



GENDER AND RACE STEREOTYPES ERADICATION
IN LABOR MARKET ACCESS

GRASE



Effective strategies to fight race and gender stereotypes in career counselling services

GRASE Toolkit



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Authorship & Disclaimer

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The Toolkit is the result of a shared effort of the project's Steering Group and Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini and has been edited by Fondazione ISMU. The content of the present Toolkit represents the views of the authors and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains. The GRASE Project's Steering Group and Board of Experts are the only responsible for the final content, words and phrases used.

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The GRASE Project

GRASE stands for “Gender and Race Stereotypes Eradication in Labour Market Access” and is a 2-year project (2021-2022), funded under the European Union’s Rights, Equality & Citizenship program which addresses the double discrimination faced by migrant women in their access to employment, through the adoption of a truly intersectional approach. GRASE focuses on facilitating the access of women with a migratory background to the labour market by reducing the barriers they may find in career counselling services systems.

To reach this objective, GRASE combined **expert knowledge**, through the involvement of antidiscrimination specialists and researchers working on gender, race and migration, as well as **practical knowledge**, by activating three Communities of Practice with career counselling professionals in Italy, Spain and Portugal – three countries where women and migrants varyingly face barriers in the access to the labour market.

The final goal of the project is to contribute to **reduce gender and race gaps** in migrant women’s participation in the labour market, with a view to provide full implementation of the principle of non-discrimination, heralded in the European legislative framework as one of its core elements, and enshrined also in the Constitutions and the laws of Italy, Spain and Portugal – the three countries where the project was implemented.

The project produced three Toolkits to fight the reproduction of bias and stereotypes against women with a migratory background: “Effective strategies to fight race and gender stereotypes in career counselling services” (**Toolkit 1**), “Raising awareness against gender and race stereotypes in recruitment: training for career counselling professionals” (**Toolkit 2**); “AI-based gender and race/origin bias detection toolkit” (**Toolkit 3**).

For a detailed description of GRASE’s approach and products, please refer to the project’s Website.

Go!

“Overcome the stereotype: Be open to the unexpected!”



“Overcome the stereotype: Be open to the unexpected!”

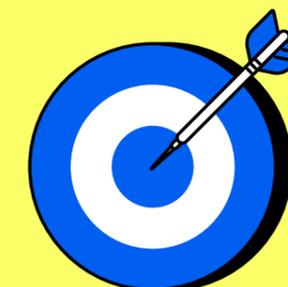


Objective of the Toolkit

GRASE’s overall objective is to fight the reproduction of gender and race stereotypes of which migrant women may suffer when seeking guidance from career counselling services to access the labour market. The present Toolkit focuses on career counselling services and on their daily work practices, to **increase awareness of how gender and race stereotypes get wittingly and unwittingly reproduced**, thereby enhancing their capability to properly recognize and assess migrant’s women skills and potential. This is expected to reduce forms of double discrimination, ensure fairer selection processes and remove significant obstacles in migrant women’s access to employment – ultimately supporting migrant women’s effective integration into receiving countries’ societies.

Target of Toolkit

This Toolkit targets **career counselling professionals**. It aims to enhance their competences by valorising their unique position as “**hubs**” of information and as privileged standpoints able to guide migrant women to find jobs that better correspond to their skills. Instead of looking at migrants’ presumed “deficiencies” as responsible for their difficult integration in the labour market, GRASE looks at how the receiving society may unwittingly pose barriers to their integration, by unconsciously reproducing stereotypes and biases. Therefore, this Toolkit supports career counselling professionals in “overturning their perspective” about their own behaviour, to help them identify how they can become even more inclusive by providing concrete solutions and suggestions.



Why this Toolkit?

This Toolkit presents effective strategies to counter the reproduction of race and gender stereotypes in the daily work practice of career counselling professionals. These contents are based on the practical knowledge and experience of career counselling professionals, which GRASE collected by activating a **Community of Practice (COP) in three countries - Italy, Spain and Portugal** - involving professionals who work in private and public career counselling services, including services aimed at the general population and services aimed at disadvantaged groups (migrants, women).

The professionals involved in the COPs reflected about how they may, wittingly or unwittingly, associate migrant women to a series of stereotypes in their day-to-day work, which, in turn, could prevent professionals from providing effective advice to migrant women, guiding them to low-quality and low-paid jobs, that do not necessarily correspond to the actual skills and potentials of migrant women. 97 career counselling professionals across Italy, Spain and Portugal contributed to inform the contents of this Toolkit, which have been tested by 30 professionals in the three countries. The present version incorporates the feedback collected during the testing phase.

