership skills:

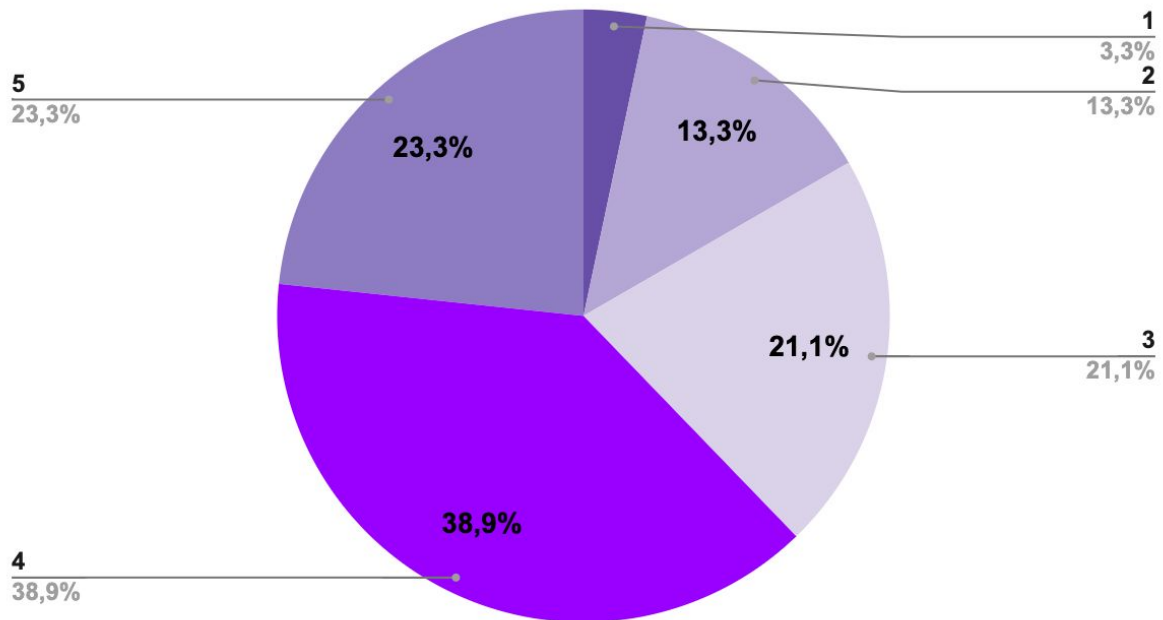
People management skills (combined dat...



how well participants collaborate with others (combined data from all partners)



Leadership skills (combined data from all partners)

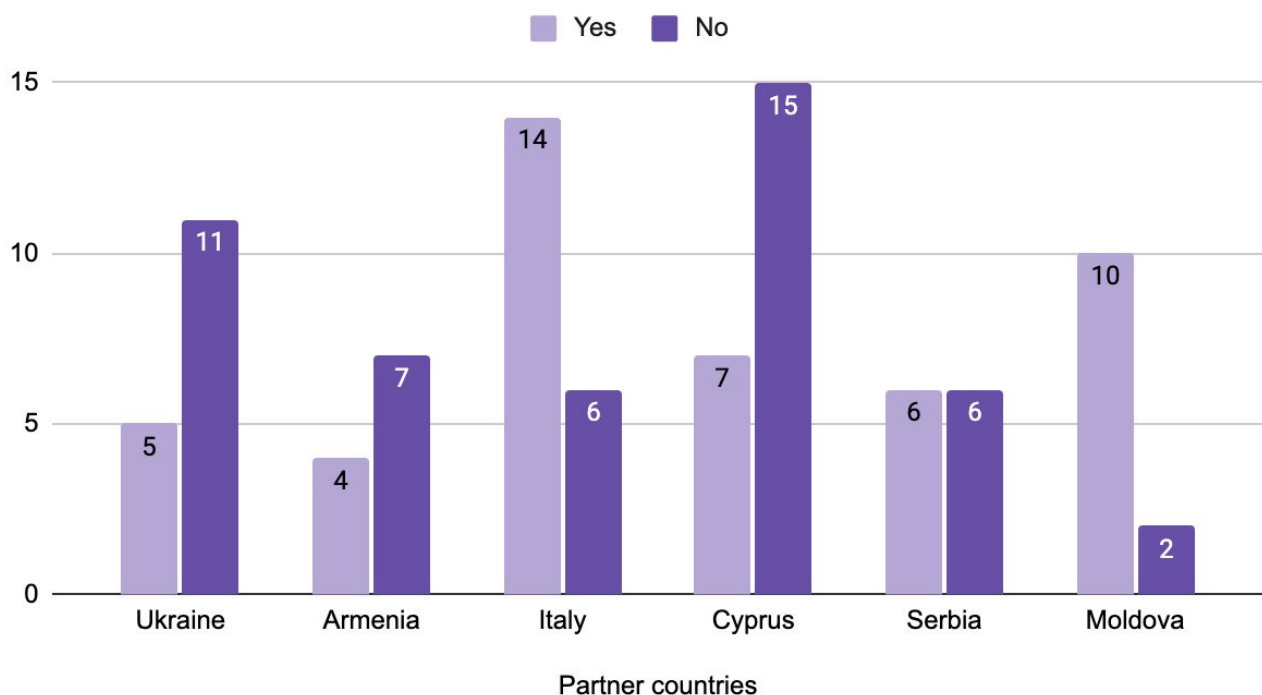


It is worth noting that on a scale of 1 to 5, in the diagrams above we indicate 5 as the highest quality indicator, while 1 is the lowest. Taking all of these into account, we get a positive result of skills in all three categories.

The next thematic block is active participation (volunteering and community service, cultural integration programs).

