**Final Report (FU)**

**Migrant women in Spain**

INTRODUCTION

The PAL WOMEN project considers entrepreneurship as an effective strategy for women to enter and remain on the labour market. Under the project, Florida Universitaria focuses on a specific target group: migrant women aged from 31 to 45 years old within the Valencian Community. The fact of having experienced a migration process usually takes form of discrimination with regard to access to the labour market, salary and fair labour conditions. In a similar way it occurs in gender and age terms. The risk of unemployment increases, and life opportunities decreases at the same time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As an imposed period of inactivity of labour force, unemployment is one of the causes of poverty and exclusion (Gil, Mar 4th 2019; McConell, Brue & Macpherson, 2007; Herrador Buendía, 2002). At the same time, it is one of the enemies of the Welfare State, which is aimed at solving collective situations and problems for the benefit of society as a whole and the equal opportunities for all (García Cotarelo, 1987). Safeguarding the Social Welfare is one of the reasons why we all should fight social exclusion and unemployment (and long-term unemployment particularly[[1]](#footnote-1)) (Herrador Buendía, 2002).

Generally speaking, unemployment is an economic and social matter (Herrador Buendía, 2002). It involves a waste of human resources, potential, and talent, at the cost of the country’s growth. At the same time, it has negative consequences on the unemployed person, in a broad sense. We are talking about circumstances in which it is not possible for the unemployed person to cover and satisfy their family and personal needs. In parallel, this situation may lead them to have more possibilities to be socially excluded, with all the consequences that would entail (Herrador Buendía, 2002).

Despite the large amount of different social groups considered as population at risk of unemployment, social and labour exclusion, for the purposes of this report, we will focus on migrant women coming from other countries and currently living in Spain, with special emphasis on the Valencian Community. In Spain, being a woman usually involves having less opportunities in terms of access to the labour market, salary and fair labour conditions. According to data from the Statistical National Institute, from 2009 to 2018, the risk of poverty in Spain has increased, and there is usually a significant difference in favour of men as a tendency.

According to Llano Ortíz (2019), unemployment rate (and part-time employment rate) in Spain has been traditionally higher for women than for men, which is a clear indicator of gender discrimination. In 2018, 17’02% of women were in a situation of unemployment. Instead, 13’72% of men were in the same situation. In parallel, part-time employment was more common among women (24%) than among men (6’8%). As for salaries, women are still paid less than men, according to the 2014 Wage Structure four-yearly Survey (Oct 28th 2016). Salary gap reaches 14’02% in favour of men. Particularly in the Valencian Community, from 2008 to 2017, the figures show a similar situation. There is a salary gap of about 4.500 euros in favour of men throughout the whole period contemplated. A survey with open-ended questions was used to delve into the questions, and one of the respondents underlined the impact of the patriarchal society:

I think that the main difficulty is the fact of being subjected to a patriarchal culture, which confines them in their domestic and family environment, so when the husband is unemployed, or they separate, and need to start working, they find many difficulties because of the language, since they have not been related to native people in all that time. (S1)

As far as a situation of migration is considered[[2]](#footnote-2), about two thirds of foreign women stay in Andalucía (12%), Valencian Community (15%), Community of Madrid (21%) and Catalonia (22%). The Valencian Community gathers both migration of residential nature and migration related to employment reasons. It is a region which is an attraction for residential tourism and people looking for employment related to the tourism it generates. In 2007, 58% of migrant women living in Spain was not yet 35 years (En Red Consultoría, 2009, based on figures from the Municipal Register the National Statistical Institute led in 2007). As for their level of education, in 2007, 34% of migrant women had achieved secondary education, and 20% of them, even higher education. At the same time: “Generally speaking, there are no great variations between the sexes, if any, indicating a higher level of education among women. It is significant that among the illiterate population, the percentage of men is twice that of women” (En Red Consultoría, 2009).

Stereotypes play an important role in employability, according to the following respondent:

Stereotypes are a serious difficulty that often prevent them from accessing a job, either because of the prejudices of the recruiter, or because of what he thinks a potential client or supplier of the company will have. In addition, stereotypes and prejudices undermine their self-confidence in approaching the difficulties of an active job search process. (S3)

There are worrying figures in terms of salary and access to employment in Spain and in the Valencian Community. The Table 1 shows the wage distribution by gender and nationality in 2014 in Spain.

**TABLE 1. Wage distribution by gender and nationality in 2014. Spain**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Both genders** | **Women** | **Men** |
| **Spain** | 23.237,94 | 20.038,72 | 26.234,90 |
| **UE except Spain** | 20.327,65 | 16.911,69 | 23.419,20 |
| **Rest of Europe** | -15.147,39 | -12.122,48 | -19.432,43 |
| **Latin America** | 14.714,46 | 12.831,05 | 16.155,88 |
| **Rest of the world** | 14.720,89 | -12.170,27 | 15.631,83 |

\* When having a negative sign (-) before the figure, it indicates that the number of sample observations ranges from 100 to 500, which means that the figure is unreliable and should be considered with caution.

Source: 2014 Wage Structure four-yearly Survey, Statistical National Institute (Spain)

According to the Labour Force Survey led by the Statistical National Institute from 2009 to 2019, within the Valencian Community, from 2013 to 2019 the unemployment rate of migrant people has decreased, but it is still specially high for women coming from other European Union (EU) countries (25%, which means 14% more than men coming from the EU), and also for women coming from outside the EU (27%, which means 10% more than men coming from outside the EU).