The Toolkit is based on one main assumption, concerning the **central role** that the **career guidance professional** may play in regards not only to the provision of *advice on jobs and labour market*, but also to the provision of *essential information* that can help migrant women to better integrate, making the difference in their empowerment, and, ultimately, in finding a job that is aligned to their skills and aspirations. The career counselling professional may indeed act as a **hub of information** that can help the woman orientate in the receiving society at large. In this regard, not only access to information is essential, but this information should not be opaque. Migrants need to be provided with clear and objective information about their rights, which should be delivered with comprehensible and concise language. Migrants also need to be made aware about the institutions where they can report discrimination.

Thus, the career counselling must be able to **identify the possible obstacles** that migrant women may face and, at the same time, must be reflexive, to **acknowledge and go beyond his / her own usual stereotypes**: awareness about these two sets of issues – the migrants woman's *obstacles* and one's own *stereotypes* - can lead the professional to offer the best support to the migrant woman. What is crucial to grasp is that the professional may indeed see “real” or “objective” problems in the situation of the migrant woman that he / she is advising - however, he / she may respond to that problem with a stereotype, therefore providing the wrong answer to her needs.

“She is not bound to work in the care sector. Would you ever imagine she could work in other sectors?”



“Would you ever imagine she could be a great data analyst?”

The reflections conducted by the three Communities of Practice activated in Italy, Spain and Portugal highlighted specific challenges based on the participants' experiences and related to each national context. More specifically:

- **With regards to Italy in particular**, the Italian Community of Practice identified some critical areas where these obstacles and stereotypes can be found – namely concerning barriers related to child-bearing and family relations, the educational background and previous work experiences, as well as the support network and the knowledge of the culture of the receiving country, also in terms of institutional and legislative culture. Moreover, participants emphasized that career counselling professionals need to enhance their active listening and empathy, as key skills that enable the overcoming of implicit bias.
- **With regards to Spain in particular**, the Spanish Community of Practice participants identified the precarious job market for migrant women that exists in Spain as a major barrier. The caregiving sector is feminized and racialized, mostly covered by migrant women with different levels of training. Two main causes of this problem were identified. Firstly, the difficulties migrant women meet at validating their professional qualifications in Spain, a process that stretches over time. Due to the job seekers' state of need, they accept less qualified jobs, giving up their applications. Secondly, the employment system at the national level tends to fit racialized migrant women into the care market, regardless their validation or previous knowledge. Lastly, the Community of Practice analysed how such issues can be turned into opportunities, by valorising the very set of skills that a migrant woman can develop through her experience of migration and recognizing that those skills are the most requested competencies in today's labour market.
- **With regards to Portugal in particular**, the Portuguese Community of Practice highlighted the need to distinguish between what are subjective beliefs, or judgmental behaviours, that lead to valuing or undervaluing people, more specifically migrant women, based on their identity markers, and what are 'objective' skills to value and look for in the job candidates, and how to identify those features. During the discussions, participants pointed out the wrong perceptions that the general population has towards people with migrant backgrounds, which is enhanced by the educational system, and the impact those stereotypes and prejudices have in the recruitment processes, such as leading to precarious jobs for overqualified job seekers.



Glossary

This Glossary provides an overview of the terminology and of the approach used by GRASE. It aims at helping the reader navigate the contents of the present Toolkit. Terms are listed under four main topics: “stereotypes”, “discrimination”, “bias”, “diversity, race, ethnicity and gender”.

STEREOTYPES

Compounded stereotypes	Generalised view or preconception about groups that results from the ascription of attributes, characteristics or roles based on one or more grounds.
Gender stereotypes	Preconceived ideas whereby females and males are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their gender. Gender stereotyping can limit the development of the natural talents and abilities of girls and boys, women and men, as well as their educational and professional experiences and life opportunities in general. Stereotypes about women both result from, and are the cause of, deeply engrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices against women. Stereotypes can be both hostile and explicitly negative (e.g. women are irrational) or seemingly benign (e.g. women are nurturing) – both kinds, though, can produce harmful effects, which justify and maintain the historical relations of power of men over women as well as sexist attitudes that hold back the advancement of women.
Judicial stereotyping	Practice of judges ascribing to an individual specific attributes, characteristics or roles on the sole basis of her or his membership of a particular social group. It also refers to the practice of judges perpetuating harmful stereotypes through their failure to challenge stereotypes.
Racial / ethnic stereotypes	Stereotype is a generalized perception ascribing particular traits, characteristics, values, aspect, appearance or behaviour to a group or a member of a group without regard to accuracy or applicability (Corsini, 2016) . Racial / ethnic stereotypes are reflexive and exaggerated mental pictures that we hold about all members of a particular racial / ethnic group. These stereotypes are so rigid, we tend to ignore or discard any information that is not consistent with the stereotype that we have developed about the racial / ethnic group (University of Notre Dame, 2020) .