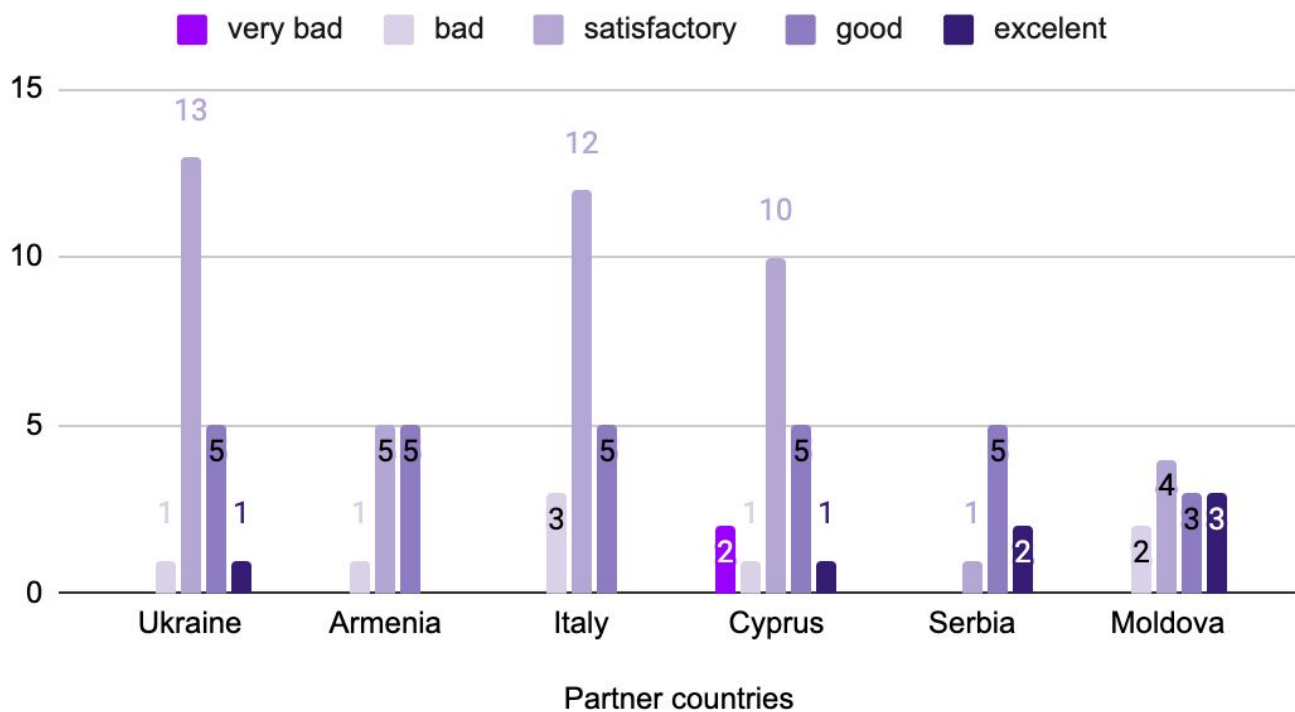
Active participation: (volunteering and community service, cultural integration programs):

Involment in cultural integration programs:



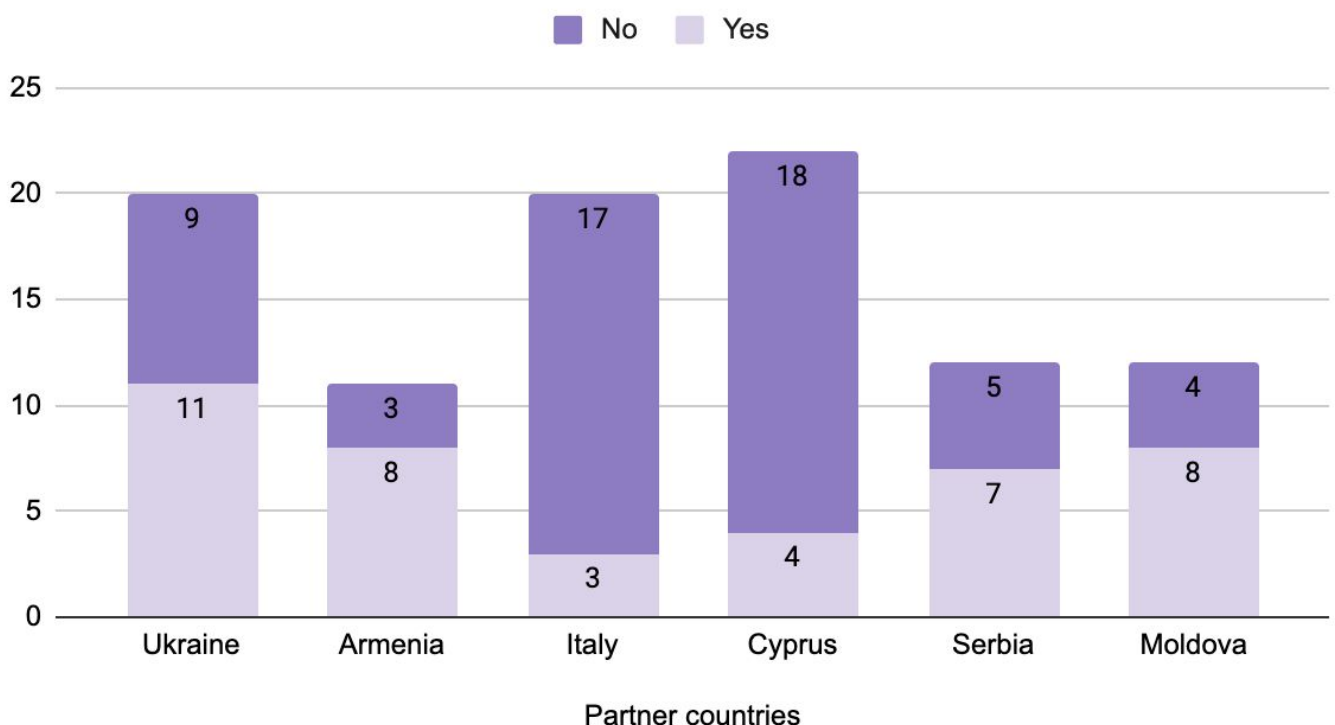
Regarding the involvement of women in cultural integration - in cases where this integration took place, it was successful in terms of results.

