



The Reality of Employment for Migrant Women in Greece

An Empirical Study

“Over the last decades migration has altered the economic and social landscape of Greece.”

Jennifer Cavounidis, 2013

The Reality of Employment for Migrant Women in Greece

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CONTENTS

1. Abstract	7
2. Introduction	7
3. Contextual Background	8
4. Methodology	10
5. Study Limitations	12
6. The imprint of employment for migrant women in Greece	13
6.1 The personal characteristics of migrant women	13
6.2 Migrant women's personal characteristics require special attention: Micro-Meso-Exo system balances	17
6.3 The macro system of the individual: The impact of the national labour market on migrant women	22
6.4 Migrant women's professional qualifications and skills	27
7. Civil Society Organisations	31
8. Policy recommendations	32
9. Future recommendations for future research	33
10. Conclusion	34
11. References	36

Abbreviations

- SN:** SolidarityNow
- AAP:** Accountability to the Affected Population
- ELSTAT:** Hellenic Statistical Authority
- LTAC:** Long Term Accommodation Sites
- SDG:** Sustainable Development Goals
- KIIs:** Key Informant Interviews
- TCN:** Third Country Nationals
- CSOs:** Civil Society Organisations
- NGOs:** Non-Governmental Organisations
- ERGANI:** Business Service Information System of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Cedefop:** European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
- UNDP:** United Nations Development Programme
- RPL:** Recognition of Prior Learning

ABSTRACT

Recognising the imperative to address the integration of migrant women into the national labour market, SolidarityNow leveraged its experience to undertake an empirical research study. **The objective of the research is to identify key elements that significantly contribute to the integration of migrant women into the workforce and understand how these elements interact with, and are influenced by, the surrounding environment.**

A total of 215 migrant women participated in the study; additionally, insights from 11 employers were gathered to provide a comprehensive perspective on the issue. The research employed a questionnaire structured around four monitoring activities, covering six categories of questions. The examination of five factors and their dynamics shed light on the reality of employment for migrant women in Greece, revealing **an overall downscaling of their employment levels in Greece** compared to their countries of origin. As a result, irrespective of education levels and experience, women tend to take on low skilled labour with more precarious working conditions.

The findings highlight the need for specialised support mechanisms and collaborative efforts among relevant stakeholders to facilitate the integration the integration process of migrant women.

INTRODUCTION

SolidarityNow (SN) is a Greek non-profit, humanitarian organisation founded in 2013, to provide targeted support to the most vulnerable and marginalised members of our society based on their needs. SN's headquarters are in Athens with large operations throughout the country.

SN HAS FOUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- A. Supporting inclusive education for all**
- B. Catalysing livelihoods opportunities**
- C. Improving social protection and inclusion**
- D. Enabling access to justice and the protection of human rights**

To date, SN has supported more than 350,000 beneficiaries through an array of programming. SN collaborates with diverse stakeholders to achieve its mission and increase the impact and reach of its programmes. The knowledge gained by SN throughout the research, is incorporated into designing future interventions, with the aim to continuously improve programmes, and more effectively respond to the needs of those who we aim to support.

Catalysing livelihoods opportunities lies at the core of SN interventions. Under this area of work, SN aims to enable access to the labour market for vulnerable individuals, through empowerment, information provision, capacity building and jobs matching. Collaborations are also established directly with the private sector to strengthen these interventions and support companies to become more open and able to hire people of different backgrounds. Lastly, pathways to employment are strengthened through establishing links with vocational training and skills development opportunities.

SN consistently upholds Accountability towards the Affected Population (AAP) as a core principle in its work. Through a well-defined communication process with stakeholders, the organisation aims to comprehensively support and safeguard the rights of beneficiaries while ensuring strict confidentiality. This involves the continuous collection of both quantitative and qualitative information throughout the year, with the overarching goal of informing evidence-based programme design.

Aligned with these principles, this study was designed to gain a deeper insight into the experiences, needs, and aspirations of migrant women in Greece, specifically concerning their integration into the national labour market. The findings from this study will serve as a crucial guide for our initiatives and will be disseminated for use by interested stakeholders.

3

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Since 2015, a total of 1,269,567 asylum seekers have entered Greece via land or sea. According to ELSTAT and the 2011 population census, the permanent migrant population in Greece was 912,000, including 445,053 migrant women. By 2021, this figure decreased to 765,598 (with 375,911 migrant women), while the total Greek population stood at 9,716,889 individuals (51% female). In 2021, the working-age population (25-74 years old) in Greece was 6,773,700, with migrants comprising 8.6% (581,768), nearly half of whom are women (49%).

As of July 2023, the unemployment rate in Greece was 10.8%. However, among the migrant population, the unemployment rate is notably higher, reaching almost 20%. The most significant unemployment rates are observed among women (15.7%), individuals with primary to secondary education (26%), and those aged between 20 and 29 (53%). Notably, Greece's shadow economy is estimated to contribute to almost 30% of the country's GDP, featuring one of the highest rates of uninsured workers (37%) and a substantial presence of irregular migrants in the workforce, accounting for 4.4%. According to the latest data, the shadow economy at the EU level for 2022, accounts for 17.3% of the GDP.

The employed population is predominantly concentrated in the Wholesale and Retail Trade markets, and Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles sector, comprising 17% (688,400 people). This is followed by the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector at 11% and the Manufacturing sector at 10%, as outlined below.

Employed individuals by the top and bottom labour market sectors: 4th quarter 2022	% of the total	ranking in the list of 21 labour market sectors
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	17%	1st
Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry	11%	2nd
Manufacturing	10%	3rd
Education	9%	4th
Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	9%	5th
Accommodation and food service	8%	6th
Other service activities	2%	14th
Activities of households as employers	1%	18th

Diagram 1. Employment per labour market sectors

In accordance with Law 4939/2022 (Article 26 & 57), migrants seeking or benefiting from international protection must present a valid document—such as an active asylum seeker card for six months, a residence permit, or a valid visa for labour reasons—to access the labour market. Sustaining a valid permit requires migrant workers to demonstrate the payment of social insurance contributions corresponding to a minimum number of workdays, as stipulated in Law 4251/2014, Code of Migration and Social Integration, Article 15.

Furthermore, supporting the integration of asylum seekers and refugees is also a core priority of the 2022 National Integration Strategy, which delineates strategic goals for the social integration of asylum seekers and recognised refugees, encompassing four key pillars:

- 1. Pre-integration** of asylum seekers, supporting the regular and smooth transition of adults into their professional life, and of minors to the formal education system; Protection of rights and promotion of the European way of life and of the Rule of Law; Prevention and efficient protection from all forms of violence.
- 2. Social integration** of recognised refugees through intensive education and training programs to facilitate their access to the labour market as well as the promotion of the European way of life.
- 3. Prevention and efficient protection** from all forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse through strengthening reporting mechanisms.
- 4. Monitoring and supervision of the integration process** using commonly accepted and measurable indicators.

Drawing on the contextual analysis, it is important to better understand the experience of migrant women in order to critically analyse the relationships between the different factors affecting them.

METHODOLOGY

Aiming to support migrant women and key actors through programmatic interventions and advocacy activities, SN initiated an empirical study titled **“The Reality of Employment for Migrant Women in Greece.”** The study adopts the ecosystem model to comprehensively examine the various factors influencing employment realities for migrant women in the country.

The **ecosystem model**, as applied to migratory processes by Falicov (2008), draws on Bronfenbrenner’s Social Ecology Model for Human Development (1977, 1979). Both theories emphasise understanding a system through the interactions and influences between individuals and their environment, categorised as *micro*, *meso*, *exo*, and *macro* environments. In alignment with these principles, Cedefop’s “European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning” further underscores this by stating that *“The individual and their specific requirements and circumstances need to be considered in all elements of a validation arrangement and it is important that any validation arrangement specifically serves the individuals.”*

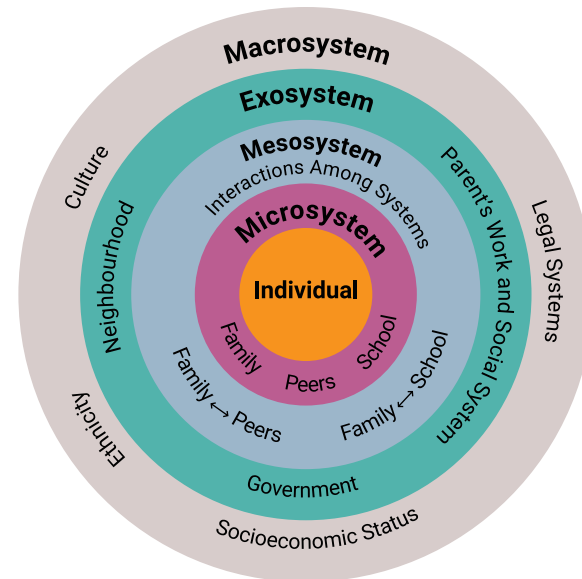


Diagram 2. Falicov (2008): Ecosystem Model for migratory processes

In this case, **the individual** is the migrant woman. The **microsystem** refers to individual’s characteristics. The **mesosystem** outlines the interactions of the individuals with the direct environment. The **exosystem** describes the interaction of the individual with the national labour market and the **macrosystem** draws on the effects the national labour market has towards the individuals.