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination against women	Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex and gender that has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, and on a basis of equality between women and men, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. Discrimination can stem from law (de jure) or from practice (de facto). The CEDAW Convention recognises and addresses both forms of discrimination, whether contained in laws, policies, procedures or practice.
Direct discrimination	Discrimination occurring where one person is treated less favourably on grounds such as sex and gender, age, nationality, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, health, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation.
Indirect discrimination	Discrimination occurring where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of one sex at a particular disadvantage compared with persons of the other sex, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim, and the means for achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.
Intersectional discrimination	Discrimination that takes place on the basis of several personal grounds or characteristics / identities (sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.) which operate and interact with each other at the same time in such a way as to be inseparable.
Sex- and gender-based discrimination	Discrimination occurring due to interaction between sex (as the biological characteristics of women and men) and their socially constructed identities, attributes and roles and society’s social and cultural meaning for biological differences between women and men. Such interactions result in hierarchical and unequal relations and roles between and among women and men, and a disadvantaged social positioning of women. The social positioning of women and men is affected by political, economic, cultural, social, religious, ideological and environmental factors, and can be changed over time.
Racial / ethnic discrimination	Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. (Art. 1.1 of the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination).

BIAS

Implicit bias	Behaviours by which people act on the basis of prejudice and stereotypes without intending to do so and without consciously recognizing their bias. These behaviours display a bias – i.e. rather than being neutral, they show a preference for (or an aversion to) a person or a group of people. However, this bias is present but not consciously held or recognized, meaning we are unaware of them or mistaken about their nature. For instance, a host of studies have demonstrated that white people tend to associate criminality with black people. The present definition is based on the Merriam Webster dictionary and on the definitions provided by <u>The Perception Institute</u> .
Invisible barriers	Attitudes and the underlying traditional assumptions, norms and values that prevent women's and migrants' empowerment / full participation in society.
Gender bias	Prejudiced actions or thoughts based on the gender-based perception that women are not equal to men. Bias represents the enactment” of stereotypes and prejudices: through preconceived ideas, females and males are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their gender. For example, this may lead a career counselling professional to avoid proposing certain kinds of jobs to women, assuming that, because they are women, they are not “suitable” for those kinds of jobs.
Racial / ethnic bias	Prejudiced actions or thoughts based on reflexive and exaggerated mental pictures that we hold about all members of a particular racial / ethnic group. Bias represents the enactment” of stereotypes and prejudices: through preconceived ideas, members of specific racial or ethnic groups are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their belonging to that group. For example, this may lead a career counselling professional to avoid proposing certain kinds of jobs to people of colour, assuming that, because they are people of colour, they are not “suitable” for those kinds of jobs.

DIVERSITY, RACE, ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Diversity	Differences in the values, attitudes, cultural perspective, beliefs, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, skills, knowledge and life experiences of each individual in any group of people.
Gender awareness raising	Process that aims at showing how existing values and norms influence our picture of reality, perpetuate stereotypes and support mechanisms (re)producing inequality. It challenges values and gender norms by explaining how they influence and limit opinions taken into consideration and decision-making. In addition, awareness raising aims at stimulating a general sensitivity to gender issues.
Gender roles	Social and behavioural norms which, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex. Collectively, gender roles often determine the traditional responsibilities and tasks assigned to women, men, girls and boys (see gender division of labour). Gender-specific roles are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, occurrence of conflict or disaster, and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions. Like gender itself, gender roles can evolve over time, in particular through the empowerment of women and transformation of masculinities.
Gender segregation	Differences in patterns of representation of women and men in the labour market, public and political life, unpaid domestic work and caring, and in young women's and men's choice of education.
Racial segregation	The practice of restricting people to certain circumscribed areas of residence or to separate institutions (e.g., schools, churches) and facilities (parks, playgrounds, restaurants, restrooms) on the basis of race or alleged race. Racial segregation provides a means of maintaining the economic advantages and superior social status of the politically dominant group, and in recent times it has been employed primarily by white populations to maintain their ascendancy over other groups by means of legal and social colour bars (Britannica 2022).