Quality of cultural integration programs:

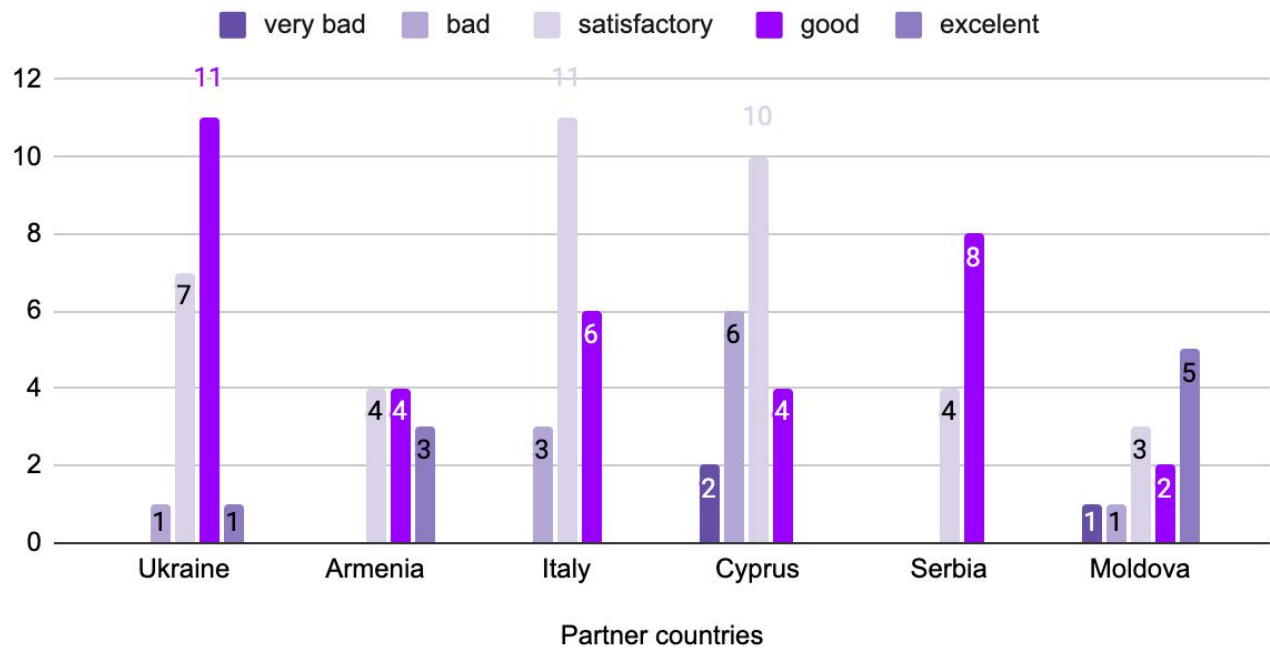


Volunteering and community service: Here is an example of involvement in volunteer activities and, accordingly, indicators of the quality of this work in the public sector:

Involvement in volunteering and community service:



Quality of volunteering and participate in community service:



3.2. Qualitative data analysis (interviews)

The personal interviews allowed us to reveal more about the needs and problems of female refugees/migrants/IDPs.

Combining all the data from partners, we can note a general tendency:

The main factors affecting the quality of life and employment opportunities are integration into society, as well as ignorance of their rights and feeling more pressure compared to local residents, as noted by the majority of respondents.

There were also quite loud comments about discrimination, low levels of trust and stereotypes, which have a very negative impact on the personal well-being of refugee women and make them more closed from society.

However, there were also positive comments about the accessibility of various types of online learning (trainings, seminars, language courses, etc.), which are mostly free of charge. They would also be happy to attend some kind of event or perhaps interesting clubs, which would speed up their adaptation to a new place.

The respondents showed great interest in various kinds of training and would be happy to attend something like how to start a business, how to present themselves as a good specialist, and language courses.

Thus, the following facts emerge from the personal survey: when you change your place of residence, you rarely have friends, and therefore it is very important to adapt through various meetings, best of all if it happens offline for quick socialisation. It is also important to have access to various online courses so that you can combine work and study.

3.3. Indicators of the results of the structured focus group survey

For a detailed analysis of the needs of women refugees/migrants/IDPs, all research partners conducted a focus group with different representatives, for example, NGO “Youth Space” talked to representatives of NGOs that work directly with internally displaced persons. The focus group from the Moldovan partner, NGO “MilleniumM”, included youth workers, project managers, teachers working with refugees from Ukraine, and Ukrainian refugees themselves. The NGO “BEST-SELLER” invited immigrants/refugees from different communities (Tunisian, Turkish, Ukrainian and IDPs from southern Serbia) with different social and economic statuses to participate in the focus group. And the partners from Cyprus NGO “NECI”, communicated with youth workers, project managers and social workers.

After analysing the results of the focus group, we can identify the following problems faced by women refugees/migrants/IDPs in finding employment:

- Language barriers are one of the main obstacles, as limited proficiency in the language of the country of residence may hinder their ability to communicate effectively and understand the requirements of the job.
- Intolerance of the local population and difficulties with integration (discrimination based on refugee/migrant/IDP status, gender, ethnicity and even race can further limit their employment opportunities).
- Difficulties in finding accommodation for women with children (often high rental prices in large cities and insufficient supply)
- Inflexible working hours on the part of employers for possible employment of women with children who are unable to send their children to kindergarten or leave them under someone's supervision.
- Refugee women need to communicate with the local population, as they remain isolated due to the lack of broad initiatives (except for international organisations and human rights organisations dealing with migrant issues). This means that they would like to engage in community service, attend various trainings, classes, clubs, etc.
- Psychological difficulties due to the trauma of war and radical changes in life that do not allow for self-expression.
- Bureaucratic difficulties with restoring documents that were lost or left in the occupied regions (Ukraine).

If we take into account the main requests of women, the following recommendations can be justified on the basis of the focus group:

- Dialogue with businesses on flexible working hours for refugee/migrant/IDP women with children. Partnerships with local businesses can create opportunities for mentoring and internships, while legal and administrative support can help navigate the legal framework of the residence country (the area of IDPs);
- Offer and advocate for gender-responsive approaches to women's employment;
- Expanding social services for women;
- Online courses to improve competencies: resume writing, SMM, photography courses, basics of entrepreneurship, e-commerce, soft skills training, STEM education and language courses;

4. BEST PRACTICES OF INCLUSIVE INITIATIVES

Each partner country described different best practices of inclusive initiatives for refugee women in Europe. These practices focus on successful initiatives that have effectively promoted the active participation and entrepreneurial skills of refugee/migrant/IDP women.

Each of these practices is highly valuable for research purposes. We will focus on each practice from a partner.

✓ **NGO “YOUTH SPACE”** presents the following best practices: Career and Business Hub “VONA”, “Women For The Future” and “Women of Ukraine: heard, capable, resilient”

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Career and Business Hub "VONA"**

Location: Ukraine

Implementing Organization: UNFPA Ukraine, with support from the UK Government and USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)

Level of Implementation: National

Purpose and Objectives: Develop the professional potential and financial capacity of women who have experienced or are at risk of domestic/gender-based violence.

