



European
Commission



Courtesy of the project (WEIP)

EXTRA CARE FOR MIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

Project name:
Women's empowerment, integration
and participation (WEIP)

Purpose:

Supporting the integration of migrant
and refugee women into European
society

AT A GLANCE

Geographical coverage:

4 countries: Italy, Poland, Spain
and the UK

Project coordinator:

Latin American Women's Rights
Service

Estimated budget:

€ 510 576

EU contribution:

90% co-funded by the
European Union

Type of funding:

Asylum, Migration and Integration
Fund (AMIF)

Start date:

January 2017

End date:

January 2019

Overview

Due to the feminisation of poverty in developing regions, women are migrating to Europe in growing numbers, looking for better employment and education opportunities. Migration can open up opportunities for women, but it can also reinforce traditional, restrictive, gender stereotypes and roles, increasing women's lack of decision-making power within their families.

In Europe, refugees and migrants come from many cultures. Their interactions often lead to stereotypes, gender clichés and misunderstandings of cultural differences. Such mix-ups cause serious problems for the refugees and migrants, and make things difficult for healthcare professionals, social workers and police.

Migrant and refugee women, in particular, are at risk of falling victim to such misunderstandings. Arriving with little or no host-country language skills, they do not know how to navigate the system. Many end up trapped in low-skill jobs with low pay, and often fall victim to violence and abuse, including through sexual exploitation. It is therefore important to empower women to take greater control of their lives.

To tackle this problem, the Women's empowerment, integration and participation (WEIP) project supported migrant and refugee women in four countries: Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Important to increase awareness

The WEIP project realises the importance of increasing the awareness of policy-makers, front-line service providers and professionals in the legal sector working with migrant and refugee women (MRW) to strengthen their understanding of the realities of MRW and the challenges they face. It is also important that professionals working with MRW have the knowledge to better respond to the gender-specific needs of these women and to foster their successful integration in the host country. Social workers have started



Migration and
Home Affairs

to investigate the size and particularities of this group, in an effort to reach them more easily and to avoid misunderstandings and mistakes.

The project had two goals. The first of these was to provide new and recent migrant and refugee women with a better start to life in four EU countries and to improve their chances of integration in the host country by increasing their skills, access to services and employment opportunities. In this way, the project helped migrant and refugee women and girls find their way in unfamiliar societies.

Secondly, the project aimed to transfer knowledge and build capacity on the successful integration of migrant and refugee women with front-line service providers, professionals and organisations working with them at national and EU levels. The project spoke with doctors and nurses who then briefed sociologists and psychologists while the organisations spoke directly with police officers, and informed politicians. Thanks to workshops and conferences, these public services and authorities now have a better understanding of migrant and refugee women.

“When women first come to us, some feel isolated and even depressed as a result of their migration experience. They are far away from their loved ones. They are unable to fully use their qualifications and skills. They don’t feel confident in the local language. Some women and their children face domestic abuse and violence. They don’t know how to talk about this, or how to get help and support,” said project officer Alma Gatica. “It is quite inspiring to see the changes taking place over time. Thanks to our advice, support and participation in this project, these women have regained their self-esteem and confidence.”

WORKSHOPS

The Women’s empowerment, integration and participation project organised close to 100 workshops, which were open to those working with refugee and migrant women. The project organised specialist training for front-line care providers and public services.

The project created posters and leaflets, which were hung in the many buildings of organisations involved with migrant and refugee women, including consulates and embassies.

The project devised and used an advocacy and communications plan. This included the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and the websites of the organisations involved in the project.

Outreach

The project reached out to some of the most vulnerable refugee and migrant women. These are recently arrived women who face language barriers, or who endured abuse at home, or are stricken by poverty.

These women have now made their first steps to adapt to their host country. There have been introductory language courses; the project organised dozens of events on cultural integration; women were shown where and how to look for suitable jobs, how to access healthcare and to find adequate housing. The project helped several dozen women to find volunteer work. There was also specialist care and advice for close to 100 women and girls who had been beaten and abused.

In all these activities, the project made available crèche services, enabling single mothers to participate in the activities and integrate into the wider community.

MORE INFORMATION

Project reference: HOME/2015/AMIF/AG/INTE/9155

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