The key-instruments of this Toolkit



Recognize the potential obstacles...

... that migrant women may face in their daily life when integrating into a new receiving society. The Communities of Practices activated by GRASE identified these obstacles in 6 thematic areas - although it is not an exhaustive list, these are the obstacles that you may help her overcome with your advice. Remember you can act as a precious hub of information, providing orientation not just concerning the job market, but also for her integration process more broadly.



Use our antidotes against the reproduction of stereotypes and discrimination...

... a series of cross-cutting suggestions, identified by the members of the Communities of Practice activated by GRASE, which represent pre-requisites and premises to become inclusive and avoid implicit biases. These antidotes represent cross-cutting strategies and tools which run as a red thread in the daily work practice of the career counselling professionals and that connect all the 6 thematic areas in which obstacles, and their related stereotypes, are more likely to appear.



Reflect on the potential stereotypes and implicit bias...

... that you may have about race, ethnicity and gender and on the habits by which you may lead her to consider only some kinds of jobs, without taking the time to properly assess her skills and explore her preferences.

Antidotes to the reproduction of gender and race stereotypes and implicit bias in career counselling services

1) Get training about migration-related issues

To fully understand and advise her, acquire knowledge about what it means to migrate (emotionally, practically and materially), about the migration law of your country and about services and entities supporting migrants and women, in order to offer the best tools and advice. Examples of useful resources to get information about migration-related issues and about services for migrants are:

- **Italy** Portale Integrazione Migranti. Vivere e lavorare in Italia: [Website](#)
- **Spain** Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado. Directory of public and private entities and useful resources: [Website](#)
- **Portugal** Alto Comissariado para as Migrações (ACM): [Website](#)

2) Show empathy for the intersectional challenges that migrant women face

Migrant women experience difficulties related to their status as a woman *and* as a *migrant*. Replace the language you use with collaborative terminology: “Barriers they have” for “Barriers they put up”. Use the term “People looking for a job”.

3) Become aware and reflexive

Think about *issues*, and not about categories of people: situations that occur with migrant woman may also occur with other profiles of users, and not just with women or with migrants. Don't blame the cultural background of a person for her difficulties.

4) Conduct a very extensive, in-depth interview

The interview should be very comprehensive, addressing not only her qualifications and work experience, but also her migratory trajectory, her psycho-social well-being, issues pertaining to her family-related duties, her social relations and support network, her knowledge of the language, the culture and the legislation of the receiving country. This allows exploring in depth all the aspects of her condition, going beyond stereotypes. The interview should be based on a very structured and detailed interview guide, ensuring a thorough exploration of all topics, regardless of who conducts the interview among the personnel of the career counselling service.

5) Think about what she has, and not about what she lacks

Value her positive experiences, look at competencies, and not just about titles and formal experience. The very decision and action to migrate represents an opportunity to develop a number of very valuable problem-solving skills, which can be thoroughly investigated and properly valorised.

6) Maintain a relationship with her, build mutual trust and collaboration

For instance, you can propose her to follow training sessions, and you can follow her through her skills development path and then better advise her on possible jobs.

7) Use self-assessment tools to evaluate your implicit bias

Get training and capacity-building to fight implicit bias in your work practice.

8) Make sure to properly understand her

When the woman you are interviewing does not master the receiving's country language well, be assisted by a translator / linguistic and cultural mediator when conducting the in-depth interview with her; alternatively, be assisted by a person she trusts accompanying her, that can speak both her language and the receiving's country one (for the reasons explained in area 4, the woman's husband may not necessarily be the best suited person). Ideally, your service could develop brochures in the languages most spread among the third-country nationals containing basic information about language courses, IT courses, professional training, networking opportunities, female empowerment sessions, support provided by public services and third-sector associations to unemployed people and migrants.

Area 1
Difficulties inherent to the condition of being a migrant



Area 4
Family



Area 5
Difficulties related to legislation and bureaucracy

6 Areas

where to reduce gender and race gaps in migrant women's participation in the labour market



Area 2
Education



Area 3
Previous work experience

Area 6
Social integration and personal networks



The GRASE approach



1.

We describe the potential obstacles that **migrant women** may face when looking for a job

2.

We describe the potential biases, stereotypes and implicit assumptions that **Career Counselling Professionals** may wittingly or unwittingly reproduce when advising a migrant woman

Potential obstacles	Potential biases, Stereotypes, implicit Assumptions



3.