Recommendations for Adaptation: main impact is helping women believe in themselves, become more confident in themselves and their abilities, become financially capable and economically independent, which will significantly reduce the risk of domestic violence.

Link to the initiative - <https://vonahub.org.ua/>

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Women For The Future**

Location: Ukraine

Implementing Organization: NGO ‘Professionals of the Future’

Level of Implementation: National

Purpose and Objectives: The program assists in finding new employment opportunities and promotes professional growth. The program content can be tailored to specific high-demand industries or occupations.

Recommendations for Adaptation: Collaborate with Local Organisations: Partner with local organisations to address regional needs and challenges effectively. Hybrid Format: Consider offering the program in a hybrid format (online and face-to-face) to reach a wider audience. Empower Women: Equip women with the skills and resources needed to secure employment, facilitate career development and professional advancement, and foster entrepreneurship.

Link to the initiative - <https://women.happymonday.ua/>

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Women of Ukraine: Heard, Capable, Resilient**

Location: Ukraine

Implementing Organization: Pact, with financial support from the Government of Canada

Level of Implementation: National

Purpose and Objectives: This project aims to strengthen Ukrainian women's organisations and help them defend women's rights. The goal of the project is to increase the level of enjoyment of human rights by women and girls and to promote gender equality in Ukraine.

Recommendations for Adaptation: The project's research highlights the effectiveness of various activities and programs, providing useful information for developing new initiatives. It underscores the relevance of women's issues and uncovers their root causes, contributing to the development of effective solutions. Additionally, it creates opportunities for further research and innovative approaches with long-term impact. This knowledge can be leveraged by other organisations to enhance their work with refugees/migrant/IDPs women.

Link to the initiative - <https://www.pactworld.org/country/ukraine>



NGO “INEDNET” presents the following best practices: “Artsakh women for Artsakh”, “Empowering Young Women Media Professionals from Artsakh” and “Baking Zhengyalov Hats (herb-infused bread) in Dilijan”

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Artsakh Women for Artsakh**

Location: Oshakan, Armenia

Implementing Organization: Come to OSHAKAN initiative

Level of Implementation: Municipal

Purpose and Objectives: the main goal was to help female refugees to forget about their daily worries during the war of 2020 and make some income that can meet their own needs in a new town. With the financial support of an Armenian educational institution, three young people from Oshakan opened a temporary sewing factory in the city's cultural centre and created the Artsakh Women for Artsakh sewing collective, which makes eco-bags.

Recommendations for Adaptation: This project can be easily implemented in any country and region without huge investments. Female refugees can learn the basics of sewing and then they can establish their own factory with the help of the FREE project. People can buy second-hand sewing equipment and start production in a week or two.

Link to the initiative -

<https://chaikhana.media/en/stories/1043/recovering-from-war-one-stitch-at-a-time>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=373260194021087>

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Empowering Young Women Media Professionals from Artsakh**

Location: Yerevan, Armenia

Implementing Organization: Freedom of Information Center of Armenia NGO

Level of Implementation: National

Purpose and Objectives: Support displaced media professionals from Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) who lost employment and equipment due to the conflict, and enhance their media skills for new opportunities in Armenia. Main Goal: Empower the professional skills and capabilities of young refugee women working in media from Artsakh.

Recommendations for Adaptation: Key findings from the initiative that can be taken into account in the project: FREE - long-term professional development for displaced journalists; increased community engagement and dialogue through multimedia content; empowerment and resilience for displaced female journalists; foundation for future initiatives supporting female journalists and media literacy.

Link to the initiative - <https://foi.am/en/implemented/31311>

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Baking Zhengyalov Hats (herb-infused bread) in Dilijan**

Location: Dilijan, Armenia

Implementing Organization: Varuzhan Babakhanyan, owner of Hover Hotel

Level of Implementation: Municipal

Purpose and Objectives: Provide income for female refugees during the 2020 war; Establish a sustainable business that could continue post-conflict; Enable refugees to cover their needs and integrate into the local community.

Recommendations for Adaptation: Partner with local organisations to address regional needs; Offer hybrid formats (online and face-to-face) for wider reach; Empower women with skills and resources

Link to the initiative - <https://hetq.am/en/article/123173>



NGO “NECI” presents the following best practices: “Greek Together”, networking events WeSTART “Women education Strategic Approach for training” and “Training guide for inclusion”

Overview of Practice:

Name: WeSTART “Women Education Strategic Approach for Training”

Location: 6 European countries: Italy, Greece, Romania, Austria, Germany, and Cyprus

Implementing Organizations: DEDALUS (IT): Focus on young migrants and women ROM, STUDIO ERRESSE (IT): Monitoring, evaluation, and consulting for third sector organizations, AESD (RO): Digital training activities for adults. DAFNI KEK (GR): Training in digital skills, life skills, and soft skills, VHS CHAM (DE): Training for women (migrants and refugees) in digital and linguistic skills, VHS WIEN (AT): Vocational training and social research, CARDET (CY): Research and technological development center.

Purpose and Objectives: Address the challenges faced by women refugees in integrating into the job market and society due to language barriers, lack of qualifications, and limited access to professional networks. Main goal of the program: improve language proficiency, provide vocational training and facilitate job placements

Recommendations for Adaptation: We can adopt similar training and mentoring structures, ensuring cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in program design.

Link to the initiative - <https://westart-project.eu/>

Overview of Practice:

Name: Greek Together

Location: Limassol, Cyprus

Implementing Organization: Running-Fluent Initiative

Level of Implementation: Municipal

Purpose and Objectives: Address social integration challenges and overcome xenophobia by integrating migrants into Cypriot society.

Recommendations for Adaptation: Identify local cultural experts and language instructors to lead the programs, secure partnerships with local organizations, and ensure consistent funding sources.

Link to the initiative - <https://runningfluentinitiative.com/projects/greek-together>

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Training Guide for Inclusion**

Location: Cyprus

Implementing Organizations: CARDET, MAKES, Jovesolidres, CESIE

Level of Implementation: National

Purpose and Objectives: Address limited awareness among European youth about migration and foster social cohesion within a diverse European identity.

Recommendations for Adaptation: Translation to other European languages so other countries of Europe and not only can use it.