Rodríguez Fernández (2011) states that regulating their situation and finding a job are the main problems led by migrants when reaching Spain. Not all the possible measures to prevent and overcome a situation of unemployment are under the control of migrant women. One of the strategies hold by them is related to entrepreneurship, despite the difficulties:

[We can find, among the difficulties associated with entrepreneurship,] a low knowledge of the cultural reality, a lack of knowledge for the management of a business, difficulties in taking advantage of the existing aid network, lack of personal skills linked to empowerment, and also sometimes linguistic competence is a problem. (S3)

In spite of the difficulties, there is a greater social integration among migrant people when creating their own business, according to Pérez Yruela y Rinken (2005), Observatorio Argos (2009), En Red Consultoría (2009), and Rodríguez Fernández (2011). Entrepreneurship provides more effective strategies to enter and remain on the labour market. In Spain, and also within the Valencian Community, setting up a business is more and more frequent among migrant people. This kind of strategies among migrant women has not been sufficiently studied and documented as a social phenomenon (Moreras, 1999; Solé & Parella, 2005; Tomás López, 2016), but it has an important role to play in terms of empowerment of migrant women, upward social mobility, equal opportunities, personal, professional, and social development.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Based on literature review, a survey was prepared to be filled up by experts working in the target group. It aimed at gathering information, anonymously, about institutions and organizations working for social inclusion and especially with migrant women. The ultimate goal was to understand better the situation of these women, gather good practices, and explore the difficulties encountered and entrepreneurial actions as a way of accessing the labour market.

The survey, finally answered by a total of 51 people, covers a large variety of respondents in terms of age, level of education, field of work… but the majority of participants is aged from 30 to 59 years old, have a University degree, are social educators, social workers or employment consultants, and mostly work in social sector with some experience in migrant women from 31 to 45 years old. Particularly, most of the participants report to have less than one year of experience within this area, including the field of entrepreneurship.

According to most of the experts surveyed, between 1 and 10% of migrant women aged 31 to 45 choose to take entrepreneurial activities and set up their own business. Many of the migrant enterprising women come from Latin America (Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia…) but also from North Africa and Eastern Europe.

There are many difficulties with which migrant women have to deal. They make more difficult to perform entrepreneurial actions. A general lack of economic resources to invest, contact network or empowerment would be some of the reasons why many migrant women usually reject this kind of actions. It includes a variety of aspects that should be taken into consideration: a lack of savings, or the impossibility of combining the enterprise with work for others. As women, they often cope with gender discrimination, and have a real need to reconcile working and family life.

If starting a business is complicated when you are a woman, it is even harder when you are a migrant. The possibilities of starting any initiative are further reduced. As migrant, there are difficulties in terms of social integration. They may not have a proper knowledge of the Spanish labor market or the language. Without a strong knowledge of the language it is very difficult for them to entrepreneur or work, and their social network may also be insufficient.

The vast majority of experts surveyed believe that migrant women aged 31-45 lack the opportunity to obtain financing because they are migrants. On the contrary, they should be given more opportunities to start their own business.

All these barriers often overcome migrant women’s needs and qualities such as creativity, activeness when looking for a job, dedication to work, discipline, ability to plan short-term and long-term goals… It would probably be beneficial for migrant women to have more examples of women who were successful in terms of entrepreneurship (real stories of success), as this would improve their own expectations of success and self-confidence, but entrepreneurship is not something accessible to all women. In many cases, it does not matter so much what skills, knowledge or talent they have when there are many other factors beyond their control. Entrepreneurship always carries a high risk that not all migrant women can take.

According to the survey, the best thing that can be done to help migrant women develop entrepreneurial activities is to train them in this area, in addition to creating policies that are particularly aimed at improving their opportunities for entrepreneurship (policies that include active discrimination programs), and to raise awareness among stakeholders who support entrepreneurial activities of migrant women, in this case, aged 31-45.

In general terms, between the competencies and characteristics that would have to develop the immigrant women to initiate themselves in the enterprise, are the persistence, the capacity of resolution of problems, the emotional intelligence, the critical decision making, the critical thought, the reflective capacity of analysis, the planning and management of the time, the capacity to value the viability of a business and its possibilities of development, or the leadership. It is also important that they acquire experience in the sector in which they want to start up, as well as financial knowledge and vision of the future.

The experts surveyed suggest that, in order to achieve the development of these competencies and skills, organizations dedicated to this sector of the population should provide them with training material on social networks or websites, hold public seminars, share motivational videos on social networks and on the personal web, etc.

Most experts believe that the Government does not provide enough facilities for migrant women between the ages of 31 and 45 to set up their own business. Policies would be effective in getting migrant women between the ages of 31 and 45 to seriously consider starting their own business should include: Financial assistance; support from experts and other entrepreneurs; reduction of administrative bureaucracy; reduction in fees and taxes for the creation of their businesses; access to credit or financial microcredit; recognition of their qualifications (homologation of diplomas); or the creation of programmes to promote entrepreneurship among low-income women, since this is the situation experienced by the majority of immigrant women. At the same time, it would be highly beneficial to accompany and advise these women in their ideas, as well as to bet on their economic and social autonomy. This would mean studying their projects and supporting them financially so that they could have a real work-life balance appropriate to their needs. Finally, the experts surveyed believe that it would be necessary, at the same time, to make migrant women more visible as a factor of economic development for the country and as generators of employment and self-employment.

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1. According to OCDE (1988), long-term unemployment refers to a situation in which a person is unemployed and looking for a job for one year or more (p. 169). It is both a problem to deal with and a challenge at the same time, as Herrador Buendía (2002) says. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Many migrants fall outside the official statistics” (Domingo Pérez & Viruela Martínez, 1999). In spite of this, according to the National Immigrant Survey led by the Statistical National Institute in 2007, about 290.000 migrants arrived in the Valencian Community from 2002 to 2007. Most of them were from Latin American and Eastern Europe. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)