We propose the most effective solutions for each area to overcome the reproduction of gender and race stereotypes

Solutions

Area 1

Difficulties inherent to the condition of being a migrant

Potential obstacles



Potential biases, stereotypes, implicit assumptions

A) Fear to fail

Nostalgia of the country of origin and / or of the family and associated feelings of depression

A) “This woman is very fragile”

The migrant woman might be victimized by the career counselling professional, who might see her as necessarily incapable of expressing any agency or capability to act as a self-starter, and therefore might be led to offer her jobs only in certain areas (e.g. as cleaning maids) which do not require high sets of skills.



Solutions

A1) Offer support by providing guidance concerning available services (e.g. trainings), female empowerment sessions / courses, self-help group sessions, networking opportunities (e.g. with people who work in the domain she would like to work in), associations assisting migrants and / or women...

Propose such opportunities by asking her:

- Do you think this service / course / association would interest you?
Would you take this in consideration?
- Would you like trying this service / course out?
Have you ever thought about having the possibility to get this kind of support?
- There is a course / service about... proposed by this association... do you think it could suit you well?
- Have you ever thought about trying and meeting new people and expand your support network through this kind of opportunities?

A2) Make sure that the interview you conduct with her contains a detailed part with direct questions on her interests, desires, aspirations and on her propensity to develop skills and competences. This is strongly connected to the assessment of her informal and non-formal skills (see Area 3).

Explore her desires and interests through questions such as:

- Is there anything you have always desired to do?
- Is there anything you used to do, which you would like to restart doing now?
- Would you accept any job? Is there anything that you would never do?
- Would you like to learn to do something you like in order to get a job, i.e. through a training course?
- Would you like to try a training before looking for a job?



Area 1

Difficulties inherent to the condition of being a migrant

Potential obstacles



Potential biases, stereotypes, implicit assumptions

B) **Misalignment between reality and expectations, frustration**

B) ***“This woman would accept any kind of job, because she thinks she is already lucky to get one”***

The career counselling professional could be led to offer only jobs in certain areas (e.g. as cleaning maids) because he / she thinks that the migrant woman he / she is advising would settle for any kind of job, for the sake of obtaining one, without considering her actual potentials and skills.

Solutions

B) **Make sure that the interview you conduct with her contains a detailed part with direct questions on her interests, desires, aspirations and on her propensity to develop skills and competences. This is strongly connected to the assessment of her informal and non-formal skills (see Area 3).**

Explore her desires and interests through questions such as:

- Is there anything you have always desired to do?
- Is there anything you used to do, which you would like to restart doing now?
- Would you accept any job? Is there anything that you could never do?
- Would you like to learn to do something you like in order to get a job, i.e. through a training course?
- Would you like to try a training before looking for a job?



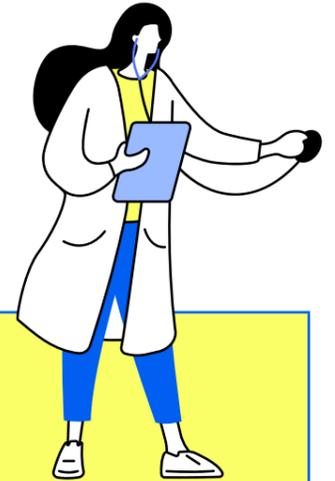
Education

Potential obstacles	
 Potential biases, stereotypes, implicit assumptions	
<p>A) Lack of literacy or low levels of educational achievements: in numerous countries access to education is limited / unavailable, causing some migrant women to hold low levels of education or even be illiterate</p>	<p>A) “This migrant woman has a very low education” Career counselling professionals could be led to think that the migrant woman he / she is advising may find it difficult to acquire new skills and new knowledge, or even that she does not want to do it because she considers it not very useful or because she thinks it requires too much effort.</p>
<p>B) Lack of knowledge of the receiving country’s language - Lack of knowledge about the use of digital tools (e.g. software, web apps...)</p>	<p>B) “This migrant woman does not know our language” or “This migrant woman cannot use a PC” Career counselling professionals could be led to think that the migrant woman he / she is advising will never be able to acquire good levels of language and digital literacy, and therefore does not propose her neither language / digital training nor jobs involving such competences, without taking into due account other characteristics or informal skills of the person that would make a good candidate for those jobs.</p>
<p>C) Barriers in the recognition of qualifications of the country of origin (e.g. due to the absence of bilateral agreements between the country of origin and the receiving country)</p>	<p>C) “Even if she has received formal education, this woman will never have her educational qualifications recognized” Career counselling professionals may not propose jobs in areas apt to someone who is literate the woman they are advising: because she will hardly have her titles recognized due to the existing institutional and bureaucratic barriers, the professional might automatically discard all jobs adapted to a person that has received formal education.</p>