Link to the initiative - <https://move-inclusion.eu/methodology/>

✓ **NGO “L'ORMA SSD ARL”** presents the following best practices: “Sistech #TF4Women Fellowship”, “Includere per Crescere (Include to Grow)” and project: “Accoglienza Lavoro”

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Sistech #TF4Women Fellowship**

Location: France, Italy, Greece

Implementing Organisation: Sistech

Level of Implementation: International

Purpose and Objectives: Address professional inclusion challenges for refugee women in tech and digital job sectors; adaptable and scalable across multiple countries; requires collaboration with companies, professional mentors, online platforms, and financial support from partners.

Recommendations for Adaptation: Leverage partnerships with local tech companies; adapt training modules to fit specific job market needs.

Link to the initiative - <https://sis.tech/>

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Includere per Crescere (Include to Grow)**

Location: Italy

Implementing Organization: Consorzio di aziende ELIS (CONSEL)

Level of Implementation: National

Purpose and Objectives: Integrate individuals excluded from the labour market, including migrant and refugee women.

Recommendations for Adaptation: partner with local businesses and social enterprises; customise training modules for local job markets; ensure access to necessary digital tools and internet connectivity.

Link to the initiative - [ELIS website](#)

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Accoglienza&Lavoro**

Location: Italy

Implementing Organisation: Assolavoro in collaboration with UNHCR

Level of Implementation: National

Purpose and Objectives: promote the integration of beneficiaries of international, temporary, and special protection into the labour market.

Recommendations for Adaptation: Establish partnerships with local employment agencies and unions; customise training modules to meet local job market demands; Ensure availability of legal and administrative support for participants.

Link to the initiative - <https://assolavoro.eu/associazione/presidenza-assolavoro/>

 **NGO “BEST-SELLER”** presents the following best practices: “ Call to action of NGOs from CEI region: Integrate Ukrainian women into the workforce and society”, “Migrant mobility situation research in Serbia” and “Access to higher education and cooperation with socially responsible companies as examples of good practice in the integration of refugees in Serbia”

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Call to Action of NGOs from CEI Region: Integrate Ukrainian Women into the Workforce and Society**

Location: Central European Initiative member states (Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia/FYROM, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine)

Implementing Organization: Best-seller as a consortium member (Business and Professional Women Czech Republic as coordinator)

Level of Implementation: International

Purpose and Objectives: Address barriers for employment of Ukrainian women, especially in the corporate sector.

Recommendations for Adaptation: Complementary to the FREE project, with potential for ongoing discussions and partnership.

Link to the initiative:

<https://www.best-seller.org.rs/project/equal-pay-day-conference-going-international-iii/>

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Migrant Mobility Situation Research in Serbia**

Location: 9 reception centers in Serbia/asylum centers

Implementing Organizations: International Organization for Migration (IOM) with Commissariat for Refugees and Migrants of the Republic of Serbia (SCRM)

Level of Implementation: National

Purpose and Objectives: Lack of recorded data about migrants and asylum seekers.

Recommendations for Adaptation: Data collected highlights the importance of education for integration.

Link to the initiative -

<https://dtm.iom.int/reports/serbia-migrant-mobility-situation-report-january-2024>

Overview of Practice:

Name: Access to Higher Education and Cooperation with Socially Responsible Companies

Location: Belgrade, Serbia

Implementing Organization: Belgrade Center for Human Rights

Level of Implementation: Municipal

Purpose and Objectives: Presentation of access to higher education for migrants (immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers)

Recommendations for adaptation in a FREE project: establishing collaboration with socially responsible companies. In this case it was IKEA.

Link to the initiative -

<http://azil.rs/odrzan-zavrsni-dogadjaj-na-integraciji-pristup-visokom-obrazovanju-i-saradnja-sa-drustveno-odgovornim-kompanijama-kao-primeri-dobre-prakse-integracije-izbeglica-u-srbiji/>



NGO “MilleniuM” presents the following best practices: “Network to support solidarity and socio-economic empowerment of Ukrainian refugee women - Career Centers for Women”, “Entrepreneurship and Digital Marketing” and project: “Upskilling digital competences and career management skills of disadvantaged youth in Georgia, Armenia and Moldova.

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Network to Support Solidarity and Socio-Economic Empowerment of Ukrainian Refugee Women - Career Centers for Women**

Location: Republic of Moldova

Implementing Organization: NGO "FACLIA"

Purpose: Support socio-economic integration of displaced (Ukrainian) and local women in Moldova by developing infrastructure for their socio-professional integration.

Link to the initiative -

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc0AFn6L4f1IuNb_1nN7LV9ZtaSR5wkqka2Z6jCkdN8ZO3Qig/viewform?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR0C10Cu0xMiuBCb-s_NE2OIqHBep82a3Mh-l2J03DZSyETDI5GDxqgI4Z8_aem_AQinGbmIc_880m82uCVAouNurNyJYoBBhCVyT9rxtUh3OvJ8x5l63kJtfP93x04H_Zn5P8DexlhxyJqnJVglZuA-

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Entrepreneurship and Digital Marketing**

Location: Ungheni, Moldova

Implementing Organisations: "Creative Women" Public Association and NGO "FACLIA"

Purpose: Support socio-economic empowerment of Ukrainian refugee women. Key Components: Training activities and coaching on entrepreneurship and digital marketing. Hands-on sessions and workshops covering CV writing, social media content structuring, business marketing, and planning.

Easy to adapt, because it is structured in training activities, with coaching elements which help women to find jobs or initiate personal business.

Overview of Practice:

Name: **Upskilling Digital Competences and Career Management Skills of Disadvantaged Youth in Georgia, Armenia, and Moldova**

Location: Republic of Moldova (Cahul, Chisinau, Ungheni regions)