The information was collected through a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods to involve all stakeholders in the process. Four monitoring activities were conducted to gather information from migrant women, employability professionals, and key employers, aiming to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation.

The monitoring activities conducted include:

- **Desk Research and Literature Review:**
Comprehensive review of existing literature and relevant materials.
- **Focus Group Discussions with Migrant Women:**
In-depth discussions to capture perspectives and experiences directly from migrant women.

- **Key Informant Interviews with Employability Professionals:**
Interviews with professionals engaged in employability initiatives spanning urban and rural areas across mainland Greece.
- **Key Informant Interviews with Employers:**
Interviews with key employers to gather insights on their perspectives and practices related to migrant employment.

Four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) engaged 31 migrant women in urban and rural settings (Blue Refugee Centre in Thessaloniki, Ritsona LTAC and Malakasa LTAC) during the design phase. The aim was to identify key elements facilitating their integration into the national labour market and to uncover common barriers.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) involved 11 national labour market representatives (key employers), gathering insights into their experiences employing migrants, challenges encountered and potential support required.

The above activities helped to formulate the questionnaire which examined six (6) question categories:

1. **Demographics**
2. **Personal attributes, qualifications and skills**
3. **Future aspirations**
4. **National labour market perceptions**
5. **Barriers encountered**
6. **Requirement of future assistance**

The questionnaire was deployed using an online platform which a) allows for multiple submissions, b) permits synchronisation of all data collected in one excel sheet and facilitates data analysis.

Female enumerators were assigned to conduct the survey in person or by phone with the female participant to ensure that all participants felt comfortable to share their personal experiences. Each female participant was randomly selected through the dedicated databases SolidarityNow has or using convenience sampling and reaching out to females visiting the locations where SN provides support. The sample was selected with a 95% level of confidence and 6.67% margin of error, identified from the women aged between 17 and 66 years old, supported throughout SN programs in 2022 (Population=1,250).

The data analysis was conducted using SPSS statistical analysis program to identify correlations between variables and describe the characteristics of the target group.

The Hypotheses examined are:

HYPOTHESIS 0 /

Migrant women have the same characteristics among themselves which enable their access to national labour market.

HYPOTHESIS 1 /

The personal state (attributes, qualifications and skills, feelings of security), future aspirations, perceptions, barriers encountered and level of assistance are affected by their personal characteristics.

HYPOTHESIS 2 /

There are disparities between professional experience in the home country and in Greece that promote brain waste and skills discounting of migrant women.

HYPOTHESIS 3 /

Migrant women have skills that are not related to low-skilled jobs.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

The engagement of individuals (staff and participants) in this empirical study was not guaranteed. The staff is dedicated to projects that are ending or even with increased workload which eliminates their dedication to the survey. Participants also are not easily engaged in the Focus Group Discussions as they share information without a direct positive impact towards their lives.

During phone interviews several phone numbers were found to be out of service. During face-to-face interviews individuals, already having visited a service within our premises, possess limited time to respond to a questionnaire, as their main issue is to receive support from the service (legal aid, employment, psychosocial support), and overcome issues faced. Employers participating in this survey acquire limited time to dedicate to the survey because of increased work responsibilities.

Respondents predominantly comprise women of refugee and migrant origin who have received support from SN programs over the years. Consequently, they are already affiliated with an organisation providing assistance. This composition may thus not be fully representative of the entire population, as there are others who have not had the opportunity to benefit from such support. Therefore, the findings may not capture the perspectives of the broader population.

THE IMPRINT OF EMPLOYMENT FOR MIGRANT WOMEN IN GREECE

6.1 The personal characteristics of migrant women

The sample of 184 migrant women who contributed to this survey comprises of multiple characteristics. Participants originated from **28 countries**. Most of them (45%) were from African countries (both sub-Saharan and Northern African), 25% came from the Middle East and other countries (Pakistan and Albania), 22% were from Ukraine and 7.6% were from Afghanistan.

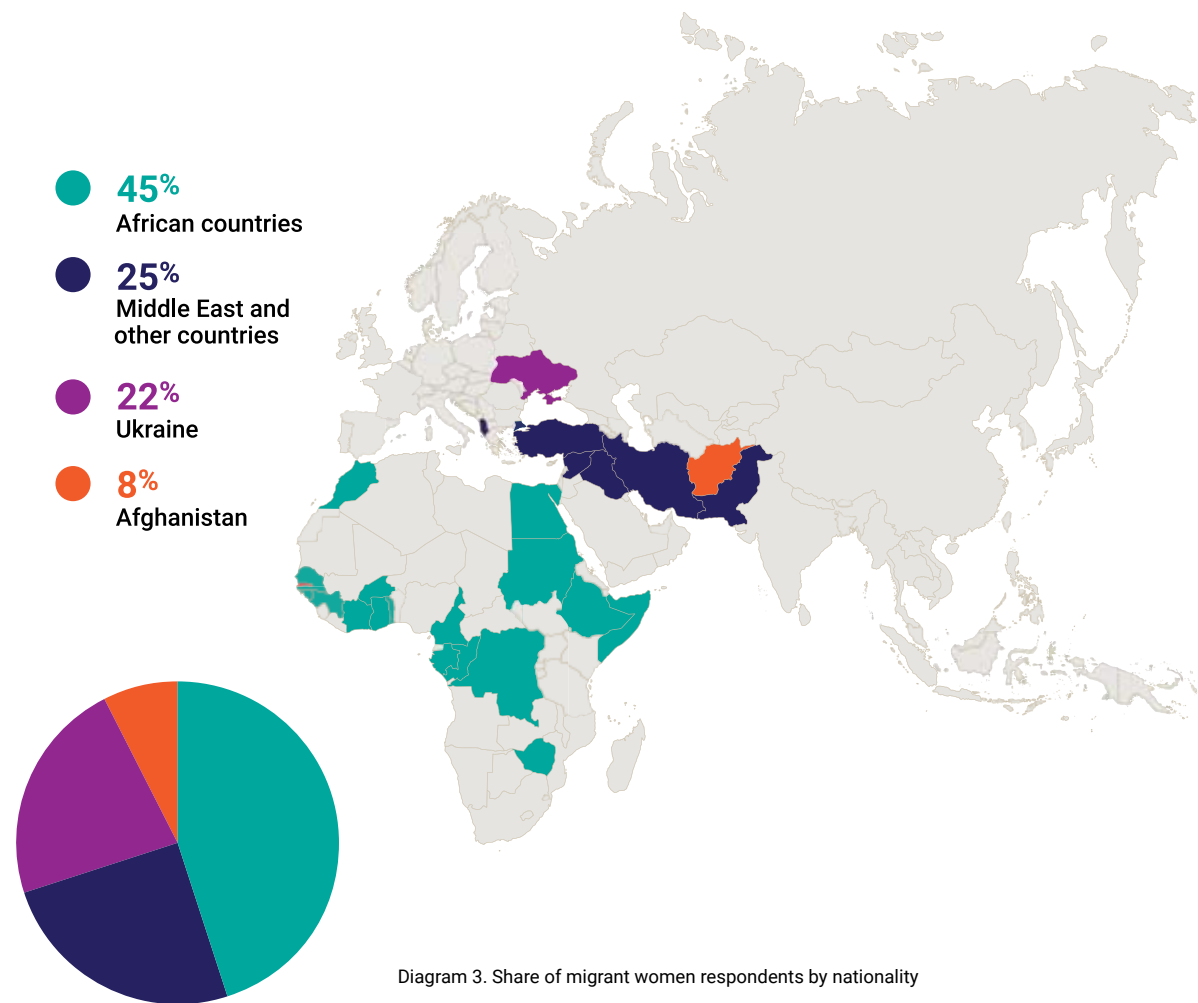


Diagram 3. Share of migrant women respondents by nationality

According to the latest data from the 2021 Census, 3.5% of migrant women are from Ukraine, 3.1% from African countries, 2.5% from the Middle East, and 2% from other countries (Pakistan, Palestine, Afghanistan). The vast majority of migrant women are from Albania, accounting for 47.1% of all non-Greek women permanently residing in Greece.