Solutions
<p>A) Based on the interview, propose professional / linguistic / digital training that is timely, continuous, and adequate by referring her to existing courses available.</p>
<p>B) Based on the interview, propose professional / linguistic / digital training that is timely, continuous, and adequate by referring her to existing courses available.</p>
<p>C) Even if her titles can hardly be recognized due to the existing institutional and bureaucratic barriers, do take into proper account the educations she has received and encourage her to consider jobs in areas akin to the subject matters she has studied.</p>

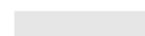


Previous work experience



Potential obstacles	
	Potential biases, stereotypes, implicit assumptions
<p>A) Difficult recognition of previous work experience (both formal and informal) in the country of origin and / or in other countries</p>	<p>A) “The skills or the experience of this woman are not adequate for the context of our society” The career counselling professional might not go “beyond the surface” and does not conduct an in-depth assessment of her non-formal skills, which derive from overall work experiences and life experiences.</p>
<p>B) Low levels of work experience / Inexperience</p>	<p>B) “This woman has insufficient skills” The career counselling professional may not be able to recognize informal and cross-cutting skills, that migrants develop thanks to very experience of <i>migrating</i>, and therefore may propose low-skilled jobs that do not correspond to the actual capabilities of the woman they are advising.</p>

Solutions
<p>A1) Be trained to recognize skills different than the “traditionally” codified ones, e.g. by referring to a number of existing tools for the skills assessment of migrants - e.g. EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals In order to detect these skills, you can refer to these existing tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Guidelines for the identification and assessment of migrants’ soft skills</u>, developed by ISMU (English and Italian versions available) • <u>Valorising Migrants’ Human Capital and Prior Learning</u>, in “The Diversity Value”(ed. by Laura Zanfrini), pp. 53-78 (English) • <u>Diversity Management and Immigrant Human Resources. A Booklet for Companies and other work organizations</u>, developed by ISMU (English and Italian versions available)
<p>A2+B1) Valorise especially the skills inherent to the condition of being a migrant by changing your mindset and turning problems into opportunities - as the skills that the workforce needs in the future are precisely the skills that migrants develop through their experiences as migrants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-solving skills • Global citizenship • Curiosity and learning ability • Communication skills • Cognitive adaptability and flexibility
<p>B2) Interviewing in-depth, with active listening, should allow you to guide the migrant woman you are advising along a “journey of discovery” of her competences and preferences, enabling her to recognize her skills in herself in herself, which, in turn, allows you to propose her jobs more suitable to her profile.</p>



Area 4 Family



Potential obstacles



Potential biases, stereotypes, implicit assumptions

A) Obstacles related to family responsibilities and childcare duties

A) ***“This migrant woman has to take care of the children, therefore she cannot work for many hours”***

The career counselling professional could deduce that the woman will have reduced hourly availability and little flexibility. This could lead to suggest part-time jobs, not far from the place of residence, even if less correspondent to the qualifications of the migrant woman.

B) Obstacles related to social norms concerning gender roles in the culture of origin

B) ***“This migrant woman has a predominant husband; therefore, she might find it difficult to work with other men”***

some migrant women (but not all) could have problems in managing their children or in the relationship with a predominant male figure. The career counselling professional could deduce that the woman has little autonomy and problems in dealing with work contexts with male presence or with other role models. In turn, this could lead the professional to not consider jobs that would entail working with other men or with different role models, suggesting only jobs in contexts that reproduce the cultural model of the woman’s country of origin.

Solutions

A1) Make sure that the interview includes direct questions regarding her availability of time and her possibility to move and how distant - e.g.:

- How many children do you have? Is there anyone who could help you? Are you aware of the existence of services that help you take care of the children?
- Over the week, how many days / hours would you be able to work for? How much time would you like to devote to working over the week? Would that depend on the kind of job? If you could do the job you prefer the most, how much time would you like to spend working during the week?
- If the job you liked the most was distant from where you live, would you be able / would you like to apply anyways? Are you familiar with the local transport network? Would you be willing to commute between home and work? Would that represent a problem in your family? Can you drive? Would you have a car to drive, in case this was needed to reach the company?