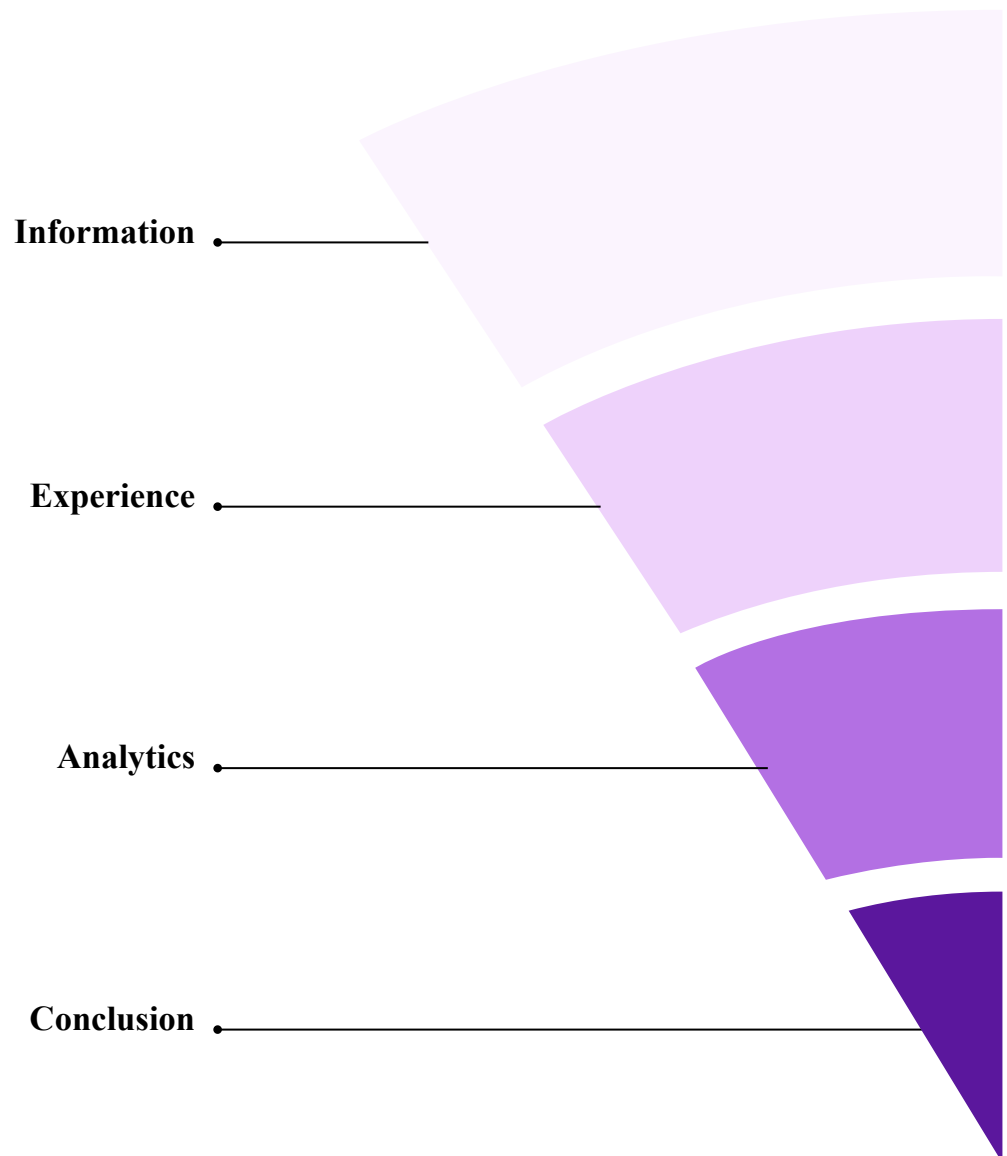
Implementing Organisations: Caritas Czech Republic in Georgia, Coalition for Independent Living (Georgia), Agate (Armenia), MilleniumM (Moldova).

Purpose: Increase self-trust and adaptability of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and PwD (People with Disabilities) youth for better labour market inclusion. Key Components: Capacity building on digital skills for CSOs (Civil Society Organizations). Workshops on digital career guidance. Sub-granting activities for digital skills training and career guidance. Networking events and mentoring activities.

Link to the initiative- <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61557812790350>

Best practices are important because they help the project team and project partners develop highly effective processes to streamline work. Since best practices comprise the best way to do something, implementing them can improve efficiency.

Taking into account these best practices and their results, the FREE will implement initiatives and project activities to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women refugees, migrants, and IDPs, ultimately enhancing their quality of life and employment opportunities.



5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research, the following conclusions and recommendations for the FREE project follow:

Conclusions:

1. **Employment Challenges:** Young refugee, migrant, and internally displaced women face significant barriers to employment, including language barriers, lack of recognition of their qualifications, and limited access to job opportunities. These challenges are compounded by discrimination and social exclusion in host communities.

2. **Educational Gaps:** Access to education remains a critical issue, with many young refugee women unable to pursue further education due to financial constraints, lack of documentation, and cultural barriers. This lack of education directly impacts their ability to find meaningful employment.

3. **Economic Empowerment through Entrepreneurship:** Entrepreneurship has been identified as a viable path for economic empowerment. Women who engage in entrepreneurial activities demonstrate higher levels of self-sufficiency and integration into their host communities. However, they require tailored support programs to overcome specific obstacles such as access to finance and business networks. To enhance the economic empowerment of young refugee women, we recommend developing targeted training programs, improving access to online education, and implementing policies that address discrimination in the workplace.

4. **Support Networks:** The creation of strong support networks, including mentorship programs and peer support groups, significantly enhances the integration and empowerment of young refugee women. Virtual networking platforms play a crucial role in connecting these women with resources, opportunities, and support systems.

5. **Impact of Local Integration Programs:** Integration with existing local initiatives is essential for the sustainability of employment and entrepreneurship programs. Collaborating with local authorities and NGOs ensures that refugee women benefit from established resources and support mechanisms, leading to better outcomes.

6. **Best Practices and Training Materials:** Developing accessible, culturally adaptable training materials and using interactive learning methods greatly improve participant engagement and motivation. Training programs should focus on the specific needs and challenges of young refugee women to be effective.

7. **Continuous Monitoring and Feedback:** Regular monitoring and evaluation of project initiatives are vital to identify successes and areas needing improvement. Incorporating feedback from participants helps adapt programs to better meet their needs and expectations, ensuring ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

8. **Post-Course Support:** Providing post-course support, such as counselling, access to resources, and business assistance, is crucial for participants to successfully apply their learning in practical settings. Continuous support helps sustain the benefits of initial training and fosters long-term success.

9. **Policy Recommendations:** The findings highlight the need for policies and programs that specifically address the unique challenges faced by young refugee women. Recommendations include improving access to education and healthcare, creating targeted employment opportunities, and supporting entrepreneurial ventures.

Recommendations:

1. **Support for Specialized Training Programs:** To enhance the employability of refugee, migrant, and IDP women, we recommend developing comprehensive training programs that focus on English language courses, resume and cover letter writing (as 33% of respondents highlighted this as a primary need), social media marketing (SMM), photography, basics of entrepreneurship, e-commerce, soft skills training and STEM education.