Remarkably, a small number of women chose not to participate in this survey because they deemed themselves too old, never engaged in employment in their home countries, expressed a lack of willingness to remain in Greece in the near future, or were obliged to care for their grandchildren, enabling their daughters to seek employment. This trend was also evident during the Focus Group Discussions, where older women were less active in the conversation.

The age distribution of respondents mirrors the active working-age population, with a predominant focus on individuals between the ages of 17 and 45, constituting 84% of the respondents. Within this range, 23% fall between the ages of 17 and 29. Additionally, 16% of the total sample consists of individuals aged between 46 and 66, actively seeking employment. Notably, the migrant population aged between 25 and 74, represents 76% of the total migrant population, as per the latest census.

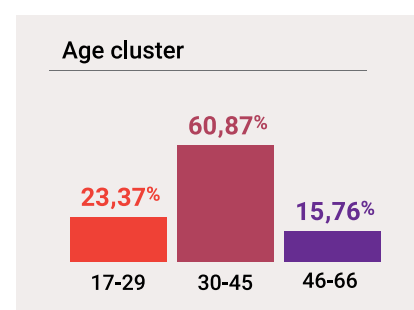


Diagram 4. Age clusters of migrant women respondents

The majority of women respondents (61%) are recognised refugees, and 35% are asylum seekers. Additionally, one woman is yet to be officially registered, and six women possess national legal documents, such as the National Identity Card or a Greek Visa.

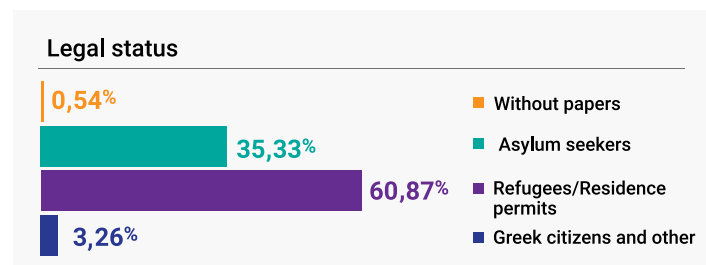


Diagram 5. Legal status of migrant women respondents

Among the respondents, 12% of women have lived in Greece for less than one year while 41% have been residing in Greece for less than 2 years. This percentage includes the Ukrainian population accounting for 22% of the sample. Within the respondents, 27% entered the country in 2019 and 2020, while 32% came to Greece before 2019. Notably, among them are 26 female respondents who have been residing in Greece for more than 7 years.

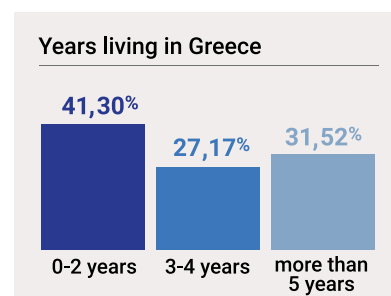


Diagram 6. Years living in Greece of migrant women respondents

In terms of accommodation, 41% of respondents live in their own rented apartment (70 people) or their own house (6). Additionally, 34% reside in an Open Accommodation Site (17) or an apartment provided by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, through the HELIOS program (46). Notably, 15% of respondents live under precarious conditions, including homelessness or staying in a squat (5), occupying a space within an apartment among others for a fee (17), or residing temporarily in a church or municipal shelters (5). The remaining 10% are hosted by friends or relatives (15) or provided accommodation by an employer (3).

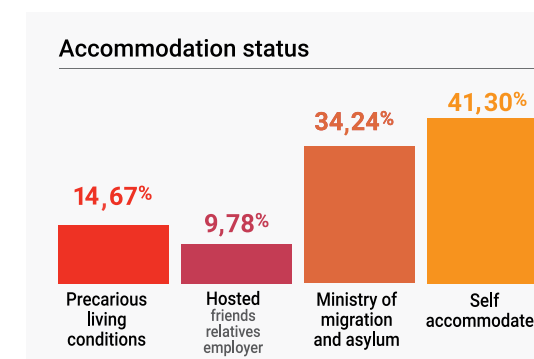


Diagram 7. Status of accommodation of migrant women respondents

Most respondents (60%) are single with 59% having more than one child.

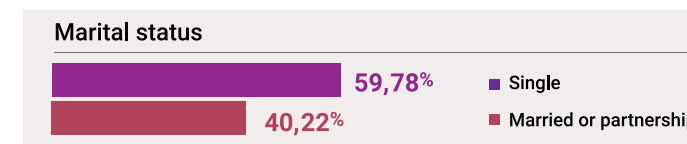


Diagram 8. Marital status of respondents

Respondents are evenly distributed between having completed Secondary (40%) and Tertiary education (41%), including those who have completed vocational or post-secondary education. Additionally, 18% have only completed primary education.

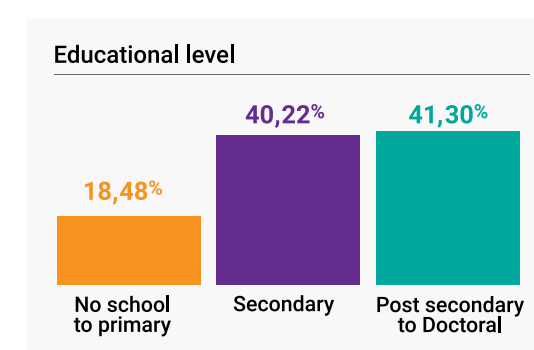


Diagram 9. Level of education of respondents

Notably, only 40% of the respondents rely solely on their own or their family's salary, while the remaining 60% depend on supplemental assistance. Of the respondents, 50% indicate that they rely on their personal and family salary, bolstered by support from NGOs or other actors. Additionally, 23% are employed and receive daily wages. Some individuals borrow money from friends and relatives (7%), receive support from their parents and family (16%), engage in self-employment activities (8%), or use their own savings or other means (17%).

Critical relationships are identified between the personal characteristics of migrant women, including their nationality, age, educational level, and marital status, allowing for generalised assumptions. There is a statistically significant relationship between nationality and the educational level of female participants ($\chi^2(6) = 80.559, p < 0.001$), with a medium effect size

(Cramer's $V = 0.468$, $p < 0.001$). Women from African countries have typically completed secondary education, while women from Ukraine, the Middle East and other countries have mostly completed post-secondary to doctoral studies. Notably, most Ukrainian beneficiaries are highly skilled, having completed tertiary-level education.

Reinforcing this finding, extensive research on highly skilled migrant women and their integration into the labour market reveals a concerning trend. These **individuals often find themselves relegated to low-skilled jobs; a phenomenon referred to as 'brain waste'**. This issue highlights challenges related to gender and ethnicity, encapsulated in the so-called phenomenon of 'skills discounting'.

Brain waste occurs when the valuable skills, qualifications, and professional experiences of migrants are not utilised in the receiving country. This phenomenon manifests in several ways:

- a) Some migrants resort to illegal employment due to barriers in accessing legal channels, hindering their ability to contribute their skills fully.
- b) Navigating the bureaucratic hurdles of diploma recognition in their home country becomes a significant challenge, adding a layer of complexity to their integration.
- c) The mismatch between migrants' professional backgrounds and the local job market, hinders their ability to secure roles that align with their expertise (different scope of professional experience).
- d) Lack of professional networks cause difficulties in accessing suitable opportunities.

Lastly, brain waste can also be exacerbated by the unspoken biases and skill devaluation against migrants, the so-called "skill discounting".

In addition, according to the survey findings, having completed post-secondary education, most (30%) women participants, aged between 30 and 45, fulfil the necessary qualifications (knowledge, experience) and skills to find employment and pursue better working conditions. This is in contrast to those aged 17 to 29 who were compelled to leave their countries at a young age, thus lacking the opportunity to fulfil their educational aspirations and gain valuable professional experience. As a result, younger women are more vulnerable to employment challenges in the national labour market, particularly when compared to highly skilled women with substantial work experience.

As described above, the relationship between age and educational attainment demonstrates a significant correlation ($\chi^2(4) = 16.536$, $p = 0.002$) with a weak effect size (Cramer's $V = 0.212$, $p = 0.002$). A significant correlation was observed between marital status and the number of children among female participants ($\chi^2(4) = 51.437$, $p < 0.001$) with a medium effect size (Cramer's $V = 0.529$, $p < 0.001$). Married women are more likely to have more than two children compared to those who are single. Only 24% of respondents are without offspring.

In summary:

- Women aged 17-29 face increased vulnerability in Greek employment due to lower educational attainment.
- 59% of the women surveyed are single mothers with more than two children.
- Displaced Ukrainian, Middle Eastern, and Afghan women predominantly attended post-secondary education and beyond.
- Approximately 15% of participants live in precarious conditions.
- Women residing in Greece for over five years are primarily self-accommodated, often renting a house, and meet their basic needs with support from NGOs or other public actors, irrespective of whether they have an income.