A2) Inform about services and support networks in your area (such as schools or associations that manage pre and post school).

B) If you deem that the woman’s husband might be a predominant figure, inhibiting her possibility to freely speak, give her an appointment asking her to come alone, or to be accompanied by another co-national (a friend, another relative she trusts) who can translate, in case the person is not fluent in the receiving’s country language. Make sure that the interview includes direct questions regarding the presence of men in the work environment, her availability of time and her possibility to move and how distant - e.g.:

- Would you find it problematic to work in a place where there are other men? What would make you feel more comfortable?



Area 4

Family

Potential obstacles



Potential biases, stereotypes, implicit assumptions

C) Pressure of the family in the country of origin and related concerns

(remittances, health conditions of the relatives, education of children left behind...).

C) *“This woman would accept any kind of job, because she feels the pressure of her duties towards her relatives in the country of origin (children, the elderly...)”*

The career counselling professional could be led to offer the first jobs available, often low-qualified, because he / she thinks that the migrant woman he / she is advising would settle for any kind of job, for the sake of obtaining one due to the pressures she feels from her family, without considering her actual potentials and skills and guiding her towards more suitable and more qualified jobs. With good intentions, the career counselling professional might think he / she is helping her in finding the first available job.

Solutions

C) **Do not take your assumptions for granted and do not “substitute yourself” to her in the decision-making concerning the choice of the possible job. Make sure that the interview you conduct both explores whether she feels pressures from her relatives and her skills and preferences concerning possible jobs.**



Area 5

Difficulties related to legislation and bureaucracy

Potential obstacles



Potential biases, stereotypes, implicit assumptions

A) **Lack of knowledge of the legislation, specifically of labour legislation. Migrant women may have little knowledge also of the rights and duties connected to her legal status in the receiving country**

A) **“If I tell her about her rights, she will then have excessive claims about them where she will work”**
The career counselling professional does not inform the migrant woman about her rights and duties, because he / she thinks that it is better if the woman does not know the law (especially labour legislation) in detail, so that she does not put forward “excessive claims” with the risk of losing her job.

A2) **“If this woman does not know the law, it is because she does not actively get information about it (or because she relies only on her ethnic network) instead of our institutions”**
The career counselling professional does not think it is not his / her duty to inform the woman about existing legislation, because it should only be her duty.

Solutions



A1+A2) **For both kinds of biases:**

- **Get training about migration law (e.g. rights associated to different permits of stay, especially concerning access to the labour market)**
- **Devote a part of the interview to explain the rights and duties of the worker, as well as to offer ad hoc courses also about employment contracts. This will allow for the creation of a relationship of trust between the operator and the woman through a path designed for mutual collaboration, as it would represent an opportunity for the migrant women to have access to clear and objective information. The use of opaque language is a major barrier for migrant women to know their rights and how and where to claim them**
- **Provide information about networks and entities that provide support (e.g. legal aid) to workers concerning labour legislation, discrimination and abuse**
- **Provide information about the existing bodies where to denounce discrimination and unfair treatment.**
- **Check on the behaviours of companies and social services and monitor whether they actually guarantee equal treatment of migrant workers (e.g. do they offer the same contractual provisions to people holding the same permit of stay? Do recruiters of the same company show a consistent attitude towards migrants, or do they behave differently?)**



Area 5

Difficulties related to legislation and bureaucracy

Potential obstacles



Potential biases, stereotypes, implicit assumptions

B) **Lack of networks and social capital, and related difficulties in navigating bureaucracy – with associated feelings of helplessness in the face of bureaucratic barriers and slow procedures**

B) ***This woman never goes out of home, only relies on her network, does not know any native and will never be able to understand bureaucracy or to seek support from existing services***

The career counselling professional may think that the migrant woman he / she is advising can hardly understand how complex procedures work, especially concerning the request of support to existing services, and therefore may think it is not worthy to take the time to explain her how to access these procedures, especially when there is the feeling that she relies on her personal network. This bias is harmful in that the career counselling professional may not help her become more independent and self-reliant.