We recommend develop and implement specialised courses and training sessions tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by young refugee, migrant, and IDP women. Focusing on the skills required for entrepreneurship and labour market integration can increase their chances of success.

We can also talk about mentorship programs to help women gain the skills and confidence needed to find employment. It is also crucial to create more inclusive workplaces and provide anti-discrimination training to foster a supportive environment for refugees, migrants, and IDPs. Additionally, expanding access to affordable housing options will alleviate a significant barrier, enabling these women to focus on their career and personal development.

2. **Create Virtual Networking Platforms:** Organise virtual events that enable participants from different countries to share experiences, find business partners, or connect with mentors. This will help build strong support networks and facilitate international dialogue and cooperation. Providing these virtual platforms will ensure continuous and flexible engagement, especially for those who may have mobility or accessibility challenges.

3. **Integration with Local Initiatives:** Integrate the project with existing entrepreneurship and employment support programs in each participating country. This will ensure better synergy with local resources and increase the chances of project sustainability.

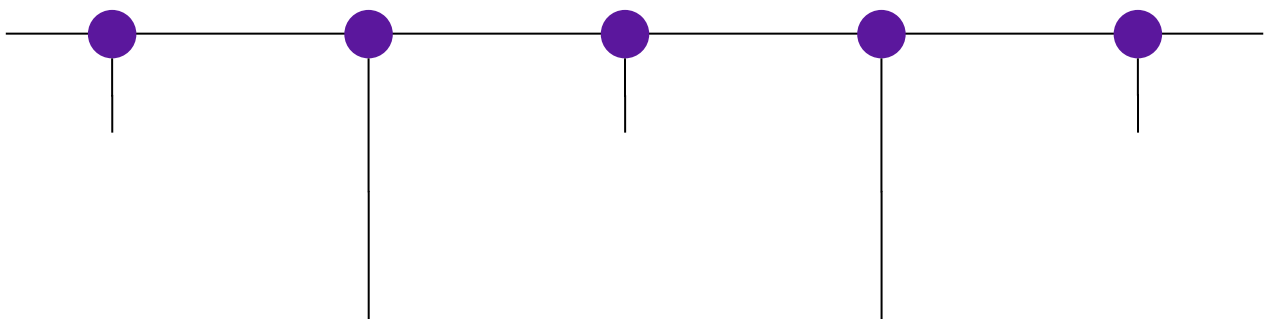
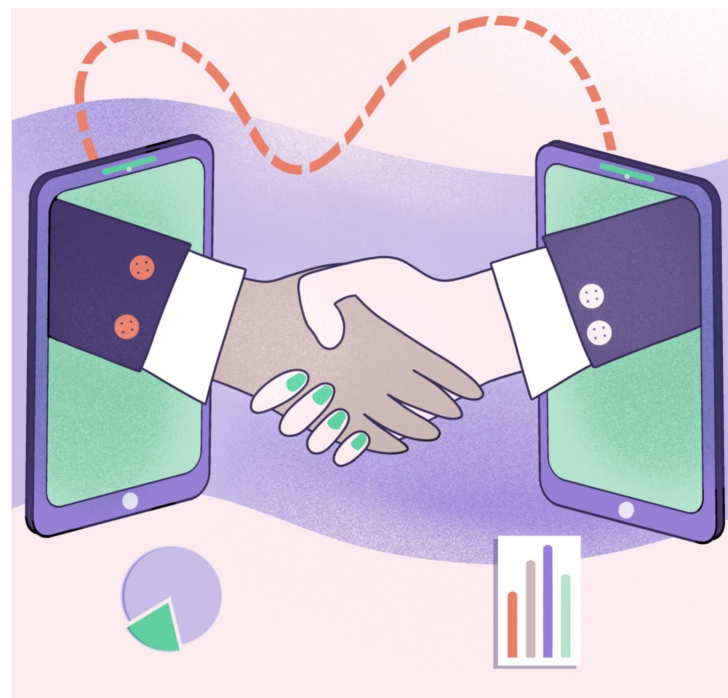
Collaborating with local organizations and leveraging their expertise will enhance the effectiveness of the initiatives and ensure they are culturally and contextually relevant. This integration will also help in identifying and addressing specific local barriers faced by women refugees, migrants, and IDPs.

4. **Focus on Educational Materials:** Develop accessible and understandable training materials that can be easily adapted to different cultural contexts. Utilising interactive learning methods can increase participant engagement and motivation.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of Results: Regular monitoring and evaluation of the project's impact will help identify successes and areas needing improvement. It is important to include feedback from participants to adapt the project to their needs and expectations. A periodic feedback collection and surveys and focus group discussions can provide deeper insights into the participants' experiences and outcomes.

6. Post-Course Support: We recommend design post-course support, including counselling, access to resources, and business assistance, to enable participants to successfully apply their learning in practice. Providing follow-up mentoring and regular check-ins can help participants navigate challenges and stay motivated. Access to a network of alumni and continued learning opportunities will further support their professional growth and integration into the job market.

These conclusions provide a comprehensive overview of the research findings and offer actionable insights to inform future policies and programs aimed at improving the socio-economic status of young refugee women in the EU.



6. ANNEXES

6.1. Annex 1. Questionnaire:

Demographic Information	Your Name and Surname	
	Age	
	Nationality	
	Country where you were born	
	Country of residence (region for IDPs)	
Please specify Your educational level:	Select all that apply:	• incomplete secondary education • secondary education • college education • higher education (bachelor's degree) • higher education (master's degree) • higher education (doctorate) • other (please specify) _____
Please specify Your Current Status:	Select all that apply:	• in school full-time • in school part-time • working full-time (30 hours or more per week) • working part-time • working seasonally • working casual hours, temporary jobs or odd jobs • self employed full-time and able to support myself and/or my family • self employed part-time and contributing to my household income • self employed but not making enough to live off • unemployed and looking for work • unemployed and not looking for work • travelling • staying at home to care for my family/friends • being under the care of the state • other _____