6.2 Migrant women's personal characteristics require special attention: Micro-Meso-Exo system balances.

In the framework of the ecosystem model applied in this empirical study, the employment landscape for migrant women is explored across multiple dimensions. The investigation delves into their present personal attributes, future aspirations, national labour market perceptions, encountered barriers, and the necessary support mechanisms essential to facilitate their entry into the national workforce.

- **Personal attributes** include their knowledge of Greek or other EU languages, employment status, possession of legal documentation, and computer literacy. The survey also delves into their sense of security and feelings of safety.
- **Future aspirations** include intentions relating to employment, educational pursuits, and entrepreneurial ventures.
- The study captures women's perspectives based on their lived experiences within the **national labour market**. This encompasses their perception of its safety and friendliness for skill acquisition and professional practice, as well as reflections on the value attributed to skills, diplomas, and qualifications in gaining market access.
- Inquiries related to **barriers** involve exploring challenges encountered by women seeking for employment in Greece. Factors such as childcare availability, resolution of legal issues, and the presence of a supportive social network are examined. These elements play a crucial role in women's ability to work, find employment, or enhance their skills.
- Lastly, participants express the **level of assistance** they require to improve their personal status and overcome existing barriers.

By examining these five factors and their interconnections, our investigation aims to illuminate the experiences of migrant women, offering insights into their current situations and identifying the key elements that significantly influence their pursuit of employment in Greece.

Each factor is examined through statements which the women are requested to indicate their level of agreement using a scale (1=Disagree, 2=Somehow/Somewhat, 3= Agree, 4=Don't know, 5=Not applicable). For the analysis 4 and 5 are considered as missing values.

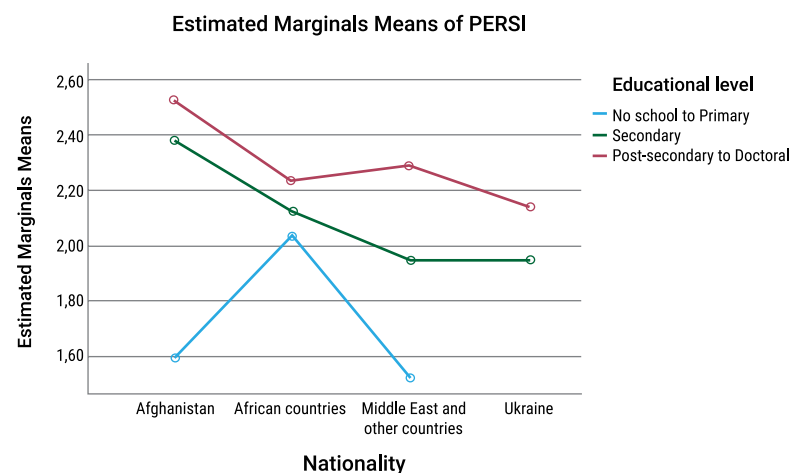
Personal attributes

Through the previous findings, we've uncovered significant correlations between women's nationality, age, educational level, and marital status. Moving forward, we extended our analysis to examine additional connections between the personal characteristics and the five factors under investigation.

High-skilled women who completed post-secondary to tertiary education fulfil the basic requirements to join the national labour market. This is not the case for those who have lower education attainment.

However, there is a notable difference between women from African countries who have completed primary education and women from other countries. Those from African countries seem (mean=2.04) to fulfil the basic requirements (personal attributes factor) to join the labour market. Women from Afghanistan and the Middle East and other countries with low educational attainment, are underprivileged compared to the rest.

In terms of their experience with the Greek labour market, **half the survey participants reported being involved in employment without a contract or insurance during the past year.** In terms of language proficiency, **56% are currently in the process of learning Greek, while only 19.6% speak the language.**



According to the data, the current personal status of women is significantly associated with both their educational level and country of origin ($F(10, 0.808) = 7.668, p < 0.001$). More precisely, a significant relation was identified between educational levels ($p < 0.001$), nationality ($p < 0.001$) and both educational level and nationality ($p = 0.002$).

Remarkably, 53% of survey participants experience symptoms of the Ulysses syndrome daily or feel insecure about themselves and their family (46.7%).

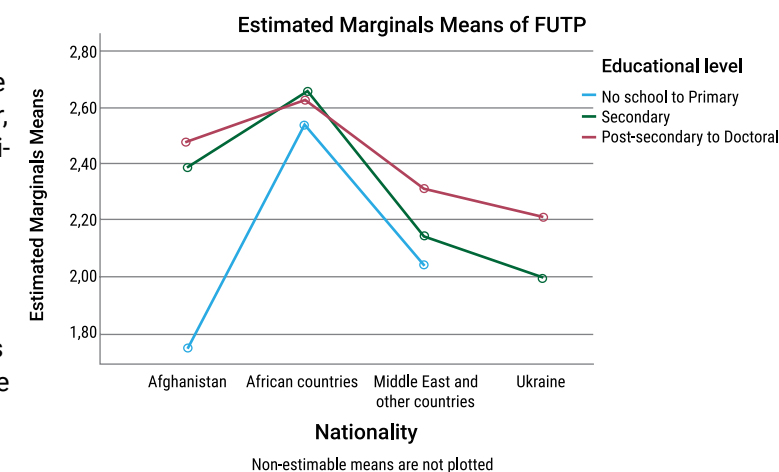
Ulysses syndrome

According to the Ulysses Syndrome Institute for Migration and Mental Health, the "Ulysses syndrome is a picture of intense stress and mourning related to suffering relevant difficulties during migration, such as loneliness, helplessness or lack of opportunities which are expressed in the form of tension nervousness, recurrent worries, sadness, difficulties sleeping, headaches and other stress – related somatic complaints."

Future aspirations

Women from African countries, irrespective of their education, express a common intention to remain in Greece to secure employment, save money, or, if possible, establishing their own business (mean=2.62).

Those with the least pronounced future incentive are Afghani women, who we can assume mostly want to leave the country (mean=2.08). This is particularly evident for those who have only completed primary education.



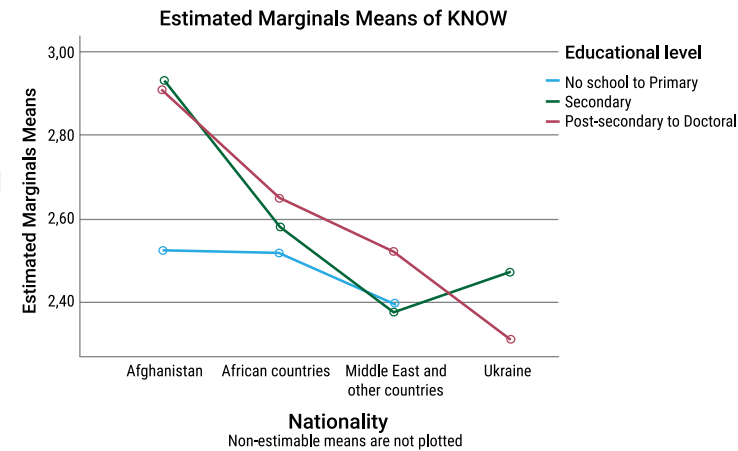
SOME FINDINGS:

- **65%** of participants intend to stay in Greece the following year.
- **74%** plan to work in Greece.
- **44%** want to study in Greece.
- **55%** want to learn another EU language.
- **7%** plan to start their own business or save money in order to explore business opportunities.
- **The majority (69%)** of those who plan to work in Greece, want this so that they can support their family.

National labour market perceptions

As explained above, the future aspirations are correlated with the educational level ($p=0.001$) and the nationality ($p<0.001$) of the migrant women significantly ($F(10, 1.190) = 8.951, p<0.001$) but not both, with the African women being more motivated towards working in Greece compared to other countries.

Women from Afghanistan (mean=2.72) in particular, believe that the national labour market, is safe and friendly for a woman, is a space where you can learn, and practice profession, is open to their expertise and special qualifications. Furthermore, they know that it is important to learn Greek to find employment and acquire a professional certificate. Finally, they think that their qualifications can be potentially recognised in Greece and that employers show respect about their culture. However, women from the Middle East and other countries (mean= 2.45), and Ukraine (mean =2.32) do not have a clear perception about the national labour market. Women from African countries know the national labour market and how to access it (mean=2.58).