Solutions

B) **Provide information about social services and entities that provide support in the form of subsidies and legal aid. Take the time to explain complex procedures - do not assume that she will not be able to understand.**



Area 6

Social integration and personal networks

Potential obstacles



Potential biases, stereotypes, implicit assumptions

A) **Lack of relations with contact persons among natives**

A1) *“This woman only knows people from the community, she never gets out of her community and get to know other people, she is closed-off and is not interested of getting out of her community”*

A2) *“This woman always relies on her community to ask for support and is not interested in knowing about how to navigate public services”*

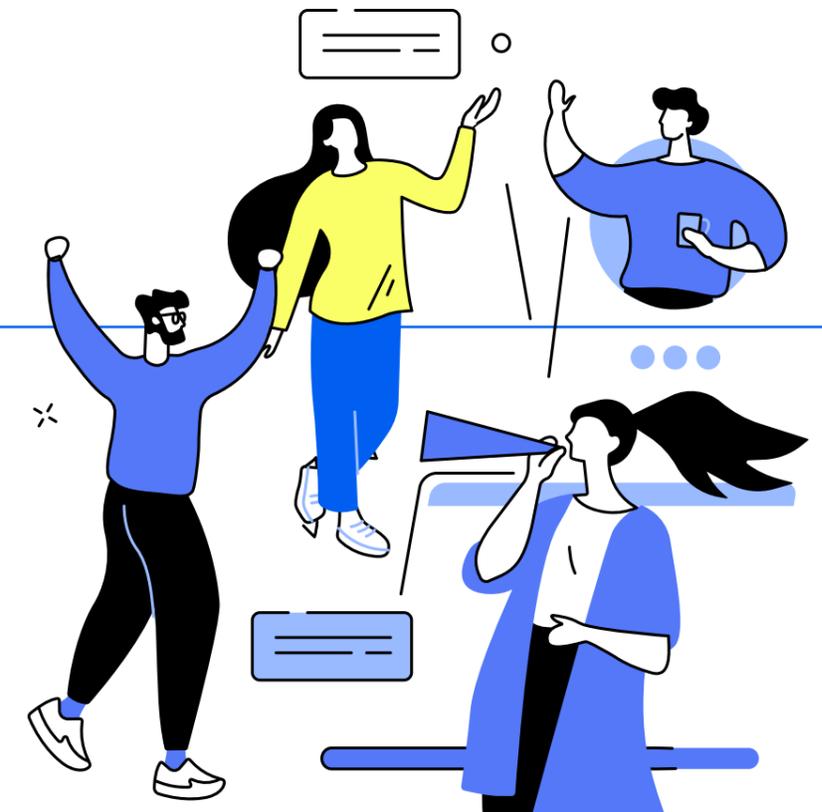
Both these prejudices may prevent the career counselling professional from taking fully in charge the migrant woman; the career counselling professional may not disclose information about support and opportunities, which could also help her find a job, only based on these assumptions



Solutions

A1+A2) **For both kinds of biases:**

- **Weave networks with other entities: propose a path of integration through courses with meetings at regular intervals in order to insert the woman in multiple social networks.**
- **Offer guidance to help the woman expand her support network (services and associations for migrants and for women, self-help groups, female empowerment sessions...)**



Area 6

Social integration and personal networks

Potential obstacles



Potential biases, stereotypes, implicit assumptions

B) Poor knowledge of the language of the receiving country

B) ***“This woman only spends time with her family or co-nationals, therefore she does not know the culture and the language of the receiving country”***

Career counselling professionals could be led to think that the migrant woman he / she is advising will never be able to acquire good levels of language, and therefore does not propose her language training nor jobs involving good linguistic competences, without taking into account her possible desire to master the receiving country’s language.

C) Risk of experiencing racism and discrimination

C) ***“This woman keeps telling stories about racist behaviours she has experienced in the work place, but it is impossible she only incurred in racist people”***

The career counselling professional may think that the migrant woman he / she is advising is exaggerating the perception of racism and discrimination existing in your country.

Solutions



B) Verify her actual desire and possibility to learn the language of your country – avoid assuming that she is not interested in learning it, or not capable of learning it. Ask her whether she has encountered obstacles in learning your language (e.g. language courses too distant from where she lives, or not suitable in terms of timetable). Refer to [Area 2](#) for a number of possible, concrete suggestions.

C) Fight employers’ prejudices regarding ethnic stereotypes: it is essential, especially for first generation migrants, that all the different public and private actors working to facilitate the integration process collaborate in building a shared and heterogeneous network capable of supporting a fully-fledged inclusion. Precisely by actively listening to people’s experiences, it is possible to reach an understanding of how discrimination and racism subtly works in society – ultimately leading the career counselling professional to show empathy for the negative experiences that migrant women may go through.





This Toolkit has been produced by the **GRASE project**. Visit our website to learn more about GRASE activities and products!