What are the greatest challenges you face to find or keep employment?	Select all that apply:	• discrimination or other's attitudes • finding dependent care • don't know how to job search • don't know what to do • in need of housing • keep losing my job • lack of training or education • lack of work experience • limited job opportunities • new to town or don't know anyone in town • workplace safety, bullying or harassment • no resume or outdated resume • struggle using the internet to job search or apply for work • struggling with mental or physical health • problems with concentration • struggling with personal problems • unfamiliar with the world of work • work is too seasonal or up and down • find it difficult to approach employers to apply for jobs • lack of interpersonal skills like communication, teamwork, conflict resolution or problem-solving • not being aware of rights and responsibilities in the workplace • don't know what my skills or strengths are • other _____
What topics or activities would be important to employment?	Select all that apply:	• how to write a resume and cover letter • how to approach employers • how to do interviews • volunteer or job shadowing to explore different careers • using social media in your job search • teamwork, communication and conflict resolution skills for the workplace • work life balance • stress management • how to start a business • unpaid work experience to try out different jobs and see if there is a fit • finances and budgeting • workplace safety • employment standards - rights and responsibilities • career exploration, assessment and planning to find out what you're good at • learning tips and strategies for on the job • how to shine as a new employee • recreation or fun activities that help you feel healthy • where to go for help in the community • transportation solutions for job search and getting to work • help arranging childcare • other _____

Do you have access to additional educational resources, such as non-formal education? (training, activities, workshops, etc.)	Select one option:	• yes, in large quantities • yes, but in a limited way • no, access is limited • no access at all • not sure/not sure
Do you have access to additional educational resources, such as online courses?	Select one option:	• yes, in large quantities • yes, but in a limited way • no, access is limited • no access at all • not sure/not sure
How do you rate the quality of the medical care you receive?	Select one option:	• very bad • bad • satisfactory • good • excellent
On a scale of 1–5, how would you rate your people management skills?		
On a scale of 1–5, how well do you collaborate with others?		
On a scale from 1-5, how would you rate yourself as a leader?		
How likely are you to support others in achieving their goals?	• very likely • somewhat likely • neither likely nor unlikely	
How would you rate procedural and administrative support in the destination country?	• kindly support • neutral • not support	
How would you rate the level of legal support and mechanisms at the arrival?	• difficult • normally • easy	
How would you describe contextual adaptation? (For example: easiness to find accommodation, language course, openness for interaction on behalf of locals, etc.)	• difficult • normally • easy	

Have you been involved in any language training?	Yes/No
How do you rate the quality of language training?	• very bad • bad • satisfactory • good • excellent
Have you been involved in different types of cultural integration programs?	Yes/No
How do you rate the quality of cultural integration programs?	• very bad • bad • satisfactory • good • excellent
<i>if yes, please describe what kind of initiative it was and the level of your involvement</i>	
How would you rate the outreach towards you on behalf of the local/national stakeholders, such as non-governmental sector (civil society organizations), business sector and state bodies in charge for migrants/refugees/IDPs?	• only acquaintances with us • keep in touch with us • take care of us • offer different possibilities • don't support • there is no connection with us
Have you had the opportunity to volunteer and participate in community service?	Yes/No
How do you rate the quality of volunteer and participate in community service	• very bad • bad • satisfactory • good • excellent
<i>if yes, please describe what kind of initiative it was and the level of your involvement</i>	
Have you been involved in any inclusive initiatives targeting refugee women?	Yes/No

How do you rate the quality of inclusive initiatives targeting refugee women?	● very bad ● bad ● satisfactory ● good ● excellent
<i>if yes, please describe what kind of initiative it was and the level of your involvement</i>	
What impact have these initiatives had on your life?	<i>(e.g. improved access to resources, helped you to feel safer, enabled you to connect with other women)</i>
Is there any mechanism of support within your company, such as troubleshoot point for migrant/refugees/IDPs or a person delegated to take care of possible issues?	Yes/No
<i>if yes, please describe what kind of initiative it was and the level of your involvement</i>	
Is there a group or a circle withing a community in a form of trauma-informed care? <i>(support sensitive to the needs of young women)</i>	Yes/No
<i>if yes, please describe what kind of initiative it was and the level of your involvement</i>	
Feel free to share some ideas that you think will improve the employment of young people and especially females in your country	
What actions do you believe can be taken to enhance initiatives that are inclusive for women refugees?	
What obstacles do young women refugees encounter in seeking or maintaining employment?	
If you want to take part in the project activities, please indicate your contacts	<i>E-mail:</i> <i>Phone number:</i>

6.2. Annex 2. Template of the report on the results of the focus group survey

From which partner (country, organization) does the response come from?	
General description of the group	
Who exactly are you involving in the focus group? (brief description of the participants, their occupation, etc.)	
Overview of the survey (questions and answers)	
1. Did internally in your activities or inclusive initiatives aimed at supporting women-refugees?	
2. How do you think these initiatives have affected their lives?	
3. What are the biggest challenges women-refugees face in finding or keeping a job?	
4. In your opinion, what are the most relevant topics or activities that would be important for the employment of refugee women?	
5. Does your centre have a support mechanism for women refugees (migrants/refugees/internally displaced persons), such as a problem-solving point or a person to whom you delegate the resolution of possible problems?	
6. What do you think can be done to strengthen initiatives that reach out to refugee women? Please share ideas that could contribute to improving employment opportunities for young people, in particular women, in your country	
Analysis of the results:	
Conclusions	
Recommendations	
Additional information	
<i>(You can include any of your suggestions or additions here)</i>	



6.3. Annex 3. Template of Best Practices

1. Overview of Practice	
Name of Initiative/Program:	
Location (Setting):	
Implementing Organization(s):	
Level of implementation: <i>international</i> <i>national</i> <i>regional</i> <i>county</i> <i>municipal</i>	
2. Purpose and Objectives	
What was the reason or problem behind having that initiative	
Target group(s) (Perspective):	
Implementation period	
Budget	
3. Initiative description	
Brief description of the initiative	
Main goal(s) of the initiative:	
Key components of the initiative (training, mentoring, access to finance, networking)	
4. Scalability and allocation	
How well can this practice be adapted and scaled to a different level?	
What resources are required for implementation?	
Recommendations for adaptation in a FREE project or in the countries involved in the project	

5. Results and impact

Initiative/Program results

Number of participants

Number of refugee women who have started their own business:

What is the project's impact?

6. Additional Information

How many people were involved in the initiative

Describe the organizing teams of the initiative

Supporting documents (reports, publications, website links):

RESEARCH REPORT

**FEMALE REFUGEES for ENTREPRENEURSHIP
and EMPLOYABILITY (FREE) project**

June 2024



[Female Refugees for
Entrepreneurship](#)



[free_project24](#)