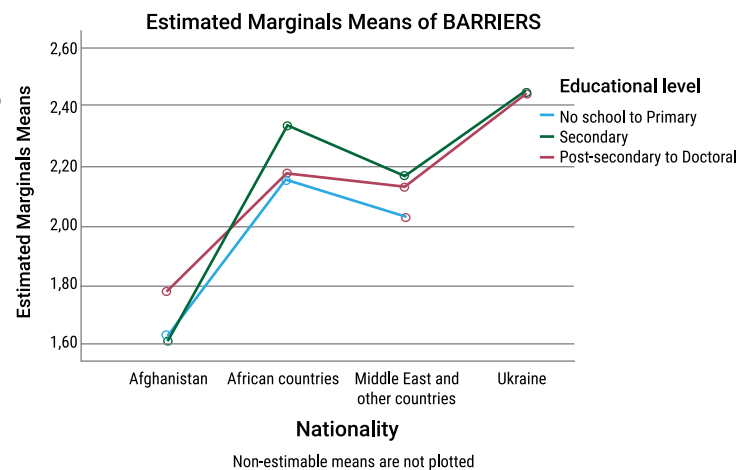
ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:

- **95%** believe that it is important to learn Greek or another EU language (70%) to secure employment in Greece.
- **63%** believe that it's important to obtain a professional certificate.
- **Only 35%** think that their professional certificates can be recognised in Greece.
- **42%** believe that employers respect and understand their community's cultural differences.
- They believe that the Greek labour market is safe (47%), friendly (47%) and a space where you can learn and practice profession (53%).

The perception about the national labour market is significantly related to nationality ($p=0.003$) but not the educational attainment of migrant women ($F(10, 0.362) = 3.361, p<0.001$).

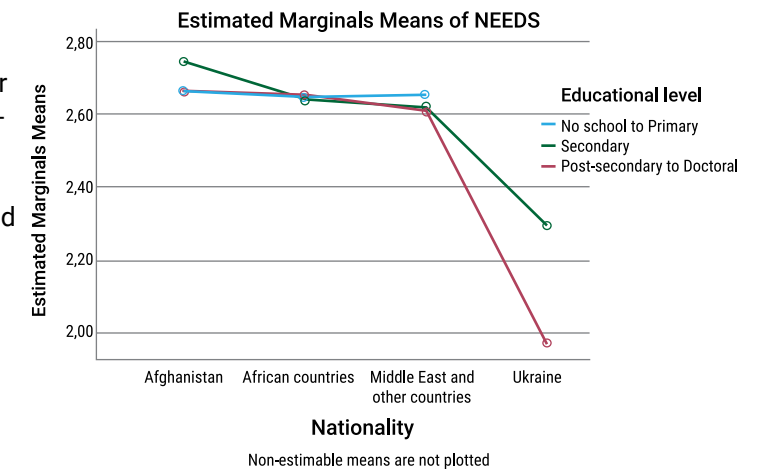
Barriers encountered

In terms of their access to the labour market, 72% believe that the only place to leave their children is schools, while they do not believe that maternity acts as a barrier against employment (64%). The barriers that women confront regarding labour market integration are common between same nationalities ($p<0.001$) but not between educational level completed ($F(10, 0.850) = 9.503, p<0.001$). This is especially true for Ukrainian (mean=2.45) and African (mean=2.28) migrant women.



Women of the same nationality seem to encounter the same challenges in accessing the labour market.

Notably, migrant women from Afghanistan, African countries and Middle East and other countries ($p<0.001$), regardless of their educational level, ($p=0.404$) show an increased requirement for assistance compared to Ukrainian women who seem to be supported by their communities, CSOs and others ($F(10,1.363)=19.012, p<0.001$). Findings reveal that most women need to find employment in Greece and learn Greek. Most of them have the necessary professional experience, skills and diplomas to do so.



SOME FINDINGS

- **76%** identified the need to find legal work.
- **72%** stated needing to learn the Greek language or other EU language (56%).
- **56%** want to continue their studies in Greece.
- **65%** require for their professional experience, skills and diplomas to be recognised in Greece.
- **82%** need to be employed in a friendly and safe environment.
- **More than 50%** need someone to take care of their children while they are working.
- **52%** agree that is important for them to resolve their legal and/or fiscal issues.
- **42%** need medical or in-kind support (47%) support.
- **53%** need mentoring support work in Greece.

In terms of their requirements for certifications:

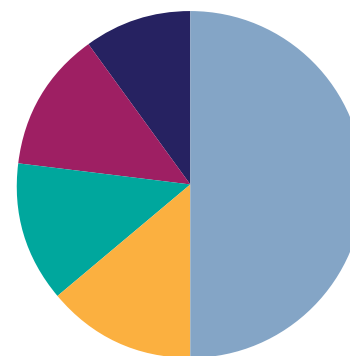


Diagram 10. Certification requirements

- **61%** requested a formal certification/diploma for a specific labour market sector.
- **17%** want to be certified in "Human health and social work activities", linked with medical professions.
- **16%** are interested in the "Accommodation and Food Services sector".
- **16%** in the "Other services sector", linked with personal care professions.
- **12%** want to get a university degree related to the "Professional, scientific, and technical activities sector".

The age of women was associated with their requirements for assistance ($p=0.042$). In the

analysis of their personal characteristics, this relationship is further confirmed, with a significant correlation identified between age and assistance requirements ($F(10, 1.412)=20.502$, $p<0.001$). Notably, women aged between 17-29 years require more assistance.

Summarising the above:

- Women from different nationalities need tailored support to improve their current situation.
- Women from Afghanistan and Middle East and other countries, with lower levels of education, show a lower level of personal status and lower incentives and aspirations for the future.
- African women with lower levels of education have better personal status and plan to improve their personal status in the future.
- Women from Afghanistan, besides their lower personal status and incentives for the future, have a more positive perception of the national labour market reality.
- Ukrainian women do not require the same assistance as the rest of the women.
- Younger women (17-29 years of age) require particular attention and support to join the labour market.
- Women overall are motivated to pursue employment in Greece, yet express reservations with regards to the working conditions offered by the national labour market.

6.3 The macro system of the individual: The impact of the national labour market on migrant women

Regarding the participation of women migrants in the economic sectors, it is noteworthy that 60% of women migrants are engaged in the household sector, followed by 17% in accommodation and food service activities, 7% in manufacturing, 3.5% in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, and 2.7% in wholesale and retail trade. It is also important to acknowledge that the shadow economy in Greece is estimated to account for 30% of the country's GDP. Additionally, Greece faces challenges, including one of the highest rates of uninsured workers at 37% and a significant presence of irregular migrants in the workforce, standing at 4.4%.

In terms of legal provisions, Law 4939/2022, specifically Articles 26 and 57, stipulate complete and automatic access to the labour market for beneficiaries of international protection under the same conditions as for Greek citizens. Specifically, beneficiaries of international protection, who hold the valid residence permit provided for by the relevant authorities, have the right to access dependent work, provide services, work or exercise independent economic activity. Additionally, the same prerequisites incur regarding their access to educational programs related to employment, vocational training, including training courses for upskilling, professional simulation programs and employment support by professionals.

Applicants for international protection, after the lapse of six (6) months of the application for international protection in accordance with the legal provisions in force, if no first instance decision has been provided by the competent Authority and the delay cannot be attributed to them, have right to substantial access to the labour market under the terms and conditions of paragraph 2 of the article 57.

Applicants for international protection are obliged to inform the competent Reception Authority of each start of a profession or of each contract of dependent work that they enter into, by presenting a certificate of commencement of work or a copy of the contract or the recruitment notice to the Public Employment Service (D.YPA.A) or the recruitment announcement at ERGANI. In case of violation of this obligation, Article 61 of the Code applies.

The right to access the labor market is automatically revoked in the event of a negative decision, which does not have a suspensive nature, and the applicants do not have the right to stay in the country.

Additionally, an extra burden is created for refugees attempting to enrol in vocational training programs due to their inability to provide documentation, such as high school degrees or diplomas, to validate their educational backgrounds. Such documentation is often a prerequisite for participation in these programs.

Freedman points out: *"Across many countries women are used to do unpaid and non-formal jobs"*. Additionally, migrant women often end up doing jobs relating to care giving, domestic or the sex industry, such as live-in housemaids, caretakers of elderly people and prostitution. In Greece, caring for the home, children and the elderly are generally perceived as women's role. However, since Greek women increasingly attain diplomas and university degrees, and are employed in the formal sector, there emerges a need in the traditional family roles. The reality is that women's emancipation has not been accompanied by a corresponding shift in domestic responsibilities to men. To address this void, migrant women began entering the informal economy in the late '90s.

Migrant women are disproportionately engaged in part-time, and frequently involuntary, precarious employment. Their roles predominantly involve providing indirect services to individuals, encompassing maternal assistance, caregiving for the elderly, domestic cleaning, and janitorial work, particularly within the Care Sector. Additionally, a significant number of migrant women can be found in service industries, occupying unskilled positions in areas such as catering, hotels, supermarkets, cleaning services, and business-related roles.

