

EMN Finland National Conference and Webinar

Diversity of migrant women – How to improve labour market integration of migrant women

25 November 2022

Background

Women account for around 50 per cent of migrants in Finland. Migrant women form a diverse group having different reasons for migrating and different personal attributes: women arrive to Finland as family migrants, labour migrants, students, asylum seekers, refugees, and beneficiaries of temporary protection.

Despite of their different backgrounds, migrant women seem to face the same obstacle: it is challenging to gain access to the Finnish labour market. This applies to both highly educated migrant women, and to those with lower levels of education. A significant proportion of migrant women are highly educated, but their employment rate is not improving as could be expected. The Finnish labour market includes many discriminatory structures, and a high level of education does not necessarily guarantee success to migrant women when it comes to accessing the working life. On the other hand, migrant women of lower educational levels face other notable obstacles as well, such as being able to participate in the integration and language training.

Employment is a significant factor in successful integration and it has wide-ranging impacts on individual well-being. The impacts of the low employment rate of migrant women extend beyond the women themselves to subsequent generations. The weak labour market position of mothers with a migrant background is seen as having a negative impact on the school performance and integration of their children. The low employment rate of migrant women is also a problem for Finnish society: for a society that is trying to bridge the sustainability gap, increasing the employment rate of migrant women would be very important.

One of the key questions of the integration policies in Finland is how to guide migrant women towards integration services and the labour market more effectively. Both the Government Programme and the Government's Action Plan for Gender Equality state that the access of migrant women to

integration and language instruction have to be ensured. Effectively guiding migrant women towards integration services and the labour market is also a key development target in the report of the Finnish Government on the need for a reform in integration promotion.

In 2022, Ukrainians fleeing the war form a new group of migrants arriving to Finland. These migrants, most of them women, are beneficiaries of temporary protection and have access to the Finnish labour market and partly to services supporting integration. It is not yet known how permanent the situation will be and how many Ukrainians will decide to stay in Finland.

Objective

The conference of EMN Finland will tackle the abovementioned issues of employment of migrant women. Solutions will be sought from best practices in Finland and abroad. A comparative EU-level study on integration of migrant women in EMN member countries, published by EMN in September 2022, will be introduced in the event. Additionally, experiences from Norway will be shared, as Norway has succeeded better than Finland in the employment of migrant women. The floor will be given to Finnish experts of immigration, migrant women, and representatives of governance. Additionally, the situation of Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection will be discussed from the viewpoint of integration and employment.

Information about EMN

The European Migration Network (EMN) was established in 2008 by a decision of the European Council and it receives funding from the European Union. The European Migration Network supports policymaking in the European Union by providing up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum in the EMN Member Countries and EMN Observer Countries, and distributes it to national and EU-level policymakers and authorities. Additionally, EMN distributes information on migration and asylum to the general public.

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