



Facilitating the integration of newly arrived refugee and migrant women both socially and into the labour market

The 3-year Erasmus project WeCan “Encouraging integration for newly arrived immigrant women through entrepreneurship” has continued during 2020 with a focus on background research and the production of an Enterprise Curriculum. Some of the project activities have had to be revised due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact.

Building Networks:

In the first half of 2020 the partner organisations conducted desk research as well as workshops, interviews and focus groups with a range of professionals and migrant and refugee women. Over 60 professional stakeholders and 80 women took part in these meetings. Because of covid-19 restrictions some of these necessarily took place online.

The meetings aimed to:

- Support understanding of the needs of low skilled refugee and migrant women in relation to entrepreneurship,
- to start to build networks between these women and business enterprise agencies and professionals
- to ascertain the most important enterprise competencies that the project curriculum should focus on.





Barriers preventing integration

Although the barriers to social and economic integration for newly arrived, low skilled migrant women vary from country to country, there are also a number of common issues which include:

- stress and disorientation with first priorities linked to safety and security for the whole family
- caring responsibilities
- cultural values in the family leading to a lack of ambition and confidence around the world of work
- lack of basic skills and competencies
- experience through less formal routes is not acknowledged or valued
- less professional interest in supporting women with a working partner into work

Creating a Project Curriculum

Reflection related to the results of the initial project research has encouraged the partners to move forward with a focus less on ensuring the women involved create new businesses and more on the women's development of an entrepreneurial / enterprise attitude (characterised by initiative, pro-activity, independence and innovation). This is important not only in creating a business, but more generally to be successful in today's world of work, and also supportive of participants becoming active citizens more generally. The project will focus on a number of key competences (linked to entrecomp).

Competences

- Self-management/vision
- Creativity
- Cultural awareness
- Initiative
- Career-awareness for women
- Confidence
- Digital skills
- Marketing
- Communication
- Resilience
- Planning/management
- Insight into the customer