This specialisation in employment often places migrant women in vulnerable professional situations, exposing them to higher risks of unemployment. They confront a dual burden of discrimination, both due to their actual or perceived ethnic origin and their gender, within the labour market.

Furthermore, informal employment is widespread, with migrant women engaging in work that is not officially declared or recognised by state authorities. Legal residence and job authorisation are prerequisites for accessing public services, thereby excluding women who do not possess these privileges. Consequently, these women are compelled to resort to informal employment, rendering them susceptible to exploitation and gender-based violence. The fear of legal consequences for their undeclared work can deter them from seeking assistance or reporting abusive situations.

In parallel, highly qualified migrant women often find themselves in occupations that do not align with their educational degrees or diplomas, primarily due to prevailing stereotypes or gaps in legislation regarding the recognition of their qualifications. This mismatch between their skills and job roles further compounds the challenges faced by migrant women in the workforce.

6.3.1. Household and Domestic Activities

The gathered primary data highlights the precarious working conditions faced by migrant women in domestic professions in Greece. Moreover, those involved in this sector often operate within the shadow economy, given, among other facts, that the Household Employer Activities sector constitutes only 1% of employment in the country. These compelling findings underscore the importance of further exploring the distinctive features of this field.

The Greek legal authorities define the housekeeping/domestic work broadly. The definition encompasses both household chores and care work (Court of Cassation, Decision No 1292/2004).

Domestic employees are those who, in the context of a contract of dependent employment, offer their services to the employer and primarily cover the housekeeping or personal needs of the latter, of his/her family or of a third person (Ministry of Labour, document No 40578/898/2.1.2014, section A; author's translation)

Until the mid-20th century, domestic workers were mostly single women with low social status, who moved from rural to urban areas of Greece in order to improve their financial and social situation, occupied in middle- and upper-class households. Domestic labour was viewed mostly as a transit phase in a woman's life rather than a secure choice. There was no motive for women to claim basic labour rights, despite the exploitative working conditions. In the 80s and the 90s, the position of domestic workers significantly improved after profound social changes-along with the rise of the feminist movement- where Greek women joined the formal market. This transition created a labour market gap in the domestic care sector, which was covered by migrant women. The transition contributed to the professionalisation of domestic work on the one hand, but it also fostered the expansion of informal employment on the other, frequently at the risk of labour rights. This argument along with the inadequate/flexible legal

framework to safeguard domestic workers' labour rights, exposed them to job exploitation. Even in situations where migrants managed to pay their insurance obligations, it is not rare for employers to pay less than the actual number of working days or to oblige the migrant to cover the employer's share.

Although the legal framework regarding the rights to employment was not renewed, the legislation for Trafficking in Human Beings has been repeatedly revised to be in line with the international standards (Palermo Protocols, Presidential Decree 233/2003 and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (LAW N. 4251/2014) encountering the Trafficking in Human Beings for employment reasons.

6.3.2 National Labour Market representatives' reflections about migrant women employees

In the context of this study, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were carried out with employability professionals and representatives from sectors of the economy that employ migrant women. The aim was to gain insights into their motivations for hiring migrant women, understand the skills they seek in female employees, and identify potential challenges they encounter.

A questionnaire was administered to eleven (11) private businesses, including two (2) HR agencies. These businesses primarily operate in the dynamic sectors of tourism, manufacturing, and cleaning services. Noteworthy is the prominence of the tourism industry, particularly hotels and hotel groups, which constituted most responses. This underscores a consistent trend of employing migrant women in roles such as room attendants and cleaners within the tourism sector.

Primarily located in the prefecture of Central Macedonia, these businesses revealed a reliance on migrant women, constituting up to 15% of their workforce. The demographic composition leaned towards individuals originating from African countries, Ukraine, and Albania, mostly within the age bracket of 30 to 45 years old, followed by the age group of 46 to 59.

Employers cited several reasons for hiring migrant women, with three prevailing factors: a) the unavailability of Greek nationals to fill these positions, b) the increasing and continuous demand for staffing, especially in the tourism sector and c) a genuine willingness to support this vulnerable group of persons. However, the reasons that they employ women usually interact with each other. Specifically, an employer stated: "Women are usually hired for low-skilled jobs (e.g., cleaners, dishwashers), which are not attractive to Greek nationals, and good knowledge of Greek language is not a prerequisite". Additionally, gender-based prejudice was also recorded, as one employer stated that "women are preferred as they are more reliable and work more efficiently than men. Men are lazy", while another employer stated that "we hire women because there are not many men willing to do this type of work (cleaning). Women are weaker and less resilient". Additionally, employing migrant women in Greece brings different challenges for employers.

Foremost, among these is the language barrier, as many women are not fluent in Greek, hindering effective communication and integration within the workplace. Moreover, bureaucratic procedures and obstacles in issuing formalities and documentation, like AMKA and AMA, pose a significant hurdle for both the employers and the migrant workers. Distinctively, a representative of an HR agency stated that “when a candidate, applying for a position in a hotel, misses a document such as AMA, at the interview stage, employers reject her, as they have no time to wait”. Moreover, challenges of acclimatising to the professional culture have been identified. An indicative incident highlights the struggle – a lady found it perplexing to comprehend the cultural norm of adhering to an 8-hour workday, despite completing her tasks earlier.

Furthermore, the discussion with the employers revealed a prevailing trend that the majority of roles filled by migrant women in Greece demand little to no advanced professional skills for initial employment. When addressing the training needs for these women, employers primarily underscored the importance of language and communication skills. This emphasis reflects the vital role language proficiency plays in overcoming barriers within the workplace. Moreover, while acknowledging the significance of training needs in problem solving, efficiency in work, positive attitudes in the workplace and life skills, the data highlights that employers seemed to indicate a limited demand or relevance for higher level competencies (e.g., management and organisational skills, computer literacy etc.) in the context of the roles filled by migrant women.

Finally, the positive survey outcomes indicate a strong commitment from employers to continue hiring migrant women. The decision to keep this hiring practice is mainly driven by the distinctive disparity between the demand for staffing, especially in the tourism sector, and the limited pool of available workers. Beyond the immediate labour demand, the majority of employers’ statements reflect a commendable sentiment of social responsibility and a willingness to support this vulnerable group. This commitment not only fills a labour void but also contributes to empowering and offering a pathway to dignified jobs for these women, recognising the potential and value they bring to the workforce.

Summarising the findings:

- Migrant women experience a twofold bias related to their gender and ethnicity.
- Legislation does not promote the recognition of their skills, qualifications, and diplomas.
- High qualified women undertake low skilled jobs.
- Migrant women with no documentation are led to take on informal jobs leading to irregular jobs out with fear of losing their legal rights.
- Learning Greek is significant to overcome barriers faced in the workplace.
- Employers require little or no advanced professional skills by the migrant women.
- Greek women do not respond to job openings requiring little or no advanced professional skills; hence migrant women undertake these jobs.

6.4 Migrant women’s professional qualifications and skills

Empirical research underscores the circumstances in which these women are subjected to “brain waste.” This phenomenon is often intensified by prevailing societal biases that lead to the devaluation of their skills, known as “skills discounting”. These women thus experience a twofold discrimination which consist of their gender and their ethnicity.

A UNDP research study covering 85% of the population worldwide found a positive correlation between the gender gap and GSNI (Gender Social Norms Index) value in regard to the time spent on unpaid domestic chores and care work, enhancing the argument that social norms bias the development of women’s agency. Women spend more time in domestic chores compared to men rather than in the development of their professional capabilities.

“Agency is central to human development. It stands apart from wellbeing achievements and wellbeing freedoms, two other dimensions of the human capability approach, by focusing on the freedom to do and achieve what people regard as important or what they, as responsible agents, have reason to value.”

However, social norms can alter positively. Steps towards this direction are implemented globally through private businesses and civil society organisations running tailored projects for the target group.

Building upon these arguments, we will delve into the employment background of these women, as well as the skills that they have acquired both in their countries of origin and in Greece. This examination aims to reveal potential disparities, shedding light on the issues of “brain waste” and “skills discounting”, which, in turn, underscore persistent social norms against migrant women.

Indicatively, 41% of the participants have completed post-secondary to tertiary education most of them with studies, between others, in the fields of Professional, scientific and technical activities (28), Financial and insurance activities (11), Education (10) and Human health and social work activities (7) which are related to skilled jobs. Therefore, at first glance many women seem to have the relevant expertise to add value to the national labour market.

The professional experience of the participants is classified according to the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC).

Previous employment experiences of participants are shared across a range of labour market sectors. The predominant occupation in their countries of origin was within the “Other service activities” category, including professions involving personal care services, such as hairdressing and beautician services. Approximately 17% of these individuals were engaged in this particular sector, while 12% were occupied in the “Accommodation and food service activities”

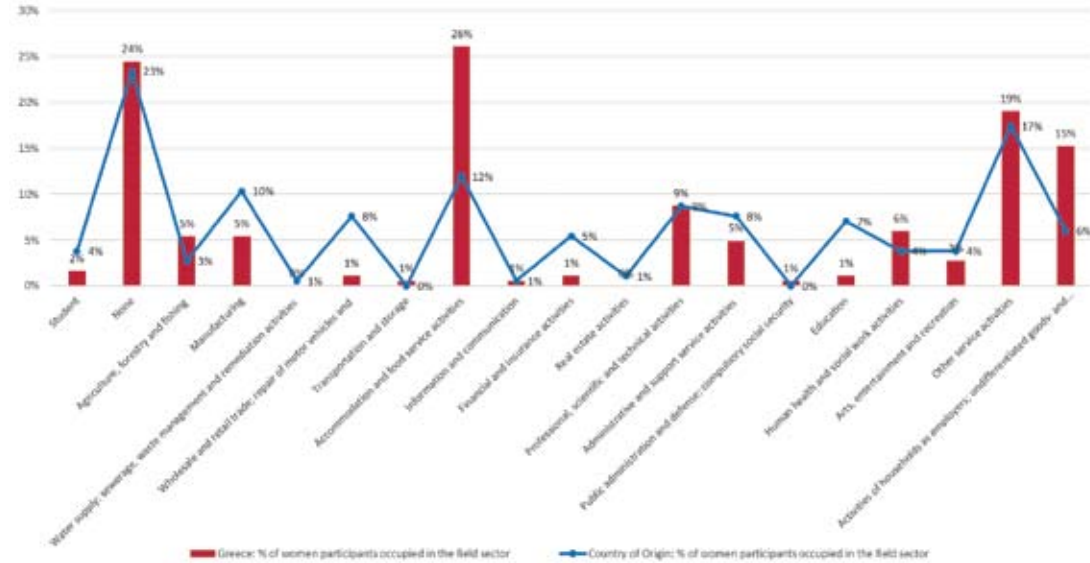


Diagram 11. Professional occupations of migrant women in their country of origin and in Greece

sector, which includes roles related to customer service and tourism-related positions and 6% concentrates in the sector of “Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods – and services-producing activities of household for own use in domestic care positions”.

It is noteworthy that 24% of the participants reported unemployment in their countries of origin whereas the rest (76%) were employed. Few female participants who didn’t manage to finish their educational aspirations aged 17 – 29 years old are included in the unemployed percentage of women. Additionally, 9% of individuals holding university degrees already practised their expertise in the “Professional, scientific, and technical activities” sector.

In the case of Greece, the most prevalent sector for women of refugee and migrant background to be working, is tourism-related occupations, with the “Accommodation and food services activities” sector constituting 26% of the participants’ occupations. Approximately 19% of the participants were involved in personal care occupations, falling under the “Other service activities” sector. Additionally, 15% were employed in the “Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods – and services-producing activities of household for own use” sector, which includes domestic care occupations.

Remarkably only, 35% of female migrant participants were employed in their home country in the “Accommodation and food services activities”, “Other service activities” and the “Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods – and services-producing activities of household for own use” sectors. In contrast, in Greece, this percentage almost doubles, accounting for 60%. The initial analysis indicates that women who were occupied in different

sectors in their country-of-origin transition to other sectors in Greece, where there is a labour market gap, but which are characterised by precarious working conditions.

While this alone does not conclusively prove the “**brain waste**” or “**skills discounting**” argument, when considered alongside the unique characteristics of these sectors, the fact that 50% were engaged in irregular work, and the finding that only 42.4% believe that employers respect or will respect their cultural differences, it suggests that these phenomena are indeed confirmed. Migrant women appear to be more vulnerable to exploitation, especially when employers require little or minimum skills for employment. It is crucial to pay special attention to the fact that many of them grapple with feelings related to the Ulysses syndrome on a daily basis, adding an extra and serious burden to their everyday life, including their professional decisions.

Civil Society Organisations, through diverse programs facilitated by employability professionals, offer tailored employability support to these women. Often, these services provide a level of protection by mediating in the hiring process and offering post-employment support. A notable 50.5% of the female participants in the study have been guided by employability professionals.

The majority do not consider any occupation as unfavourable given their personal circumstances. However, 30% of women consider occupations related to cleaning services as unfavourable, irrespective of the field sector—whether domestic, tourism, or elsewhere.

However, the potential of these women is shaped by their skills and experience, along with the value that they articulate in those aspects.

WOMEN ASSESSED THEIR LEVEL OF SKILLS IN A 5-SCALE WHERE:

- 1= Not acquired
- 2= Beginner
- 3= Competent
- 4= Proficient
- 5= Expert.

Skills were defined according to the comprehensive list of the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations project of the European Commission.

Framing the employment background of female participants with their skills, women assess themselves more than competent (mean=3.51) to respond to the challenges encountered in the job market.

The majority demonstrate a willingness to learn (89%), maintaining a positive attitude (90%) to work efficiently (88%) utilising their social and communication skills and/or life skills and

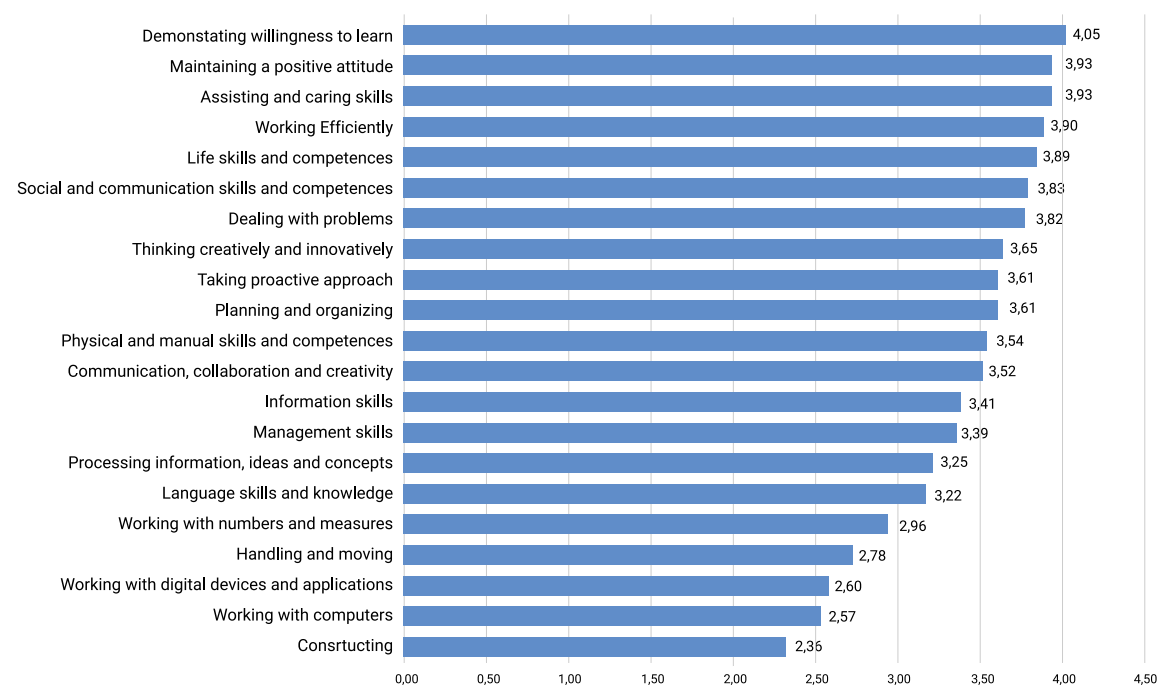


Diagram 12. Skills assessment of migrant women

competences (89%), acting proactively when required (80.4%) once they encounter problems (87%). They demonstrate planning and organisational skills (81.5%) using their physical and manual skills (76.6%) and/or assisting and caring skills (88.6%). The skills that are outstanding to those women are skills which could relate to a wide range of professions but also they represent skills which indicate increased resilience.

The skills which rank lowest are those requiring physical strength (constructing, handling and moving), digital skills (working with computers, working with digital devices and applications) and numeracy skills (working with numbers and measures). Notably, between those skills are the language skills and knowledge (mean=3.22) which is aligned to our findings regarding their level of knowledge of Greek language (19.6%) or other EU languages whilst 70% believe that it is important to speak the Greek or other EU language in Greece to secure employment. Additionally 46.7% declare to be computer literate and they assess their computer skills lower (mean=2.57). However, this also indicates that skills which are in demand by the national labour market need to be upscaled in order to increase opportunities to join the labour market.

Migrant women with lower levels of education validate their skills to be lower than women with increased levels of education. Women from the Ukraine rate their skills above the average (mean=3.77) than the rest of the women from Afghanistan, African and Middle East and other countries. Women from Afghanistan are the second which is remarkable considering that they show the lowest incentive and their personal state is deprived/underprivileged compared to the other women.

Through this survey the respondent employers were requested to rate the level of training requirements for the above skills for the migrant women employees. The findings indicate that employers require migrant women to have little to no professional skills. Therefore, women who assess their skills as more than competent are engaged in jobs where those skills are not utilised, not relevant or even not a prerequisite.

Summarising the professional experience and the skills of migrant women:

- More than 60% of migrant women are experienced in economic sectors with questionable working conditions.
- Women have skills that are related to a range of professions.
- Women wish a recognition of their skills, qualifications and diplomas and to get a certification in certain economic sectors.
- Highly qualified Ukrainian women validate their skills as higher compared to those with lower levels of education.
- Brain waste and skills discounting phenomena are confirmed by the information collected.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Gender equality is a fundamental human right that as a concept is at the center of interest globally from several actors (public authorities, unions, associations, NGOs etc). According to an Active Citizens Fund report 2022, gender equality is required for the society and the economy if sustainable development is to be achieved. Policy makers on gender equality refer to efforts addressing gender equality in representation and participation, attitudes towards gender equality, access to resources, rights, norms and values regardless of gender or gender identity as way to achieve this.

Certain NGOs have an extensive experience in supporting the most vulnerable population, and migrant women in particular, promoting their human rights and contributing toward the alteration of social norms which bias women's agency. Indicative is the contribution of **SolidarityNow**, which provides employability support through an array of projects since 2018 in the urban and rural areas of Northern and Southern Greece with many individuals securing employment through this intervention. **CRS and Caritas** also provide employability support in Athens and have built the Adama jobs matching platform in collaboration with UNHCR. Furthermore, **ActionAid** through "INTERNISA" project which aims to support young women 18-35 years old in their effort to find educational opportunities and work and more widely through Epikentro – a service provision, and activity centre in the centre of Athens. **Diotima** with "All Safe II" support women survivors of gender-based violence and live in the regions of Attica and Central Macedonia finding employment in Greece. **G2.ORED** through the project "Workplaces-

Workplaces Working for Women Integration” supporting holistically women towards employment and **Odyssea** through an array of programs providing tailored activities to individuals, including vocational trainings and entrepreneurship. **European Public Law Organisation** in the framework of the Erasmus+ project “Voices of Migrant Women made several policy recommendations related the matter of employment of migrant women in Greece. The policy paper recommends through nine (9) policy measures what would enhance the feeling of belonging of TCN women into the Greek society with a focus on collaboration and intervention to educational institutions. The material is available online through the site viw.pixel-online.org. **The Municipality of Athens** under the ENFEM project reported on a set of key findings and good practices through transnational research: “Needs analysis and community based socioeconomic ecosystem mapping” with a focus on the educational needs and challenges that all stakeholders (TCN women, private employers, public authorities, chamber of commerce) face in the integration of TCN women.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Moving forward, based on the findings outlined in this report, we adopt the recommendation of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) for the recognition of skills of migrant workers. Cedefop in the report “How to facilitate the recognition of skills of migrant workers” presents the Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) method as a key method with a potential for positive impact on migrant worker and employers.

RPL is a process identifying, documenting, assessing, and certifying formal, informal and non-formal learning outcomes against standards used in formal education and training.

In this report, seven benefits are identified for both counterparts. RPL method provides an opportunity for people to acquire qualifications, or credits for qualification, or exemptions (of all or part of the curriculum, or even exemption of academic pre-requisites to enter a formal study program) without going through a formal education or training program, in order to ease their employment pathways with their skills recognised.

The RPL method defines four phases of validation of the skills of migrant including several actors, which are:

1. Identification
2. Documentation
3. Assessment and
4. Certification

Additionally, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has released extensive guidelines on

the measurement of skill and qualification mismatches among individuals in employment. These guidelines define the elements of skill and qualification mismatches as well as the monitoring tools that can be used to detect them.

Recognising prior learning and measuring skill and qualification mismatches necessitates multiple synergies among different actors (CSOs, National Organisation of Employment-DYPA and State Ministry), while also allocating resources in the long term to be implemented as well as monitor the achievements and their impact on individuals.

Furthermore, through capacity-building activities, the synergies between NGOs and private sector businesses would promote the diversity in the workplace, as NGOs have extensive experience in supporting migrant population of multiple characteristics, safeguarding their human rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Findings revealed that migrant women expressed limited trust to the working conditions that the national labour market and its representatives provide. Future endeavors could research issues related to their protection and security in workplaces.
- Findings revealed that migrant women want to study in Greece or complete their studies in Greece and most importantly the majority want to learn the Greek or another EU language to become employed in Greece. Hence, future research could explore on the appropriate means migrant women use to be further educated.
- Findings focus on persons eligible to work with most of them being seekers or beneficiaries of international protection without focusing on the most vulnerable ones, the undocumented. Supplementing with the finding that half of the participants were engaged in undeclared jobs, future research could focus on people with precarious legal conditions, hence undocumented or with negative asylum decisions etc.
- Findings reveal that migrant women gained professional experience and skills in their home country connected to the professional culture of the sector in the country of origin. Through this study it was not surveyed if those professional backgrounds and skills are aligned culturally with the national ones. Research could search for this matter in the future.

CONCLUSION

SN in respect with its Strategy 2023-2025 and the engagement adhered to all its stakeholders to support them effectively, designed an empirical study in 2022 drawing on its extensive experience supporting migrant women who want to integrate into the national labour market. This empirical study focused throughout all its steps, from the design to implementation, on the individuals, shedding light on the core elements that play a significant role towards their integration in the workforce.

The study incorporated four key monitoring activities: a) a thorough literature review to delve into employment experiences of migrant women in Greece, b) Four Focus Group Discussions engaging 31 migrant women in Thessaloniki, Ritsona and Malakasa LTAC who provided their invaluable insights about the national labour market, c) Two interviews with Employability project coordinators shedding light, through their experiences with migrant women and businesses and d) Eleven (11) phone interviews with employers in Central Macedonia sharing their reasoning on employing migrant women.

These activities structured a questionnaire which examined five factors. Each factor was examined by a set of questions. These factors measured the a) personal attributes of migrant women in Greece, professional experience in Greece and their home country and their skills, their b) aspirations for future employment in Greece, their c) perceptions of national labour market based on their experiences, d) barriers they encounter searching for employment and e) future assistance requirements to progress in Greek employment.

The findings of the 184 migrant women surveyed underscore that stakeholders should focus on the personal characteristics of migrant women searching for job. Notably, migrant women from the same origin exhibit similarities in personal attributes, future aspirations, perceptions, encountered barriers and assistance requirements related to the national labour market. Despite possessing professional skills and qualifications aligned with the national labour market, many are occupied in low-skilled jobs and certain times working under precarious working conditions. Employers reassure this argument who indicate minimal skill requirements for these positions. Remarkably, findings reveal that high skilled women require specialised support to avoid the phenomenon of 'brain waste' or 'skills discounting'. Younger women, between 17 – 29 years old, not having completed their educational or professional dreams in their home countries as they were forced to live, require additional attention.

Indicatively, 95% of women recognise the imperative need to learn the Greek language in order to enter in the national labour market with only 19% speaking Greek. Additionally, 74% aim to work in Greece to support their families while 20% explore entrepreneurial ventures and more than 52% seek mentoring support. A substantial 65% sought recognition of their professional experience, certificates and diplomas in Greece while 63% expressed the need to study in Greece to find work in a friendly and safe working environment in sectors such as human health.

In terms of professional experience and skills acquired in their home country 76% have gained professional experience. 35% of female migrant participants were employed in their home country in the "Accommodation and food services activities", "Other service activities" and the "Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods – and services-producing activities of household for own use" sectors whilst in Greece, these sectors concentrate 60% of female respondents. The initial analysis indicates that women who were occupied in different sectors in their country-of-origin transit to other sectors in Greece, characterised by precarious working conditions. The majority of the respondents acquire professional skills invaluable to the national labour market (mean=3.5/5).

On the contrary, only 42% believe employers would respect their culture with 35% doubting the recognition of their professional certificates and skills in Greece whereas 72% of respondents, primarily single mothers, faced challenges finding suitable childcare while working.

It must be noted that more than 53% of women experience feelings or thoughts of anxiety, stress, insomnia, excessive worry, tension, depression, fear, fatigue, gastric pain, sadness, bone pain, low self-esteem almost daily. **These compelling insights underscore the urgent need for targeted intervention and support mechanisms to address multifaceted challenges faced by migrant women in Greece.**

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